CONCEPT PAPER
Second Inter-American Meeting of Experts and Representatives of Electoral Organizations
Caracas, June 11th and 12th, 2009

"Towards the construction of a referential framework of procedures to manage and control electoral processes"

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1. Name of the meeting:

Towards the construction of a referential framework of procedures to manage and control electoral processes

2. Background
The First Inter-American Meeting of Experts and Representatives of Electoral Organizations held in Caracas, on April 2008, favored the exchange of innovative practices and experiences on electorate identification systems, voters' registration processes and automated voting systems. Participants concluded that automated voting systems, backed by proper civil education and training campaigns may provide for a friendlier environment and a simpler process, favoring higher participation and improving the timeliness for the collection and dissemination of electoral results.

It was also highlighted that in some countries of the region the automation of the vote, especially automated casting, has not been implemented, whether for legal, economic, or civil-tradition causes. Nonetheless, the Meeting allowed the acknowledgment of the progress made by electoral authorities and organizations regarding the use of technologies in the management of electoral processes, in any of the stages thereof. In either case, manual or automated, it was concluded that safety guarantees and process auditing are at the core of the trust and transparency of electoral processes, a fact reinforced by the participation of political stakeholders.

Besides recognizing the high technological capability that the countries of this region have in electoral matters, an emphasis was made on the importance of promoting cooperation between the States regarding

electoral technology. Summarizing, the First Meeting served as a platform to systematize the use of technologies in the management of electoral processes, to acknowledge the necessity of offering guarantees of transparency to voters, and to enhance cooperation among electoral bodies.

With the aim of reinforcing current guarantees of transparency in electoral processes, during This Second Meeting, there is a proposal to create an inventory of the criteria and procedures for the management and control of the fundamental stages of the electoral process: Registration, Nomination, Production of the Electoral Material, Capacity building, Communication, Logistics, Voting, Canvassing and Tally-up, Transmission of Electoral Results, in order to build a referential framework. First, to identify common and different grounds, and then to move forward to the standardization and systematization of the elements that optimize the use of resources and the existence of guarantees.

3. Justification:
In a regional context in which all OAS member countries boast about consolidated democratic systems in which electoral organizations are now of the utmost importance, thinking about the creation of a referential framework of procedures to manage and control electoral processes is a fundamental and undoubtedly necessary step.

Within a context of political and cultural diversity among countries of the hemisphere, the necessity of sharing cross-sectional elements, such as the control and management of electoral processes, arises. To this end, based on a series of principles or common criteria, a sort of axiological Decalogue is created. Each stage of the process keeps all parties informed about the system's capability to properly express the will of voters.

During this stage, each electoral organization or authority, in keeping with their own electoral reality and based on the specific demands of their political stakeholders, will generate different controls to provide for the necessary trust that supports the legitimacy of the process.

This Second Meeting is also an occasion to know what each country is doing, and to discuss the criteria for the optimization of the current electoral processes, based on concrete realities. In this way it allows us to identify coincidences and differences in the methods and purposes of

the electoral process management, permitting the identification of strengths and weaknesses, and consequently, leading us to promote the former and mitigate the latter. As countries know what and how the others are doing, each electoral organization could (re)think their own mechanisms and procedures in order to find the ones that best fit on them.

4. Objectives of the meeting:

-To identify criteria and procedures optimizing the management and control of electoral processes.
-To debate each key process of the electoral system, the criteria and procedures used to guarantee auditability.
-To build up a referential framework of criteria and procedures to guarantee the audit-ability of electoral processes throughout the hemisphere.