GUIDELINES FOR THE FUNCTIONING OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION FORUM IN UNASUR

1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

   a) Flexibility and gradual implementation of the South American integration process and union, including citizen participation.

   b) Citizen participation and pluralism as guiding principles for South American integration and union.

   c) Citizen participation/involvement is a fundamental element for building regional integration.

   d) Mechanisms and innovative spaces established for interaction and dialog between UNASUR and the different social actors in formulating South American integration policies and union.

   e) Promotion of full involvement of citizens in the integration process, in an ample, inclusive, pluralistic, diverse, democratic, independent, transparent, and free manner.

   f) Adequate consideration and response to proposals submitted by the citizens.

   g) Guaranteed right of citizens to participate not only in their respective national domains, but also in the regional and international scenarios.

   h) Equality.- Citizens are guaranteed, individual and collectively, equal rights, conditions, and opportunities to participate and have an influence on decisions adopted by the member States in matters pertaining to South American integration and union.

   i) Interculturality.- the different cultural identities are valued, respected and recognized for the construction of equality in diversity.

   j) Transparency.- Information on actions taken by the member States during the development of the integration process and promoted within UNASUR shall be public and freely accessible to all citizens. Likewise, all information generated or owned by the Citizen Participation Forum shall be made public and shall be freely accessible to the public, excluding in both cases, information generated by and obtained while research processes are taking place.

   k) Co-responsibility.- Shared responsibility between social actors and the States in promoting and furthering the regional integration processes.

   l) Solidarity- participation as a citizen must promote development of relations for mutual cooperation and assistance amongst the people and institutions.
2. MAIN OBJECTIVES

a) To guarantee and promote full participation and impact by the social actors committed to the regional integration process in formulating South American integration policies”.

b) To promote, through Citizen involvement, the strengthening of South American identities and diversities within a framework of respect for human rights.

c) To submit recommendations and proposals, concerning matters of their interest with regard to South American union and integration by establishing effective information, consultation, and follow-up channels at the different UNASUR instances.

d) To follow up, propose, participate, analyze, and assess the public policies geared towards the integration and union processes at the different implementation stages.

e) To carry out research, studies, seminars, events or meetings of similar nature on issues that are relevant to UNASUR.

f) To guarantee and promote participation and representation, at all levels, of the priority groups, among others, migrants, native or indigenous peoples, women, youth, girls and boys, senior citizens, disabled people, farmers, afro-descendants, LGTBI, as a way of strengthening the democratic systems and regional integration and union.

g) To serve as a consulting instance to the UNASUR Council of Heads of State and Government and its other entities and instances on matters concerning the South American integration and union.

h) To serve as an Exchange space for sharing successful experiences and proposals for involving the different social actors.

3. MAKE UP

a) The Citizen Participation Forum comprises national and regional social actors, who may be grouped around national coordination and articulation spaces between the states and the citizenry (hereinbelow referred to as “national spaces for participation”).

b) The national spaces for participation shall be autonomous in terms of their organization, and they can independently define, depending upon their internal peculiarities, the type of social actors that will integrate them and the type of financing by their representatives, looking to promote participation, especially of the priority groups, under a rotating scheme and equitable representation following clear transparency rules, promoting permanent citizen participation within each Member State, concerning South American integration and union.
c) Each national participation space shall be assisted by a Focal Point (principal and/or alternate) for Citizen Participation which will be appointed by the national authority accredited before UNASUR and its function shall be to serve as a communication channel between the UNASUR actors and bodies and instances.

d) Amongst its authorities, the Focal Point for Citizen Participation in each Member State shall be communication to the Citizen Participation Forum matters concerning the social actors that will participate in the Forum, as well as updating information wherever necessary.

4. COORDINATION OF THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION FORUM

Forum Coordination shall be performed by the Member State that is holding the UNASUR Pro Tempore Chairmanship, except whenever by proposal and consensus the Member States decide to designate another Member State to chair the Forum.

As regards the coordination focal points, it is the responsibility of the Forum Chairmanship to:

a) Call for, organize, and chair the Plenary Meetings of the Forum and to elaborate its corresponding minutes.

b) Consolidate the proposals for the Forum Plenary Meetings agendas.

c) Follow recommendations, proposals and actions approved by the Forum Plenary.

d) Maintain contact with the UNASUR bodies, especially with the Pro Tempore Chairmanship and the General Secretariat.

e) Promote citizen participation within the different Ministerial Councils and other instances of UNASUR, in accordance with specific directives and modalities as per its bye-laws and action plans.

f) Direct towards UNASUR bodies and instances, all proposals and recommendations received, as well as the Forums’ findings.

g) Perform other powers conferred upon it by the Forum Plenary.

h) Advise the UNASUR instances on issues of citizenship participation.

The Chairmanship of the Forum shall have the support of the General Secretariat. To this end, it shall:

i) Maintain the files of the minutes, documents, and correspondence organized and up to date.

j) Offer support to the Plenary Meetings and the national spaces for citizen participation, as well as the organization of seminars or similar events.
k) Offer support to all activities carried out by the Forum Chairmanship and other UNASUR entities and instances involved in Citizen Participation
l) Host and maintain a virtual platform for Citizen Participation at the UNASUR Center for Communication and Information.
m) Manage financing ways and means, in coordination with the Member States.
n) The General Secretariat of UNASUR in coordination with the Pro Tempore Chairmanship shall maintain a permanent policy that will promote and facilitate development and consolidation of the citizen participation Forum.

UNASUR shall allocate a Budget to guarantee the operation of the Forum and an adequate presence of the social actors of the Member States whose terms of reference shall be defined by the corresponding entity.

5. FREQUENCY OF THE FORUM PLENARY

The Forum Plenary shall meet face to face at least once a year and it shall hold special sessions whenever necessary, and said sessions shall be called for by the Pro Tempore Chairmanship of the Forum in coordination with the focal points, or upon request by at least (6) national citizen participation spaces. These meetings shall be held, in as much as possible, prior to the UNASUR Council of Heads of State and Government.

6. CITIZEN PARTICIPACION WITHIN THE UNASUR BODIES AND INSTANCES

a) The Sectoral Ministerial Councils and other UNASUR instances must incorporate into their respective action plans the carrying out of events for dissemination and dialog with the citizenry and its organizations, to include face to face meetings, along with the corresponding budget.

b) The Pro Tempore Chairmanship, with the support of the General Secretariat and the focal points, shall be the link between UNASUR’s bodies and instances, and the social actors, guaranteeing the timely delivery and reception of relevant material and information in perfect shape and form for both parties.

c) The social actors may participate, with the right to voice and by express invitation, at the sessions of the UNASUR bodies and other instances. Participation may include other modalities, including written and virtual, with the same validity as the face to face instances.

d) In recognition of the intergovernmental nature of the Sectoral Council meetings or any other UNASUR instance, active participation of the organizations confers the right to formulate and submit recommendations for decision making at the corresponding instance.

e) The member States of UNASUR shall seek to, inasmuch as possible, support participation of the social actors in order that the financial situation of its members not hinder their participation.

7. FOLLOW UP OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The Pro Tempore Chairmanship, with the support of the General Secretariat and the corresponding reports by the Sectoral Ministerial Councils and other UNASUR instances,
shall be in charge of writing up an annual report concerning the advances in the relations between the social actors and the Union. Said report shall include in its methodology, amongst other indicators, the impact of the proposals by the social actors and the feedback offered by the Citizen Participation Forum.

8. LIAISING WITH THIRD PARTIES

UNASUR’s Citizen Participation Forum relations with third-party States, international entities and other entities with international legal status shall abide by the terms of the Founding Charter and Decision Nº 6/2012 as well as other applicable provisions.

9. REGISTRY OF SOCIAL ACTORS

The General Secretariat of UNASUR, in coordination with the Member States should maintain an up to date informative registry of the national or regional social actors, community networks as well as the citizenry platforms that participate and/or express their interest in participating at UNASUR’s Citizen Participation Forum.

The registry shall include general information about the social actors, such as name or official denomination, mission, vision, statement of principles, trajectory and membership to networks and shall not condition participation of social actors.

10. RULES OF CONDUCT

The social actors must conduct themselves in accordance with the principles and objectives of the UNASUR Foundation Charter as well as the national and international rules. The social actors wishing to take part must commit to respecting these principles and must assume full responsibility for their actions and declarations, ensuring a constructive and respectful dialog in all areas of participation.