



PUBLIC STATEMENT

46TH ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES GENERAL ASSEMBLY PREVENTS ACCESS TO CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS

Last night, via e-mail, the Organization of American States informed that "due to space limitations at the venue of the General Assembly, civil society organizations will not be able to access the premises of the OAS General Assembly." The e-mail invites registered participants to follow the plenary sessions of state representative on television screens located in a hotel in the Dominican capital.

This exclusion of civil society shows an unprecedented lack of respect. In practice, it leaves over a hundred people who travelled to Santo Domingo to witness and participate in the plenary sessions in front of screens.

One of the OAS pillars is civil society participation in decision-making. In this period of sessions, another resolution to strengthen active civil society participation in OAS activities will likely be passed. In light of these factors, this decision to limit access to the plenary meetings is deeply worrying and contrary to the principles of transparency and democracy that guide the organization.

As members of civil society, we express deep concern at this affront, and demand that the OAS permit full civil society access and participation. These were the conditions under which we travelled to the country, fully expecting to be active participants in this important event, as we have been in the previous decades. We demand that the Dominican government honours its commitment as the host country, and that along with the rest of the governments of the region it makes the necessary arrangements to guarantee that the General Assembly continues to be an open and transparent event.