

No. 1631

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**COSTA RICA, EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA,  
HONDURAS AND NICARAGUA**

**Charter of the Organization of Central American States  
(San Salvador Charter). Signed at San Salvador, on  
14 October 1951**

*Official text: Spanish.*

*Registered by El Salvador on 25 February 1952.*

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**COSTA-RICA, GUATEMALA, HONDURAS,  
NICARAGUA ET SALVADOR**

**Charte de l'Organisation des États de l'Amérique centrale  
(Charte de San-Salvador). Signée à San-Salvador, le  
14 octobre 1951**

*Texte officiel espagnol.*

*Enregistrée par le Salvador le 25 février 1952.*

[TRANSLATION — TRADUCTION]

No. 1631. CHARTER<sup>1</sup> OF THE ORGANIZATION OF CENTRAL AMERICAN STATES (SAN SALVADOR CHARTER). SIGNED AT SAN SALVADOR, ON 14 OCTOBER 1951

The Governments of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, inspired by the highest ideals of Central America, anxious to promote a beneficial and fraternal relationship among the Central American Republics, and certain of faithfully interpreting the wishes of their respective peoples; and

CONSIDERING :

That the Central American Republics, parts of a single nation split asunder, are united by indestructible bonds which should be used and strengthened for their collective benefit;

That the fraternal and organized co-operation of them all is essential for the progressive development of their institutions and the common solution of their problems;

That it is necessary to remove the artificial barriers which separate the peoples of Central America and to achieve a joint determination to solve their problems and to defend their interests by means of collective and systematic action;

That the attempts made in the course of the independent existence of the Central American Republics to restore their former unity have been fruitless; and

That modern international law provides an adequate method of achieving that purpose through the creation of regional organizations :

THEREFORE :

The above-mentioned Governments decide to establish an Organization of Central American States for the co-ordination of their joint efforts. To that end, their Ministers of Foreign Affairs, duly authorized, have agreed upon the following :

<sup>1</sup> Came into force on 9 January 1952, by the deposit of the instruments of ratification of the Republics of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, in accordance with article 21.

*Following are the dates of deposit of the respective instruments of ratification with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of El Salvador:*

El Salvador . . . . .	3 December 1951
Guatemala . . . . .	14 December 1951
Nicaragua . . . . .	14 December 1951
Costa Rica . . . . .	14 December 1951
Honduras . . . . .	9 January 1952

## PURPOSES

*Article 1.* — Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua constitute the Organization of Central American States (O.C.A.S.), for the following purposes: to strengthen the bonds which unite them; to consult together in order to guarantee and maintain their fraternal existence side by side in this region of the Continent; to prevent and avert all discord and to ensure the peaceful settlement of any dispute that may arise between them; to help one another; to seek joint solutions of their common problems; and to promote their economic, social and cultural development by means of co-operative and concerted action.

## PRINCIPLES

*Article 2.* — The Central American Republics, as Members of the United Nations and of the Organization of American States, on the occasion of establishing the Organization of Central American States, herewith affirm their faith in the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of the Charter<sup>1</sup> of the Organization of American States and their adherence to those principles.

*Article 3.* — The Organization of Central American States is based on the principles sanctioned by the Charter of the United Nations and the Charter of the Organization of American States and, in particular, on the juridical equality of States, on mutual respect and on the principle of non-intervention.

## ORGANS

*Article 4.* — The organs of the Organization of Central American States are:

- The Conference of Presidents (if and when it meets);
- The Conference of Foreign Ministers;
- The Conference of Ministers of other branches (if and when it meets);
- The Central American Office; and
- The Economic Council.

*Article 5.* — When the five Presidents of the Republics of Central America meet together for consultation, such a Conference shall be the supreme organ of the Organization.

*Article 6.* — The principal organ of the Organization of Central American States shall be the Conference of Foreign Ministers.

The Foreign Ministers may be accompanied by councillors and advisers, but if these are not nationals by birth of the Central American Republics, they may not replace the respective Ministers at the meetings.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, Vol. 119.

If a Foreign Minister is unable to attend the Conference, he may be represented by a Special Delegate.

*Article 7.* — The Conference of Foreign Ministers shall meet in regular session every two years, and in special session whenever not less than three of their number deem it necessary.

*Article 8.* — The Conference of Foreign Ministers shall meet in rotation in the Central American countries in the following order : Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras and Costa Rica; the Conference shall meet in the city designated by the Government concerned.

*Article 9.* — In the Conference of Foreign Ministers, each Republic shall have one vote only.

Decisions on questions of substance must be adopted unanimously. Whenever it is in doubt whether a question is one of substance or of procedure, a unanimous vote shall be required.

*Article 10.* — Conferences of Ministers of other branches may be called by any of the Governments whenever they encounter in any branch of the public administration a problem the solution of which calls for collective study and a joint Central American plan.

*Article 11.* — The Central American Office shall be the Secretariat of the Organization.

Its functions shall include : *a*) providing secretarial services for the Conference of Foreign Ministers and for any Conferences of Ministers of other branches; *b*) co-ordinating the work of the various organs and assisting them in their efforts; and *c*) preparing and distributing all appropriate documentation.

The seat of the Central American Office shall be the capital of the Republic of El Salvador.

*Article 12.* — The Central American Office shall be under the authority of a Secretary-General elected by the Conference of Foreign Ministers for a period of four years, which may not be extended. This official may not be re-elected.

The Secretary-General shall appoint the additional staff required, having regard in its selection to an equitable geographical distribution among the Central American States.

*Article 13.* — For the maintenance of the Office, a contribution shall be fixed for each member of the Organization, on the basis of a budget and scale of contributions to be submitted by an *ad hoc* committee and approved by the Conference of Foreign Ministers.

*Article 14.* — The Economic Council shall have such functions as may be assigned to it by the Conference of Foreign Ministers, to which it shall

report on its work and activities and submit the proposals and recommendations which it adopts.

The Council shall be composed of delegates appointed by Governments, and shall meet at least once a year, at a time and place chosen by itself.

### SUBSIDIARY ORGANS

*Article 15.* — The Conference of Foreign Ministers may set up, as subsidiary organs, such councils, institutes and commissions as it deems appropriate for the study of various problems.

The seat of the various subsidiary organs shall be chosen in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution and with the needs which have led to their establishment.

*Article 16.* — Each of the various subsidiary organs shall submit detailed reports on its work to the Conference of Foreign Ministers and may suggest to it such resolutions and measures as it may deem appropriate. These organs must also report to the Conference, at each regular session, on the progress of their respective work and advise the Conferences of Ministers of various branches with regard to the work entrusted to them.

### SPECIAL COUNCIL

*Article 17.* — There shall be a Council composed of the diplomatic representatives of the Republics of Central America to the country in which the next Conference of Foreign Ministers is to be held and of a delegate from that country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

This Council shall advise the Government of the host country on preparations for the Conference.

### GENERAL PROVISIONS

*Article 18.* — None of the provisions of the present Charter shall prejudice the respect and observance of the constitutional laws of each Republic or be construed as impairing the rights and obligations of the Central American Republics as Members of the United Nations and of the Organization of American States or the special positions taken by any one of them by means of specific reservations in existing treaties or conventions.

*Article 19.* — The present Charter shall be ratified by the Central American Republics with the least possible delay, in conformity with their respective constitutional processes.

It shall be registered with the Secretariat of the United Nations in accordance with Article 102 of the United Nations Charter.

*Article 20.* — The original of the present Charter shall be deposited with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of El Salvador, which shall transmit certified true copies thereof to the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the other Central American Republics.

The instruments of ratification shall also be deposited with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of El Salvador, which shall notify the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the other Republics of each deposit.

*Article 21.* — The present Charter shall come into force on the day of the deposit of the instruments of ratification of the Republics of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

*Article 22.* — This Convention on the Organization of the Central American States shall be called "San Salvador Charter".

#### TEMPORARY PROVISIONS

1. The present Convention shall be open to the Republic of Panama which may at any time accede to this Charter and become a member of the Organization of Central American States.

2. The first regular Conference of Foreign Ministers shall be called by the Government of the Republic of Guatemala in the course of the year following that in which the present Charter comes into force.

IN FAITH WHEREOF, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Central American Republics have signed this document at the city of San Salvador, on the fourteenth day of October, one thousand nine hundred and fifty-one.

For Costa Rica :  
For El Salvador :  
For Guatemala :  
For Honduras :  
For Nicaragua :

Mario ECHANDI  
Roberto E. CANESSA  
Manuel GALICH  
J. Edgardo VALENZUELA  
Oscar SEVILLA SACASA