

The Oriental Republic of Uruguay

Positions for the Organization of American States

I. Promoting Sustainable Cities and Communities

The Oriental Republic of Uruguay strongly affirms the consensus that the creation of sustainable cities and communities throughout the hemisphere will help strengthen the safety of citizens in poorer, urban areas. Uruguay also acknowledges that by promoting sustainability, the Organization of American States (OAS) Member States can successfully plan for the expected increase of citizens moving into developing urban spaces. Making sure that sufficient housing, safe and sanitary public areas, technology, and renewable energy sources are accessible to citizens today and future citizens is a goal that all OAS Member States must play a part in. Member States with highly-populated urban slums and undeveloped public areas hinder the progress of the OAS and make it harder to achieve sustainability and urban renewal. Such as it is, Uruguay believes that we must join together as a body to encourage, uplift, and incentivize the concept of sustainability in each and every OAS Member State.

As a leader on the issue of sustainability, Uruguay has made tremendous strides to implement policies and frameworks dealing with issues from clean water and waste management to renewable energy and housing. For example, in 2008 a long-term energy policy was approved that focused on the variation of energy sources with detailed emphasis on the use of renewable energies, the promotion of energy efficiency, and the consideration of universal and safe access to energy for all social sectors. In 2016, the National System of Productive Transformation and Competitiveness was created to ensure that innovative economic developments could be made in Uruguay while promoting sustainability, socioeconomic equity, and balance between industrial and residential urban areas and the natural environment. Due to major developments within Uruguay, 95 percent of our energy over the last few years have come from renewable sources. These kinds of developments are crucial to creating sustainable and lasting communities that will be available to future generations to experience and even improve. Uruguay has fully committed to mitigating the effects of climate change by creating progressive goals to be achieved by 2030.

Recently, an Uruguayan delegation took part in the 2018 Voluntary National Review of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. During the forum, the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals took place. Uruguay is proud to share and discuss creative techniques that will further sustainability around the globe. The opportunity to discuss the roadmap to sustainability and the progress that has been made is essential for development to take place. **Uruguay strongly encourages** an active dialogue within the OAS so that the flow of innovative ideas can propagate throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Seeing the value and importance of dialogue and the need for innovative idea sharing, **Uruguay proposes** the creation of the Innovative Sustainability Development Summit or ISD Summit. This summit would be held in an OAS Member State quadrennially to create, discuss, and potentially fund and develop sustainability projects brought to, or created during the summit. This ISD Summit will also be used to discuss progress made in each OAS Member State to achieve the benchmarks established by the Sustainable Development Goals. Together, with the vast resources of the OAS and the spirit of cooperation, we can establish cities and communities that are built to last and withstand the changing climate, arising natural disasters, and increased population growth. In time and with continued development this summit can serve as a motivating force and inspiration to push all United Nations (UN) Member States into making sustainability a top priority.

II. Eliminating Corruption in Political Institutions

The Oriental Republic of Uruguay enjoys the reputation of being one of the least corrupt countries in Latin America. Due to a strong rule of law and transparent political institutions, Uruguay has managed to ensure that corporate interference and bribery have no place in Uruguayan governance. Seeing the high levels of corruption that has plagued certain Member States within the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations (UN), Uruguay works extensively to prevent any corporation or special interest group from becoming a dominant factor in lawmaking and legislation. Uruguay strongly believes that the state of democracy throughout the OAS must be improved so that the democratic beliefs and the integrity of the OAS remain intact. This can only begin when all Member States do their part to root out corruption in their own individual political environments.

Uruguay signed and ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in 2007 and the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption in 1998. This shows that Uruguay is committed to eliminating corruption within the OAS and globally. Major legislation within Uruguay such as the Anti-Bribery Law and the Law for the Control and Prevention of Money Laundering and Terrorism Finance establishes strict rules and regulations on gifts, monetary contributions, and personal donations that government officials can give and receive. Under these stringent laws, acceptance of a bribe is deemed a felony under the penal code. The message that there will be no tolerance for unscrupulous behavior on the part of any government official whether elected or appointed is clearly expressed through our actions. Unfortunately, some high-level officials from the executive, parliamentary, and judicial branches have been prosecuted in the past, but now serve as cautionary tales to government officials who seek to corrupt our free and transparent political institutions.

Although not a member of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Uruguay's executive branch has submitted bills to parliament, starting in 2017, to strengthen laws so that they are in compliance with the organization's norms against corruption and bribery. Uruguay is proud to be cooperating with the OECD and the UN to fight against this prevalent issue in the Americas and abroad. Uruguay strongly believes that the effort to fight against corruption must be a unified and cooperative effort that will require the actions and support of every Member State of the OAS and relevant international organizations. Member States must be willing to fight for their own political institutions' reputation and integrity in order to work with the rest of the OAS in rooting out corruption altogether.

Corruption has long plagued Member States along the Western Hemisphere for many years. We sympathize with citizens in Member States across the OAS who actively call out and protest for the end of corruption and bribery in their political institutions because of the harm that corruption causes ordinary people across the Americas. Many citizens face retaliation for reporting or speaking out against any instance of corruption that they witness or unearth in their political environments. This simply should not be the case for those citizens attempting to hold their government officials accountable for their unprincipled actions. Uruguay stands with those citizens in the hopes that stable democracy and law-abiding political institutions can be restored to those OAS Member States who struggle to keep honest and upstanding government structures.

Given the retaliatory nature of Member States that punish citizens for exposing corruption and bribery within their very own political institutions, **Uruguay strongly implores** the creation of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection of Whistleblowers. This convention would guarantee the protection of those who inform on a person or organization engaged in any illicit or unscrupulous activity within their political institutions and environment. The convention will also convey that Member States are absolutely prohibited from retaliating or enforcing any punitive actions against the reporter of such activities until a thorough investigation is conducted to deny or refute a reporter's claim. Uruguay stands firm in the opinion that if citizens feel that they are shielded from retaliation from the Member State in which they reside, more citizens will be courageous enough to report these instances as they happen. Lastly, the convention will detail an OAS approved rules of procedure in handling claims made by "whistleblowers" who do come forward. Uruguay welcomes input from its fellow OAS members and looks forward to a rigorous discussion in this endeavor.