

No. 8048

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

**Charter of the Organization of Central American States
(OCAS). Signed at Panama City, on 12 December 1962**

Official text: Spanish.

Registered on 24 January 1966 by the Organization of Central American States, acting on behalf of the Contracting Parties, in accordance with article 25 of the Charter of the Organization of Central American States.

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

**Charte de l'Organisation des États d'Amérique centrale
(ODECA). Signée à Panama, le 12 décembre 1962**

Texte officiel espagnol.

Enregistrée le 24 janvier 1966 par l'Organisation des États d'Amérique centrale agissant au nom des Parties contractantes, conformément à l'article 25 de la Charte de l'Organisation des États d'Amérique centrale.

[TRANSLATION — TRADUCTION]

No. 8048. CHARTER¹ OF THE ORGANIZATION OF CENTRAL AMERICAN STATES (OCAS). SIGNED AT PANAMA CITY, ON 12 DECEMBER 1962

The Governments of Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala,

Considering :

That it is necessary to provide the five States with a more effective instrument by establishing organs which will ensure their economic and social progress, remove the barriers which divide them, bring about steady improvement in the living conditions of their peoples, ensure industrial stability and growth, and strengthen Central American solidarity,

Therefore :

The above-mentioned Governments have decided to replace the Charter signed at San Salvador, in the Republic of El Salvador, on 14 October 1951 by the following Charter of the Organization of Central American States :

PURPOSES

Article 1

Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala constitute an economic and political community which aspires to achieve the integration of Central America. It is for this purpose that the Organization of Central American States (OCAS) has been established.

ORGANS

Article 2

The following organs shall be established in order to give effect to the purposes of the Organization of Central American States :

¹ Came into force on 30 March 1965, the date on which the instruments of ratification of the five Member States of the Organization of Central American States had been deposited in accordance with article 29. The instruments were deposited with the Secretary-General of the Organization of Central American States on the following dates :

Guatemala	29 July	1963
El Salvador	23 August	1963
Honduras	23 August	1963
Nicaragua	19 November	1963
Costa Rica	30 March	1965

- (a) The Meeting of Heads of State ;
- (b) The Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs ;
- (c) The Executive Council ;
- (d) The Legislative Council ;
- (e) The Central American Court of Justice ;
- (f) The Central American Economic Council ;
- (g) The Cultural and Educational Council ; and
- (h) The Central American Defence Council.

Article 3

The Meeting of Heads of State shall be the supreme organ of the Organization.

The Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs shall be the principal organ.

The Executive Council shall be the permanent organ of the Organization. It shall have its seat in the city of San Salvador.

THE PRINCIPAL ORGAN

Article 4

The Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs shall meet in regular session once a year and in special session whenever not less than three of their number deem it necessary.

Article 5

In the Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs, each Member State shall have only one vote.

Decisions on questions of substance shall be adopted unanimously. Where doubt exists whether a question is one of substance or of procedure, the matter shall be settled by unanimous vote.

Article 6

The Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs may establish such subsidiary organs as it deems appropriate for the study of various problems.

The seats of the various subsidiary organs shall be chosen on the basis of equitable geographical distribution and in accordance with the needs which have led to the establishment of the said organs.

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Article 7

The Executive Council shall be composed of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs or their specially authorized representatives. It shall be responsible for the legal representation of the Organization.

Article 8

The Executive Council shall be presided over by one of its members. The Presidency shall rotate each year among the States Members of the Organization. The Council shall hold regular meetings once a week and shall hold special meetings when convoked by the President.

Article 9

The Executive Council shall be responsible for directing and co-ordinating the policy of the Organization with a view to the accomplishment of its purposes.

The Council shall appoint a Secretary and the necessary staff in order to ensure the proper functioning of the administrative services. It shall for that purpose adopt appropriate rules defining their obligations.

The Council shall be the channel of communication between the organs and Member States.

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Article 10

The Legislative Council shall be composed of three representatives of the legislative authority of each Member State.

The Council shall give advice and act as an organ of consultation in legislative matters. It shall also study the possibility of unifying the legislation of the Central American States.

Article 11

The Council shall, in accordance with its own rules, establish such working committees as it deems appropriate.

Article 12

The Legislative Council shall meet in regular session each year, starting on 15 September, and in special session whenever it is convoked by the Executive Council at the request of at least two Governments of Member States.

Article 13

The adoption of resolutions and recommendations by the Council shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of its members.

THE CENTRAL AMERICAN COURT OF JUSTICE

Article 14

The Central American Court of Justice shall be composed of the Presidents of the Judiciary of the Member States.

Article 15

The Central American Court of Justice shall have the following functions :

- (a) To hear such legal disputes arising between Member States as the latter submit to it by agreement ;
- (b) To formulate and express opinions on schemes for the unification of Central American legislation when requested to do so by the Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs or the Executive Council.

Article 16

The Central American Court of Justice shall meet whenever it deems it necessary or is convoked by the Executive Council.

THE CENTRAL AMERICAN ECONOMIC COUNCIL

Article 17

The Central American Economic Council shall be composed of the Ministers of Economics of the Member States and shall be responsible for the planning, co-ordination and execution of Central American economic integration.

All Central American economic integration agencies shall form part of the Council.

Article 18

The Economic Council shall, on the basis of the reports of the various agencies connected with the Central American Economic Integration Programme, submit a comprehensive annual report on its work to the Executive Council for the information of the Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs.

THE CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL COUNCIL

Article 19

The Cultural and Educational Council shall be composed of the Ministers of Education of the Member States or their representatives.

Article 20

The Cultural and Educational Council shall have the following functions :

- (a) To promote educational, scientific and cultural exchanges among Member States ;
- (b) To conduct studies of the state of education, science and culture in the region ;
- (c) To co-ordinate efforts to achieve uniformity in the educational systems of Central America ;
- (d) To report on its activities to the Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs through the Executive Council of the Organization.

THE DEFENCE COUNCIL

Article 21

The Defence Council shall be composed of the Ministers of Defence or officials of equivalent rank and functions of the Member States.

Article 22

The Defence Council shall act as an organ of consultation in matters of regional defence and shall endeavour to ensure the collective security of Member States. It shall report on its activities to the Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs through the Executive Council.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 23

Any Member State may, through the Executive Council, propose a meeting of the organs or of ministers of other departments to deal with matters affecting Central America.

Article 24

The Organization shall not function in such a way as to interfere with the internal systems of States, and nothing in the provisions of this Charter shall prejudice observ-

ance of and compliance with the constitutional rules of the various States or be interpreted in such a way as to impair the rights and obligations of the Central American States as Members of the United Nations and the Organization of American States or such special positions as any one of them may have adopted through specific reservations in existing treaties or agreements.

Article 25

This Charter shall be ratified by the Central American States as soon as possible in accordance with their respective constitutional procedures.

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

Article 26

Each of the organs provided for in this Charter shall draw up its own rules.

Article 27

The organs shall, save as otherwise provided, meet at the seat of the Organization.

Article 28

The original of this Charter shall be deposited with the Office of the Organization, which shall transmit certified true copies thereof to the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Member States.

The instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Office of the Organization, which shall notify the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Member States of each deposit.

Article 29

This Charter shall enter into force on the date of the deposit of the instruments of ratification of the five Member States.

Article 30

This Convention on the Organization of Central American States shall retain the name "San Salvador Charter".

TEMPORARY PROVISIONS

Article 1

This 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.

Article 2

Until such time as the Republic of Panama accedes to this Charter and becomes a Member of the Organization of Central American States, it may join any of the subsidiary organs which have already been established or are hereafter established by signing for that purpose the necessary protocol or protocols.

Article 3

The provision of funds for the functioning of the Organization shall be the subject of a special protocol among the Member States, and the Central American Economic Council shall for that purpose be instructed to conduct appropriate studies.

Until the permanent scheme for the financing of OCAS takes effect and the necessary funds for the purpose are available, the Member States shall cover the budgetary expenditure of the Organization by making contributions which are proportional to the assessments established by the United Nations.

In the event of any change in the said assessments, the Executive Council shall adjust accordingly the proportional contributions of the Member States.

Article 4

Within thirty days after the date of the deposit of the final instrument of ratification of this Charter, the ambassadors accredited to OCAS by the Member States shall constitute themselves an *ad hoc* committee for the purpose of accepting, on the basis of an inventory, the assets of the Organization and receiving the statement of accounts of the Secretariat.

Article 5

Upon the entry into force of this Charter and the formation of the Executive Council, the latter shall choose its first President by lot.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Central American Republics have signed this document at Panama City, in the Republic of Panama, on 12 December 1962.

For Costa Rica :

Daniel ODUBER QUIRÓS

For Nicaragua :

Alfonso ORTEGA URBINA

For Honduras :

Roberto PERDOMO PAREDES

For El Salvador :

Héctor ESCOBAR SERRANO

For Guatemala :

Jesús UNDA MURILLO