
Second National Seminar on the Friendly Settlement Mechanism in Paraguay

The Second National Seminar on the Friendly Settlement Mechanism was held in Asunción, Paraguay, on June 6, 2014, in the framework of the forty-fourth regular session of the OAS General Assembly.

The event was attended by representative of Paraguayan state agencies, including representatives from the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of National Defense, Ministry for Women, National Secretariat for Youth, Civil Service Secretariat, Development Secretariat for Repatriated Fellow Nationals and Refugees, Secretariat for Social Action (SAS), National Emergency Secretariat, National Secretariat of Culture, Supreme Court of Justice, Office of the Prosecutor General, Ombudsman's Office, Supreme Court of Military Justice, National Secretariat for the Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities (SENADIS), National Secretariat for Housing and Habitat (SENAVITAT).

The list of civil society organizations invited to the seminar included CEJIL (Center for Justice and International Law), SERPAJ (Servicio, Paz y Justicia), AFAVISEM (Asociación de Familiares y Víctimas del Servicio Militar), Tierra Viva a los Pueblos indígenas del Chaco, Coordinadora Por Los Derechos De La Infancia Y La Adolescencia (CDIA), La Fundacion Tekojoja, Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa, Comité de Iglesias para Ayudas de Emergencias, Central sindical de trabajadores (CESITEP), Coordinadora de Derechos Humanos del Paraguay CODEHUPY, Aireana – Grupo por los derechos de las lesbianas, Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights – Paraguay (CLADEM Py), Coordinadora Nacional por la Promoción de los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad (CONAPRODIS), Instituto de Estudios Comparados en Ciencias Penales y Sociales, Sindicato de Periodistas del Paraguay (SPP), Coordinadora Nacional de Organizaciones de Mujeres Trabajadoras Rurales, Campesinas e Indígenas (CONAMURI), and Red Contra Toda Forma de Discriminación.

There were a number of special guests at the seminar, including Ambassador Jorge Hevia, Permanent Observer of Spain to the OAS; Patrick Zahnd, Legal Adviser to the International Committee of the Red Cross ; and Liliana Valiña, Adviser to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Paraguay.

The event began with a presentation delivered by Emilio Álvarez Icaza, Executive Secretary of the IACHR, on general aspects of the friendly settlement procedure, the evolution of the mechanism, and the Commission's role as facilitator. He also presented the report "Impact of the Friendly Settlement Procedure."

The program included a presentation on best practices in the area of friendly settlements in Argentina and Mexico, and a panel discussion on the "Perspective of the Paraguayan State" with the participation of the Directors for Human Rights of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Supreme Court Justice, and the

Ministry of Justice and Human Rights. That was followed by a presentation on the "Perspective of Paraguayan Civil Society" in which representatives of CEJIL, Tierra Viva, and SERPAJ took part. Finally, there was an open discussion on identifying challenges for the friendly settlement mechanism, lessons learned, best practices, and suggestions by participants, which yielded a rich exchange among the representatives of state agencies, civil society, victims, and victims' representatives.