

CP/RES. 926 (1625/08)

INSTALLATION IN PANAMA OF THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT FOR THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM OF ACTION FOR THE DECADE OF THE
AMERICAS FOR THE RIGHTS AND DIGNITY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
(2006-2016)

(Adopted at the meeting held on January 23, 2008)

THE PERMANENT COUNCIL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES,

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that in the Plan of Action of the Fourth Summit of the Americas (Mar del Plata, Argentina, November 5, 2005) the Heads of State and Government instructed the Organization of American States to “consider at the next OAS period of regular sessions of the General Assembly to be held in the Dominican Republic, a Declaration on the Decade of the Americas for Persons with Disabilities (2006-2016), together with a program of action”;

CONSIDERING resolution AG/RES. 2339 (XXXVII-O/07), “Program of Action for the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities (2006-2016),” adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh regular session, held in Panama City, Republic of Panama, which established said Program of Action and instructed the Permanent Council to instruct the Permanent Council to present, through the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP) in consultation with the Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs (CAAP), a proposal defining the structure, legal nature, and funding of the Technical Secretariat, which would function with voluntary contributions, as well as substantive follow-up of the Program, for approval by the Permanent Council during the last quarter of 2007;

EMPHASIZING that the Program of Action assigns the coordination of its execution to a technical secretariat, the purpose of which will be to provide support to member states, persons with disabilities and their organizations, and OAS bodies, in order to follow up on the commitments set forth therein and to plan activities for the achievement of its objectives and specific actions;

EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR the offer by the Government of the Republic of Panama to install the headquarters and to provide seed money and an economic contribution to sustain the operations of the Technical Secretariat through its second year, in addition to donations in-kind for as long as the Technical Secretariat is functioning in Panama;

HAVING SEEN the report presented by the coordinator of the Informal Working Group to Study the Proposal for the Installation in Panama of the Technical Secretariat for the Implementation of the Program of Action for the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities (2006-2016), subsequently adopted by the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs in consultation with the Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs, which defines the structure, legal nature, and funding of the Technical Secretariat (CP/CAJP-2538/07 rev. 3); and

CONVINCED that the successful application and implementation of the Program of Action for the Decade requires that the member states honor their commitments and that multilateral cooperation bodies and civil society lend their decisive support,

RESOLVES:

1. To install in Panama City, Republic of Panama, the Technical Secretariat to follow up on and coordinate the implementation of the Program of Action for the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities (2006-2016), as well as to plan activities for the achievement of its objectives and specific actions, within and among the member states of the Organization of American States (OAS).

2. For the purposes defined in the previous paragraph, to adopt document CP/CAJP-2538/07 rev. 3, "Installation in Panama of the Technical Secretariat for the Implementation of the Program of Action for the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities (2006-2016)," which is appended to this resolution and which defines the structure, legal nature, and funding of the Technical Secretariat.

3. To request the Secretary General to take the necessary administrative measures as soon as possible to initiate the operations of said Technical Secretariat, in Panama City, Republic of Panama.

4. To establish the Specific Fund for Voluntary Contributions for the purpose of supporting the functioning of the Technical Secretariat. The Specific Fund shall consist of voluntary contributions from the Organization's member states and permanent observers, as well as from persons or entities, whether public or private, national or international, wishing to finance achievement of the stated objective, in accordance with the OAS Charter and the General Standards to Govern the Operations of the General Secretariat. The continued functioning of the Technical Secretariat will be subject to the availability of resources at the end of the first two years of its effective functioning.

5. To express its appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Panama for its decisive and effective support for the Program of Action, in particular through the establishment of the Technical Secretariat in that country.

6. To request the Secretary General to present to the Permanent Council, at the end of the Technical Secretariat's first year of effective operations, a report on its operations, its executed budget, and budgets adjusted and evaluated with a view to the future, as well as firm commitments regarding the Technical Secretariat's functioning in subsequent years.

APPENDIX

INSTALLATION IN PANAMA OF THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT FOR THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM OF ACTION FOR THE DECADE OF THE
AMERICAS FOR THE RIGHTS AND DIGNITY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
(2006–2016)^{1/}

(Adopted through resolution CP/RES. 926 (1625/08) at the meeting of January 23, 2008)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This document contains a proposal and rationale for the establishment of the Technical Secretariat for the Implementation of the Program of Action for the Decade (SETEDIS). It seeks to translate into specific and scheduled lines of action the fundamental principles set down in the Declaration on the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, 2006-2016 [(AG/DEC. 50 (XXXVI-O/06)], adopted in 2006 at the thirty-sixth regular session of the OAS General Assembly, held in the Dominican Republic, to address the specific objectives of the Decade, details of which are given in the Program of Action for the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, 2006–2016 [(AG/RES. 2339 (XXXVII-O/07)], adopted at the thirty-seventh regular session of the OAS General Assembly, held in Panama in June 2007.
- 1.2. The general framework for this document is found in the Declaration on the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities (2006-2016), with the theme “Equality, Dignity, and Participation,” the general objective of which is: “the recognition and full exercise of the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities and their right to participate fully in economic, social, cultural, and political life and in the development of their societies, without discrimination and on an equal basis with others” [(AG/DEC. 50 (XXXVI-O/06)].
- 1.3. The Technical Secretariat was established in resolution AG/RES. 2339 (XXXVII-O/07), “Program of Action for the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities (2006–2016),” in which the General Assembly resolved to assign the coordination of implementation of the Program of Action for the Decade to a technical secretariat entrusted with following up on the Program and Action and planning activities in pursuit of its aims and specific measures. In operative paragraph two, it further resolved to instruct the Permanent Council to present, through the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP) in consultation with the Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs (CAAP), a proposal defining the structure, legal nature, and funding of the Technical Secretariat, which would function with voluntary contributions, as well as substantive follow-up of the Program, for approval by the Permanent Council during the last quarter of 2007.

1. This document has been classified as CP/CAJP-2538/07 rev. 3.

- 1.4. Based on the foregoing, the purpose of this document is to serve as a tool for the General Secretariat to use to install the Technical Secretariat. It elaborates upon the four elements identified in that resolution, namely: the structure, legal nature, and funding of the Technical Secretariat, and substantive follow-up of the Program of Action.
- 1.5. For successful implementation of the Program of Action for the Decade, in addition to financing consistent with the mission of the Technical Secretariat and the number of activities assigned to it, the following are needed:
 - 1.5.1. Assumption, by governments and member state bodies, of the political commitment to implement the Program of Action for the Decade, and their implementation of the actions necessary for the application of said program within their legal, administrative, and political systems for this population.
 - 1.5.2. Support from multilateral cooperation agencies (regional and international) and from civil society.

2. OBJECTIVES

2.1 Objectives of the Program of Action for the Decade

- 2.1.1. Social awareness: To raise public awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities and their families.
- 2.1.2. Health: To expand, improve, and ensure access to health services and to promote research in the areas of prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.
- 2.1.3. Education: To ensure and guarantee access to inclusive and quality education.
- 2.1.4. Employment: To promote full, dignified, and equitable inclusion in the workforce.
- 2.1.5. Accessibility: To eliminate existing physical, architectural, communications, information, and transportation barriers.
- 2.1.6. Political participation: To ensure full and active participation and inclusion in public and political life.
- 2.1.7. Participation in cultural, artistic, sports, and recreational activities: To promote public policies to foster culture, sports, leisure, and tourism.
- 2.1.8. Welfare and social assistance: To ensure persons with disabilities access to welfare and social security programs and to guarantee social assistance measures for their families.
- 2.1.9. International cooperation: To promote international cooperation in support of national, private sector, and civil society organizations' programs.

2.2 Objectives of the Technical Secretariat:

- 2.2.1. To create a space for the exchange of actions and information among member states to facilitate the implementation of the Program of Action for the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities and their Families (states, civil society, universities, and multilateral organizations).
- 2.2.2. To promote the mainstreaming of the Decade objectives throughout the inter-American system.
- 2.2.3. To promote participation by civil society and persons with disabilities and their families in implementing the Program of Action.
- 2.2.4. To promote research at all levels to contribute to the fulfillment of the objectives of the Program of Action.
- 2.2.5. To promote cooperation with the Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities provided for in the Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities.

3. HEADQUARTERS

The headquarters of the Technical Secretariat will be located in Panama City, Republic of Panama.

4. LEGAL NATURE

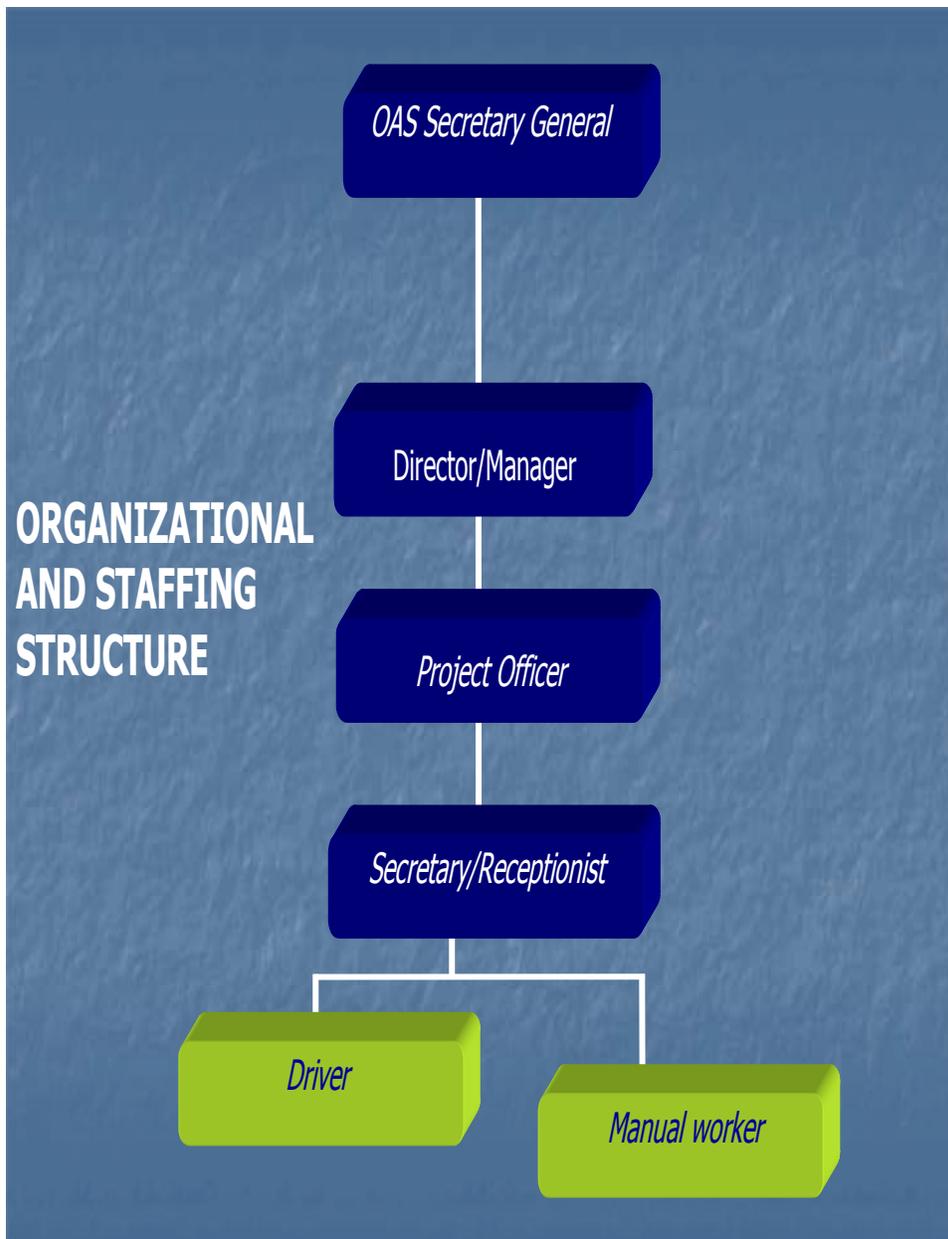
The office shall be established as a unit of the OAS General Secretariat to follow up on the Program of Action, pursuant to the terms stipulated in resolution AG/RES. 2339 (XXXVII-O/07).

5. STRUCTURE

- 5.1 Initially the Technical Secretariat, charged with following up on the Program of Action for the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities (2006–2016), should be comprised of basic personnel whose primary objective would be to provide support to member states, persons with disabilities, their families, their organizations, and OAS bodies in following up on the commitments contained in the PROGRAM OF ACTION FOR THE DECADE OF THE AMERICAS FOR THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (2006-2016) and in planning activities for the fulfillment of its objectives and specific measures.
- 5.2 Each member state will decide how it will implement the Program of Action, but will be able to obtain support from the office for a free-flowing information exchange among the member states and civil society organizations. Such an exchange should in turn optimize and streamline the use of resources and the operational capacity of the Plan.

- 5.3 The Technical Secretariat will be authorized to formulate, recommend, and coordinate projects of priority interest to member states. The outcomes of projects generated by this office will be available to all interested parties, including government offices, international organizations, civil society organizations, and universities.
- 5.4 As part of the OAS General Secretariat, the office should observe its staff hiring and benefit policies.
- 5.5 When it deems appropriate, the OAS General Secretariat may also appoint an Advisor/Counselor. Such appointment shall be made ad honorem and in accordance with the policies followed in such cases within the OAS.

5.6 Profiles and functions of Secretariat Staff, Organization Chart



5.6.1. Staff member profiles

5.6.1.1. Office director

Minimum requirements: A university degree. At least 11 years' professional experience, or a Master's degree plus seven years' professional experience and broad knowledge of the topic of disability. Command of English and Spanish. Organizational and public

administration experience. Experience in project formulation and promotion. Willingness to travel and work long hours.

5.6.1.2. Project officer

Minimum requirements: University degree. Management experience with specialization in project formulation. At least four years' professional experience, or a Master's degree plus two years' experience. Command of English and Spanish. Knowledge and experience of social development and disability will be considered an advantage. Basic accounting. Willingness to travel.

5.6.2 Responsibilities of the posts

5.6.2.1. The office director answers directly to the OAS Secretary General.

5.6.2.2. The project officer answers directly to the office director.

5.6.3. Description of posts

5.6.3.1. Salaries. The Director of the office and the Project Officer of the Technical Secretariat hired by the General Secretariat shall enjoy the same benefits, privileges, and immunities as other staff in this area. Any other personnel shall be hired through performance contracts, in accordance with the internal rules of the OAS. The final determination of benefits shall be made by the General Secretariat's Department of Human Resources on a case-by-case basis. Candidates shall receive an offer of employment. If they accept the offer they must sign a contract spelling out the benefits due in each case. Any emoluments, benefits, other entitlements, and allowances for all personnel working for this Technical Secretariat shall be financed by the Specific Fund, at no cost to the Regular Fund.

5.6.3.2. General Program Director/Manager (P-4 on the OAS scale; annual salary: \$119,124.00; monthly salary: \$9,927.00)

5.6.3.2.1. Is head of the office and has responsibility for facilitating the fulfillment of the Decade objectives and programs within the proposed timeframe.

5.6.3.2.2. Serves as liaison between the OAS, member states, persons with disabilities and their families, and organized civil society.

5.6.3.2.3. Serves as the Technical Secretariat's legal representative for follow up on the Program of Action for the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities.

5.6.3.2.4. By means of visits, participation in forums, and publications, coordinates fulfillment of the objectives set out in the Program of Action.

- 5.6.3.2.5. Is in charge of the staff of the Technical Secretariat and works in collaboration with member state officials, the OAS, persons with disabilities and their families, and organized civil society.
- 5.6.3.2.6. Supports member states, persons with disabilities and their families, and organized civil society in preparing regional and hemispheric plans and programs to improve the quality of life and access to welfare, from a human rights perspective.
- 5.6.3.2.7. Supports member states in disseminating the rights of persons with disabilities and their families in programs for the elimination of stereotypes and discriminatory and stigmatizing patterns of conduct towards persons with disabilities.
- 5.6.3.2.8. Promotes and provides support for programs for the incorporation of persons with disabilities in levels of decision-making and public policy formulation and adoption, and in electoral and political participation.
- 5.6.3.2.9. Presents the annual operations budget to the OAS Secretariat.
- 5.6.3.2.10. Manages resources for office operations and project execution.
- 5.6.3.2.11. Has responsibility for presenting reports on achievements and actions.
- 5.6.3.2.12. Promotes participation by persons with disabilities and their families and organizations in connection with the fulfillment of the Program of Action.
- 5.6.3.2.13. Promotes cooperation and the exchange of experiences and information among member states for resource optimization.
- 5.6.3.2.14. Coordinates the organization of courses, seminars, virtual conferences, workshops, and other types of training on disability.
- 5.6.3.2.15. Promotes and generates publications and other instruments to disseminate information on disability.
- 5.6.3.2.16. Performs the other functions required to accomplish the objectives of the Program of Action and the Technical Secretariat.
- 5.6.3.3. Project officer: Grade P-2 on the OAS scale (annual salary \$86,676.00; monthly salary \$7,223.00)
 - 5.6.3.3.1. Has responsibility for the formulation of all Office projects for presentation to the Technical Secretariat's Director/General Manager for his/her consideration.
 - 5.6.3.3.2. Maintains correspondence for purposes of bringing data current and exchanging projects among member states.
 - 5.6.3.3.3. Keeps a record of projects and coordinates the center for information and dissemination of instruments that help to

improve the situation of persons with disabilities in the region.

- 5.6.3.3.4. Keeps the office's accounts.
- 5.6.3.3.5. Prepares and submits project execution reports to the Director.
- 5.6.3.3.6. Prepares the office's financial reports.
- 5.6.3.3.7. Presents the draft operations budget to the Director/Manager for his or her consideration.
- 5.6.3.3.8. Replaces the Director/Manager in his or her absence for travel or vacation or when temporarily absent for other reasons.

6. FUNDING

Pursuant to resolution AG/RES. 2339 (XXXVII-O/07), the Technical Secretariat will function with voluntary contributions, to which end a voluntary specific fund will be established. Therefore, no funds from the OAS Regular Fund will be used.

6.1. Panama's Economic Contribution

Panama's economic contribution will consist of the following:

- 6.1.1. A contribution of three hundred thousand dollars (US\$ 300,000.00) in seed money for the first year, which can be used immediately to begin the work of the Technical Secretariat.
- 6.1.2. An economic contribution of three hundred thousand dollars (US\$ 300,000.00) that will financially sustain the operations of the Technical Secretariat in the second year.
- 6.1.3. Collaborating with the Technical Secretariat to negotiate with the member states and permanent observer states of the Organization and other member states of the United Nations, as well as individuals or public or private institutions, whether national or international, to raise the funds needed for the third year and for the remainder of the period for which the Technical Secretariat has been created, all in accordance with Article 74 of the General Standards to Govern the Operations of the General Secretariat.
- 6.1.4. Panama will house the headquarters of the Technical Secretariat in the development called "Casa de la Diversidad," which will be home to a number of disability-related programs, all housed in the same building. Panama will pay for the power, water, telephone and internet services, office furniture and supplies, and the other operating expenses itemized in the table titled "annual operations budget" 6.3 (with the exception of ground transportation, travel abroad, per diem in connection with travel abroad, and meals), and the staffing costs of a secretary/receptionist, a driver and a manual worker. These costs will be regarded as a donation in kind, for as long as the Technical Secretariat is functioning in Panama. It is important to observe that the fact that the Technical Secretariat is physically located within the "Casa de la

Diversidad” will not affect its structure or legal status as a unit of the OAS General Secretariat. The Technical Secretariat will be autonomous and independent from the other programs housed in the building.

- 6.2. Item for indirect cost recovery based on the contribution amounts received and in keeping with the financial rules in force in the General Secretariat

The budget will include an item for indirect cost recovery which, under the financial and budgetary rules in force in the General Secretariat, will amount to 11% of the funds that the General Secretariat receives and will be for administration. Since Panama’s contribution to the fund will be US\$ 300,000 per year for the first two years, at the 11% rate the indirect cost recovery would amount to US\$ 33,000.00 per annum.

**Funding Budget
(USD)**

Funding	Year 1		Year 2		Total
	Panama – in cash	Panama – in kind	Panama – in cash	Panama – in kind	
<u>Expenses</u>					
Leasing office space		9,000		9,000	18,000
Office furniture		4,450			4,450
Computer equipment		1,800			1,800
Reception area furniture		1,025			1,025
Air conditioners		3,000			3,000
Office materials and supplies		3,000		3,000	6,000
Paper and cardboard products		4,000		4,000	8,000
Ground transportation	15,000				15,000
Travel abroad	22,250		22,250		44,500
Per diem (travel abroad)	22,250		22,250		44,500
Meals	1,500		1,500		3,000
Communications equipment		2,310			2,310
Internet service		1,080		1,080	2,160
Web page maintenance		250		250	500
Clearing and clearing materials		1,200		1,200	2,400
Fuel		3,000		3,000	6,000
Lubricants		250		250	500
Spare parts				1,000	1,000
Other expenses		5,000		5,000	10,000
Printing and binding		4,000		4,000	8,000
Translation of materials		2,000		2,000	4,000
Advertising		15,000		15,000	30,000
Other maintenance and repairs				2,000	2,000
Utility costs		10,240		10,240	20,480
Salaries					-
Director/Administrator – P-4 *	119,124		126,271		245,395
Program Administrator - P02*	86,676		91,877		178,553
Other salaries – Secretary/ receptionist/driver/manual worker **					
Recovery of indirect costs	33,000		33,000		66,000
TOTAL USD	299,800	70,605	297,148	61,020	728,573

* This includes a 6% annual cost-of-living increase, pay change and other factors.

** These costs have not been quantified.

6.3 Operations Budget

The office will have a secretary/receptionist, a driver and a manual worker hired in Panama as local staff, and their salaries will be paid by the country for the period in which the Republic of Panama finances Office operations.

Interim evaluations will be done to study the changes in the budget; budgets for subsequent years will be reassessed and fine-tuned based on the actual expenses in the first year of operations. Firm funding commitments will also be assessed once the Technical Secretariat is functioning, so that operations in the years that follow can be evaluated.

Continued functioning of the Technical Secretariat will depend on the funds available at the end of its first two years of operations.

7. SUBSEQUENT FOLLOW UP OF THE PROGRAM

7.1 Lines of Action

In implementing this plan, the Technical Secretariat's main lines of action are targeted at the areas of awareness, research and information, community development, and the promotion of pilot subregional projects.

Panama will collaborate with the Technical Secretariat in soliciting the member states and permanent observer states of the Organization and other member states of the United Nations, as well as individuals or public or private institutions, whether national or international, to raise the funds needed to conduct projects that are the responsibility of the Technical Secretariat, all in keeping with Article 74 of the General Standards to Govern the Operations of the General Secretariat.

7.1.1. Awareness: The Secretariat will work to promote, in all sectors of society, political awareness of the dignity of persons with disabilities and their families, and rights to full participation in the economic, social, cultural, and political life of the country on an equal basis with all other people. Work will also be done with persons with disabilities, their families, and organizations to raise awareness of their rights and opportunities.

7.1.1.1. Specific activities to be carried out under this line of action include: training programs (courses, seminars, virtual conferences, workshops, etc.); publications and distribution of informational material; public awareness campaigns (television announcements, printed materials, web pages, etc.); work with social community support networks (to promote the creation of social networks and support groups, the holding of meetings, and promotion of coordination, among others); efforts to support different national programs for the prevention of discrimination-based exclusion, and other types of programs; as well as promotion of the inclusion of disability as a thematic area in national health, education, employment, and communication plans of member states.

- 7.1.1.2. Activities carried out under this line of action directly address Technical Secretariat objectives 2 and 3, which are: to promote mainstreaming of the Decade objectives throughout the inter-American system and participation by civil society and persons with disabilities and their families in implementing the Program of Action. This line of action also directly addresses the fulfillment of objectives 1 and 6 of the Program of Action for the Decade, which refer specifically to raising public awareness and ensuring full and active participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in public life and politics. However, all awareness activities have indirect impact on the other Program of Action objectives.
- 7.1.2. Research and information: The Secretariat will promote efforts in the area of research and information on disability in the American Hemisphere in all its aspects: societal, legal, work-related, etc. This line of action also includes processing of the data arising from research, its systematization, and processing the resulting information compiled, so that the Technical Secretariat becomes a specialized agency on the subject of disability in the Hemisphere.
 - 7.1.2.1. Research as a line of action will be reflected in activities such as the formulation of research projects on specific issues related to persons with disabilities (quality of life of persons with disabilities and their families; levels of schooling, quality and results, among others). It also includes statistical data processing and updating activities; systematization of information; classification of existing disparities in the Hemisphere; compilation of disability-related instruments that have been adopted at the international level; creation of an information center; project records; creation of a national synergy through information exchange, promotion of communication and exchange of experiences among different societal actors, international organizations, and organizations for persons with disabilities; preparation of reports containing research findings and monitoring of the progress made in implementing the Program of Action, etc.
 - 7.1.2.2. The activities included under this line of action address Technical Secretariat objectives 1 and 4 regarding the creation of a space for exchange of actions and information to facilitate the implementation of the Program of Action, and promotion of research at all levels to contribute to the fulfillment of the Program of Action objectives. They also have indirect impact on all objectives of the Program of Action for the Decade, especially through the exchange of information among the states and other actors (organizations of persons with disabilities, civil society, etc.).
- 7.1.3. Community development: The Technical Secretariat, in its capacity as coordinator of the Program of Action for the Decade, will work to achieve genuine community development to benefit persons with disabilities and their families. This line of

action will be implemented both by seeking and promoting international cooperation to support national and/or private programs and by supporting specific regional programs to combat poverty and its characteristics of exclusion and vulnerability.

7.1.3.1. Activities under this line of action include promotion of the exchange of information on anti-poverty projects for groups of persons with disabilities and their families, and the promotion of development programs and projects for this population and its family and social environments (eradication of illiteracy among persons with disabilities, promotion of workforce inclusion, implementation of inclusive education, and support for the families of low-income persons with disabilities, among others).

7.1.3.2. Activities included under this line of action address Technical Secretariat objective 3, to promote participation by civil society and persons with disabilities and their families in implementing the Program of Action. With regard to the Program of Action objectives, by seeking and identifying sources of cooperation and promoting specific projects, this line of action generally supports the fulfillment of all Program objectives.

7.1.4. Development of subregional projects: This will be carried out in order to benefit from the different platforms and existing political, economic, and social forces in the region arising from subregional integration processes and systems to promote the appropriation of the objectives of the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities and the implementation and advancement of the Program of Action.

7.1.4.1. This line of action includes projects to promote the creation of more inclusive models that encourage citizen participation by persons with disabilities and their families, among others. Projects included in this line of action address Technical Secretariat objectives 2, 3, and 4, which are to promote the mainstreaming of the Decade objectives throughout the inter-American system, promote participation by civil society and persons with disabilities in implementing the Program of Action, and to promote research at all levels to contribute to the fulfillment of the proposed objectives. With regard to the Program of Action, this line indirectly contributes to the fulfillment of all objectives, since it promotes actions focused on improving society's legal, political/administrative, and social structures to benefit persons with disabilities and their families.

7.1.4.2. As soon as the Technical Secretariat has been opened, negotiations should begin for projects to promote inclusive education in the regular educational system and for citizen participation in the community by persons with disabilities and their families. It should be noted that the

execution of such projects should be in the hands of member states and civil society organizations.

7.2. Plan of Action of the Office

7.2.1. Awareness actions

7.2.1.1. Training activities (courses, seminars, virtual conferences, workshops, etc.)

- Providing advice to member states on the fulfillment of the Program of Action for the Decade.
- Providing guidance to member states on training professionals working with persons with disabilities by organizing seminars and workshops, etc.
- Promoting, in technical and higher education, curriculum changes pertaining to the human rights and full citizenship of persons with disabilities and their families.
- Providing support for and promoting -through networks and organizations of persons with disabilities and other societal organizations active in the area of disability and social inclusion- awareness programs on persons with disabilities and their families, especially regarding the scope of national legislation and international conventions protecting their rights.
- Promoting and providing support, with organizations of persons with disabilities, for training on the subject of leadership for the movement of associations of persons with disabilities and their families.

7.2.1.2. Publication and informational material distribution activities

- Publishing the annual report of the Secretariat.
- Periodically publishing an informational bulletin containing issues and articles on disability, actions carried out, achievements, etc.
- Electronic distribution of the informational bulletin to organizations of persons with disabilities, civil society coordinators, community support networks, national NGOs, international organizations present in the American Hemisphere, government agencies of the different member states and other interested persons.

7.2.1.3. Regional public awareness campaigns and strategies

- Promoting and organizing, region-wide, the design and launch of an informational campaign on the Decade of the Americas, the objectives, content and commitments of the Program of Action, and the existence and operation of the Technical Secretariat.
- Promoting public awareness campaigns, at the level of the different member states, on the rights and duties of persons with disabilities.
- Promoting the elimination of architectural, social, and communications barriers in public use areas through regional awareness strategies.

7.2.1.4. Community or volunteer support groups or social networks

- Promoting the creation of social networks or community or volunteer support groups to encourage recognition and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities and their full and effective participation in society.
- Promoting the formation of civil society organizations that include participation by persons with disabilities and that promote and foster their dignity and rights.
- Promoting the holding of meetings and forums of civil society groups and government representatives on the subject of disability, challenges, and action plans.
- Promoting coordination among the different associations and organizations of persons with disabilities to strengthen their participation in the debate on and application of public policies and to consolidate the defense of their rights.

7.2.1.5. Support for different national programs

- Supporting and promoting the inclusion of the thematic area of disability in national health, education, employment, and communication plans of member states.
- Encouraging member states to strengthen, both institutionally and administratively, government agencies and/or mechanisms for the promotion and protection of the dignity and rights of persons with disabilities.
- Encouraging member states' national campaigns to strengthen inclusion and citizen participation.

7.2.2. Research actions

7.2.2.1. Research tasks

- Promoting research to study the prevalence and classification of disability throughout the Hemisphere.
- Promoting research on access to services.
- Promoting review and modernization of member states' public policies.
- Promoting a review of legislation in force in each country to include the subject of disability with a human rights and a citizen participation-based approach.

7.2.2.2. Informational tasks

- Compiling instruments on disability that have been adopted at the international level.
- Creating an information center on the subject of disability.
- Creating the Technical Secretariat's web page to provide electronic access to all the center's information and accessible to the visually impaired.
- Creating a database on organizations, associations, schools, and institutions and others active in the area of disability and/or with persons with disabilities in the region, and on different governmental bodies and international organizations with competence and interest in this area, to be made available via the Secretariat's web page and containing direct links thereto.
- At least twice each year, promoting regional meetings for effective information exchange.
- Serving as a coordination and contact point for information and documentation exchange among representatives of member states, OAS bodies, and other organizations and institutions.
- Preparing a timetable for monitoring the progress made by the member states in implementing the Program of Action for the Decade.

7.2.2.3. Support for different national programs

- Providing support to member states in technological, scientific, and epidemiological exchange to incorporate successful and discard unsuccessful experiences, with the aim of making genuine progress with plans and programs for the population with disabilities and their families.
- Providing support to member states in promoting and exchanging information on anti-poverty projects for groups of persons with disabilities and their families.

7.2.3. Community development actions

7.2.3.1. Community development programs

- Promoting programs for citizen participation with persons with disabilities before, during, and after electoral processes.
- Promoting, with member states, the creation of job support programs for persons with disabilities and their families.
- Promoting the creation of microenterprises and small businesses for the self-sustainability of persons with disabilities and their families.

7.2.4. International cooperation

- Identifying sources of international cooperation for the different programs and/or projects – public and/or private – within the framework of the Program of Action for the Decade.
- Promoting international cooperation with multilateral organizations and other sources of international cooperation as indispensable and effective instruments to provide support to organized civil society, state institutions, and other actors in the framework of the Program of Action for the Decade and to benefit persons with disabilities.
- Supporting member states, organizations of persons with disabilities and others in accessing funds to finance development programs and/or projects within the framework of the Program of Action for the Decade.

7.2.5. Actions to promote pilot subregional projects

7.2.5.1. Projects

- Developing subregional projects to promote the creation of social inclusion models for persons with disabilities and their families.
- Developing subregional projects to revise and confirm existing national legislation and add new draft laws on the subject of disability and the rights of persons with disabilities.
- Developing pilot subregional projects to promote participation by persons with disabilities at levels of decision-making and public policy formulation and adoption.