



# Andean-U.S. Dialogue Forum



*The Andean-U.S. Dialogue Forum aims to create an informal space where influential citizens can exchange views, ask hard questions, and learn from one another.*



## Member Countries of the Andean-U.S. Dialogue Forum

- Bolivia
- Colombia
- Ecuador
- Peru
- United States
- Venezuela

**C**hallenges to the national interests of the five Andean countries—Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela—and the United States are clear: illegal armed actors, drug producers, and criminal elements do not respect national boundaries; environmental damage spills across borders to affect neighboring countries; internal turmoil and conflict in individual countries produce displaced people and refugees; broken diplomatic relations and ideological divides restrict trade; and migration continues to be one of the most difficult issues facing all six nations. Strained relations between countries impede cooperation to achieve greater security and economic well-being for all citizens. Despite the evident need for a shared agenda between the United States and the Andean countries to address these challenges and opportunities, divergent approaches and priorities have prevented adequate cooperation to date.

## Role of the Dialogue Forum

While formal diplomatic efforts are important, The Carter Center and International IDEA are supporting an Andean-U.S. Dialogue Forum that serves as a platform for dialogue at the civil society level. Formed in January 2010, the Dialogue Forum strives to increase mutual understanding among societies and governments in the region, create collaborative initiatives around issues of mutual concern, and promote cooperation and exchange of information between individuals,

organizations, and governments in the United States and the Andean nations.

Forum members share a common concern for human welfare and the prosperity of their nations and the hemisphere. They are united by their common characteristics as individuals with direct access to high-level decision makers in their governments, experts in their fields, and people who can influence public opinion. The group includes leaders of civic organizations, social movements, academic institutions, media organizations, the military, the



**The Ecuadorian town of General Farfán sits on the border with Colombia. The Andean-U.S. Dialogue Forum promotes dialogue on key transnational issues that impact people living in vulnerable border zones.**

private sector, and parliaments, and former government officials.

## Dialogue Forum Activities

Forum activities to date have led to several important accomplishments. Groups committed to dialogue between the countries have been formed in all six nations. Mutual understanding, trust, and personal relationships among the members have been strengthened through three dialogue sessions in Atlanta, Lima, and Washington, D.C. Pairs of members from the United States have visited all the Andean countries to gain a deeper understanding of each country's unique political and economic situation. Communications and information channels have been put in place with the governments of each participating country.

As an initial product of the Andean-U.S. Dialogue Forum, members have developed a report, "Toward a Common Agenda for the Andean Countries and the United States." Based on public opinion polls and elite interviews in all six countries, the report identifies convergences and divergences in priorities among the Andean countries and their citizens and the United States. The report was designed to improve understanding of the internal dynamics in each country and reduce the stereotypes that impede working together to resolve

mutual challenges. Finally, the report presents priorities for a common agenda for cooperation. The report will be widely disseminated to national governments and civil society in all six countries.

Members have formed working groups to explore issues of drug policy and organized crime, environmental policy, polarized media, and inclusive trade and development. As a result, members from the various countries are working together on several issues, including bilateral dialogue between Colombian and Venezuelan journalists, editors, and newspaper directors to analyze and promote a wider understanding of the role of the media and journalists in generating or reducing tensions; advocacy efforts to extend the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act (ATPDEA); and national consultations to assess the impact and results of current drug policy and propose innovative changes.

## Upcoming Plans

New activities include media dialogues between Dialogue Forum countries to exchange perceptions and experiences in covering bilateral relations. Forum members have also proposed a meeting between experts on drug policy to advance innovative policy proposals and a fourth dialogue plenary meeting.



Former President U.S. President Jimmy Carter leads the first session of the Andean-U.S. Dialogue Forum, held in Atlanta, Georgia, in February 2010.



THE CARTER CENTER  
THE AMERICAS PROGRAM

**The Carter Center**  
One Copenhill  
453 Freedom Parkway  
Atlanta, GA 30307  
Tel: (404) 420-5100  
Fax: (404) 420-5145  
[www.cartercenter.org](http://www.cartercenter.org)

### The Carter Center

The Carter Center was founded in 1982 by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, in partnership with Emory University, to advance peace and health worldwide. A not-for-profit, nongovernmental organization, the Center has helped to improve life for people in more than 70 countries by resolving conflicts; advancing democracy, human rights, and economic opportunity; preventing diseases; and improving mental health care.



**International IDEA**  
Andean Región  
Av. San Borja Norte 1123  
San Borja, Lima  
Peru  
Tel: (511) 2037960  
Fax: (511) 4377227  
[www.idea.int](http://www.idea.int)

### International IDEA

International IDEA is an intergovernmental organization with 25 member countries. The Institute supports democratic institutions and processes worldwide by providing resources to strengthen capacities, developing policy proposals and supporting democratic reforms. International IDEA's main areas of expertise are electoral processes, political party systems, constitutional processes, gender and democracy.