

The plan of action of the Summit of Americas held in Miami, among other things in the area of Science and Technology, recommended that a meeting be held of the ministers responsible for S&T from the country's of the hemisphere. It was decided during June 1995 meeting of the External Affairs Ministers of the Hemisphere (the OAS 25th. General Assembly) in Haiti, that this meeting be held in the Cartagena de Indias in Colombia on March 27-29th 1996.

In October 1995, the meeting of the First Preparatory Committee for the meeting of the Ministers was held in Washington, D.C. During this meeting it was decided that during their deliberations the Minister's will:

1. Evaluate progress of current hemispheric programs for cooperation in science and technology in order to determine how they may be strengthened.
2. Identify proposals of action for hemispheric cooperation in science and technology for: development of science and technology capabilities; strengthening the interface between science and technology and different areas of application and use of knowledge leading to sustainable and equitable development; strengthening capacity to develop creative methods of financing programs of scientific and technological development.
3. Adopt and/or strengthen mechanisms to promote hemispheric cooperation in science and technology.
4. Development of mechanisms oriented towards ensuring full participation of small and relatively lesser developed countries.

As a starting point during this meeting the following countries undertook to prepare background papers dealing with different aspects of the above subjects:

Brazil: Development of Scientific and Technological capacity in the region;

Chile: Strengthening interface between science and technology, and the productive sectors;

Jamaica and Venezuela: Strengthening interface between science and technology and social development;

Colombia: Developing creative ways to fund scientific and technological activities;

Honduras: Full participation of small and relatively lesser developed countries;

United States of America: Coordinating and strengthening hemispheric cooperation in science and technology;

Uruguay: Evaluation of hemispheric cooperation program in science and technology.

The Office of Science and Technology (at that time known as the Department of Scientific and Technological Affairs) of the Organization of American States (OAS) in its part, commissioned the following studies:

“Information Technology and Communication for Generation and Dissemination of Knowledge”, by Jacqueline Bourdeau, Laura Winer and Jesús Vázquez-Abad.

“Technological Innovation Competitiveness and international Trade”, by Jacques Marcovitch and Simão Silber;

“Clean Technologies and Hemispheric Cooperation”, by Amitav Rath;

“Scientific and Technological Knowledge for Social Development, Generation of Employment and the fight against Poverty”, by Renato Dagnino.

Following the Ministers meeting these papers were presented to an invited audience at the head office of the Organization of American States in Washington D.C. This special issue of *REDES* is devoted to the publication of the above papers. □

Sitoo Mukerji
Director of the Office of Science and Technology,
Organization of American States