



**Atlantic Basin Initiative**  
**Summary Notes**  
***Eminent Persons Group Meeting***  
***Veracruz, Mexico***  
***January 16-17, 2014***

Eminent Persons from the public and private sectors in Africa, Europe, North and South America met in Veracruz to chart new paths for pan-Atlantic cooperation. The Eminent Persons were welcomed by Javier Duarte de Ochoa, Governor of the state of Veracruz, and Vanessa Rubio Marquez, Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Mexico, at the invitation of the Center for Transatlantic Relations (CTR) at Johns Hopkins University SAIS, particularly CTR Distinguished Fellow and former President of the Government of Spain José Maria Aznar and CTR Executive Director Prof. Daniel Hamilton.

The Veracruz meeting followed Eminent Persons meetings in 2012/2013 in São Paulo, Brazil; La Romana in the Dominican Republic; and in Luanda, Angola. A smaller meeting of Latin American and African leaders was held together with the Brenthurst Foundation in South Africa in November 2013.

In Veracruz the Eminent Persons agreed on a common White Paper, a "birth certificate" for the Initiative that sets forth why pan-Atlantic cooperation is needed and charts an action-oriented agenda. They agreed to sign the White Paper and to help publicize it over coming months, saying that "the time is right" for such an initiative. What is needed is a "feeling of belonging" to a common Atlantic, even though such a common sentiment does not yet exist.

The advantage of the Atlantic Basin network is that it is not bound to government timetables and their considerations. Other initiatives tend to be formed with an "us" vs. "them" approach; the Atlantic Basin Initiative is focused on "we" and transcends such divisions. It also offers a particular opportunity for African and Latin American leaders to create closer connections. Its strength lies in inviting those with shared values as well as interests, and in being primarily non-governmental. The Initiative should be demand-driven; consider itself a mixed 'think-and-do tank; and play to its strengths as a value- and personality-driven network of reform-minded individuals able to harness their extensive public and private experience to drive greater cooperation across the Atlantic Hemisphere.

The White Paper signals the commitment of the Eminent Persons to move from the conceptual stage to a more practical stage. The suggestion was made to add a number of CTR's "flow maps" to the final publication.

*Background Papers:*

- [Draft White Paper](#)
- *Background Maps:* [Mapping the Atlantic – Changing Atlantic Connections](#), Center for Transatlantic Relations



The group discussed each of the five White Paper chapters on:

- a) Energy issues;
- b) Economic growth and human development;
- c) Challenges to the Atlantic Ocean itself;
- d) Human security challenges;
- e) Democratic governance and cultivating "cultures of lawfulness."

### **Energy issues**

In Luanda, Angola, the Eminent Persons endorsed a Luanda Declaration committing them to:

- the notion of a cooperative and collaborative process towards sustainable energy development in the Atlantic Basin
- promote the modernization of Atlantic Basin energy sectors, infrastructure and services and a more effective coordination of regulatory regimes
- the goal of universal access to electricity and affordable energy services to the citizens within the Atlantic Basin
- the promotion of a new model for long-term, inclusive energy cooperation in the Atlantic Basin, articulated upon a market economy framework, based on mutual assistance and the principle of international non-discrimination, and taking into account perspectives of consumers, producers and other legitimate social needs
- recognize state sovereignty and sovereign rights over energy resources
- the creation of an Atlantic Energy Forum (AEF).

Principals in Veracruz welcomed the proposed creation of an Atlantic Energy Forum. Additional suggestions were made:

- While intended as a public-private forum, the AEF should not neglect the fact that many energy sectors are public, and so the public-public element should be included.
- Energy decisions are critical for development; the Forum should address this interrelationship.
- The AEF can offer a platform for exchange of experience on fiscal aspects of energy.
- Consider a Peer Review Energy Efficiency mechanism, as has been done via APEC. The voluntary APEC mechanism seeks to share information on energy efficiency performances as well as on policies and measures for improving energy efficiency; provide opportunities for learning from other economies' experiences and for broadening the network among energy efficiency policy experts; explore how energy efficiency goals on an overall and/or sectoral basis and action plans could be effectively formulated in each economy under review, taking into account the diversity of possible strategies that could be used, according to the circumstances of individual economies; monitor progress toward attaining energy efficiency goals; provide recommendations for voluntary implementation on how implementation of action plans could be improved.
- Given the tremendous energy poverty afflicting parts of the South Atlantic, a Peer Review Mechanism for Energy Development may be more pressing than one focused on energy efficiency.
- Energy can be the next African development revolution if African governments can get the proper mechanisms in place. The AEF can provide a facilitative platform, with particular attention to green energy development.
- The AEF should focus on the geopolitical implications of the revolutionary energy developments in North America.

There was also support for two other action steps proposed in the White Paper: an Atlantic biofuels initiative; and work on an Atlantic Charter for Sustainable Energy that could define the



terms by which such cooperative efforts may be pursued, knowing that formulation of such a Charter will take some time.

- [Atlantic Energy Forum Rollout Proposal](#)

### **Economic growth and human development**

The White Paper summarizes changing commercial developments in the Atlantic Basin. It recommends actions governments should take, and it commits the Eminent Persons to create an Atlantic Business Forum. Principals endorsed these recommendations. Additional points were made:

- The White Paper should include references to the impact of new technologies and digitization. The use of mobile devices in Africa, for instance, connected to mobile banking, is further advanced than in Europe. The Eminent Persons should take a stand against current efforts to "localize" internet operations.
- Issues of migration and human mobility should be addressed.
- The opportunities to develop infrastructures should be highlighted.
- The Paper's phrasing regarding inequality should be reviewed. Inequality is no doubt a problem, but there was discussion as to how best to tackle it, with some preferring to spur economic growth, ease social mobility, and provide greater access to opportunity as relevant objectives.

*Background papers:*

- [Summary of Africa-Latin America Dialogue, Tswalu Kalahari Reserve, South Africa](#)
- [Harmonized Trade Preferences for Low-Income African Countries: A Transatlantic Initiative.](#)  
*Eveline Herfkens*
- [A Transatlantic Deal for Africa.](#) *K.Y. Amaoko, Daniel Hamilton and Eveline Herfkens*

### **Challenges to the Atlantic Ocean itself**

The White Paper addresses Atlantic Ocean issues. Time constraints in Veracruz meant this issue was not discussed at length, but Principals endorsed the goals set forth in the White Paper.

*Food for thought paper:*

- [The Atlantic Ocean: The Growing Need for a Pan-Atlantic Agenda,](#) *Dan Hamilton and Paul Isbell*

### **Human security**

Principals endorsed the main conclusions of the White Paper, including the creation of a Human Security Forum. Since some states do not necessarily want to raise these issues, the Eminent Persons should do so.

Additional points were made:

- The challenge of human trafficking should receive greater attention.
- Consideration should also be given to the development and health aspects of human security.
- Attention should be paid to other challenges, such as diversion of assistance expenditures; transfer pricing, tax evasion, underpayment of labor; failure to cooperate in sharing banking information.
- Security threats to the internet should also be included.
- Attention should be paid to the corrupting influence of drug funds on the political culture of some Atlantic Basin countries.



- The effort should not duplicate work already underway in other forums.
- Efforts to address human security challenges is often hampered by woeful lack of intelligence cooperation.
- Small countries need concrete assistance, not just more coordination or cooperation.
- Existing information-sharing mechanisms can offer some perspective. The SECI initiative in southeastern Europe, which facilitates sharing of information relevant to law enforcement activities, was offered as a relevant example.

*Background papers:*

- [\*Atlantic Basin Countries and Organized Crime: Paradigms, Policies, Priorities.\*](#) *Wibke Hansen and Judith Vorrath*
- [\*Designing Pan-Atlantic and International Anti-Crime Cooperation.\*](#) *Vanda Felbab-Brown*
- [\*Africa's Security Challenges in the Atlantic Ocean.\*](#) *Samuel Kamé-Domguia*

### **Democratic governance and cultivating "cultures of lawfulness"**

Principals affirmed their belief that a shared commitment to such basic principles as freedom, democracy, rule of law, transparency, human rights, open societies and open markets, and the need to build institutions in society that reflect and uphold those values, offers a unifying pan-Atlantic foundation upon which to tackle common challenges together, even as such principles may be applied in different ways due to specific national conditions. They endorsed the White Paper's recommendations. Additional points were made:

- The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights affirms many of these rights, as well as responsibilities to uphold them.
- Acting on these values can be difficult. Habits and traditions do not change overnight.
- Established democracies should also pay heed to the need to gain acceptance and sustain support for these values by their own populations; the issue is not just how to cultivate these values in younger democracies.
- This focus on effective governance should also address growing populist and fringe political elements.
- The White Paper should add that a commitment to these core values also helps to attract foreign investment.
- The Initiative can offer "political SWAT teams" of experienced democratic reformers ready to offer hands-on help to current reformers; but such an effort must be demand-driven.
- There is much to be gained from sharing experiences in implementing reforms, primarily among Latin American and African leaders, but east European countries that underwent significant transition from communism also have relevant experiences to share.
- Consideration should be given to adapting the African Peer Review Mechanism and creating Atlantic Peer Review mechanism, a voluntary arrangement by which reformers ask for advice from peers who have had personal experience with reform.
- International associations of political parties or like-minded political groupings, once quite prominent, have faded given that such parties tend to focus on domestic challenges, and that there are fewer resources for such activities. Such groupings, including political foundations, should be invited to consider how to work more effectively to promote reforms.

*Background papers:*

- [\*Building a Culture of Lawfulness.\*](#) *Roy Godson/World Bank*



## Next Steps

The edited White Paper will be sent around for final approval by the end of January 2014. It will be published in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. Once the White Paper is available, Principals agreed to embark on an activist strategy of public and media outreach to raise awareness and make the Atlantic Basin Initiative attractive in the global marketplace of ideas.

Public release events will be scheduled in key cities. Eminent Persons are asked to consider

- hosting/and or speaking at such events;
- Engaging key decision makers and opinion leaders, in and out of governments;
- Preparing opinion articles together with other Eminent Persons;
- Offering sessions on the Atlantic Basin Initiative at other widely-attended forums;
- Other media work as appropriate.

It is important to get the messaging right, as the potential for misunderstanding is great for any ambitious new initiative. The Initiative is not an effort to distract from policy failures of the past. It is not an effort to counteract Asia-Pacific developments, in fact it is more a complement, not competitor, to Pacific efforts. It is not an effort to contain China.

In addition to the White Paper, this spring the Center will publish one book on Human Security in the Atlantic Basin and another on the changing commercial dynamics of the Atlantic Basin, each featuring authors from all four continents.

*Further funding will be key to the success of the Initiative.* Individual Members can be helpful in this regard. In the meantime the Initiative must proceed step-by-step and only take on tasks that it can reasonably complete until greater funding and staff capacity can be built. Funding priorities include

- Support for the work of the small secretariat at the Johns Hopkins Center for Transatlantic Relations
- Support for the Atlantic Energy Forum
- Support for the Human Security Forum
- Support for public events promoting the Initiative
- Support for Atlantic Peer Review mechanisms
- Support for an annual Latin America-Africa Dialogue within the broader Initiative
- Support for Eminent Persons meetings in summer/fall 2014 and winter/spring 2015.

The Eminent Persons agreed to meet again in 2014 to advance their cooperation.