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## Op-Ed

### Haiti: Time for Haitians to Make Some Hard Choices

*Carlo Dade*

One hundred days into the administration of Haitian President René Préval and the country has witnessed scant movement on the political or economic fronts. Key challenges—some long-standing, others caused by recent stumbles—are looming and time is growing short for the new government to act.

In one sense the lack of movement in Haiti can be seen as positive—at least the downward trajectory of the past decade has stalled. On the other hand, the lack of movement is creating anxiety because of the elevated expectations among the popular elements in the Haitian society that enthusiastically elected Préval and who took to the streets when attempts were made to rig the voting results and deny him the presidency.

Of course, not everyone had high expectations for the new government. Those in the Haitian private sector and international community who supported his candidacy did so somewhat reluctantly and have been waiting to be surprised by the new president. In this case, Préval is looking a lot like Godot.

Four key challenges loom for the Haitian government and will force Préval into action in the very near future.

#### Security

Surprisingly, in this area some progress has been made as Préval has given the United Nations (UN) forces the green light to go after the gangs that had been behind a recent spike in kidnappings and shootings. However, this was a reactive gesture; the rise in gang activity was viewed as a direct threat to Préval himself and he had no choice but to allow the UN a freer hand. When he acted, he did so forcefully, going on the air to tell the gang leaders to "give up your weapons or die" (*AP*, 04/09/06). In response the UN has moved Chilean troops from Cap-Haitien and Uruguayan troops from Jeremy to Port-au-Prince and in recent weeks has taken back the airport road and sections of neighbourhoods held by the gangs.

This success will be temporary unless the government develops the capacity to incarcerate captured gang leaders. In response to the crackdown in Port-au-Prince several gangs have tried to establish a beachhead in other cities. They have been turned in to the UN forces by locals who fear the gangs. But no sooner are gang

members arrested then they are released by the Haitian courts. This is doubly dangerous as it increases the feeling of impunity on the part of the gangs and the sense of impotence of the law-abiding populace. The Haitian judiciary and penal institution are incapable of coping with the situation due to the capacity, human resource and corruption constraints that face all branches of government, and Préval has resisted consideration of any solutions. It was suggested by some in the international community, that foreign judges should be brought in to assist in a reform of the judiciary. This was vehemently criticized by the Haitian judiciary, most Haitians and by the Diaspora as a gross infringement on Haitian sovereignty. Given a choice between the loss of sovereignty implied in rampant lawlessness and impunity among gangs versus that implied by accepting further international help, Préval, in line with the popular opinion, seems to have chosen the former.

## BRAZIL

On October 1, the results of the first round of the Brazilian presidential elections announced a run-off between Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Labour Party (PT), and Geraldo Alckmin of the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB), to be held on October 29.

Observers expected a first-round victory for incumbent President Lula, but allegations of corruption against the PT a few days ahead of the vote and Lula's failure to participate in a debate on television on September 28 were sufficient to give some voters a change of heart. With 48.61% of the vote, Lula had a small lead over Alckmin who garnered 41.64%. In third place, Heloisa Helena Lima, Socialism and Freedom party (PSOL) got 6.85% of votes, followed by Cristovam Buarque, Democratic Labour Party (PDT) with 2.64%.

Voting results revealed a stark division of the country between the north and the south. Lula won a landslide in the north and northeast, Brazil's poorest areas and the main recipients of his social programs. Alckmin won in the south, southeast and centre-west, the country's richest and most industrialized regions.

On October 1 Brazilian voters also elected governors and decided on the composition of federal, state and district legislatures. Federal congressional results indicate a favourable environment for Alckmin in the event of a victory with a plurality of seats (33) for the PSDB in alliance with the Party of the Liberal Front (PFL), 11 for Lula's PT and 15 for the Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (PMDB).

## China

Despite the presence of Chinese troops in Haiti as part of the UN forces, Haiti continues to recognize Taiwan. Given the massive support provided by Taiwan for Préval's election, this situation will not change. China and Haiti appeared to have worked out a detente on this issue where Haiti would keep its relationship with Taiwan low key and China would overlook it. This came to an end when Haiti deliberately chose to provoke China at the UN. Haiti is serving a term as part of the 23-nation committee that sets the UN General Assembly agenda. In this capacity it was given a resolution, prepared by Taiwan clients Nicaragua and Gambia, calling for discussion of "the security of the Korean peninsula and the straits of Taiwan." Haiti not only presented this resolution to the agenda committee where it was rejected by a 22-1 vote, but turned around and presented the same resolution again the very next day. Beijing termed the offense "grave" and the "trade office" in Port-au-Prince demanded an explanation. The Chinese government has promised that there will be repercussions.

## Parliament

The new parliament has passed no legislation in four months and its main preoccupation appears to be what type of cars members will be given, the size of per diems and other critical matters of state. The one area where Parliament did move was potentially disastrous. There was strong support in the new body to reconstitute the Haitian army. Given that no donor funding, which accounts for over 65% of the government's budget, was available, the parliament decided to take money from the President and Prime Minister's Office. Luckily business and civil society organizations managed to convince the lawmakers that this move would have severe repercussions from the international donors and instead the body voted to approve a modest sum for a study on creating a new security force. However, the business and civil society groups behind this intervention were an ad hoc group and it is questionable if they can continue to play this role with Parliament without donor support.

## Reform of the Constitution

According to the Haitian constitution the country will have to have 11 elections in the next 5 years. The elections scheduled for this December will be postponed because so many UN troops are tied up in Port-au-Prince. There will likely be rumbling from the Haitian street over this delay and more rumbling if the future electoral schedule is reduced. However, it is clear to all that Haiti simply cannot afford 11 elections in 5 years. The next round are local and municipal elections. If newly elected officials start to mimic the actions of Parliament there will be new demands on aid and expectations from a new domestic constituency without offsetting contributions to governance.

Large aid inflows have distorted expectations on the part of the Haitian populace. Eleven elections in 5 years, or reconstituting the army, or perks for parliamentarians all seem like fine ideas if one either has the money to afford them or if one does not have to worry about paying the bills. Neither applies to Haiti. As Polonius said to Laertes in Hamlet, "costly thy habit as thy purse can bear [...]." This should be made clear by the international community, but must also be publicly and transparently supported by Préval. Fortunately for Haiti the new head of the UN Mission appears up to this task. We can only hope that as with the crackdown on the gangs, Préval can rise to the challenge and support him. ■

Carlo Dade is Deputy Director of FOCAL.

## Not So Cooperative: Venezuela's Proposed Law of International Cooperation

*Laurie Cole*

In the midst of the current Venezuelan presidential campaign and international competition for one of the rotating seats on the United Nations Security Council, limited attention has been given to a proposed law that would restructure how Venezuela distributes and receives international cooperation funds. On July 13, 2006 the Venezuelan National Assembly unanimously approved the first of two readings required to ratify the draft Law of International Cooperation. The law, presented by the Standing Committee on Foreign Policy, is intended to provide "the President of the Republic with a framework law [...] to create the administrative and financial agencies needed for execution, monitoring and evaluation of the policies, actions and activities carried out in the area of international cooperation." The 24-article framework law includes provisions that determine priorities for Venezuelan foreign aid, regulate the spending and internal disbursement of international cooperation funds. It also defines, controls and monitors the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) eligible to undertake domestic activities with international cooperation.

However, the law that pledges to support the development, prosperity and the rights of peoples around the world could also threaten the very existence

of an independent and effective Venezuelan civil society at home. As it is currently drafted, the vague language and arbitrary powers assigned to the executive have raised concerns among national and international observers. Among the main problematic elements is the requirement that NGOs re-register with a national inventory maintained by the executive, on top of the current legal and bureaucratic requirements necessary for normal NGO operations. Additionally, the law proposes the establishment of an autonomous International Cooperation and Assistance Fund that would administer all internal and external international cooperation funding. While the current draft does not clearly state the role, reach and mandate of this new body, there is concern that it could allow the government to manage all foreign donations made to domestic organizations. Together, the more stringent regulations and greater government discretionary powers vis-à-vis organizations could potentially present limits to exercise of freedom of expression and assembly—among other rights. If the bill is approved organizations will have six months to comply with the terms of the new legislation and register with the appropriate authorities.

### Unfounded Fears?

From the Venezuelan government's perspective the new law would help to protect the state against those that are using their not-for-profit status as a cover for potentially "subversive" activities at home. However, ongoing domestic polarization and the confrontational relationship between the government and many independent organizations have provoked concern that the provisions of the new law will be used to silence alternative proposals and remove existing oversight mechanisms to government actions, in the process limiting the vital functions that civil society organizations carry out in Venezuela. These fears are not completely unfounded. According to the Venezuelan chapter of Transparency International (TI) there are approximately 4,000 NGOs in Venezuela, and the majority of large organizations involved in politically sensitive work do not receive substantial national public or private funding sources, but rely on international resources to undertake their work, making them susceptible to funding cuts possible under the new legislation (*Transparency Watch*, August 2006).

What is more, the polarized domestic climate and Venezuela's adversarial relationship with the US—one of the main sources of international funding—has already made international cooperation a contentious issue. The high-profile case of Súmate is a case in point. In July 2005 Súmate's leadership was charged with treason for receiving US aid money prior to the 2004 recall referendum. Human Rights Watch included this case as but one of the tactics used by government media and public officials to discredit Venezuelan human rights organizations in 2005. Ironically, the accusations against Venezuelan civil society and potential limits on incoming international cooperation money are taking place concurrently with Venezuela's growing

reputation as a generous contributor to countries in Latin America and around the world. In the past year President Hugo Chávez has been particularly active internationally, visiting upwards of 24 countries on 5 continents, often taking advantage of his travels to announce joint initiatives, donation and aid projects in pursuit of foreign policy objectives; promoting comprehensive human development, social justice and well-being, while serving as a counterpoint to a "unipolar model." A recent unofficial report estimates foreign spending by the government at approximately to US\$50 billion over the last 18 months (*Economist*, 28/09/06).

## ANDEAN REGION

A military agreement signed last August between Venezuela and Bolivia (see news brief *FOCAL POINT*, September 2006) is becoming a matter of concern to Peru and Chile. The agreement explicitly mentions the construction of military and port infrastructure in the Bolivian border with Brazil and Paraguay, and could also entail the construction and strengthening of 20 military bases along Bolivia's other borders, including with Peru and Chile.

Chilean and Peruvian media stressed that the agreement included the increase of Bolivia's military capacity and the potential for Venezuelan intervention in disputes between Bolivia and its neighbours (*El Comercio*, 09/10/06; *La Nación*, 09/10/06).

In Peru, Foreign Relations Minister José García Belaunde expressed that the construction of a military base and a port in the border with Brazil and Paraguay did not constitute a bilateral issue between Bolivia and Peru. However, it would become a matter of concern if the construction of military bases—with support from Venezuela—along the border with Peru was contemplated. Luis González Posada, the President of the Defence Committee of the National Congress, said that with the agreement Venezuela was harming the spirit of integration, generating suspicion and affecting the possibilities for Bolivia to have access to the sea through Peru (*El Financiero*, 09/10/06).

In Chile, the government of Michelle Bachelet responded with caution, saying that while military cooperation agreements abound, and as such are not a matter of concern, it would be important that Bolivia and Venezuela be transparent about the content and reach of the agreement. Her spokesperson, Ricardo Lagos Weber, stated that such defence agreements would be in line with other arrangements in so far as they foster integration and are conducive to peace (*BBC Mundo*, 11/10/06, *La Nación*, 09/10/06). In Congress, however, legislators are expressing concern about the potential for regional instability brought by this agreement and are asking the government not to vote for Venezuela for the non-permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council.

## Next Steps

To enter into effect the National Assembly must approve the draft law a second time. The second reading was originally scheduled to take place on August 8, 2006, but has been indefinitely postponed. The reason for the postponement is not clear, but there is speculation that pressure from the international diplomatic community contributed to the delay. In addition to select diplomatic missions in Caracas voicing their misgivings, members of international community have also issued statements outlining their concerns and urging the government to retract the current bill and rework it based on consultation with Venezuelan civil society. TI has launched a letter writing campaign to the President of the National Assembly urging people to actively and publicly reject the draft bill ([www.transparency.org](http://www.transparency.org)). In a stern published statement, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights advised the Venezuelan government to adopt a law that is in keeping with international human rights standards, including the American Convention on Human Rights, to which Venezuela is a signatory.

At this time a new date for the second reading of the bill has not been announced. There is speculation that the second reading of the bill will be postponed until after the December elections, banking on a win for President Chávez. This, however, has not been confirmed. What is clear is that as currently drafted, the law could restrict the effectiveness—and very existence—of an independent and functioning civil society in Venezuela. Civil society organizations in Venezuela, as in all countries of the Americas,

play a critical role in protecting human rights, providing basic services and as an oversight mechanism for the sitting government—protections necessary in a democratic society regardless of who is governing. Any measures taken to regulate civil society must comply with international standards and protect citizens' human rights, including their right to association and free speech. ■

Laurie Cole is a Senior Analyst at FOCAL.

## Cuba: The Role of the International Community

*Joaquín Roy*

Once the noise of the Non Aligned Movement (NAM) meeting has vanished, what can different international actors, especially Latin American and European, do regarding the evolving Cuban landscape? A lot, and it needs to be executed with a high sense of responsibility and efficacy.

### Action in the Americas

Intense and constant communication with Cuba has been the trademark of a majority of the governments in the Western Hemisphere since the regime of Fidel Castro was expelled from the Organization of American States (OAS) and most of the inter-American sphere, and the early and tenacious erosion of the US embargo. With the exception of most military dictatorships, each one of the Latin American and Caribbean countries got ready to normalize their relations with Havana.

On the one hand, in the Western Hemisphere the new Mexican administration, once settled after surviving the convulsion of the challenge posed by Andrés Manuel López Obrador, will have to meet the pressure to repair the damaged relationship with Cuba following the confrontation between Castro and Vicente Fox. By combining the insistence on the human rights dimension with the need to have a stable Cuba, Felipe Calderón has to persuade the Cuban government that it needs to foster stability in the wider Caribbean region, an area that is crucial for the national security of Mexico.

On the other hand, Mexico also needs not to appear that it is designing a policy towards Cuba different from the minimum and difficult Latin American common denominator. On the contrary, Calderón will have to lead moderate centrist initiatives, far from the extremes of the unconditional alliances with Havana (Venezuela and Bolivia). At the same time he will have to sideline taking cues from the United States. In this fashion, Mexico and Brazil (with or without Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva) could form a solid block with other Latin American governments of social democratic inclinations.

The Caribbean countries will have to adapt to the possibility that Cuban might some day be a "normal" competitor in capturing tourism and investments. They will have to spark synergies benefiting from the new

Cuban attractiveness and accept that the maintenance of the Castro regime would not benefit the region.

Canada, for its part, will probably reinforce its traditional policy of cautious and respectful engagement with Cuba, without falling in the oversimplification of merely distancing itself from the United States. It is significant that the Canadian government was the first recipient, subtly and indirectly, of messages from the State Department, in search of cooperation.

### The Role of Europe

The obvious irreplaceable partner for this new "constructive engagement" is the European Union (EU), as a collective entity and through its most significant members, by virtue of their corresponding "special relationships" with Cuba. However, the lack of a clear consensus is not limited to differences between the dominant role of a country like Spain and the others that do not seem to give any special attention to Cuba.

In reality, there exists a much wider range of country attitudes, from the ones that pressure for the respect of human rights (the Nordics and the Netherlands) to the hardliners (the newcomers from the East, led by Prague). Although the role of the Czech government, joined by the Polish, may seem to be one of counterweight to the Spanish position, at the end of the discussions they do not have an impact on the general consensus. But the collective attitude would not be far from the existing Common Position established in 1996.

With respect to Spain, the moment might have arrived to evaluate objectively the standing policy of sustaining a relationship on a double level. Through a script faithfully followed since 1898, Spain has maintained a link not only with official Cuba, but also, an above all, with the real Cuba. With the exception of a brief period during the Partido Popular (PP) administration, successive Spanish governments of different political inclinations, including the regime of Francisco Franco, have left open the communication lines with the diverse Cuban political powers.

Since its membership in the European Union, the Spanish governments, including José María Aznar's PP, have taken the responsibility of leading European efforts. The government of Aznar in 1996 managed to get the critical EU Common Position approved. The same government pressured for the adoption of temporary measures that later were seen as counterproductive. The government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero led the suspension of said measures in early 2005. The current consensus shows the need for maintaining the communication lines open with the government, as the best way to be also close to the civil society.

### The Alternative to the Washington Approach

During all these years, the policy of the EU, through a fragile agreement often riddled with contradictions, has shown an obvious contrast with the Washington strategy. While the measures implemented by the US

government, by the imposition of the embargo, have been aimed at causing a drastic regime change, the European approach has been designed to facilitate a pacific transition.

Today, if the US approach has failed, the European strategy is still waiting to be graded. Only when the transition is fully consolidated will it be possible to render the verdict. Consequently, if during the months just before the crisis caused by Castro's illness there was a temptation of abandoning a policy that was rejected by the Cuban government (through disdain for development aid, resistance to conditions, and personal insults), this alternative should now be dismissed.

## COLOMBIA

On October 2, in the context of negotiations to exchange prisoners, President Álvaro Uribe opened the way to meet with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) for the first time, "if that were required to advance firmly towards achieving peace." (*El Universal*, 04/10/06). If such dialogue took place, he said, negotiations would have to have clear deadlines and objectives, to prevent insurgents from strengthening militarily during the procedures. To launch the process, the FARC would need to cease all its military activities.

Uribe also raised the possibility of calling a Constituent Assembly to allow the participation of FARC members in Congress. Constitutional changes, Uribe added, would apply equally to other groups, including the paramilitaries (*El Universal*, 06/10/06).

The FARC, for their part, showed openness to start a negotiation process, stating that they would be willing to negotiate a bilateral cessation of hostilities if—among others conditions—the Armed Forces withdrew from the Departments of Caquetá and Putumayo (current strongholds of the FARC), and if the government removed them from the list of terrorist organizations.

Uribe also gave the green light to negotiate the exchange of 60 prisoners of FARC—including former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt—and 500 rebels currently in prison. Negotiations will likely take place in Pradera y Florida with the potential participation of France, Spain and Switzerland as guarantors of the security of negotiators from both sides.

Meanwhile, on October 16 the Colombian government will restart negotiations with the National Liberation Army (ELN) in Havana.

Instead, the European policy should keep an offer on the table whereby an international alternative would complement the logical temptations of the Cuban regime for the so-called "China option." The plan of the EU to insert Cuba in the cooperation framework between the European Union and African, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP) countries is now more valid than ever. It is also a platform to supplement to move towards Mercosur. But Spain and the EU cannot depend on moves from Havana. Changes in the existing EU position should not be in the essence but in the details. Once a transition to democracy has clearly begun, offers should be converted into effective actions. ■

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### "Chronicle of a Death Foretold" The Presidential Election in Ecuador

*Pablo Andrade A.*

The upcoming general elections on October 15 are, to a large extent, reminiscent of the plot of the Gabriel García Márquez novel, in the sense that they continue a familiar script that dates back to 1996. An anti-status quo presidential candidate,

Rafael Correa (Country Alliance (AP)–Ecuadorian Socialist Party (PSE)), a Ph.D. in Economics and former Minister of the Economy under current President Alfredo Palacio, appears to be the possible winner of the first electoral round according to public opinion polls. It is also likely that whoever should emerge victorious—Correa or his closest rival, lawyer León Roldós of the Ethics and Democracy Network (RED)—the winner will not find a Congress that is favourable to his proposals.

Faced with this highly probable outcome, Correa and Roldós have offered to call a Constituent Assembly (Correa) and a plebiscite (Roldós) with the explicit purpose of reforming the Constitution. The implicit goal of these actions, should they come to pass, would be to produce a Congress more closely aligned with the political plans of the future president. The assumption underlying this strategy is that if the future president has a clear and stable majority parliament, he would be less likely to be removed from office by Congress, as occurred in 1997, 2000 and 2005.

The two candidates fall in the centre-left of the Ecuadorian political spectrum, in the sense that both have rejected the neoliberal programs in effect in Ecuador since at least 1994, if not earlier. Nevertheless, they differ not only in terms of the leaders' personalities, but also their very distinct origins. Correa, an academic, is a newcomer on the Ecuadorian political scene; most Ecuadorians first became familiar with Correa through his leadership in the public demonstrations that put an end to President Lucio Gutiérrez's government in 2005, and because of his controversial passage through the Ministry of the Economy in the early months of Alfredo Palacio's administration. León Roldós' political career is more extensive; this is an old socialist militant who, in the last six years, formed an independent movement with social democratic leanings that is participating in the current electoral race in an alliance with the Democratic Left Party (ID).

Correa also appears to have learned from the recent electoral and governmental experiences in Venezuela and Colombia, and consequently his campaign strategy aims to capitalize on and stimulate the political polarization between "anti-party" voters and those who support the "party-cracy." Judging from the rapid growth in electoral support for Correa, his strategy has been successful—in less than a month he jumped from 6% to 22% of favourable opinions, taking the lead in the race. Correa's leftist profile is strengthened by his evident friendliness and good relations with Hugo Chávez and Fidel Castro, although the influence of these Latin American leaders on his campaign have been minimal or non-existent.

Roldós, on the other hand, has bet on a more proposal-based campaign; one focused on assuring the electorate that his management of the economy will be predictable and will, through the prudent use of budgetary resources, expand the state's investment in health, education and social security for all. In his case, he bet poorly: a month of campaigning saw his support fall from 23% to 19% in voting intentions, making him drop into second place. Subsequent polls have shown a continued descent.

Rafael Correa's campaign is gaining momentum based on controversy and the simplification of voters' options between "party-cracy" and "anti-partyism".

This strategy has been systematically applied in Correa's confrontations with the candidate from the Social Christian Party (PSC, the main right-wing party) Cynthia Viteri, and also with Roldós. Correa's accusation of possible electoral fraud, which links the current Minister of Defence to the historic leader of the PSC (former President Febres Cordero), must be considered a tactical move that achieved a concrete political objective: to take away momentum from the Social Christian candidate. The goal was achieved based on two circumstantial elements: first, the Defence Minister publicly acknowledged that he had a longstanding friendship with the former President, and second, videos were aired proving acts of corruption by three Supreme Court judges with ties to the PSC. As public opinion polls conducted the week following the accusations showed that the move had worked, other trailing presidential candidates joined Correa in his claim, trusting that such an attitude would benefit them as well. The accusation has not prospered, however, and the Supreme Electoral Court appears to be poised to carry on with its tradition of relatively clean and problem-free elections.

An alternative scenario would occur. If the decline in electoral preferences for Roldós persists and he does not make it to the second round, Álvaro Noboa, one of the country's most important businessman and leader of the Institutional Renewal Party of National Action (PRIAN) could then take his place and turn the election into a confrontation between the populist left that Correa represents and a populist leader with a clear neoliberal programme.

Curiously, a central aspect of the current electoral race has been left out. None of the leading presidential candidates and only a very small number of congressional candidates come from Pachakutik, the political party representing the indigenous movement. This election would seem to be putting an end not only to the pure neoliberal political plans of the right, but also the type of left-wing plans promoted by the indigenous movement, an opposition that dominated Ecuador's political scene for 16 years. Pachakutik's current weakness stems from its brief participation in Lucio Gutiérrez' government, a participation that undermined the support provided to the indigenous movement in previous years by dissident sectors of the urban

middle class, and encouraged the internal division of the primary indigenous organization, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE). ■

Pablo Andrade A. is a Professor and Coordinator of the Master's Degree Program in Latin American Studies at the Simón Bolívar Andean University, Ecuador Main Campus.

## Upcoming Events

### CIES' Annual Seminar "*Peru: The 2006 Elections and Beyond*"

Featuring presentations by Dr. Carlos Eduardo Aramburú, CIES Executive Director and Mr. Javier Portocarrero Maisch, CIES Deputy Director with comments by Dr. Brent Herbert-Copley, IDRC.

The seminar is an annual event hosted by IDRC and represents an opportunity for CIES and its partners to share experiences and lessons learned on current and past research. It is also an occasion for CIES to strengthen and develop linkages with academic, research and development partners in Canada. The featured presentations are *Peru 2006-2011: The New Administration and Upcoming Challenges* and *The Peru 2006 Elections Project: Impact in Public Policies and Lessons Learned*.

Dr. Aramburú is a recognized anthropologist and demographer with ample experience in public policy and the NGO sector. He will present lessons learned by CIES in linking research and policy making. Mr. Portocarrero is an experienced economist and sociologist with knowledge of the state, the international donor community and the academia. He will present the main challenges facing Peru in the context of the recent presidential elections.

The IDRC, in collaboration with CIDA, the Embassy of Peru, the Peruvian Economic and Social Research Consortium (CIES) and the Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL) invite you to attend.

Date: Tuesday October 17, 2006 (9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.)

Place: 14 Floor, IDRC headquarters, 250 Albert Street, Ottawa, Ontario

### "*Canada-Argentina Relations Facing the Future*"

FOCAL and the Argentina Council on International Relations (CARI) will hold a public video-conferencing event, linking panels in Buenos Aires (Palacio San Martín, Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and Ottawa-Gatineau (at the UNAM campus). Both panels will include H.E. Argentinean Ambassador Arturo G. Bothamley and H.E. Canadian Ambassador Yves Gagnon, expert academics, moderators at each venue and open discussion with the public.

Date: Monday October 30, 2006 at 3:45 p.m. (Canada Eastern Time).

Place: UNAM Campus (55 Promenade du Portage, Gatineau, Quebec)

For more information please contact: [vtorres@focal.ca](mailto:vtorres@focal.ca).

## Upcoming Publications

**Civil Society in the Promotion and Strengthening of Democracy in the Americas: A Vision for the Future**

*Laurie Cole and Caroline Lavoie*

On March 1 and 2, 2006 in Ottawa, Canada, the Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL) held a strategic working session followed by a public conference to take stock of civil society initiatives in the Americas in light of evolving political realities and the status of multilateral efforts.

The following report provides a synthesis of the main threads of the discussion, highlighting new ideas, priorities and recommendations. The report seeks to support CSOs in their work and inform donors, governments and international institutions about how they can work collaboratively and productively with CSOs in the pursuit of common goals.

You may access FOCAL's reports, articles  
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