

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASE

AI Index: IOR 30/001/2004 (Public)
News Service Number: 289
12 January 2004

Embargoed until 12 January 2004 06:00 GMT

Special Summit of the Americas: the region needs concrete action.

The rhetoric of Development, Growth and Governance must result in concrete action for the region, said Amnesty International on the occasion of the Special Summit of the Americas, to be held in Mexico on 12 and 13 January next.

The Organization of American States has adopted numerous resolutions encouraging respect for and promotion of fundamental rights, and there are important regional and international Treaties and Conventions that require states to respect human rights.

"Advances in the legislative sphere have been crucial in recent years. Nonetheless, it is essential that this Summit should move beyond mere statements of desires and ideas to their rapid and concrete implementation," emphasised Amnesty International.

The organization considers it essential that the heads of state support the role of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, agreeing to provide these protection bodies with significant, regular and increasing financial resources, along with objective, impartial and effective mechanisms with which to guarantee the strict fulfilment of their recommendations and decisions.

The democratic and inclusive participation of civil society must also be institutionalised within the Americas Summit process and, particularly, within the Summit Implementation Review Group. This must be effective participation that avoids arbitrary favouritism, for it is a question of promoting an active presence and contribution that go beyond the purely formal and bureaucratic.

In recent years, the region has witnessed the continual and systematic abuse of its people's fundamental rights.

From increased poverty to generalised corruption within the justice system, from systematic abuses of human rights activists to governments' failures to respond to their people's demands, it seems clear that the authorities are doing little to face up to the new challenges responsibly.

"The overwhelming problems of the region can wait no longer, it is time the heads of state in the Americas began to put concrete measures in place to protect their citizens," concluded Amnesty International.

General Information

The summit, which brings together Presidents and Prime Ministers from the 34 active Member States of the Organization of American States (OAS), will take place in Monterrey, Mexico on 12 and 13 January.

One of its main objectives is to seek agreement on a political agenda that will serve as a basis for the governments of the Americas region.

Amnesty International participates in the Summit as an observer and as part of the "International Coalition of Human Rights Organizations for the Americas".

For more information, please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5562
Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW. web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

For latest human rights news view <http://news.amnesty.org>