



WikiLeaks Document Release

<http://wikileaks.org/wiki/CRS-R40074>

February 2, 2009

Congressional Research Service

Report R40074

Fifth Summit of the Americas, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, April 2009: Background, Agenda, and Expectations

Peter J. Meyer, Analyst in Latin American Affairs

December 17, 2008

Abstract. The fifth Summit of the Americas in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago scheduled to be held on April 17-19, 2009 will be the first hemispheric forum for President-elect Barack Obama to engage with leaders from across Latin America and the Caribbean. The Port of Spain Summit will also be the first meeting of all 34 democratic heads of government from Latin America, the Caribbean, Canada, and the United States since the contentious 2005 Summit in Mar del Plata, Argentina. Taking place less than four months after his inauguration, the Summit could set the tone for hemispheric relations during the early stages of the new Administration. The fifth Summit of the Americas in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago scheduled to be held on April 17-19, 2009 will be the first hemispheric forum for President-elect Barack Obama to engage with leaders from across Latin America and the Caribbean. The Port of Spain Summit will also be the first meeting of all 34 democratic heads of government from Latin America, the Caribbean, Canada, and the United States since the contentious 2005 Summit in Mar del Plata, Argentina. Taking place less than four months after his inauguration, the Summit could set the tone for hemispheric relations during the early stages of the new Administration.

WikiLeaks



Fifth Summit of the Americas, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, April 2009: Background, Agenda, and Expectations

Peter J. Meyer
Analyst in Latin American Affairs

December 17, 2008

<http://wikileaks.org/wiki/CRS-R40074>

Congressional Research Service

7-5700

www.crs.gov

R40074

Summary

The fifth Summit of the Americas in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago scheduled to be held on April 17-19, 2009 will be the first hemispheric forum for President-elect Barack Obama to engage with leaders from across Latin America and the Caribbean. The Port of Spain Summit will also be the first meeting of all 34 democratic heads of government from Latin America, the Caribbean, Canada, and the United States since the contentious 2005 Summit in Mar del Plata, Argentina. Taking place less than four months after his inauguration, the Summit could set the tone for hemispheric relations during the early stages of the new Administration.

There have been four Summits of the Americas, two Special Summits of the Americas, and a number of ministerial-level summits held since 1994. Past Summits have led to a number of successful initiatives in the region, including the creation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, reductions in the cost of remittance transfers, and increased provision of anti-retroviral therapy to victims of HIV/AIDS. Although some view the most recent Summit as a failure because of its divisiveness, it too produced a number of important initiatives, including support for Haiti's democracy, improved infrastructure, and reductions in child labor.

Despite these accomplishments, many observers have criticized the Summits of the Americas. Civil society representatives contend that the Summits lack transparency and believe their organizations should play larger roles in the Summit process. Some observers have questioned the Summits' effectiveness, drawing attention to the fact that the majority of Summit goals have never been met. Other analysts doubt the Summits' ability to advance U.S. interests and argue that the United States should pursue its own priorities outside of the Summit process.

The theme for the Port of Spain Summit is, "Securing our citizens' future by promoting human prosperity, energy security, and environmental sustainability." Summit organizers have stressed the need to refocus the hemisphere's priorities, set achievable goals, and create the institutions necessary to hold countries accountable for implementing the Summits' mandates. As a result, the Draft Declaration of Commitment of the Summit focuses on areas of consensus in the hemisphere, such as promoting human prosperity, promoting energy security and environmental sustainability, and strengthening public security and democratic governance. The Draft Declaration also sets measurable goals and seeks to strengthen the follow-up mechanisms of the Summit process. Congress may be particularly interested in a number of initiatives concerning energy, the environment, and social justice which coincide with proposals of the Obama Administration since it may be asked to commit U.S. resources to projects in the region. This report will be updated as events warrant.

Contents

Background on Previous Summits of the Americas: From Miami to Mar del Plata	1
Achievements of the Summits of the Americas.....	2
Political	2
Economic	3
Social.....	3
Criticism of the Summits of the Americas	4
Transparency	4
Effectiveness	4
Ability to Further U.S. Interests	5
2009 Port of Spain Summit	5
Agenda	6
Promoting Human Prosperity	6
Promoting Energy Security	6
Promoting Environmental Sustainability	6
Strengthening Public Security.....	7
Strengthening Democratic Governance	7
Strengthening the Summit Process and Implementation	7
Expectations	7
Congressional Interest.....	8

Contacts

Author Contact Information	9
----------------------------------	---

Background on Previous Summits of the Americas: From Miami to Mar del Plata

By the early 1990s, after decades of civil war and military rule in parts of the hemisphere, 34 of the 35 governments in the region were elected civilian democracies. Likewise, most of the countries in the region discarded statist economic policies in favor of economic liberalization. In order to build on these values shared by the United States and Latin America as well as develop an agenda for the hemisphere's future, President Clinton organized the first modern Summit of the Americas. Held in Miami in 1994, the Summit was the first meeting of the region's leaders since 1967 and was attended by all 34 democratically elected heads of government in the region, excluding only Fidel Castro of Cuba. After much discussion, the region's leaders approved a comprehensive Plan of Action with 23 separate initiatives under four major themes: preserving and strengthening the community of democracies of the Americas, promoting prosperity through economic integration and free trade, eradicating poverty and discrimination in the hemisphere, and guaranteeing sustainable development and conserving the natural environment for future generations. One of the most important initiatives to emerge from the Miami Summit was the agreement to work towards the creation of a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), which was to be completed by January 1, 2005.¹

Since the 1994 Miami Summit, there have been three Summits of the Americas and two Special Summits of the Americas, each introducing new initiatives and producing extensive Plans of Action. In 1996, a Special Summit on Sustainable Development was held in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, focusing on environmental issues in the hemisphere. In 1998, Santiago, Chile hosted the second Summit of the Americas. The Santiago Summit focused on education, but also marked the initiation of negotiations for the FTAA. Quebec City, Canada hosted the third Summit of the Americas in 2001. The Quebec City Summit produced a commitment to democracy, led to the creation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, and generated a preliminary draft of the FTAA. Another Special Summit of the Americas was held in Monterrey, Mexico in 2004. The Monterrey Summit produced the Declaration of Nuevo León, which reaffirmed the region's commitment to implementing the Quebec City Plan of Action.² These summits have been complemented by regular meetings of the ministers of defense, education, finance, justice, labor, and trade of the countries of the region.

The most recent Summit of the Americas was held in Mar del Plata, Argentina in November 2005. Although the theme of the Summit was "Creating jobs to fight poverty and strengthen democratic governance," debate largely centered around the Bush Administration's proposal to resume negotiations on the FTAA. President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela led the opposition to the proposal, speaking to protesters at the so-called 'People's Summit,' who gathered to demonstrate—sometimes violently—against President Bush, U.S. military involvement in Iraq,

¹ For more information on the Free Trade Area of the Americas, see CRS Report RS20864, *A Free Trade Area of the Americas: Major Policy Issues and Status of Negotiations*, by J. F. Hornbeck.

² For more information on the Summits of 1998, 2001, and 2004, see CRS Report 98-330, *Summit of the Americas II, April 18-19, 1998: Background, Objectives, and Expectations*, by K. Larry Storrs; CRS Report RL30936, *Summit of the Americas III, Quebec City, Canada, April 20-22, 2001: Background, Objectives, and Results*, by K. Larry Storrs and M. Angeles Villarreal; and CRS Report RS21700, *Special Summit of the Americas - Monterrey, Mexico, January 2004: Background, Objectives, and Results*, by Clare Ribando Seelke.

and the FTAA. Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay, the countries of the Common Market of the South (Mercosur), also opposed the resumption of talks on the FTAA.³ The Mercosur countries opposed the continuation of U.S. agricultural subsidies and argued that talks should not resume until after conclusion of the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Doha Development Round, when there may be a greater possibility of achieving what they would consider a balanced and equitable agreement. Despite consensus among 29 of the 34 democratic leaders that FTAA talks should resume, the economic weight of the dissenting countries led to the adoption of the first Summit declaration to acknowledge a lack of unanimous agreement among the countries in the region concerning the desirability of the FTAA.⁴

Achievements of the Summits of the Americas

Political

According to some observers, one of the greatest political accomplishments of the Summit process has been the Inter-American Democratic Charter. In the Declaration of Quebec City, the leaders of the Americas committed to a democracy clause, which led to the creation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter in September 2001. The Charter affirms the peoples of the Americas' universal right to democracy and asserts that the governments of the region have an obligation to promote and defend democracy. Though it has produced somewhat mixed results, the Inter-American Democratic Charter has been invoked on several occasions following challenges to democratic institutions in the region, such as the attempted coup against President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela in 2002 and the removal of President Lucio Gutiérrez from office by Ecuador's Congress in 2005.⁵

The Plan of Action adopted at the most recent Summit of the Americas in Mar del Plata, Argentina in 2005, called on the countries of the region to act in solidarity with the Haitian people to improve democratic institutions. Since the Summit, the Organization of American States (OAS) Special Mission for Strengthening Democracy in Haiti has worked with the Provisional Electoral Council of Haiti to develop a stronger electoral system.⁶ The OAS and the Haitian government completed a mass registration and identity card distribution campaign, which integrated the citizen identity card issuing process, electoral process, and the Civil Status Registry in order to better organize and secure population information, establish stronger electoral institutions, and provide the government with better information to improve the efficiency of its services. Approximately 3.56 million of the 4.4 million Haitians over the age of 18 were registered.⁷ Since 2006, the United States has given more than \$34 million to Haiti to strengthen

³ For more information on Mercosur, see CRS Report RL33620, *Mercosur: Evolution and Implications for U.S. Trade Policy*, by J. F. Hornbeck.

⁴ "Americas Summit Ends in Polite Dissent Over Resumption of FTAA Talks," *Latin News Weekly Report*, November 8, 2005; *Declaration of Mar Del Plata*, IV Summit of the Americas, November 5, 2005.

⁵ Barry S. Levitt, "A Desultory Defense of Democracy: OAS Resolution 1080 and the Inter-American Democratic Charter," *Latin American Politics and Society*, Volume 48 (3), 2006; Craig Arceneaux & David Pion-Berlin, "Issues, Threats, and institutions: Explaining OAS Responses to Democratic Dilemmas in Latin America," *Latin American Politics and Society*, Volume 49 (2), 2007.

⁶ For more information on the Organization of American States, see CRS Report RS22095, *Organization of American States: A Primer*, by Clare Ribando Seelke.

⁷ Joint Summit Working Group, "Achievements of the Summits of the Americas: Progress since Mar del Plata," 2007.

its judicial system, increase the capabilities of its parliament, and develop stronger political parties, media, and civil society organizations. The U.S. government has also provided \$46 million in equipment and training to strengthen the law enforcement and human rights protection capabilities of the Haitian National Police.⁸

Economic

The Summits have also led to several important economic initiatives in the hemisphere. In the Declaration of Nuevo León, the leaders of the hemisphere committed to reducing the average cost of remittance transfers by at least 50% by 2008. Between 2000 and 2006, transaction costs to send remittances were reduced from 15% to 5.6%, allowing \$5 billion more to reach recipient families.⁹ The United States has played a large role in reducing the transaction costs of remittances by encouraging competition, eliminating excess regulations, and promoting the use of new technology. The cost of sending remittances through some corridors between the United States and Mexico has fallen by 50% and the United States has begun to partner with other countries like Guatemala in hopes of achieving similar cost reductions.¹⁰

The Mar del Plata Plan of Action states that countries should promote investment in infrastructure. President Bush proposed the Infrastructure Facility of the Americas (IFA) at the Summit, which encourages private sector investment by reducing the cost of identifying worthy projects through the establishment of a fund for feasibility assessments. The U.S. Trade and Development Agency invested \$10.4 million in 2006 to support infrastructure development in 14 countries in the region. The funds supported a variety of projects, including road pavement in Paraguay, water re-use in Brazil, and a refinery expansion in Colombia.¹¹

Social

In addition to political and economic initiatives, the Summits of the Americas have prompted some successful social programs. The Declaration of Nuevo León set the goal of providing anti-retroviral therapy to 600,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in the hemisphere by 2005. As a result of funding from a variety of multilateral, bilateral, and domestic initiatives, over 640,000 people in the region were receiving treatment by the time of the 2005 Mar del Plata Summit, exceeding the Nuevo León goal.¹² These initiatives included the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. Additionally, the U.S. government has helped over 400,000 people in the region get tested for HIV and spent over \$552 million on HIV/AIDS programs in the hemisphere between 2001 and

⁸ Summits of the Americas Secretariat, "National Report of the United States of America on the Implementation of Commitments from the Fourth Summit of the Americas," 2007.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Summits of the Americas Secretariat, "Achievements of the Summits of the Americas: National Accomplishments," 2004.

¹¹ Summits of the Americas Secretariat, "National Report of the United States of America on the Implementation of Commitments from the Fourth Summit of the Americas," 2007.

¹² Summits of the Americas Secretariat, "Achievements of the Summits of the Americas: National Accomplishments," 2004; For more information on the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, see CRS Report RL34192, *PEPFAR: From Emergency to Sustainability*, by Tiaji Salaam-Blyther.

2007. This represented a substantial increase in funding, rising from just \$22 million in 2001 to over \$153 million in 2007.¹³

The Plan of Action of the Mar del Plata Summit called for the eradication of the worst forms of child labor by 2020. The U.S. Department of Labor has taken the lead in working toward achieving this goal by funding \$22 million in anti-child labor projects throughout the region in 2004 and providing an additional \$16 million in 2005. These projects combat child labor in hazardous agricultural and industrial sectors and improve access to basic education for children who have already endured child labor.¹⁴ These programs have been responsible for withdrawing and preventing more than 40,000 children from the worst forms of child labor in countries throughout the region.¹⁵

Criticism of the Summits of the Americas

Transparency

The Summits of the Americas process has drawn criticism throughout its brief history. Civil society and anti-globalization organizations contend that the Summits lack openness and transparency. These groups argue that important discussions that affect the welfare of all people in the region should not be held behind closed doors and that the Summits should be open to civil society representatives. The exclusivity of the Summits and the large role that negotiations over the FTAA have played at each of the Summits have led some civil society groups to assert that the Summits promote the expansion of corporate power while ignoring social welfare, environmental protection, and citizens' rights.¹⁶ Although the countries of the region agreed in the Declaration of Quebec City that the Summits must be open, transparent, and include civil society, many civil society groups contend that little has been done to increase their participation.¹⁷

Effectiveness

Many observers have also criticized the Summits of the Americas for producing overly-ambitious documents that repeatedly mandate new initiatives while largely ignoring the status of implementation of previous Summit commitments. Since the first Summit of the Americas, over 600 initiatives have been introduced.¹⁸ Many of these mandates provide no criteria for measuring

¹³ Summits of the Americas Secretariat, "National Report of the United States of America on the Implementation of Commitments from the Fourth Summit of the Americas," 2007.

¹⁴ Summits of the Americas Secretariat, "Achievements of the Summits of the Americas: National Accomplishments," 2004.

¹⁵ Summits of the Americas Secretariat, "National Report of the United States of America on the Implementation of Commitments from the Fourth Summit of the Americas," 2007.

¹⁶ "Trade Summit Spurs Peaceful Protest," *Washington Times*, April 21, 2001; "Counter-Summit to Summit of the Americas Showcases Opposition to U.S., Neoliberal Economics," *Latin America Data Base NotiSur*, December 2, 2005; "Caribbean Sub-Regional Civil Society Forum Underscores OAS Emphasis on Inclusion, Ahead of Summit of the Americas," *US Fed News*, November 3, 2008.

¹⁷ Peter Richards, "Politics: Civil Society Groups Demand Voice at Americas Summit," *Inter Press Service*, November 5, 2008.

¹⁸ Peter Richards, "Politics: Civil Society Groups Demand Voice at Americas Summit," *Inter Press Service*, November 5, 2008; Racquel Smith, "Summit Reform and Civil Society: Taking a Deeper Look," *FOCAL Point*, August 2008.

their implementation. Likewise, there are few mechanisms to enforce implementation of those initiatives that are measurable. Furthermore, many countries lack the organizational capacity, political will, or financial resources to implement the Summits' mandates. As a result, most Summit commitments have never been met.¹⁹ The failure of many countries to implement the Summits' mandates has cast doubt upon the effectiveness of the Summit process and called into question the credibility of the Summits of the Americas as an institution for achieving tangible results in the hemisphere.

Ability to Further U.S. Interests

Some analysts, acknowledging the divergence of economic values among countries of the region, have begun to question whether the Summit of the Americas process is worth continuing. Whereas the Summit process was initiated in a spirit of cooperation by like-minded leaders in Miami in 1994, the hemisphere is now more divided than at any time since the Cold War. The dismissal of the Bush Administration's proposal to resume talks on the FTAA at the Mar del Plata Summit was a clear manifestation of the increasing number of leaders and countries in the region that reject neoliberal economic policies. Indeed, the most recent Latinobarómetro survey found that while 56% of Latin Americans agree that a market economy is the only path to development, only 32% are satisfied with services that have been privatized and majorities in every Latin American nation believe their countries should rely more on state solutions than market solutions to resolve societal problems.²⁰ Given these economic divisions and the movement of the Summit agenda away from the FTAA and toward state-based development programs, some analysts believe the interests of the United States would be better served by focusing instead on finalizing bilateral and multilateral agreements with those countries that still share the U.S. commitment to free trade.²¹

2009 Port of Spain Summit

The fifth Summit of the Americas is scheduled to be held April 17-19, 2009 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. All 34 democratically elected leaders of the hemisphere are scheduled to attend the summit, many of whom will be attending for the first time, including President-elect Obama and Presidents Fernández de Kirchner of Argentina, Morales of Bolivia, Bachelet of Chile, Arias of Costa Rica, Correa of Ecuador, Colom of Guatemala, Zelaya of Honduras, Calderón of Mexico, Ortega of Nicaragua, Lugo of Paraguay, and García of Peru. Although Raúl Castro officially succeeded his brother Fidel as President of Cuba in February 2008, the country's communist government has once again ensured that it will be the only country in the region not invited to attend the Summit of democratic nations.

¹⁹ Richard E. Feinberg, *Summitry in the Americas: A Progress Report*, Institute for International Economics, April 1997; Juan Cruz Diaz, "The 2009 Summit of the Americas: A New Opportunity," *Council of the Americas*, July 22, 2008.

²⁰ Corporación Latinobarómetro, *Informe 2008*, 2008.

²¹ James M. Roberts, "Rethinking the Summit of the Americas and Advancing Free Trade in Latin America," *The Heritage Foundation*, August 8, 2008.

Agenda

The theme of the Port of Spain Summit is, “Securing our citizens’ future by promoting human prosperity, energy security, and environmental sustainability.”²² In July 2008, The Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG) issued a “Draft Declaration of Commitment” for the Port of Spain Summit. The Draft Declaration of Commitment combines the traditional Summit Declaration and Plan of Action into a single document, and proposes 65 commitments under six themes: promoting human prosperity, promoting energy security, promoting environmental sustainability, strengthening public security, strengthening democratic governance, and strengthening the Summit of the Americas follow up and implementation effectiveness.

Promoting Human Prosperity

Promoting human prosperity is the most extensive section in the Draft Declaration. According to the document, countries will reaffirm their support for a number of past commitments, such as halving poverty by 2015 and eradicating child labor by 2020. Among the new national commitments of governments are goals to increase investment in research and development to a minimum of 1% of GDP by 2015, increase public spending on health to at least 5% of GDP by 2015, increase secondary education enrollment to 75% by 2010, and increase enrollment in tertiary education to at least 40% by 2020. Additionally, the countries of the region will call on multilateral organizations to address a number of issues. The Draft Declaration calls on the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and other regional banks to double lending to micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises and triple the number of enterprises accessing credit by 2012. The Draft also directs the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) to prepare a regional contingency plan that contains new international health regulations to address the spread of vector borne diseases by the end of 2009.

Promoting Energy Security

The energy security section of the Draft Declaration sets a number of specific goals for the countries of the Americas. These include generating a minimum of 50% of national primary energy demands with renewable and low-carbon energy sources by 2050, and ensuring universal access to accurate and reliable information on energy and environmental issues by 2012. The energy section also calls for hemispheric cooperation in creating cross-border renewable energy infrastructure, encouraging the development of next-generation biofuels, and developing a strategy for international cooperation on issues related to energy.

Promoting Environmental Sustainability

The environmental sustainability section of the Declaration presents a wide variety of commitments, but offers very little in terms of immediate action on environmental issues. Countries will commit to ensure the eventual stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will not seriously affect Earth’s climate and weather systems and work toward a global agreement on Climate Change at the United Nations Framework Conventions on Climate Change (UNFCCC) meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark in November and December of

²² Summit Implementation Review Group, *Draft Declaration of Commitment*, July 21, 2008.

2009. The Draft Declaration also directs Ministers responsible for sustainable development in their countries to work with the World Bank and IDB to undertake comprehensive studies of the potential impacts of climate change on each of the nations of the Americas and develop “plans of action” to mitigate those impacts by 2011.

Strengthening Public Security

Public security is the briefest section of the Draft Declaration. Governments of the region will commit to cooperate with one another to combat terrorist and criminal organizations, prevent them from operating across borders, and deny them resources. Countries will also direct the OAS Secretariat for Multi-Dimensional Security to develop a regional strategy for dealing with criminal gangs that gives special attention to the region’s youth.

Strengthening Democratic Governance

The nations of the Americas reaffirm their commitments to a variety of regional democratic initiatives in the Draft Declaration. They commit to uphold and apply the values of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and the Inter-American Conventional Against Corruption as well as to strengthen the Inter-American System of Human Rights. Countries will also commit to conclude negotiations on the proposed Social Charter of the Americas and its Plan of Action—which were proposed by Venezuela and recognize a wide variety of social, community, economic, cultural, and indigenous rights—and adopt them before the end of 2009.

Strengthening the Summit Process and Implementation

In order to improve the effectiveness of the Summit of the Americas and ensure that the commitments made at the Summit are met, the Draft Declaration proposes a number of reforms to the Summit process. Countries will agree to hold the Summits of the Americas on a regular basis, at least every three years. They will also call on multilateral financial institutions to work with Ministers of Finance to ensure that countries have the technical and fiscal resources to implement the Summits’ mandates. Likewise, the Draft Declaration encourages countries to increase the participation of civil society and business groups in the Summit process and instructs the OAS and SIRG to report annually on the progress made toward achieving the goals of the Summits.

Expectations

The Port of Spain Summit comes at a difficult time in the hemisphere. Rising food prices and the global financial crisis threaten to erase the economic and social gains of the past decade in many countries of the region. Indeed, citizens of 17 of the 18 Latin American countries surveyed by Latinobarómetro in 2008 listed economic problems as the most important challenges facing their countries, with 53% of all Latin Americans saying they would be willing to live under an undemocratic government if it could solve their countries’ economic problems.²³ The hemisphere is also increasingly divided. The 2005 Mar del Plata Summit was often confrontational and in 2007, Latin America and the Caribbean was the only region that was incapable of selecting a

²³ Corporación Latinobarómetro, *Informe 2008*, 2008.

consensus candidate for a temporary seat on the U.N. Security Council.²⁴ The United States has become ever more isolated from the rest of the region as well. Favorable opinions of the United States in Latin America have fallen from 73%, following the attacks of September 11, 2001, to 58% in 2008.²⁵ Likewise, in two recent crises in the hemisphere—the Colombian airstrike of a Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) camp inside Ecuador and the ongoing social and political conflict in Bolivia—the United States and the regional body to which it belongs, the OAS, have played minor roles while regional bodies that exclude the United States, the Rio Group and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), have taken the leads.²⁶ Additionally, the first Latin America and Caribbean Integration and Development Summit, held in Salvador de Bahia Brazil on December 16, 2008, hosted 31 heads of government from the Hemisphere, including Cuba but excluding the United States and Canada.²⁷

Despite these challenges, many analysts are optimistic about the Summit. Since the Port of Spain Summit's organizers left controversial subjects like trade and migration off the agenda in favor of issues like social equity, energy cooperation, and environmental sustainability, there should be more consensus. Similarly, the election of Barack Obama, who announced that he would pursue a policy of sustained diplomacy in the region, with a focus on advancing democracy, security, and opportunity, has led several regional leaders who have had difficult relationships with the Bush Administration to express hope that they can engage the United States in a more constructive manner.²⁸ Likewise, The Draft Declaration of Commitment's identification of specific, measurable, and attainable targets as well as institutions to assist in their implementation should make it a more effective document than those produced at previous Summits. This new agenda, spirit of cooperation, and focus on results address the concerns of many Summit critics and set the stage for what could be a very successful Summit of the Americas.

Congressional Interest

Many in Congress have expressed disappointment over what they believe has been a lack of a hemispheric agenda during the Bush Administration. This has led to a growing concern that U.S. leadership and influence in the region has seriously eroded to the benefit of others with anti-American agendas. The confluence of the Port of Spain Summit and a new U.S. Administration offers an opportunity to establish a new direction in U.S.-Latin America relations.

Although many of the mandates put forth by the Draft Declaration of the Port of Spain Summit are directed toward multilateral organizations like the OAS, the IDB, and PAHO, there are a number of commitments that would require U.S. action and funding. Congress may be interested in areas of convergence between the priorities of the Obama Administration and initiatives outlined in the Draft Declaration—such as energy, climate change, and social justice—where the Administration may ask Congress to commit U.S. resources.

²⁴ Peter Hakim, "Why We Are Together," *FOCAL Point*, August 2008.

²⁵ Corporación Latinobarómetro, *Informe 2008*, 2008.

²⁶ "Latin America Goes It Alone as Bolivian Conflict Explodes," *Latin News Weekly Report*, September 18, 2008.

²⁷ Alexi Barrionuevo "At Meeting in Brazil, Washington is Scorned," *New York Times*, December 17, 2008.

²⁸ "A New Partnership for the Americas," *Obama for America*, 2008; Jack Chang, "Obama Win Brings High Hopes to the Hemisphere," *Miami Herald*, November 6, 2008.

Several of the initiatives in the Draft Declaration of Commitment concerning energy and the environment coincide with President-elect Obama's campaign proposals. As noted above, under the Draft Declaration, countries of the region will commit to increased production of renewable energy, expansion of biofuels, development of a regional renewable energy infrastructure, and reductions in green house gas emissions. President-elect Obama called for a number of similar initiatives during his campaign. He proposed policies that would ensure that 25% of U.S. energy is produced by renewable sources by 2025, establish an "Energy Partnership for the Americas" to coordinate research, development, and transfer of renewable energy sources in the region, and implement a cap-and-trade system to lower domestic carbon emissions by 80% by 2050.²⁹

There are also a few social initiatives in the Draft Declaration of Commitment that coincide with proposed policies of the new Administration. The Draft Declaration reaffirms the countries of the Americas' commitment to meeting the U.N. Millennium Development Goals and providing adequate funding for the Global Fund to Combat AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. President-elect Obama has proposed targeting new U.S. assistance to help countries meet the U.N. Millennium Development Goals as well as increasing U.S. contributions to the Global Fund.³⁰

Author Contact Information

Peter J. Meyer
Analyst in Latin American Affairs
pmeyer@crs.loc.gov, 7-5474

²⁹ "Barack Obama and Joe Biden: New Energy for America," *Obama for America*, 2008; "A New Partnership for the Americas," *Obama for America*, 2008.

³⁰ "A New Partnership for the Americas," *Obama for America*, 2008.