



IIRSA

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

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Buenos Aires, Republic of Argentina

ANNEX 3

Speech by Ms. Margarita Aicardi Deputy Executive Director from Argentina of the Financial Fund for the Development of the Plata River Basin (FONPLATA)

Dear Ministers,
Dear National Coordinators,
Dear Members of IIRSA's Technical Coordination Committee (CCT),
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to address you on behalf of the President of the Executive Board of FONPLATA, in my capacity as Executive Director from Argentina of this agency and of the Technical Coordination Committee. In the first place, we wish to thank the Government of Argentina and, particularly, the Territorial Planning of Public Investment Undersecretariat for their welcome and for the attentions given to us.

Once again we gather here in this South American meeting, where we will review the activities performed during 2009 within the framework of IIRSA, which have posed formidable challenges and led to a high degree of uncertainty as a result of the international economic crisis that took place in the last four months of 2008. Likewise, the knowledge of the activities carried out, together with the duly approved IIRSA strategy for 2005-2010, will enable us to define an action plan for the upcoming year.

Now, nine years after IIRSA was launched and at the verge of entering its final stage since its foundation at the Summit of South American Presidents held in the city of Brasilia in 2000 —when a forum was created to foster an ongoing dialogue aimed at generating actions to support a greater infrastructure integration with a mandate for 2000-2010— it is a timely opportunity to underscore IIRSA's consolidation as a central forum of technical dialogue to build a common agenda of actions and projects for the integration of our American region.

Far from that early institutional landmark in the life of IIRSA, focused in laying the foundations for the Initiative by conducting diagnoses, strengthening concepts and information, and building institutional capabilities, we are now immersed in its implementation stage, where we begin to see concrete results. This is the stage in which we can take pride in having created 9 integration and development hubs

including 47 project groups and a total of 510 projects incorporated in IIRSA's Project Portfolio, made available to all through an online database. It is important to note that this stage involves the follow-up on the execution of IIRSA's Portfolio as well as on the activities undertaken to improve and achieve a quality leap in the Initiative, such as its workshops and training courses, the application of environmental and logistics methodologies to project groups, and the meetings of the Technical Executive Groups that continue working on territorial planning, among other relevant issues.

We are closing the first stage in the creation of a dialogue forum aimed at strengthening and streamlining South American infrastructure through the consensus reached among all South American countries. However, this first stage should entail the commitment to continue working day after day on the integration of infrastructure and should enable the countries to redouble their efforts and commitment to make the dream of a deeper and more concrete integration come true.

In line with the statements above, it has been said on several occasions —for which reason many of you are acquainted with it but we want to stress it once again— that since the beginnings of IIRSA, the Technical Coordination Committee has played an active role in this challenge by supporting the original idea of getting our countries increasingly closer in terms of infrastructure as a cornerstone for achieving a better and closer integration of the entire region.

We understand that infrastructure is a key element in any integration process, since it serves as a fundamental drive to overcome geographical barriers, contributes to social inclusion and environmental protection, brings markets closer and opens up new economic opportunities for the development of our peoples, in so far as it is developed in a context of strong political cohesion.

Since the first stage of the Initiative, through the financing of studies and diagnoses, until the present, through the financing of projects and programs, FONPLATA continues giving IIRSA its support. In spite of its relatively smaller size vis-à-vis the other agencies that make up the Technical Coordination Committee and, consequently, of the greater effort assumed in support of the activities performed every year, FONPLATA is pleased to have contributed with all the South American countries and the most important multilateral financial institutions in the region to the construction of IIRSA.

The year 2010 is as challenging as this one. Even though key interlocutors in developed and developing countries agree that the worst of the world's economic crisis of 2008 has been left behind and that there are clear signs of upswing in the most affected economies, we are still in a transition period that imposes caution.

IIRSA is not alien to this external context; in fact, it faces an additional challenge for 2010 in relation to its future as a forum for dialogue among the countries. To this end, it is important that the Action Plan for 2010 persist on the path followed year after year — namely, adding IIRSA an ever greater value and keeping on demonstrating the need to strengthen the South American integration process regardless of its denomination.

Furthermore, we understand that outreach and participation activities should be reinforced in order to disseminate even more broadly and clearly the actions taken by the Initiative among all the actors involved, particularly the civil society, thus facilitating and strengthening the attainment of the objectives pursued.

In light of all of the above, the purpose of FONPLATA and, certainly, that of the IDB and CAF, the other CCT members, is to continue supporting in a sustained way the

programming of activities and operations resulting from the Action Plan for 2010 with respect to their structuring as well as to the financing of projects and pre-investment studies, as prioritized by IIRSA, in order to actively contribute to the effective execution of the projects deemed a priority by our countries.

Thank you very much.