



I . I . R . S . A

INITIATIVE FOR THE INTEGRATION OF REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN SOUTH AMERICA



E X E C U T I V E S T E E R I N G C O M M I T T E E

Eleventh Meeting of the Executive Steering Committee

December 3rd and 4th, 2009
Buenos Aires, Republic of Argentina

ANNEX 2

Speech by Mr. Julio Miguel De Vido Minister of Federal Planning, Public Investment and Services of the Republic of Argentina

Dear Ministers and Representatives of the participating Governments,
Dear Representatives of the International Financial Organizations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

During 2009 the Republic of Argentina, through the Ministry of Federal Planning, which I lead, has held the Pro Tempore Presidency of IIRSA. We are here today at this XI Meeting of the Executive Steering Committee to take stock of the achievements made this year as well as to discuss the integration process that the region is undergoing and the way in which the Initiative must adjust itself to this process by rethinking its institutional integration and its future orientations.

As we all know, IIRSA was created by the South American Presidents in 2000. From that time to date, very important transformations have taken place in the regional geopolitical environment.

Throughout this time, the view of the integration process has considerably changed, from a view almost exclusively based on economic integration to a broader view that also considers physical integration as a necessary step to become included in a globalized world and as an instrument to achieve internal integration and development of the peoples in the region.

Along these lines, two fundamental principles must be recognized: on the one hand, the advancement of economic growth with political sovereignty, founded on the process of regional integration as a platform for inclusion into the global economy, and on the other hand, the implementation of policies to promote sustainable development processes that embody the notions of social equity and environmental sustainability of territories.

In this new emphasis given to the integration process, the territorial planning of infrastructure plays an essential role, overcoming the sectoral approaches to infrastructure that have traditionally focused on meeting short-term demands.

Even though we recognize that infrastructure per se does not guarantee development, it is a basic element to promote and sustain it as long as such infrastructure is articulated with policies and projects linked to the social, economic and environmental dimensions of the territories.

All of these considerations have been reflected in the evolution of IIRSA from its foundation to the present day.

Since 2003, when our Government began to participate in IIRSA, our aim has been to promote fundamental changes in the strategic and action guidelines as well as in the organizational structure of the Initiative in order to gradually tune it to the transformations undergone by the integration process.

This conviction has guided our activity in this forum, and we feel that we are part of the progress made by IIRSA since its inception, which has been more than significant. Most particularly in recent years, a notable change can be observed in the dynamics of the work carried out and in the more active role assumed by the countries in seeking consensus on the priorities of regional physical integration.

The creation of the Union of South American Nations brought with it the need for IIRSA to re-orient its actions in conformance with the strategies and guidelines of UNASUR, and we are now on the path towards establishing the institutional relationship between both organizations.

Furthermore, the decision of the Heads of State and Government of South America, meeting in Quito on January 10th this year, by which the South American Infrastructure and Planning Council of UNASUR was created is another milestone of great significance to strengthen the physical integration process in which the countries of the region are involved.

During the last Presidential Meetings between Argentina and Chile and Argentina and Brazil, two Presidential Declarations were signed, ratifying the interest of the countries in continuing working on the physical integration of South America, especially in the areas of connectivity, transportation and communications infrastructure as well as of international financing, among others. At the same time, reflecting the awareness of the good results achieved by this forum in the field of indicative territorial planning, the Presidents reiterated their commitment to move towards the full incorporation of the Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America (IIRSA) and its scope of work into UNASUR as its technical arm, within the framework of the South American Infrastructure and Planning Council.

This is why today we face the challenge of creating consensus among our countries to carry out the mandate of our Heads of State and Government by reinforcing the progress made towards the physical integration of South America.

In this regard, all of us are aware that implementation may always encounter difficulties at the beginning, which would almost certainly call for a greater commitment on our part in order to move forward taking a constructive and consensual approach, in the conviction that we are continuing with what proved beneficial to our countries while adjusting it to the new demands of the integration planning process.

On our part, we are ready to redouble our efforts to advance such project because we firmly believe that making headway in the consolidation of UNASUR, in general, as a political process, of the Infrastructure and Planning Council as a space for dialogue, reflection, coordination and cooperation, and of IIRSA, in particular, as the Technical

Advisory Forum for the Council is an investment for the future that will strengthen the physical integration of the region and consolidate infrastructure planning and development as one of the main engines of its sustainable development.