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## RIO GROUP

*Note: As of February 2012, this file will no longer be updated.*

**Established:** December 1986.

**Membership:** 23 states — Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica (representing the 15 CARICOM member states), Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

**Background:** The Rio Group is an association of Latin American countries seeking a common foreign policy on a variety of issues. The Group has no permanent secretariat and works by holding annual summits.

On 23 July 1991, the Peruvian government launched a comprehensive initiative for Latin America concerning weapons of mass destruction (WMD), arms transfers, dual-use technology control, and confidence-building measures. The initiative seeks the gradual adoption of three sets of measures: the establishment of a WMD-free zone in Latin America and the Caribbean; the prohibition of future purchase, transfer, and manufacture of new generations of special conventional weapons systems (to include a ban on all transfers of medium- and short-range ballistic missiles, including components and technologies); and the implementation of a set of security and confidence-building measures to promote trust in the region (including the establishment of a regional center for the registration of arms transfers, national production of armaments, and control of dual-use technology transfers).

The initiative has achieved its first aim, the establishment of WMD-free zone, with the adoption of the Cartagena Declaration by the five Andean states. It was signed on 4 December 1991, by the heads of state of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela.

In February 2010, the group held a summit where they declared plans to create the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). The new organization is set to have its first meeting in July 2011. The Rio Group plans to meet in Venezuela in 2011 and Chile in 2012, and CELAC could replace the Rio Group after the 2012 summit.

**Main Objectives:** The group seeks prevention of the introduction of WMD in Latin America and the Caribbean and enhancement of security and cooperation among the states of the region.

### The Group's Position on Certain Disarmament-, Arms Control- and Nonproliferation-Related Issues:

**Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT):** The Rio Group attaches high priority to global efforts to promote nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament, including the total elimination of nuclear weapons in order to work toward achieving international peace and security. It notes with satisfaction the efforts made in other forums to highlight the importance of the NPT and its key role for achieving nonproliferation and disarmament goals. The group welcomed the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. It is concerned with the lack of progress toward the full implementation of the 13 measures for the Treaty's Article VI disarmament obligations agreed upon at the 2000 NPT Review Conference and endorsed in the action plan at the 2010 NPT Review Conference and calls upon all states, in particular the Nuclear Weapon States (NWS), to honor the Treaty's commitments.. The group is also encouraged by the progress toward establishing nuclear weapon free zones in regions where they currently do not exist, most notably in the Middle East Within existing nuclear weapon free zones, the group has called for NWS to withdraw interpretive declarations made during the accession of their respective Treaty's protocols. The group affirms that the three pillars of the NPT—nonproliferation, disarmament, and peaceful use—have equal importance, and unconditional progress must be made on all three

### **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)**

The group has expressed its regrets about the difficult situation surrounding the issue of the entry into force of the CTBT, considers it essential for this commitment not to remain only on paper, and urges those states that have not yet done so to sign, ratify, and promote its entry into force in the near future. The group underscores the importance for states to maintain a strict moratorium on the conduct of nuclear

testing or any other type of nuclear test while the entry into force of the CTBT remains pending. It is pleased that in other important political forums, participating states have reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining that moratorium but wishes to recall nevertheless that these unilateral restrictive measures are no substitute for the ratification of the CTBT. The group is convinced that the conducting of nuclear tests seriously undermines the efforts of the international community to promote nonproliferation and nuclear disarmament.

**Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZ):** The group considers the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZ) as one of the most significant advances in the field of disarmament in the last few decades. The consolidation and expansion of such zones contributes, in the group's view, to the building of a more stable and secure world. As representatives of the first region of the world to have prohibited nuclear weapons (see [Treaty of Tlatelolco](#)), the group supports the initiative to promote the gradual development of a NWFZ spanning the Southern Hemisphere and adjacent areas to the north of the equator, where applicable in conformity with specific treaties, and appeals to the international community to reaffirm its support for efforts aimed at the creation of such a zone. The Group urges nuclear-weapon States to withdraw the interpretive statements made at the time of their accession to the protocols of the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

**Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC):** The group considers the CWC as a model instrument for the international community to control and eliminate the danger of WMD, on account of its non-discriminatory nature, the balance that it establishes between disarmament and nonproliferation, and the system that it introduces for international cooperation in this field for peaceful purposes. The group notes that sustained progress has been made in its implementation and it is confident that the recent agreement signed between the [Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons \(OPCW\)](#) and the UN will contribute not only to strengthening efforts to ensure the universality of the Convention but also to the ultimate objective, which is the total elimination of these WMD from the face of the earth.

**Biological and Toxin Weapons Conventions (BTWC):** The group regrets the lack of progress toward the conclusion of a protocol for the verification of the BTWC. On 6 October 2010, Ambassador Octavio Errazuriz of Chile issued a [statement](#) on behalf of the group at the [First Committee](#) of the 65<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly. He noted that no group members

currently possessed biological weapons and all remain fully committed to maintaining that status. It hopes that universal adherence to the BTWC becomes a reality and that biological weapons disarmament should be a disarmament priority.

**Conventional Weapons:** The Rio Group supports the holding of a debate on achieving universality for treaties related to the prohibition of the sale of small arms and light weapons to non-state actors and progress toward the eradication of anti-personnel mines. The group shares the view that it is urgently necessary to achieve the universalization of the [Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and Their Destruction](#). The group expresses its firm intention to prevent, combat, and eliminate the [illicit trade in small arms and light weapons](#) at the national, sub-regional, regional, and global levels, including measures to promote international cooperation and assistance. It supports the Program of Action adopted by the UN, which complements the progress achieved in the group's region in this area.

**4<sup>th</sup> Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD-IV):** The Rio Group supports the work of the UN Disarmament Commission to consider the objectives and agenda, including the possible establishment of a preparatory committee for the fourth special session of the UN General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

## Developments:

**2011:** On 4 April, Ambassador Octavio Errázuriz of Chile issued a [statement](#) on behalf of the Rio Group at the 2011 Substantive Session of the [UN Disarmament Commission](#). He reiterated the group's stance on "adopting specific recommendations" for nuclear disarmament and welcomed the New START agreement between the U.S. and Russia. He also called for further reductions of non-deployed and non-strategic nuclear arms, along with a call to nuclear powers to "withdraw interpretative declarations" regarding the protocols to NWFZ treaties.

On the 30th of June, it was announced that the founding meeting of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean Nations (CELAC), which had been scheduled for July, was to be postponed until a date later in the year. The president of the Bolivar Republic of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, who is also a co-chair of the forum together with Chilean President Sebastian Pinera, was undergoing medical treatment and thus unable to attend the summit. The official

establishment of CELAC has yet to be finalized and it remains to be seen if it will replace the Rio Group.

In September leaders of Latin American and the Caribbean states agreed to attend the CELAC Summit in December in Caracas.

**2010:** On 22 and 23 of February, the Heads of State and Government of the Latin American and Caribbean countries gathered at the Unity Summit in the Mayan Riviera, Mexico. The summit included both the XXI Summit of the Rio Group and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Summit of Latin America and the Caribbean on Integration and Development (CALC). Thirty-one foreign ministers from Latin America and the Caribbean islands attended the summit and issued a [declaration](#).

The major declaration made by the Unity Summit was a decision to form the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). This organization will consist of 32 nations throughout Latin American and the Caribbean and will exclude Canada, Spain and the United States. Once fully constituted, CELAC will co-opt both the Rio Group and CALC. The group is considered an alternative to the Organization of American States (OAS). Specifics regarding the structure will be further developed at the Rio Group's XXII Summit of Heads of State and Government on 5 July 2011 in Caracas, Venezuela. A meeting was held between Mexico, the current Pro Tempore Secretary of the Rio Group, and Chile, to whom the secretariat will transfer following the summit.

On 29 March during the substantive session of the [UN Disarmament Commission](#), Eduardo Gálvez (Chile), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, reiterated the group's strong position in favor of nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation. He also welcomed the convening of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish NWFZs and the entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty. The Rio Group also urged all NPT States parties to fully comply with their obligations and promoted the universality of the NPT. Although the Rio Group regretted the inability of the CD to adopt a program of work so far this year, Gálvez reiterated the Rio Group's concern over an arms race in outer space and its desire for negotiations to begin on a universal, legally-binding instrument for negative security assurances. He also stressed the need for a moratorium on nuclear testing until the entry into force of the CTBT.

On 12 April, during a meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee negotiating a [comprehensive convention on international terrorism](#), Chilean representative Heral-

do Muñoz said on behalf of the Rio Group that it was time to show the necessary flexibility in order to overcome the remaining differences.

On 5 October, Ambassador Octavio Errázuriz issued a [statement](#) on behalf of the Rio Group at the 2010 [UNGA](#) First Committee on Disarmament and International Security. He called for advancements in nuclear disarmament, full compliance by member states with the NPT, and for all annex 2 States of the [CTBT](#) to ratify the Treaty. He also stressed that the "complete elimination" of biological and chemical weapons should be a disarmament priority, and highlighted the group's support of international efforts to "reduce the suffering caused by cluster munitions and by their use against civilian populations."

**2009:** On 11 May, the 14<sup>th</sup> ministerial meeting of the European Union and the Rio Group convened in Prague, Czech Republic for four days to discuss topics such as energy security and climate change. It concluded with the adoption of a [Joint Statement](#) that addressed renewable sources of energy, recovery of financial stability and growth of the world economy. It also included a [declaration](#) of solidarity and support with the countries most affected by the H1N1 flu virus, particularly Mexico. The next EU-RIO Group Ministerial Meeting will take place in Chile in 2011. On 29 June, an extraordinary session of the Rio Group was held in Managua, Nicaragua, regarding the coup d'état over the Honduran President José Manuel Zelaya. The member nations of the Rio Group [urged](#) the Honduran armed forces to subordinate to President Jose Manuel Zelaya and called for his immediate reinstatement.

Mexico will host the XXI Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Rio Group in 2010.

**2008:** The XX Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Rio Group took place from 6-7 March in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Guyana was accepted as a full member and Haiti as a member by acclamation. The [declaration](#) affirmed Members' determination to combat terrorism in all its forms, with strict adherence to international law. Members also reaffirmed the need for greater efficiency, transparency, and democracy in the UN Security Council.

On 6 October, Mexico [addressed](#) the UN First Committee on behalf of the Rio Group, highlighting some of the contributions its Member States had made in the areas of nonproliferation and disarmament and calling on States to support many of the First Committee resolutions.

On 13 November, Cuba was accepted as a member of the Rio Group.

**2007:** The XIII Ministerial Meeting between the Rio Group and the European Union (EU) was held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic on 20 April. A [Joint Communiqué](#) was released at the end of the meeting. Discussion focused on Haiti, energy, the environment and climate change, medium-income countries and combating poverty, and strengthening multilateralism and dialogue between the Rio Group and the EU.

The XIX Summit of Heads of State and Government took place on 3 March in Turkeyen, Guyana. The [declaration](#) strongly rejected terrorism in all its forms and reaffirmed Members' commitment to prevent and eliminate terrorism and its financing by cooperating fully with the mandates of national and international law. The Heads of State and Government expressed their commitment to fostering progress towards the objective of nuclear disarmament, particularly at the upcoming NPT Preparatory Committee. Satisfaction was expressed with the political message conveyed by the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco on 14 February.

On 8 October, the Dominican Republic [addressed](#) the UN First Committee on behalf of the Rio Group. The statement emphasized nuclear weapons issues, particularly the importance of all three pillars of the NPT, the danger of permitting nuclear cooperation with an NPT non-party, and the necessity of the entry into force of the CTBT.

**2005:** The XII Institutionalized Ministerial Meeting between the Rio Group and the European Union was held in Luxembourg on 26-27 May. The meeting was chaired by Argentine Foreign Minister Rafael Bielsa and Luxembourg Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration Jean Asselborn, President of the EU Council. The ministers recalled that terrorism poses a threat to peace and security and noted the importance of reaching a common definition of terrorism and of completing the negotiation of a global international convention on terrorism, as proposed by the United Nations Secretary General.

The ministers also considered that progress in non-proliferation of WMD, arms control, and disarmament is a main objective of the international community.

The ministers reiterated their commitment to comply with and promote the universal adherence to the [Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction](#) and to the fight against illicit traffic of small arms and light weapons.

They also expressed their intention to implement the 2005-2009 Nairobi Action Plan.

The XIX Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Government was held in Argentina on 20 September. Belize was approved as a member.

**2004:** The XVIII Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Government was held in Brazil on 2-5 November. The meeting adopted the Rio de Janeiro Declaration which focused on the two main topics of the meeting's agenda: the political situation in Haiti and furthering dialogue with Cuba, the only regional power that remains outside the Rio Group. The declaration briefly mentions the importance of multilateral approaches to international security and calls for United Nations reforms. No specific references were made to terrorism, nonproliferation or related topics.

**2003:** The XI Institutionalized Ministerial Meeting between the Rio Group and the European Union was held in Athens on 28 March. The ministers renewed their commitment to strengthening cooperation in fighting the world-wide drug problem and related crimes, illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons, corruption, organized crime, drug trafficking, diversion of chemical precursors, money laundering, and the prevention of the use of monetary resources to finance terrorism and crimes globally.

The XVII Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Government was held in Peru on 23-24 May. The meeting adopted the [Cusco Consensus](#), which presents the strategic agenda for the activities of the Rio Group. The consensus states that a wide range of threats, including all forms and manifestations of terrorism, organized transnational crime, illicit arms trafficking, and the shipment of radioactive material must be addressed through joint international cooperation within the framework of respect for the sovereignty of Member States.

**2002:** In March, the Rio Group's Foreign Ministers issued a Communiqué on "Radioactive Waste and Transport" ([A/56/360](#)). They called upon the international community to strengthen the international legal regime applicable to the security of the maritime transport of radioactive waste.

On 1 October, at the First Committee of the 57<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly, Costa Rica, on behalf of the Rio Group, welcomed and commended Cuba's decision to accede to the NPT and ratify the Tlatelolco Treaty. Furthermore, it "urged the five Central Asian States to finalize their negotiations" on a NWFZ treaty in the region. In the same vein, the group supported the creation of "a nuclear-free zone"

in the Southern Hemisphere and its neighboring areas.

The group especially condemned the development of new nuclear weapons. It endorsed the outcome of the Conference of Measures to Facilitate the Entrance into Effect of the CTBT and invited all states to sign this “crucial” instrument.

**2000:** At the June summit held in Cartagena, Colombia, five nations transitioned from rotational representatives to full and individual members. These included: Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua. The group adopted the Cartagena declaration entitled "Rio Group 2000: Commitment to the Millennium," in which the Member States maintained that nuclear disarmament was the responsibility of all states, primarily of those that possess nuclear weapons. The declaration also stated that it was incumbent on the international community, represented in the UN, to take specific steps to promote the nonproliferation and the elimination of nuclear weapons.

**1999:** In March, the Rio Group issued the Veracruz Act, which consolidated the positions and principles that were shared and agreed upon throughout this period, specifically democracy, the consolidation of peace in Central America, the Panama Canal, the promotion and protection of human rights, peace, security and disarmament, actions against terrorism, corruption, and the drug problem.