



The Organization of American States (OAS) is a regional forum of discussion under article VIII of the UN Charter, which “provides the constitutional basis for the involvement of regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security.” With 32 member states throughout the Western Hemisphere, its values, among others, include promotion of democracy, education, security, sustainable economic development, and human rights. The OAS is organized in three main bodies. The General Assembly is the primary policy-making organ and governs the other bodies, such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). The Permanent Council conducts the body’s day to day business - resolving conflicts peacefully, fulfilling decisions from the General Assembly of the OAS, and submitting recommendations to the UN General Assembly. Finally, the General Secretariat is assigned to implement policies set by the General Assembly and Permanent Council, including by making offices and hiring personnel.

Note that the OAS is a regional body under the UN Charter, which means it follows the guidance of the General Assembly, Security Council, International Court of Justice, and other bodies. It is not an independent body that can make unilateral decisions.

### **Topic I: Addressing the situation in Haiti/Abordar la situación en Haití**

Haiti, a signatory to the OAS, has experienced high rates of gang violence and human rights violations. This has resulted in the displacement of millions of civilians. According to a security council hearing, gang power has only increased, limiting the ability of the Haitian government to intervene and isolating citizens due to the suspension of international flights. Vigilante groups that both clash and collude with gangs also contribute to the rise in extrajudicial action and an illicit arms market. The United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) has also reported an increase in gang-related sexual violence and human trafficking. This is an urgent situation which must be addressed as soon as possible due to the direct impact on civilians.

#### **Questions to consider:**

1. How is gang violence dealt with in your country?
2. What kinds of collaborative action could help this situation?
3. How might a solution balance state sovereignty and maintain the core value of the OAS?

### **Topic II: Natural disasters and their effects on member states/Los desastres naturales y sus efectos en estados miembro**

In 1992, the UN recognized climate change as a significant global issue and adopted the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Evidence has linked the persistence of climate change with worsening natural disasters. This means that extreme weather events like flooding, wildfires, hurricanes, tropical storms, tornadoes, etc. will only continue to intensify. Natural disasters threaten infrastructure and development, and can even be deadly. It is therefore urgent to proactively address developing issues and retroactively repair damage to communities caused by natural disasters in OAS countries.

**Questions to consider:**

1. What are some examples of natural disasters that have occurred in your country?
2. What are some steps your country is taking to address climate change - or are you?
3. How might international collaboration help address these issues?

### **Topic III: Deforestation of the Amazon/Deforestación del Amazona**

The Amazon is the world's largest rainforest. Not only is it home to the most diverse species of flora and fauna on the planet, but it is a significant source of oxygen and helps keep our atmosphere clean. Its rivers and rainfall are also a significant source of the Earth's water. Unfortunately, deforestation continues to occur, leading to massive area loss. Factors such as farming, infrastructure, and an illegal lumber trade contribute to the loss of vegetation each year. The Amazon is also home to a number of indigenous and ethnic groups, who have contributed to safeguarding the forest, but continue to be impacted by deforestation. A UN Science Committee has called for the end of deforestation due to its negative impacts.

**Questions to consider:**

1. How do indigenous groups in your country impact natural spaces?
2. How might international cooperation help the issue of deforestation?
3. How does your country impact the Amazon, and how might you modify this relationship?