

AG/RES. 2682 (XLI-O/11)

CONSUMER PROTECTION: CONSOLIDATION OF THE NETWORK FOR CONSUMER SAFETY AND HEALTH AND CREATION OF AN INTER-AMERICAN RAPID PRODUCT SAFETY WARNING SYSTEM

(Adopted at the fourth plenary session, held on June 7, 2011)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

CONSIDERING:

That Article 39 of the Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS) establishes that the member states should make efforts to obtain adequate and dependable supplies for consumers; and

That at the Special Summit of the Americas, held in Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico, in 2004, the Heads of State and Government agreed to promote consumer protection, fair competition, and improved functioning of markets through clear, effective, and transparent regulatory frameworks;

CONSIDERING ALSO the importance of information sharing and the exchange and dissemination of best practices in consumer and health protection among competent organs and agencies, for better integration of public policies related to these areas, and the importance of strengthening the capacity of states to monitor and control the safety of products available on the market for consumption or use;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT:

That resolution AG/RES. 2549 (XL-O/10), “Consumer Protection: Network for Consumer Safety and Health in the Americas,” mandated the creation of a Network for Consumer Safety and Health (RCSS) in the Americas, as a first step toward implementation of an Inter-American Rapid Product Safety Warning System (IAPSW);

That in resolution AG/RES. 2494 (XXXIX-O/09), “Consumer Protection,” the OAS General Assembly requested the General Secretariat to “support ... reinforcement of existing cooperation mechanisms and other kinds of joint activities among governmental consumer protection agencies” and to coordinate “its activities with those of national consumer protection agencies and other organizations”;

That, consequently, the General Secretariat, in collaboration with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), carried out technical consultations on consumer product safety and its impact on health, where attention was called to the importance of effective means of information exchange among authorities in the region charged with monitoring the market;

RECOGNIZING WITH SATISFACTION:

The coordination performed previously by the Department of Special Legal Programs and at present by the Department of Social Development and Employment to implement the RCSS, and the efforts by the Department of Information Technology Services to build the RCSS electronic portal, officially launched before the Permanent Council on November 23, 2010;

That, in pursuance of the mandate to train competent authorities, set forth in resolution AG/RES. 2549 (XL-O/10), the first postgraduate training course for national authorities was carried out successfully, as was a specialized workshop, and that information exchange activities in specialized areas will continue to be held;

That, as reported by the General Secretariat to the Permanent Council on February 14, 2011, this is an example of effective coordination within and outside the Organization, at both the inter-American and worldwide levels; and that its implementation with the states has been multidisciplinary, involving authorities in the consumer protection, health, metrology, standardization, civil society, and other areas; and

AWARE:

Of the need to continue reinforcing efforts and to draw upon the enthusiasm with which the Network for Consumer Safety and Health has been welcomed by the competent authorities, in order to continue helping to ensure adequate protection of consumers and of their right to safe and healthful consumer products; and

That the creation of an Inter-American Rapid Product Safety Warning System (IAPSWWS) will help to protect consumer health through rapid detection and coordinated action to prevent the entry of unsafe consumer products into markets in the Americas,

RESOLVES:

1. To thank the General Secretariat, in particular the Department of Social Development and Employment and the Department of Information Technology Services of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) for rapidly setting in motion the Network for Consumer Safety and Health and its Internet tools, and for coordinating their complementary training and information-exchange activities.

2. To request the General Secretariat to continue its coordination with PAHO and other international organizations to consolidate the Network for Consumer Safety and Health in the region and to position the OAS as an important actor at the global level in the area of consumer product safety. Also to request the General Secretariat to design and implement the Inter-American Rapid Product Safety Warning System (IAPSWWS).

3. To request the General Secretariat, for the purpose of consolidating the Network for Consumer Safety and Health, to promote and implement cooperation agreements with subregional agencies for the creation of the IAPSWWS, so as to draw upon the progress made by those organizations and not to duplicate efforts in the field of consumer product safety.

4. To request the General Secretariat, in collaboration with international consumer protection organizations, to design a plan for fostering participation by civil society and other stakeholders in building the IAPSWWS.

5. To urge those member state authorities that do not yet participate in the Network for Consumer Safety and Health to join it and to participate actively in the training activities, the information exchange, and the planning of an Inter-American Rapid Product Safety Warning System (IAPSWWS).

6. To request the General Secretariat to establish a specific fund of voluntary contributions, to be called "Consumer Safety and Health Fund," that will support measures to consolidate the Network and will be administered by the Department of Social Development and Employment.

7. To thank the governments that have made voluntary monetary and in-kind contributions, especially the Governments of Brazil, Peru, and the United States of America and the Generalitat of Catalonia, and to invite member states, permanent observers, and other donors, once the aforementioned fund has been established, to support with voluntary contributions the activities undertaken by the General Secretariat to consolidate the Network for Consumer Safety and Health and the establishment of the IAPSWWS.

8. To request the General Secretariat to report on the implementation of the foregoing mandates to the Permanent Council before the next regular session of the General Assembly.