

CHAPTER III

ACTIVITIES OF THE RAPPORTEURSHIPS, COUNTRY AND THEMATIC REPORTS, AND PROMOTION

A. Activities of the Rapporteurships

1. In 1990, the Inter-American Commission started establishing Thematic Rapporteurships to focus on certain persons, groups, and communities that are especially exposed to human rights violations because of their situation of vulnerability and for being the targets of historical discrimination. Thematic Rapporteurship are established to build up, promote, and systematize the work of the Inter-American Commission itself on concrete issues. In that respect, they foster awareness of human rights among the peoples of the Americas.¹ The Rapporteurships also support IACHR's work in developing legal standards; contribute to knowledge about⁴²³ the mechanisms of the Inter-American System; and promote access of persons, groups, and communities involved in this thematic approach to domestic and international justice. At the same time, IACHR Rapporteurships keep up a steady collaboration with various sectors working on their specific issues of specialization, including the Rapporteurships of the United Nations and other universal mechanisms, civil society organizations, States, and the academic sector, among others.

2. IACHR Thematic Rapporteurships are governed by the provisions set forth in Article 15 of its Rules of Procedure, as well as by practices provided by the Commission's plenary. The Commission adopts the reports and work plans of each Rapporteurship and supervises the daily fulfillment of their mandates. Because of their nature as specialized thematic offices established by the IACHR itself, the IACHR Rules of Procedure precisely define the procedures for their establishment and for the election of the Thematic Rapporteurs. The Rules of Procedures also regulate the duties discharged by the IACHR in which its Rapporteurships participate. The standards and practices mentioned above constitute an important series of rules that govern the conduct of all the Rapporteurships and establish stringent procedures for their activities.

3. The Thematic Rapporteurships also collaborate in the fulfillment of IACHR's main role of promoting the enforcement and defense of human rights and serve as a consulting body for the OAS in this matter.² In that regard, they can request the governments of States to provide reports on the human rights measures that they adopt,³ as well as make recommendations for them to adopt progressive measures for the benefit of human rights, in line with IACHR's mandate. The Rapporteurs also draw up studies and reports that are relevant to their thematic duties.⁴ As part of their functions, the Rapporteurs can undertake working visits to States and participate in onsite visits made by the IACHR, with the consent or at the invitation of the respective government. At present, the IACHR has eight Thematic Rapporteurships:

- ◆ rights of the indigenous peoples (1990);
- ◆ rights of women (1994);
- ◆ rights of migrants (1996);
- ◆ rights of the child (1998);
- ◆ rights of persons deprived of their liberty (2004);

¹ See Article 18 a) of the IAHR Statute.

² See Article 106 of the Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS) and Article 41 of the American Convention on Human Rights.

³ See Article 41 of the American Convention on Human Rights and Article 18 d) of the IACHR Statute.

⁴ Article 41 of the ACHR and Articles 58 and 59 of the Rules of Procedure of IACHR.

- ◆ rights of persons of African descent and against racial discrimination (2005);
- ◆ rights of human rights defenders (2011); and
- ◆ rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and intersex persons (2014).

4. The IACHR also has the power to establish Special Rapporteurships to be headed by other persons designated by the Commission.⁵ In said framework of activities, since 1997 there has been a Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression,⁶ which is a permanent office with its own operating structure and functional autonomy, which operates in the legal framework of the IACHR. On April 3, 2014, the IACHR also decided to establish a Special Rapporteurship on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, bearing in mind the interdependent and indivisible nature of human rights and the importance of protecting and promoting economic, social, and cultural rights in the region. With the establishment of this new Rapporteurship, which currently functions as a Unit,⁷ the IACHR strives to build up and further extend its work to defend and protect the economic, social, and cultural rights of the inhabitants of the Americas.

5. Among their duties, the Rapporteurships have taken advantage of their mandate to promote regional initiatives on priority issues in the region relevant to their areas of focus. These initiatives have been strengthened by participatory processes of gathering information, including the outlook of the States and civil society, the drafting of regional reports on pressing issues and the submittal of these reports, the organization of promotional activities to disseminate knowledge about the standards of the Inter-American System, the circulation of questionnaires, the preparation of consultations with experts, the organization of relevant thematic hearings and working visits, the drafting of press releases, and the use of other mechanisms. As for individual cases, at the same time the Rapporteurships continue to participate and exert a specialized impact on the processing of individual petitions on human rights violations received by the IACHR. They also participate actively in reviewing requests for precautionary measures and in supporting hearings and friendly settlements.

6. The IACHR presents below information about the thematic priorities and activities of each one of the Rapporteurships in the course of 2015.

1. Rapporteurship on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

7. The Rapporteurship on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is headed by the Chair and Commissioner Rose-Marie Belle Antoine.

8. In 2015, the Rapporteurship has focused on implementing activities aimed at addressing the following challenges: (i) obstacles to respect for, and full guarantee of, the right of indigenous peoples to their territories and natural resources, especially in the face of extraction, development, and investment activities in the region; (ii) obstacles to enforcing, in all of its dimensions, the right to prior, free, informed, and culturally adequate consultation, consent, and effective participation in decisions that are relevant to the indigenous peoples; (iii) obstacles being tackled by indigenous authorities and leaders when defending their rights, such as threats, killings, and incidents of criminality; (iv) structural, widespread, and inter-sectional discrimination being faced by indigenous peoples, including indigenous women; (v) institutional, cultural, linguistic, economic, and geographical barriers to gaining access to justice; and (vi) obstacles to the exercise of economic, social, and cultural rights by the indigenous peoples, such as rights to water, a healthy environment, health, and others.

⁵ Article 15(4) of the Rules of Procedure of IACHR.

⁶ The activities of the Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression are part of Volume II of the present Annual Report.

⁷ The IACHR indicated, by a press release on October 28, 2015 that: "Unfortunately, there are not as yet any of the resources needed to establish the Special Rapporteurship, as a result of which the IACHR has decided to extend the mandate of the Unit that is working on the subject under the coordination of Commissioner Paulo Vannuchi. Efforts will continue to be made to find funding to establish this Special Rapporteurship in the future": [//www.oas.org/es/cidh/prensa/comunicados/2015/120.asp](http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/prensa/comunicados/2015/120.asp)

9. This year, the Rapporteurship focused on drafting and publishing a series of reports on priority issues, in the framework of the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples, thanks to support from the International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) and Denmark. A report on the situation of the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples and Afrodescendant communities in the context of extractive, investment, and development activities was prepared with the Rapporteurship on the Rights of Persons of African Descent. The report provides a preliminary approach to the matters referred to above in order to promote the consolidation of legal standards about the matter in the Inter-American Human Rights System; to increase the visibility of human rights violations committed in this sphere; and to identify key challenges that require the Inter-American Commission's attention. The Rapporteurship, in turn, collaborated in drawing up a regional report on the situation of the rights of indigenous women in the Americas, along with the Rapporteurship on Women's Rights, which addresses a series of issues that are relevant to the exercise of their civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, and their right to live without violence and discrimination, among others.

10. It must also be mentioned that, on January 12, 2015, the IACHR published the report entitled *Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women in British Columbia, Canada*. This report examines the problem of indigenous women who were killed or went missing over the past few years and the Canadian State's response, and makes a series of recommendations to strengthen protection and safeguard of the rights of indigenous women.

11. The Rapporteurship in turn participated in, and carried out, the following activities in 2015:
- On February 9, 10, and 11, 2015, the Rapporteurship participated in the fifteenth meeting of negotiations aimed at securing the eventual adoption of the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The meeting took place in Washington, D.C., and was attended by representatives of OAS Member States, officials from various OAS departments, and representatives of the indigenous peoples and civil society.
 - On February 23 and 24, 2015, the Rapporteurship participated in an event sponsored by the Department of International Law of the OAS and the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples in Mexico City. In this framework, it provided training on the Inter-American Human Rights System and IACHR's work in this area to about 200 indigenous attorneys.
 - In March, April, and May 2015, the Rapporteurship participated in the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Meetings of Negotiations in the Quest for Points of Consensus for the eventual adoption of the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The meetings were held in Washington, D.C., and were attended by representatives of OAS Member States, officials from various OAS departments, and representatives of indigenous peoples and civil society.
 - On April 17 2015, the President participated with civil society in a meeting on the "Situation of Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples of the Peninsula" in Mérida, Yucatán, Mexico. The inviting organizations were the Regional Consejo Regional Indígena y Popular de X'Pujil (CRIPX), Indignación, Promoción y Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, Dialogo y Movimiento A.C., and the Due Process of Law Foundation (DPLF). She also delivered a master presentation on "Inter-American Standards for Indigenous Peoples in the Americas" in the framework of a public conference in the Autonomous University of Yucatán on April 17, 2015.
 - On June 18 and 19, 2015, Chair Rose-Marie Belle Antoine participated in an academic event on Sacred Places of Native Peoples in the United States organized by the Human Rights Commission of the Navajo People and the Law School of the University of Arizona. They met with members of the indigenous peoples of the San Carlos Apache Nation, the Lake People,

and the Navajo Nation. They also visited the following sacred places: Mount Taylor in New Mexico, and Oak Flats and San Francisco Peaks in Arizona.

- On July 23, 2015, in Washington, D.C., Chair Rose-Marie Belle Antoine participated as a panelist in presenting the Oxfam Briefing Paper *Community Consent Index 2015: Oil, gas, and mining company public positions on Free, Prior, and Informed Consent*, published by Oxfam.
- On July 28, 2015, at IACHR headquarters, Chair Rose-Marie Belle Antoine participated in presenting the report of Maina Kai, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, on the exercise of the right to prior, free, and informed consultation and consent in the context of natural resources development and extraction projects.
- On July 30, 2015, Chair Rose-Marie Belle Antoine participated in the Seminar on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Persons of African Descent in Panama City, Panama. The organizations organizing the seminar were the Partnership for Conservation and Development (Alianza para la Conservación y el Desarrollo—ACD) (Panama), the Law, Justice and Society Studies Center (Centro de Estudios de Derecho, Justicia y Sociedad—Dejusticia) (Colombia), Law, Environment and Natural Resources (Derecho, Ambiente y Recursos Naturales—DAR) (Peru), the Due Process of Law Foundation (DPLF), and Oxfam. The event was attended by members of indigenous peoples from Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, and Peru.

2. Rapporteurship on the Rights of Women

12. The Rapporteurship on the Rights of Women is headed by Commissioner Tracy Robinson.

13. The Rapporteurship on the Rights of Women has continued to work to address the principal challenges that continue to prevent women from fully exercising their rights in the region. The activities of the Rapporteurship focus mainly on: (i) the prevalence of forms of violence against women in the region, including physical, psychological, sexual, economic, spiritual, obstetric, and institutional violence, as well as other manifestations; (ii) the failure of States to fulfill the duty of acting with due diligence, including prevention, investigation, punishment, and reparations for human rights violations affecting women, as well as the guarantee of access to justice without delay and access to information administered by the State, which is a key factor for exercising their human rights; (iii) the many forms of discrimination affecting women, which leads to a situation of marked vulnerability for women who are indigenous, of African descent, with disabilities, or living with HIV/AIDS, as well as for girls, lesbians, and transgender persons, among others; (iv) challenges to safeguarding and exercising women's sexual and reproductive rights; (iv) the threefold risk that women defending their human rights suffer from because of their work as women leaders, because of the causes they uphold, and because of their sex and gender; and (v) obstacles faced by women to exercising their economic, social, and cultural rights in areas such as health, education, work, and in their access to, and control over, economic resources.

14. In 2015, the Rapporteurship drafted, published, and presented various reports. On January 12, 2015, the IACHR published the report "Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women in British Columbia, Canada." This report examines the problem of indigenous women who were killed or went missing over the past few years and the State of Canada's response to this situation. The report incorporates a series of recommendations aimed at building up the State's actions to protect and guarantee the rights of indigenous women. On January 26, 2015, the IACHR adopted a special edition of the report "Legal Standards Related to Gender Equality and Women's Rights" to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Belém do Pará Convention. The report summarizes and analyzes the legal standards of the Inter-American System on gender equality and women's rights, as well as the impact that the Inter-American System's recommendations and decisions have had on domestic court judgments issued in the region's countries. In November 2015, the report "Access to Information, Violence against Women, and the Administration of Justice in the Americas" was also

published thanks to support from ASDI. With this report, the IACHR aims to provide an introduction to the challenges faced by women in the Americas in gaining adequate access to State-controlled information on violence and discrimination and to systematize international standards developed by the Inter-American System on this subject.

15. Thanks to Denmark's support, the Rapporteurship is also in the process of drafting a thematic report on the human rights situation of indigenous women in the Americas, which shall address a series of issues that are relevant to the exercise of their civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights and their right to live without violence or discrimination, among others. This initiative is being implemented in collaboration with the Rapporteurship on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

16. The Rapporteurship participated in and carried out the following activities in 2015:

- On February 19, 2015, the Rapporteur participated as keynote speaker for the event on "Sexual Assault in the United States Military: How Far Have We Come." The event was sponsored by the following institutions: New York City Bar Association Committee on Sex and Law; Avon Global Center for Women and Justice at Cornell Law School; Avon Foundation Project Our Defenders; American Civil Liberties Union; New York City Bar Association Committee on Military Affairs; and the New York City Bar Association Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights.
- On February 25, 2015, the Rapporteurship participated in a meeting of experts on political violence against women in the framework of the Belém do Pará Convention, organized by the Inter-American Commission of Women and MESECVI.
- On March 3, 2015, the Rapporteur participated in the Workshop on Enhancing Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional Mechanisms for the Promotion and Protection of Women's Rights," organized in Geneva by the European Council, Belgium, and Latvia.
- On April 15 to 28, 2015, Commissioner Tracy Robinson, along with the previous United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences, Rashida Manjoo, participated in a study tour of four English-speaking Caribbean countries: Jamaica,⁸ Barbados, Dominica, and Trinidad and Tobago. The Rapporteurs identified a widespread pattern of psychological, physical, sexual, economic, and institutional violence against women and girls in their households, communities, workplaces, and in state institutions, as well as the existence of impunity and revictimization of women victims. They received information of special concern about acts of "corrective" violence against women who are lesbians, bisexual, and transgender, as well as sexual and institutional violence suffered by girls. The Rapporteurs recognized the efforts made by States and the technical assistance provided by the United Nations agencies, but they emphasized the importance of adopting a holistic approach mainstreaming a gender perspective in order to respond to and prevent violence against women and girls.
- On May 19 to 22, 2015, Commissioner Robinson participated in the First International Seminar on the Culture of Violence against Women in São Paulo, Brazil. The event was attended by experts, civil society organizations, and national and international institutions to discuss the cultural dimensions of violence against women and the change in culture that is needed, focusing on gender stereotypes, in order to prevent violence. In the framework of this trip, Commissioner Tracy Robinson met privately with LGBTI activists about the situation in Brazil.

⁸ Commissioner Robinson did not participate in the Jamaica component of this trip. The attorney specialist supporting the work of the Rapporteurship on Women accompanied this part of the trip.

- On August 10 to 15, 2015, Commissioner Tracy Robinson travelled to San José, Costa Rica, to hold meetings with various civil society organizations that are working for the rights of women and civil servants of the State of Costa Rica. On August 12, 2015, she attended the Conference on Sexual and Reproductive Rights: Progress and Challenges, organized by the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL), the Research Center for Women's Studies of the University of Costa Rica, the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman, and the National Women's Institute. On the same day, she delivered the Keynote Address, "Sexual and reproductive rights: Advances and challenges in the Americas", at the University of Costa Rica, San Pedro de Montes de Oca, Costa Rica.
- On August 20, 2015, the Rapporteurship participated as a panelist in the Seminar on Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Sexual and Reproductive Health: Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy in Chile from a Human Rights Perspective, held in Santiago, Chile. The organizations extending the invitation were the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Inter-agency Group on Gender and Human Rights of UN-Chile.
- On September 3, 2015, Commissioner Tracy Robinson delivered the keynote address at the Puerto Rican Congress on Human Rights, Gender and Sexuality. In the framework of this trip, on September 4, 2015, the Commissioner and her team met with authorities of the Attorney General's Office for Women and the Secretaries of Justice and Education of Puerto Rico to discuss priority issues on the situation of women's rights, LGBTI persons, education, and poverty, among others. That same day, she also met with civil society organizations, law professors, and victims of human rights violations at the Inter-American University of Puerto Rico School of Law.
- In the framework of the Dr. Héctor Fix-Zamudio Training Course in the Inter-American Human Rights System held in Mexico City, Commissioner Robinson participated, on September 7, 2015 in the Panel on Challenges of the Inter-American System: Dialogue between the Chair and former Chairs of the Court and Commission, and, on September 8, 2015, she delivered a lecture on "The Rights of Women and LGBTI Persons."
- On September 15, 2015, in Geneva, Switzerland, Commissioner Tracy Robinson participated in the Annual Panel Discussion on the integration of a gender perspective throughout the work of the Human Rights Council and that of its mechanisms, with a focus on gender parity.
- Commissioner Tracy Robinson promoted within the IACHR the organization of a joint event with the World Bank to present its report *Women, Business and the Law 2016*. The report was presented on October 23, 2015 and the event was attended by Augusto Lopez-Claros, Director of the World Bank's Global Indicators Department; Ambassador Jacinth Lorna Henry-Marin, Head of the Cabinet of the Secretary General of the OAS; Commissioner Tracy Robinson and Commissioner Paulo Vannuchi; and, as moderator, Assistant Executive Secretary of the IACHR, Elizabeth Abi-Mershed.
- On November 18, 2015, Commissioner Robinson participated in the Forum Toward the Elimination of Sexual Torture in Mexico: National and International Proposals and Outlooks in Mexico City, Mexico. The Forum was also attended by Rashida Manjoo, previous United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences, as well as various Mexican authorities.

17. During the period being reported on, Commissioner Tracy Robinson also participated in a joint statement with experts of the United Nations and the African Human Rights Commission, urging governments to take advantage of the occasion of adoption of the new upcoming United Nations 2030 Agenda

for Sustainable Development to renew their commitments and to guarantee respect for, as well as protection and full enforcement of, the right to health and sexual and reproductive rights. The following United Nations experts participated in the joint statement: Dainius Puras, Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; Michel Forst, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Dubravka Šimonović, Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences; and Eleonora Zielinska, Chair of the Working Group on the Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice; as well as experts of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, Reine Alapini-Gansou, Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, and Soyata Maiga, Special Rapporteur on Women's Rights.

3. Rapporteurship on the Rights of Migrants

18. The Rapporteurship is headed by Commissioner Felipe González.

19. The team that supports the Rapporteurship worked during this period on three thematic reports: the report on "Human Rights Situation of Families, Unaccompanied and Non-Migrant Refugee Boys and Girls in the United States of America;" the report on the situation of the Dominican Republic, which is currently being edited; and the report on "Human Rights of Migrants, Refugees, Stateless Persons, Victims of Human Trafficking, and Internally Displaced Persons. Norms and Standards of the Inter-American System."

20. As for the country and thematic reports, in the framework of the 155th session, on July 24, the Commission adopted the report on "Refugees and Migrants in the United States: Families and Unaccompanied Children." The report reviewed the measures that the United States has been adopting to address the exponential rise in the arrival of refugees and migrants into U.S. territory, especially families and unaccompanied boys and girls, coming from the countries of the Northern Triangle of Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras) and from Mexico since mid-2014. In greater detail, the report examines the impact that the actions taken by state agents have on access to procedures to identify the condition of the refugees, the automatic and widespread use of the migratory detention of families, the procedural guarantees in the framework of migratory procedures, and deportations in the light of the international human rights obligations of the United States of America.

21. In the framework of its 156th regular session, on October 22, 2015, the IACHR held the event for presenting the above-mentioned report at IACHR headquarters in Washington. At the panel for presenting the report, the following spoke: Commissioner Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, Chair of the IACHR; Commissioner Felipe González, Rapporteur on the Rights of Migrants and the Country Rapporteur for the United States; Commissioner Rosa María Ortiz, Rapporteur on the Rights of the Child; Emilio Álvarez-Icaza L., Executive Secretary of IACHR; Mary Giovagnoli, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Immigration Policy of the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS); Jennifer Podkul, Senior Program Officer for the Migrant Rights and Justice Program of the Women's Refugee Council (WRC); and Chiara Cardoletti-Carroll, Deputy Regional Representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Washington. This event benefited from the support of the Partnership for Migrations in Central America and Mexico (CAMMINA).

22. During the 156th regular session, the Rapporteurship also concluded a draft report on the Dominican Republic and a draft report on "Human Rights of Migrants, Refugees, Stateless Persons, Victims of Human Trafficking, and Internally Displaced Persons. Norms and Standards of the Inter-American System," which is in the process of being adopted by the Commission. The draft report on the Dominican Republic focuses on examining matters relative to the right to a nationality, the right to legal status, the right to equality and nondiscrimination with respect to persons of Haitian descent born in Dominican territory, as well as matters regarding the human rights of migrant persons in the Dominican Republic. Furthermore, the draft report entitled "Human Rights of Persons in the Context of Human Mobility: Standards of the Inter-American Human Rights System" represents the principal project developed by the IACHR in terms of identification, systematization, and review of the standards that the Inter-American Commission and Court have developed with respect to the rights of persons in the context of human mobility. This draft report conducts a wide-ranging review of the standards that have been set by the bodies of the Inter-American

System on the basis of case reports, judgments, consultative opinions, and thematic and country reports with respect to migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, stateless persons, victims of human trafficking, internally displaced persons, and persons subject to extradition.

23. The Rapporteurship participated in and carried out the following activities in 2015:
- On April 8, 2015, Commissioner Felipe González participated in the Colloquium “Migrant Children: the Advisory Opinion of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights”, organized by the Human Rights Centre of the Diego Portales University in Santiago, Chile.
 - In the framework of the Regional Forum on Freedom of Movement, International Protection, and Integration in Latin America held on April 28, 2015, the Rapporteurship gave a presentation on the rules and standards developed by the Inter-American Human Rights System with respect to the use of migratory detention. This forum was held in Quito, Ecuador, and was organized by the Public Defender's Office of Ecuador, the South America Chapter of the Inter-American Association of Public Defenders (AIDEF), UNCHR, the International Detention Coalition (IDC), Asylum Access Ecuador, and the Ecuador's National Institute for Advanced Studies (Instituto de Altos Estudios Nacionales—IAEN). The Forum was addressed to civil servants of the Public Defender's Offices, as well as members of human rights defense bodies and civil society organizations.
 - On May 7, 2015, the Caribbean Human Rights Center held the Third Forum on Human Rights at the Universidad del Norte in Barranquilla, Colombia. In the framework of this forum, the Rapporteurship made a presentation on its work and the mechanisms that IACHR has available to protect migrants and other persons in the context of human mobility in the Americas. The Forum was attended by university students, professors, members of legal clinics, and human rights defenders of Colombia's Caribbean region.
 - Commissioner Felipe González, Rapporteur on the Rights of Migrants, participated in a meeting of experts on "Moving away from the Death Penalty: Protection of the rights of persons facing the death penalty abroad, including migrants, organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on June 16-17, 2015 in Geneva, Switzerland. Commissioner González made a presentation on the standards developed by the Inter-American System with respect to the right to consular assistance for migrants and on the death penalty.
 - At the invitation of the UNCHR, the Rapporteurship participated in the Meeting on Brazil's Action Plan and the Role of Civil Society Organizations in the Americas on June 24-25, 2015 in Santo Tomás de Santo Domingo de Heredia, Costa Rica. In the framework of this meeting, the Rapporteurship made two presentations, the first on the various actions that the IACHR has been taking to promote and protect the right to a nationality and the elimination of statelessness in the Americas, and the second on the principal challenges identified in the region with respect to persons subject to international protection and the standards developed by the IACHR and the Inter-American Court to protect these persons. This activity was widely attended by members of civil society organizations from most countries of the Americas, UNCHR officials, and academics.
 - On August 10, 2015, in São Paulo, Brazil, the seminar on Migration and Brazil: Breakthroughs and Challenges for a New Law was held, organized by Conectas. In the framework of the seminar, Commissioner Felipe González, Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants, made a presentation on international human rights rules and standards for migrants. The seminar also tackled the situation of Brazil's migratory agenda, as well as the challenges in adopting a new Law on Migration that would be in line with the human rights obligations that Brazil has accepted to fulfill. The principal barriers preventing migrants from effectively exercising their rights were also addressed.

- On September 10 to 12, 2015, Commissioner Felipe Gonzalez, as Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants and Rapporteur for Venezuela, and Commissioner José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez, as Rapporteur for Colombia, as well as Executive Secretary Emilio Álvarez Icaza, and specialists of the IACHR Executive Secretariat, participated in a visit to Colombia's border with Venezuela. This visit was aimed at monitoring the human rights situations of Colombian migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers who had been deported or returned to Colombia after the closing of the main border crossing between San Antonio, state of Táchira, in Venezuela, and Cúcuta, department of Norte de Santander, in Colombia, on August 19, 2015, and after the declaration of a state of exception by the President of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, on August 21, 2015.
- On September 18, 2015, in Mexico City, Mexico, the Rapporteurship participated in the Meeting of the Advisory Council of the Performance Protocol for those who impart justice in cases involving migrants subject to international protection. This meeting was organized by Sin Fronteras I.A.P., under the auspices of the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation of Mexico, and was attended by other representatives of the Advisory Council, such as the Legal and Social Studies Center (Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales—CELS) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR).
- In the framework of the 156th period of sessions of the IACHR, on October 19, Commissioner Felipe González Morales met with various nongovernmental organizations of the region working to promote and protect the human rights of persons under the mandate of the Rapporteurship on the Human Rights of Migrants. At the meeting, which took place at IACHR headquarters, the Rapporteur and the organizations discussed some of the principal challenges in terms of the human rights of migrants and their families, asylum seekers, refugees, stateless persons, victims of human trafficking, and internally displaced persons, as well as other groups of vulnerable persons in the context of human mobility.
- On October 21, 2015, the Rapporteurship made a presentation in the framework of the Working Meeting on Best Legal Practices to Protect the Human Rights of Migrants Subject to International Protection, organized by Sin Fronteras I.A.P. in Washington D.C. This working meeting was also sponsored and attended by the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation of Mexico, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR), and Asylum Access Ecuador.
- On October 22, 2015, Commissioner Felipe Gonzalez made a presentation on the principal challenges for the prevention and elimination of statelessness in the Americas in the framework of the First Annual Conference of the Americas Network on Nationality and Statelessness (Red de las Américas sobre Nacionalidad y Apatridia—ANA). This conference was convened by the Americas Network on Nationality and Statelessness (ANA), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Open Society Justice Initiative, and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. It was held at the Commission's headquarters in Washington, D.C., United States. At this first annual conference, there were presentations by Eduardo Freitas de Oliveira, Representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, and Waleska Abusada, Representative of the Department of Aliens and Migration of Chile, who made presentations about the actions and best practices that Brazil and Chile have been developing to prevent and eliminate statelessness.
- On October 29 and 30, 2015, Commissioner Felipe González, Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants, and Commissioner Tracy Robinson, Country Rapporteur for The Bahamas, participated in a series of academic activities organized by the Eugene Dupuch Law School and The College of The Bahamas in Nassau, The Bahamas. On October 29, they participated in a panel on the Inter-American Human Rights System and the Caribbean. On the following day, on Friday, October 30, they participated as judges in a moot court on the Inter-American

Human Rights System organized by the Eugene Dupuch Law School with students attending that school. On the occasion of this visit, Commissioner Robinson and Commissioner González held a meeting of protocol with the Minister of Legal Affairs of The Bahamas, Damian Gomez; the Parliamentary Secretary for the Department of Immigration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cleola Hamilton; and the Director of Immigration, William Pratt.

- On November 25, 2015, Commissioner Felipe González participated in the Specialization in Migration and Asylum from a Human Rights Perspective, of the National University of Lanús, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- In the framework of the International Seminar on Migrations, Nationality, and Human Rights: Trends and Challenges in South America held on December 1, 2015, Commissioner Felipe González made a presentation on the right to nationality and the situation of stateless persons in the region. This seminar was organized by the Legal and Social Studies Center (Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales—CELS), Chile's Jesuit Service for Migrants, the Human Rights Center of the Universidad Diego Portales and the Universidad Alberto Hurtado of Chile. The Seminar was attended by experts from international agencies of the Inter-American System and the United Nations System; government representatives of Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Chile, and Paraguay; as well as academics, researchers, and representatives of nongovernmental organizations.

4. Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child

24. The Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child is headed by Commissioner Rosa María Ortiz.

25. This year, the Rapporteurship has finalized the process of drafting the regional thematic report on "Violence, Children, and Organized Crime," which has been recently adopted by the IACHR. The report addresses the impact that the activities of organized crime and violent youth gangs have on the rights of children and adolescents in the region; it highlights how the latter are used, exploited, manipulated, and coerced by these organizations; it identifies the principal responses provided by States to address violence and organized crime and reduce violence and criminality, as well as to control and repress these activities; it refers to actions aimed at preventing adolescents from becoming involved in these groups, as well as programs to separate and protect the victims from them; and it identifies problematic aspects of some of the current responses of States and makes recommendations for the adoption of public policies for citizen safety with emphasis on the rights of the child. For the drafting of said report, the Rapporteurship benefited from the financial support of the nongovernmental organization Plan International.

26. The Rapporteurship has also started to draft a new regional thematic report on the functioning of National Systems for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child, with support from the nongovernmental organization World Vision. The above-mentioned report is aimed at analyzing how National Systems to Guarantee the Rights of the Child operate in the region and what are the principal challenges or flaws they are facing, as well as identifying the principles and standards that are applicable to these systems and making recommendations that can help States safeguard the rights of the child by ensuring the adequate functioning of these systems. In the course of drafting this report, the Rapporteurship made two visits to gather technical information about the practical functioning of these systems in Brazil and Bolivia, in addition to drawing up a questionnaire to be distributed among the States and civil society organizations.

27. The Rapporteurship also collaborated in the preparation of the report on *Refugees and Migrants in the United States: Families and Unaccompanied Children*, prepared by the Rapporteurship on the Rights of Migrants. The Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child is completing a report on *Adolescents treated as adults by the United States criminal system*. It has also started the process of preparation of a report on The Media and the rights of boys and girls, in conjunction with the Special Rapporteurship on Freedom of Expression.

28. The Rapporteurship participated in and carried out the following activities in 2015:
- On February 2 and 3, 2015, an Expert Meeting on Children in the Adult Criminal Justice System in the United States was held in Washington, D.C. The meeting was organized by the Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child to prepare for the IACHR thematic report on this subject, with the participation of nine experts. The initiative arose after the presentation of a thematic hearing with the IACHR about situations in which adolescents under 18 years of age can be tried and convicted as adults in the criminal system and imprisoned in centers for adults, with a marked over-representation of Afrodescendant and Latino adolescents. In these cases, severe situations of violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect are evident in adult centers, including sexual violence and solitary confinement, without any effective possibility for rehabilitation and social reintegration.
 - On February 3 to 5, 2015, the Rapporteurship visited Washington, D.C., United States. The purpose of the visit was to receive information about and observe the situation of adolescents treated as if they were adults in the criminal justice system of the District of Columbia, as well as the conditions of adolescents in adult detention centers. This visit was part of a series of visits to various states in the United States for the purpose of drafting a thematic report on this subject. During the visit, the delegation met with District of Columbia officials, civil society organizations, as well as young people previously incarcerated in the adult criminal system, in addition to a visit to a juvenile detention center where it met with staff and incarcerated adolescents.
 - On February 9 and 10, 2015, the Rapporteur participated in the Meeting of Military Justice of the Union with the Inter-American Court and Commission on Human Rights, organized by the Superior Military Court of Brazil in the framework of which it made a presentation on the rights of children and adolescents living in contexts of insecurity and violence. In the presentation, it presented human rights standards with regard to public security, especially with respect to concerns about assigning homeland security activities to the armed forces. It also highlighted the importance of increasing the duties of preventing and reducing violence, along with the traditional duties of controlling and repressing crime and lawbreaking.
 - On April 13, 14, and 15, 2015, the Rapporteurship made a promotional trip to Honduras at the invitation of UNICEF and World Vision to follow up on the situation of children affected by the country's conditions of violence and insecurity and the conditions of adolescents deprived of liberty, as well as to examine the measures to protect migrant and returning children. Information on the functioning of the new National System for the Protection of Children and the National Commission for the Gradual and Progressive Elimination of Child Labor was gathered. Meetings were held with government authorities, judges, and civil society organizations.
 - On April 16, 2015, the Rapporteurship participated in the Regional Meeting of UNICEF Representatives in San Pedro Sula, Honduras. The meeting was aimed at conducting a review of the principal challenges that children are addressing on the continent in order to draw up strategic planning and identify the priorities for UNICEF's work over the next five years. Among the problems that were highlighted, the contexts of violence and insecurity in various countries of the region because of the presence of drug trafficking and organized crime were identified, as well as the challenge of protecting migrant children.
 - On May 25, 2015, the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography, the Rapporteurship and the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Violence against Children, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography, and UNICEF joined forces to

urge the States of the region that have not done so as yet to ratify the Protocol. The principal initiative was to send a joint letter to the States of the region.

- On July 1 to 3, 2015, the Rapporteurship traveled to Brasilia and São Paulo, Brazil, to promote the rights of children and adolescents in the country and to voice concern about the proposed amendment to the Constitution to lower the age of criminal responsibility from 18 to 16 years of age in the case of felonies. In the framework of the visit, emphasis was laid on the need to strengthen prevention measures as well as the rehabilitation and social reinsertion goal of the juvenile justice system, which entails increasing and reinforcing community-based socio-educational measures that do not deprive juveniles of their liberty. During her visit, Commissioner Rosa Maria Ortiz was welcomed by members of parliament and senators and met with civil society organizations, religious leaders, and adolescents, among whom were some who had been incarcerated. In addition, she participated in a public hearing with the Legislative Assembly of the State of São Paulo (ALESP) which was convened by the Chair of the Human Rights Commission of ALESP and by the organization World Vision. During the visit, the Rapporteur gave various interviews on television and radio, as well as in the press.
- On July 6 and 7, 2015, Commissioner Ortiz participated as the keynote speaker at a global consultation of experts on armed violence in the community and its impact on the rights of children and adolescents, organized by the Office of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Violence against Children, UNICEF, and the Government of the Republic of Honduras, in San Pedro Sula, Honduras. The Rapporteurship had the opportunity to share its principal observations on how violence arising from activities of organized crime impact children and adolescents in the region. After the consultation, the Rapporteur also met with Honduran authorities in Tegucigalpa with respect to the climate of insecurity and violence that is being experienced in the country and how the rights of the child are being affected.
- On July 8 and 9, 2015, the Rapporteurship attended the annual meeting of the regional directors of the organizations that are members of the Latin American and Caribbean Chapter of the Global Movement for Children that was held in Panama City. The purpose of the participation was to share the priorities of the Rapporteurship and further develop elements of cooperation between civil society organizations and the Rapporteurship for the fulfillment of its mandate, as well as explore opportunities for collaboration in projects and for the funding of certain activities.
- On August 17 and 18, 2015, at the invitation of the Minister of Justice of the Province of Santa Fe, in the Republic of Argentina, the Rapporteurship participated in various working meetings with officials of the Government of the Province of Santa Fe and the Under-Secretariat of Criminal Affairs of the Ministry of Justice, in the city of Rosario, for the purpose of reviewing international standards regarding adolescent criminal offenders and restorative justice. Rapporteur Rosa María Ortiz also met with the Governor of the Province and with the Mayor of the city of Rosario.
- On September 8, 2015, Commissioner Rosa María Ortiz delivered a lecture in the framework of the Dr. Héctor Fix-Zamudio Training Course in the Inter-American Human Rights System of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, in Mexico City, focusing on protecting the rights of the child. On September 9, 2015, the Rapporteur made a presentation to civil society organizations entitled "The Inter-American Human Rights Commission: New Times, Old Challenges," also in Mexico City, Mexico.
- On September 10, 2015, the Rapporteurship was invited by the Human Rights Commission of the Federal District of Mexico to participate in two working forums with officials of this body, civil society organizations, and academics. The first forum focused on the main trends

and problems with respect to rights of the child in the region and Mexico, and included information about the mandates of the IACHR and the Rapporteurship in promoting and safeguarding the rights of the child. The second working forum focused on sexual and reproductive rights of adolescents and the sexual violence against them. On that same day, the Rapporteur met with about 20 civil society organizations at a working meeting convened by the Network for the Rights of the Child in Mexico (Red por los Derechos de la Infancia en México—REDIM) to examine various subjects regarding the protection of the rights of the child and the standards of the Inter-American System.

- The Rapporteurship drew up a hypothetical case for the Second International Contest "Medellín Protects Human Rights," organized by the Office of the Mayor of Medellín, the Colombian Human Rights Institute (Instituto Colombiano de Derechos Humanos—ICDH), and the Salazar y Herrera University Institute, under the auspices of the IACHR. This contest has been organized for the purpose of fostering the study, dissemination, promotion, and training in the field of human rights with special emphasis on procedures for the bodies of the Inter-American Human Rights System. The invitation to participate in the contest was extended to students of all law schools of Latin America. The present edition of the contest focuses on the State's prevention and protection obligations with respect to children in the face of organized crime in the framework of international human rights law.
- On September 24, 2015, the Rapporteurship presented the principal findings, recommendations, and standards developed by the IACHR in the report on "The Right of Boys and Girls to a Family. Alternative Care. Ending Institutionalization in the Americas" in the framework of the fifth edition of the Training Course on Public Policies for Early Childhood of the Organization of Ibero-American States.
- On September 28, 2015, the Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child, the ESCR Unit, and the Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression met with Patrick Geary, UNICEF Specialist on Corporate Social Responsibility and Rights of the Child, and with two representatives of the International Corporate Accountability Roundtable (ICAR) to dialogue about the opportunities for collaboration, especially in the framework of drafting a regional thematic report on the rights of the child and the media, in addition to other subjects of common interest.
- On November 5, 2015 the Rapporteur gave a conference on "The Rights of children and adolescents" in Medellín, Colombia, at the invitation of the Colombian Institute of Human Rights.
- On November 16 to 20, 2015, the Rapporteurship visited Brazil for the purpose of observing and compiling information about the practical functioning of the National System for the Promotion and Protection of Rights in that country, at the federal, state, and local levels. The Rapporteurship held a large number of meetings with authorities of the bodies that are members of the above-mentioned system, civil society organizations, and children and adolescents, in addition to directly observing how various policies, services, and programs are integrated at various levels to provide comprehensive protection to children and adolescents.
- On November 24, 2015, the Rapporteurship participated in the seminar organized by the Niñosur Working Group, in the framework of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR). The seminar dealt with the topic of "Protecting children against violence in a new sustainable development agenda: Promoting humane treatment and forbidding every kind of physical and humiliating punishment of children and adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean" emphasizing the standards developed in the Inter-American Human Rights System for the protection of children against all forms of violence in all spheres.

- On November 29 to December 4, the Rapporteurship visited Bolivia to gather information about how the National Rights Promotion and Protection System is organized and functions in that country, in the framework of which it met with various authorities and civil society organizations. The information shall be used in the process of drafting a regional report on the functioning of the above-mentioned systems in the region.

5. Rapporteurship on Human Rights Defenders

29. The Rapporteurship on Human Rights Defenders is headed by Commissioner José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez.

30. The Rapporteurship has continued to carry out activities throughout 2015 to focus on the following issues in the region: (i) the misuse of criminal law to criminalize human rights defenders; (ii) the prevalence of forms of violence against persons who are human rights defenders in the region, which has recorded a high number of aggressions, threats, and killings, as well as an absence of investigation, processing, and punishment, and criminalization of the activity of defending human rights; (iii) the situation of threats and killings of the administrators of justice in the region; (iv) restrictions on the freedom of association and assembly; (v) the situation of special vulnerability and risk of the defenders of women, indigenous peoples, the LGBTI population, and the environment; (vi) the absence of guarantees for the independence of administrators of justice; and (vii) the absence of sufficient and adequate mechanisms to structurally address the situation of risk in which persons who are human rights defenders find themselves.

31. In 2015, in view of the escalating and persistent criminalization of human rights defenders in various countries of the region, the Rapporteurship drafted a report on the “Criminalization of Human Rights Defenders through the Misuse of Criminal Law.” The report examines how criminal law is applied against defenders as retaliation for their work of defending and promoting human rights and includes recommendations to States on how to prevent and respond to this severe human rights problem. The report also strives to conceptualize the problem of criminalization by identifying contexts where the misuse of criminal law is observed and the stakeholders intervening in this process, as well as the principal forms of criminalization and their after-effects. The report also includes recommendations that can serve as guidelines for States to tackle this severe problem, including the need to recognize, promote, and educate society about the importance of its role; the need to adopt laws and policies that are in line with the principle of legality; and the need to use reasonable means to prevent the misuse of precautionary measures such as pre-trial detention, among other strategies. The Commission thanks the support of the Open Society Foundations and the Trust for the Americas for the translation, publication, and dissemination of this report.

32. In that respect, this year the Rapporteurship on Human Rights Defenders started to implement a project funded by Open Society Foundations, aimed at addressing the two most important challenges being faced by defenders: criminalization and the absence of adequate protection mechanisms. As part of this project, the Rapporteurship shall be in charge of: 1) publishing and disseminating the report about the criminalization of defenders, especially in three countries of the hemisphere; 2) monitoring the obstacles and violations that persons who defend human rights in their daily work must face and identifying strategies for IACHR to respond; and 3) drafting a report examining current national protection mechanisms for human rights defenders in various countries of the region, including a detailed review of progress, challenges, and guidelines that enhance future responses, among other outputs and activities.

33. The Rapporteurship participated in and carried out the following activities in 2015:

- On February 10 2015, the Rapporteur delivered a presentation on “Mecanismos de protección a las defensoras y los defensores a cargo de la Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos” en el Encuentro de la Justicia Militar de la Unión con la Comisión y la Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, celebrado en Brasilia, República Federal de Brasil, y organizado por el Tribunal Superior Militar del Poder Judicial.

- In the framework of the 154th regular session of the IACHR, Commissioner Orozco Henríquez met with human rights defenders who were attending the public hearings before the Commission, with a view to learning about their main issues of concern, as well as to receive feedback regarding the work carried out by the Rapporteurship.
- On May 4, 2015, during a mission to Colombia, Rapporteur Orozco Henríquez was present at the IV National Seminar on Friendly Settlements, where he attended the inauguration and participated in the first panel, where he and Executive Secretary Alvarez Icaza delivered a briefing on the mandate, functions and mechanisms of protection of the IACHR as well as on the impact of friendly settlement procedures. The event took place in Bogota and was organized by the Externado University of Colombia, with participation by the head of the National Agency for the Legal Defense of the state, civil servants, academics, and human rights defenders from that country.
- On May 11 2015, the Rapporteur participated in the First Inter-American Human Rights Observatory titled “Human Rights Protection. A dialogue between America and Europe”, both at the inaugural ceremony as well as the first panel, where the challenges faced by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights were addressed; for his part, Judge Eduardo Ferrer MacGregor dealt with those pertaining to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. The event took place in Saltillo, Coahuila, México, organized by the Inter-American Human Rights Academy of the Autonomous University of Coahuila.
- On June 15, 2015, the Rapporteur participated in a meeting of the International Organization of La Francophonie (IOF), aimed at achieving greater collaboration between the various mechanisms to protect human rights defenders, as well as the adoption of the conclusions reached at the inter-mechanisms meeting in November 2014, which are geared to ensuring a more effective protection of human rights defenders.
- On June 16, 2015, in the Palais des Nations in Geneva, the Rapporteur attended an event on "Reprisals and Attacks against Human Rights Defenders: Enhancing Accountability for Violations." Both events were attended by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders in Africa, representatives of the Office of the Commissioner of Human Rights of the Council of Europe, the focal point on defenders of the OSCE/ODHIR, as well as the FIDH and OMCT.
- As part of the Dr. Héctor Fix-Zamudio Training Course in the Inter-American Human Rights System of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) in Mexico City, the Rapporteur participated as Academic Coordinator of the Program and also as speaker on various panels, on August 27 to September 11, 2015, as Second Vice-Chair and Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders of the IACHR. Specifically he presented aspects of the IACHR's functioning, including its origins, mandate, structure, and mechanisms; the challenges of the Inter-American System; and the rights of human rights defenders.
- On September 8 2015, the Rapporteur participated in the event called “The Inter-American System of Human Rights. New Times, New Challenges” at the invitation of several human rights defense organizations of America. He spoke at the panel that focused on a political view of the current situation of the IAHRs, at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, with participation by human rights defenders of the region, academics and inter-American Judges and Commissioners.
- On November 4 to 6, 2015, the Rapporteurship participated in the Eighth Dublin Platform for Human Rights Defenders. The event was attended by more than 118 defenders from various countries, including Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, Paraguay, and Venezuela, among other countries of the Americas. This Platform was aimed at

providing an opportunity for human rights defenders from all over the world to share their work and experiences, as well as strategies to prevent and mitigate the risks they are facing.

- On November 11 to 13, 2015, the Rapporteurship participated in a symposium on the situation of human rights defenders in Venezuela. The event took place in Guatemala City and the Rapporteurship took advantage of the opportunity to present information about the functioning of the mechanisms of the Inter-American Human Rights System to protect the work of human rights defenders.
- On November 26 2015, the Rapporteur participated in the XLII Regular National Congress of the Mexican Federation of Public Human Rights Organs, where he spoke about the mechanisms of protection for human rights victims from an inter-American perspective. The event took place in Mazatlán, Sinaloa, México, with the attendance of the ombudspersons at the national level as well as those for each of the 31 federal states of the country.
- On December 2, 2015, the Rapporteurship participated in an international roundtable in Mexico City, Mexico, organized by the Meso-American Human Rights Defenders Initiative. The general objective of the roundtable was to exchange local, national, regional, and international experiences about comprehensive protection with the gender perspective needed for women defenders of human rights to enhance their security and prevent violations of their right to life and personal integrity.

6. Rapporteurship on the Rights of Persons Deprived of Liberty

34. The Rapporteurship is headed by Commissioner James L. Cavallaro.

35. In the course of carrying out its activities, the Rapporteurship has identified a series of major challenges in the region, to which it continues to give special emphasis: (i) the misuse of pre-trial detention in most States of the region, which directly impacts overcrowding in prisons; (ii) principal challenges in implementing alternatives to pre-trial detention; (iii) situation of overcrowding and overpopulation; (iv) conditions of incarceration that do not safeguard the life and personal integrity of inmates; (v) absence of mechanisms to fully guarantee the human rights of groups and populations living situations of greater vulnerability, such as women, indigenous peoples, persons of African descent, LGBTI persons, children and adolescents; (vi) corruption and absence of transparency in the management of penitentiaries; and (vii) the situation of economic, social, and cultural rights of persons deprived of liberty.

36. The Rapporteurship has focused significant attention on identifying best practices in the management of detention centers in the region. In this regard, it has identified detention centers that have reduced internal levels of violence, including uprisings, hostage crises and escape attempts, through the implementation of rights-respecting systems of control. The Rapporteurship has observed that radical differences in outcomes in this regard are related to detention system practices and governance models, rather than investment in physical infrastructure. The Rapporteur expects to continue to work with states to implement measures to improve conditions in detention centers, in terms of security and human rights by improving management, rather than by investment in prison infrastructure alone.

37. At present, the Rapporteurship on the Rights of Persons Deprived of Liberty is in the process of implementing a project funded by Spain aimed at promoting the implementation of integral public policies that would make it possible to reduce the use of pre-trial detention in the Americas and foster the use of alternatives to pre-trial detention. To achieve this goal, the Rapporteurship shall draft a follow-up report on the recommendations made by the IACHR in its report on the "Use of Pre-Trial Detention in the Americas." This report shall include, in turn, a practical guide to adjust the use of pre-trial detention to international human rights standards, mainly focusing on the application of alternatives to pre-trial detention. In the framework of this project, various visits, talks, and consultations shall be organized with experts on the

subject of reducing pre-trial detention in the region, a questionnaire shall be circulated to gather information, and hearings shall be convened to focus on this subject.

38. The Rapporteurship participated in and conducted the following activities in 2015:
- Commissioner James L. Cavallaro visited Panama on June 17 to 19, 2015. During his trip, the Rapporteur visited the prisons of "La Joya" and "La Joyita" to observe how persons deprived of liberty could be transferred to the prison "La Nueva Joya" in keeping with human rights. He also met with national authorities having jurisdiction in this matter, the directors and staff of penitentiaries, and representatives of civil society. On November 12 and 13, 2015, the Rapporteur made a second working visit to Panama. The Rapporteurship is working with the Deputy Minister of the Interior and other government authorities to identify how the country's penitentiaries can be restructured.
 - On August 21, 2015, the Rapporteurship participated in a videoconference organized by Bolivia's Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights entitled "International Standards on Pre-Trial Detention and Human Rights," aimed at administrators of criminal justice (judges, prosecutors, and ministries of justice).
 - In follow-up to the visit to Mexico in September 2014, Commissioner James L. Cavallaro, as Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons Deprived of Liberty, visited Mexico on September 22 to 24, 2015. During his trip, the Rapporteur visited both federal and state penitentiaries in Mexico City and its outskirts, and met with representatives of civil society.
 - In the framework of the onsite visit to Mexico, on September 28 to October 2, 2105, the Rapporteurship on the Rights of Persons Deprived of Liberty focused on gathering and processing information on the torture of prisoners when first detained, the misuse of pre-trial detention, use of the legal mechanism "quasi flagrante delicto" (*flagrancia equiparada*), and regulation of pre-charge detention (*arraigo*).
 - On October 5, 2015, Commissioner James J. Cavallaro participated in the International Symposium on Carceral Worlds and Human Rights across the Americas organized by Stanford University and Cornell University and held at the latter. The purpose of this symposium was to present the principal challenges being faced by persons deprived of liberty and the measures that would make it possible to ensure better detention conditions. He also participated in a workshop aimed at discussing experiences relative to the system of self-government in prisons in the Americas.
 - On November 5-6, 2015, the Rapporteurship participated in the consultation of experts on the gender perspective regarding torture and mistreatment, convened by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Juan Méndez, and held at the Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law of the American University Washington College of Law.
 - Rapporteur Cavallaro visited the Lurigancho penitentiary in the outskirts of Lima, Perú, on November 17 and 18, 2015.
 - On November 19, 2015, Commissioner Cavallaro participated in the academic exchange session organized by Dejusticia and the Global Justice and Human Rights Program of the University of the Andes held in Bogotá, Colombia. At this session, the criminal and penitentiary systems were addressed, among other subjects. On the same date, Commissioner Cavallaro met with judicial authorities to discuss implementation of Judgment T-388 of the Constitutional Court, which deals with conditions on detention.

7. **Rapporteurship on the Rights of Persons of African Descent and against Racial Discrimination**

39. The Chair and Commissioner Rose Marie Antoine is at the head of the Rapporteurship on the Rights of Persons of African Descent and against Racial Discrimination.

40. The Rapporteurship continues to work to tackle the following challenges: (i) widespread inter-related and structural discrimination and racism against persons of African descent; (ii) specific vulnerability of persons of a given racial or ethnic origin to becoming victims of excessive use of force by the police and other forms of criminalization; (iii) the existence of laws, administrative practices, and court decisions disproportionately undermining the capacity of persons or population groups of a given ethnic or racial origin to exercise their human rights; and (iv) obstacles to the exercise of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of persons of African descent.

41. During this period, along with the Rapporteurship on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Rapporteurship worked on drafting a thematic report on the human rights of indigenous peoples and persons of African descent in the context of extraction, investment, and development projects in the Americas. The report provides a preliminary approach to these matters, aimed at consolidating legal standards on this issue at the level of the Inter-American Human Rights System; enhancing the visibility of human rights violations committed in this sphere; and identifying key challenges that call for the attention of the Inter-American Commission and the States. The Rapporteurship has also been working to draft a report focusing on the disproportionate use of force by the police against Afro-American persons in the United States and the human rights implication of this severe problem. The report shall refer to information compiled by the IACHR and the most recent flagship cases in the United States shall be examined.

42. The Rapporteurship participated in and carried out the following activities in 2015:

- On August 10 to 12, 2015, Chair Rose-Marie Antoine traveled to the cities of Cali and Bogotá, Colombia, to receive information about the human rights situation of Afro-Colombian persons. In the framework of the visit, she met with various authorities and with representatives of civil society who work on matters relative to persons of African descent. At the same time, Commissioner Antoine participated in an academic event that was held in the ICESI University of Cali, delivering a lecture on the rights of persons of African descent in the Inter-American System. During her visit, there was also a workshop on the legal mechanisms of the Inter-American Commission and Court aimed at students, attorneys, and community leaders, focusing on protecting and promoting the rights of persons of African descent.
- Chair Rose-Marie Antoine visited the states of Missouri, Louisiana, and Florida on September 21 to 25, 2015, to closely examine the issues of racial discrimination and poverty in the United States and gather information for drafting the report on the disproportionate use of force by the police against Afro-American persons in the country. The delegation visited the localities of Ferguson, St. Louis, New Orleans, Sanford, Orlando, and Miami, and met with government authorities and police departments, as well as with civil society organizations, activists, students, members of the academic sector, and victims of incidents of police violence, as well as their next of kin. This visit took place thanks to support from the European Union and the regional initiative on poverty and human rights spearheaded by the IACHR Unit on economic, social, and cultural rights.
- On November 23, 2015, Chair Rose-Marie Antoine participated in the Eighth Session of the Forum on Minority Issues organized by the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland. She also participated in a parallel event on November 26.

- On December 3-4, 2015, in Brasilia, Brazil, Chair Rose-Marie Antoine participated in a Regional Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean as part of the activities organized by the United Nations to commemorate the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024). This event was organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

8. Rapporteurship on the Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Persons

43. Commissioner Tracy Robinson is at the head of the Rapporteurship on the Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Persons.

44. The Rapporteurship on the Rights of LGBTI Persons continue to work to tackle a series of challenges that it has identified in the region, including: (i) prevalence of forms of violence against LGBTI persons in the hemisphere, including physical, psychological, sexual, economic, and institutional violence, as well as other manifestations; (ii) failure to fulfill the duty to act with due diligence, including prevention, investigation, punishment, and reparations for human rights violations affecting LGBTI persons; (iii) multiple forms of discrimination and intersectionality (for example, indigenous and persons of African descent with disabilities and/or HIV/AIDS); and (iv) obstacles for LGBTI persons to exercise their political, economic, social, and cultural rights.

45. On November 12, 2015, the IACHR adopted the first regional report on the rights of LGBTI people in the Americas. The Report, entitled *Violence against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Persons in the Americas* ("Violence against LGBTI Persons"), was drafted by the Rapporteur and is comprised of seven chapters that address the problem of violence perpetrated against LGBTI persons by state and non-state agents, focusing on physical violence and the absence of an effective response by the State to address it, thus failing to fulfill the duties of States to prevent, investigate, punish, and compensate for this violence. This report develops the concept of violence as a result of prejudice against persons with sexual orientations, identities, and gender manifestations that are non-normative or whose bodies differ from the regular "feminine" and "masculine" corporal standard. In the present report, the IACHR observes that, although substantial progress in recognizing the rights of LGBTI persons has been recorded in various countries of the region, there continue to be high rates of violence against them in all of the region's countries, a violence that is noteworthy for its high degree of viciousness and cruelty. The IACHR also found that the large majority of killings and acts of violence against LGBTI persons went unpunished and identified the most substantial obstacles to access of LGBTI persons and their families to justice. As explained below, in 2015, there were two launching activities in the region: on November 30 in El Salvador and on December 7 in Uruguay.

46. The Rapporteurship participated in and carried out the following activities in 2015:

- On February 25, 2015, the Rapporteurship gave a presentation at the Regional Workshop on the Role of National Human Rights Institutions in Promoting and Protecting the Human Rights of LGBTI People in Asia and the Pacific, jointly organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF). The Workshop took place in Bangkok, Thailand.
- On February 26, 2015, also in Bangkok, Thailand, the Rapporteurship gave a presentation for the opening panel of the Regional Dialogue on LGBTI Human Rights and Health in the Asia-Pacific, which was attended by more than 200 representatives of the State, community leaders, members of civil society organizations, and international experts. The Conference was part of an initiative developed by UNDP entitled "Being LGBT in Asia."
- On March 31, 2015, the Executive Secretary of the IACHR, Emilio Álvarez Icaza Longoria, participated as speaker at a panel organized to celebrate the International Transgender Day of Visibility at OAS headquarters.

- On April 8, 2015, the Rapporteurship gave a presentation at the panel discussion on Children's Rights in LGBT Families in Latin America, organized by the Impact Litigation Project and Lambda Law Society from American University Washington College of Law.
- On May 14, 2015, the Rapporteurship participated in a panel for the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia at OAS headquarters in Washington, D.C., aimed at OAS staff and the general public.
- On May 19, 2015, Rapporteur Tracy Robinson met with various LGBT organizations, defenders, and activists in Sao Paulo, Brazil, to discuss the principal concerns and challenges of protecting and recognizing the rights of LGBT persons in Brazil.
- On June 12, 2015, the Rapporteurship participated in a panel at the White House Conversation on Combating Bias-Motivated Violence against LGBT Persons in the Americas in Washington, D.C. On that same day, the Rapporteurship gave a talk on the Inter-American Human Rights System and the Rapporteurship on the Rights of LGBTI Persons to more than 35 representatives of civil society organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean, which are part of the Coalition of LGBTTTTI Organizations working in the framework of the OAS.
- On June 15, 2015, in the framework of the General Assembly of the OAS in Washington, D.C., the Chair of the IACHR, Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, met with the representatives of civil society organizations that defend the rights of LGBTI persons in Latin America and the Caribbean and which are part of the Coalition of LGBTTTTI Organizations working in the framework of the OAS. At this meeting, the challenges being faced by LGBTI persons in the region with respect to recognizing and safeguarding their human rights were discussed, in view of the discrimination and violence to which they are subjected by both state and non-state agents.
- On July 7, 2015, the Rapporteurship participated as a panelist in the Regional Consultative Meeting on Strategic Litigation in Africa for the Advancement of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity/Expression (SOGIE), organized by the nongovernmental organization Initiative for Strategic Litigation in Africa (ISLA) and held in Johannesburg, South Africa, on July 6 to 8, 2015.
- On July 20, 2015, Rapporteur Tracy Robinson and the team that supports the Rapporteurship held an exchange meeting with Randy Berry, U.S. State Department Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBT Persons. The meeting was also attended by staff of the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Mission to the OAS.
- On August 12, 2015, at IACHR headquarters, the Rapporteurship, along with staff from the IACHR Protection Group, participated in a workshop specifically organized for women leaders of organizations that defend the rights of transgender persons of El Salvador, focusing on the mechanism of precautionary measures.
- On September 4, 2015, the Rapporteurship was invited to speak at the closing session of the First International Congress and Fifth National Congress of Homo-Affective Law in Rio de Janeiro by the Homo-Affective Law Commission (Comissão Direito Homoafetivo—CDHO) of the Bar Association of Brazil (Colegio de Advogados de Brasil—OABRJ), which took place on September 2 to 4, 2015.
- On September 3, 2015, Rapporteur Tracy Robinson delivered a keynote address on the rights of LGBTI persons and women's rights in a Congress on Human Rights, Gender, and Sexuality organized by the Civil Rights Commission of Puerto Rico, in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

- On September 7, 2015, in Mexico City, Rapporteur Tracy Robinson spoke about the rights of LGBTI persons at the Third Dr. Héctor Fix-Zamudio Training Course in the Inter-American Human Rights System. On September 8, 2015, Rapporteur Tracy Robinson delivered a keynote address on violence against LGBTI persons at an event organized by the Human Rights Commission of the Supreme Court of Justice of Mexico in Tabasco, Mexico.
- On September 17, 2015, the Rapporteurship gave a presentation at the First Expert Meeting on ending human rights violations against intersex persons, convened by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which took place on September 16 and 17, 2015 in Geneva. Rapporteur Tracy Robinson also attended the meeting. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein delivered the opening remarks for the meeting.
- On September 16, 2015, the Rapporteurship participated as a speaker in the Organization of American States Model held in the Universidad del Norte in Barranquilla on September 16 to 18, 2015. The subject of discussion at this Model was "Initiatives to Promote Tolerance and Eliminate Discrimination against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Persons (LGBTI) in the Hemisphere." The Rapporteurship focused its presentation on basic notions of sex assigned at birth, gender identity, gender expression, and gender orientation; and OAS resolutions on human rights and sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.
- On October 20, 2015, at IACHR headquarters, Rapporteur Tracy Robinson met with Randy Berry, U.S. State Department Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBT Persons.
- On November 3, 2015, in Banjul, The Gambia, Rapporteur Tracy Robinson, IACHR Chair for 2015, Commissioner Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, and the Assistant Executive Secretary of the IACHR, Elizabeth Abi-Mershed, participated in a panel on sexual orientation, gender identity, and human rights. Members of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), representatives of UNAIDS, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and independent UN rapporteur experts participated in the dialogue.
- On November 3, 2015, the Rapporteurship participated as a panelist at the Fourth Legal Congress on Sexual and Reproductive Rights held in Lima, Peru, which was convened by the Association of Judges for Justice and Democracy (Asociación de Jueces por la Justicia y la Democracia—JUSDEM) and the Andean Commission of Jurists (Comisión Andina de Juristas). The Rapporteurship addressed issues of access to justice for women victims of sexual violence, including lesbian, bisexual, trans, and intersex women in the region.
- On November 20, 2015, Rapporteur Tracy Robinson participated as a panelist at the event entitled "Protecting the Rights of LGBTI People in Latin America: A Decade of Progress," organized by Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, and Uruguay (Latin American Members of the LGBT Group in New York), OutRight Action International, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.
- On November 30, 2015, in El Salvador, the IACHR, with support from UNAIDS and the following Salvadoran civil society organizations: ASPIDH Arcoiris LGTBI El Salvador, Estrellas Del Golfo Colectivo LGBTI, ESMULES, COMCAVIS Trans, Colectivo Alejandría, Generación de Hombres Trans El Salvador, and ASTRANS, carried out an activity to present the main findings and content of the Report on Violence against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Persons in the Americas.
- On December 7, 2015, the IACHR and the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression officially launched the above-mentioned Regional Report at the House of Representatives of Uruguay. This launch was organized with support from Uruguay's House of Representatives, the National Human Rights Institution, OBSERVACOM, the Latin American and Caribbean

Network of Trans Persons (REDLACTRANS), the Black Sheep Collective (Colectivo Ovejas Negras), the Coalition for Democratic Communication (Coalición por una Comunicación Democrática, Global Initiative for Sexuality and Human Rights, Heartland Alliance for Human Needs and Human Rights. On the same day, a media campaign on the IACHR Report on this matter began, and the website that provides the contents of the Report in Spanish was also launched.

9. Unit on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

47. The Unit on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ESCR) is headed by Commissioner Paulo Vannuchi.

48. The Unit, in addition to working actively to establish the Special Rapporteurship, on the basis of its activities has identified a series of persistent challenges in the region and continues to focus mainly on the following issues: (i) the region's situation of poverty; (ii) rights to water and food; (iii) obstacles to access to justice in cases of violations of economic, social, and cultural rights; (iv) special adverse impacts on the exercise of economic, social, and cultural rights by persons, communities, and groups living in a situation of vulnerability, such as women, persons living with HIV, indigenous peoples, LGBTI persons, and persons of African descent, among others; (v) obstacles to the right to access to information and to participation with respect to economic, social, and cultural rights; and (vi) violations of economic, social, and cultural rights in the context of activities carried out by corporations, especially extraction, investment, and development projects.

49. In that regard, in 2015, the ESCR Unit has continued to implement actions to secure resources to establish a Special Rapporteurship on this matter and has continued moving forward with the process of regional consultations to draft its work plan. Furthermore, while implementing a funding project with the European Union, the Unit promoted the process of drafting the first thematic report on human rights and poverty. This report provides IACHR with the opportunity to examine this subject more in depth and develop it on the basis of a human rights approach, examining the impacts that poverty has on the enjoyment and exercise of these rights, and to draw up a legal framework leading to the international responsibility of States with respect to poverty and extreme poverty. In addition, the above-mentioned report shall address the impact that poverty has on the enjoyment of the rights of persons, groups, and communities that have been historically discriminated against.

50. The ESCR Unit carried out several meetings with labor unions from OAS Member States, with diverse lines of action and thought, and created permanent communication and discussion channels with such organizations in order to bring them closer to the inter-American system of human rights. The unions shared their information and knowledge, and also presented denunciations and petitions on matters of their expertise, where they have a trajectory of mobilization: the right to work and concrete conditions associated with it; salaries; child labor; forced or slave labor; discrimination against women in the workplace, etc.

51. Commissioners Rosa Maria Ortiz and Paulo Vannuchi, members of the Working Group of the Protocol of San Salvador, appointed by the IACHR Plenary, participated in meetings and hearings of that Group during the first cycle of presentation of ESCR reports in Member States parte (grouped under social security, health and education). In their diverse activities as Commissioners, they have both undertaken efforts to closely engage the IACHR with this new strategic group of experts and State representatives, and to consider cooperation initiatives, as part of a common effort to promote progressive advances in ESCR in all countries States of the OAS.

52. The ESCR Unit participated in and carried out the following activities in 2015:

- On January 29, 2015, a special session of the OAS Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs was held to foster the exchange of best practices and experiences regarding the promotion

and protection of human rights in the business sector. The session was divided into four blocks with a multi-party panel, including speakers from the United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights, the IACHR, and representatives of civil society and businesses. On the same day, the United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights met at IACHR headquarters with the Commissioners to explore various ways of collaborating on the issue of business and human rights. Dr. Alexandra Guaqueta, representative for Latin America, reported on the global progress achieved in disseminating and implementing the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The representative also referred to potential areas of collaboration, including the exchange of knowledge and information about the processes of drafting National Action Plans (Planes de Acción Nacionales—PAN).

- On April 22 to 25, 2015, the ESCR Unit participated in various activities in Santiago de Chile, with the attendance of Commissioner Rosa María Ortiz. The above took place as a result of the Chilean State's request for technical collaboration addressed to the IACHR for technical advisory services in the process of drafting Chile's National Action Plan for Business and Human Rights. The scope of the response to this request is still being assessed by the IACHR. In this context, the ESCR Unit participated in two seminars related to the launching of the National Plan, one aimed at the general public, and the other aimed at the corporate sector, and in the Training Workshop on Business and Human Rights.
- On April 24, 2014, Commissioner Ortiz met with Chile's Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Edgardo Riveros. At the meeting, the Under-Secretary highlighted Chile's commitment to the Inter-American Human Rights System and IACHR's work in particular. He also commended IACHR's effort and cooperation in launching the National Action Plan for Business and Human Rights in Chile and indicated that alternatives would be sought to fund future activities in this field. Commissioner Ortiz stressed IACHR's willingness to collaborate and indicated that, at present, the IACHR is defining the scope of the technical collaboration it might be able to provide to Chile.
- On February 24, 2015, Commissioner Vannuchi and the Executive Secretary participated in the 65th OAS Policy Roundtable entitled "Regional Agenda for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: A Look into the Future." The Roundtable was organized from the General Secretariat on the occasion of the First Session of the Working Group on the Protocol of San Salvador to be held on February 23 to 26, 2015.
- The IACHR visited Paraguay on May 19 to 22, 2015 to gather information to draft the first thematic report on human rights and poverty by the IACHR. During the visit, the IACHR delegation also closely observed the general human rights situation in the country. This was the first of a series of visits made by the Commission to the countries of the region in order to gather information for the above-mentioned thematic report. The visit was led by Commissioner Paulo Vannuchi, as the person in charge of the Unit on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and as the Rapporteur for Paraguay. The delegation met with various government authorities and members of civil society organizations.
- On June 15, 2015, the ESCR Unit attended the signing of the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons by representatives of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, and Uruguay.
- On June 30, 2015, the ESCR Unit participated in a Colloquium held in the OAS Main Building on the occasion of the visit to headquarters by Dante Pesce, new expert Member for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Chile's Permanent Representative to the OAS, Ambassador Juan Pablo Lira, organized the event and invited the ESCR Unit of the Inter-

American Commission on Human Rights to participate in the above-mentioned colloquium, which was also attended by representatives of 12 OAS Member States. The colloquium offered an important opportunity to hold an open and informal dialogue on the current situation and challenges with respect to issues involving human rights and business in the Americas region.

- On September 4 and 5, 2015, the ESCR Unit conducted the Fifth Regional Consultation on ESCR in Costa Rica with the joint sponsorship of the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL). The event was attended by civil society, social movements, and trade unions of Central America. This consultation, in the facilities of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, led to opportunities for dialogue on ESCR issues in Central America and made it possible to gather inputs about priority concerns in this region, to be incorporated into the process of drafting the Work Plan of the Special Rapporteurship on ESCR. In the context of the above-mentioned consultation, a panel was organized to discuss case law of the Inter-American System with respect to Article 26 of the American Convention. The guest panelists were Eduardo Ferrer Mac-Gregor Poisot, Judge of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights; Oscar Parra, attorney of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights; Marcia Aguiluz, Director of the CEJIL Program for Central America; and José Thompson J., Executive Director of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights (IIDH).
- The ESCR Unit collaborated with the Rapporteurship on the Rights of Women to organize a joint event with the World Bank on Friday, October 23, 2015, to present its report *Women, Business and the Law 2016*. The event was attended by Commissioner Paulo Vannuchi; Commissioner Tracy Robinson; the Director of the World Bank's Global Indicators Group, Augusto López-Claros; and Ambassador Jacinth Lorna Henry-Martin, Head of the Cabinet of the Secretary General of the OAS.
- On November 16 to 18, 2015, the ESCR Unit, in the presence of Commissioner Paulo Vannuchi, participated in the Fourth Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights in Geneva. This event was organized by the United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights to promote respect for human rights in the business sector. At the Forum, Commissioner Vannuchi had the opportunity to present IACHR's work in this matter, as well as to refer to the progress observed in this area in the Americas region, especially with respect to the commitment made by various States to draw up their own National Action Plans. Furthermore, during the visit in Geneva, the ESCR Unit had the opportunity to meet with various relevant stakeholders, among whom the most noteworthy were representatives from the Danish Institute for Human Rights, the ILO, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the ESCR Committee, and the FAO (in Rome), for the purpose of making progress on the various pillars of the Work Plan of the ESCR Unit.
- On November 29 to December 3, 2015, the IACHR visited the departments of La Paz and Chuquisaca, Bolivia, to prepare for its thematic report on human rights and poverty. During the visit, headed by Commissioner Paulo Vannuchi, the delegation met with State authorities and civil society organizations, and gathered information directly from persons living in poverty. In the department of Chuquisaca, the delegation was taken to Tarabuco and visited the Community of Sojta Pata and a shantytown in the Barrio Señor de Maica of the Community of Azari belonging to District 5.

B. Thematic reports adopted by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

53. As stated in section A of this chapter, the purposes of thematic rapporteurships include strengthening, promoting, and developing legal standards. They also promote awareness of the human rights situations of specific groups. One way to pursue these objectives is to compile thematic reports, some of which describe and analyze specific situations and examine legal standards.

54. Nine thematic reports have been adopted in 2015. A summary of their content follows.

1. *Refugees and Migrants in the United States: Families and Unaccompanied Children.* The report examines measures adopted over time in the United States in response to an exponential increase in arrivals in U.S. territory of refugees and migrants, especially families and unaccompanied children, from countries of the Northern Triangle of Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras) and Mexico since mid-2014. In greater detail, the report discusses how the actions of state agents affect access to procedures for determining refugee status; the automatic, widespread practice of detaining migrant families; procedural guarantees under migration proceedings; and deportations in the light of the USA's international human rights obligations.
2. *Legal Standards: Gender Equality and Women's Rights.* This report summarizes and analyzes the inter-American system's legal standards concerning gender equality and women's rights and how the inter-American system's recommendations and decisions have affected judgments rendered at the domestic level in the region. It includes the text of the report adopted in November 2011 to mark the 20th anniversary of the Convention of Belém do Pará and an update thereto.
3. *Access to Information, Violence against Women, and the Administration of Justice in the Americas.* In this report the IACHR offers an initial assessment of challenges facing women in the Americas and efforts to secure proper access to state-controlled information on violence and discrimination; provides a systematic view of international standards on the matter that developed in the inter-American system; and identifies good practices in the region in the application of, and compliance with, such standards.
4. *Violence against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Persons.* The report deals with the problem of violence against LGBTI persons by state and non-state agents, focusing on physical violence and the lack of an effective state response, in contravention of the duty of states to prevent, investigate, punish, and redress such violence. In this text the IACHR develops the concept of violence based on prejudice against persons whose sexual orientation or gender identity or expression are non-standard, or whose bodies differ from "feminine" and "masculine" norms. The IACHR notes that, despite significant progress in several countries of the region in recognizing the rights of LGBTI persons, high rates of violence--particularly cruel and vicious--persist in all countries of the region. The Commission also found that most murders of, and acts de violence against, LGBTI persons go unpunished, and it identified the most significant obstacles to access to justice for LGBTI persons and their relatives.
5. *Violence, Children, and Organized Crime.* This report deals with the impact of organized crime and violent youth gangs on the rights of children and adolescents in the region; shows how they are used, exploited, manipulated, and coerced by those organizations; identifies the main ways states respond to violence and organized crime, in terms of preventing and reducing violence and crime, as well as monitoring and enforcement; measures to prevent adolescents from joining these groups, as well as programs to extricate and protect victims; identifies problematic aspects of some existing state responses; and offers recommendations for public policymaking on citizen security with a focus on children's rights.

6. *Report on the Human Rights Situation of the Dominican Republic.* This report discusses issues relating to nationality, the right to juridical personhood, and the right to equality and nondiscrimination with respect to persons of Haitian background born in Dominican territory. It also examines questions of the human rights of migrants in the Dominican Republic.
7. *Misuse of the Criminal Justice System to Criminalize Human Rights Defenders in the Americas.* This report analyzes the use of criminal justice proceedings against defenders in reprisal for their work to defend and promote human rights. Its aim is to promote full use of international standards to guide member states in confronting this obstacle.
8. *Indigenous Peoples, Afro-Descendent Communities and Natural Resources: Human Rights Protection in the Context of Extraction, Exploitation, and Development Activities* The report deals with the situation of the human rights of indigenous and tribal peoples in the context of extraction and investment activities. It offers an initial approach to the general obligations of states in this context and with specific respect to indigenous and tribal peoples, seeking to promote consolidation of legal standards on the matter at the level of the inter-American human rights system; to increase awareness of human rights violations in this arena; and to identify key challenges that require the Commission's attention.
9. *Human Rights of Migrants, Refugees, Stateless Persons, Victims of Human Trafficking, and Internally Displaced Persons. Norms and Standards of the Inter-American System.* This report is the Commission's main project to identify, systematize, and analyze the standards developed by the Inter-American Commission and the Inter-American Court on human rights in the context of human mobility. This draft report fully examines standards established by the bodies of the inter-American system through reports on cases, judgments, advisory opinions, and thematic and country reports with respect to migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees, stateless persons, trafficking victims, internally displaced persons, and persons subject to extradition.