Dear Colleagues,

I would like to present some additional concepts about SIRGAS, related to its achievements and its relevance for the region.

SIRGAS was created in 1993, during the International Conference for the Definition of a South American Geocentric Reference System. Nowadays, SIRGAS is composed by 21 American Countries (which are mainly represented by mapping or surveying national agencies); 1 member of the International Association of Geodesy; and 1 member of the Pan-American Institute of Geography and History.

The operation of SIRGAS is regulated by a Statute established in 2002 and revised in 2013. This Statute allowed SIRGAS to resolve in a reasonable and harmonious manner all disputes that have been raised in more than fifteen years.

Some of the SIRGAS’ achievements during the las 25 years are the following:

1. 15 countries from the region have adopted the SIRGAS reference framework;
2. A network of more than 400 Continuously Operating Reference Stations, which covers a large part of the Americas and the Caribbean, is distributed and supported by SIRGAS;
3. 10 Analysis Centers (9 in America and 1 in Germany) were developed to process the data from the CORS network;
4. 2 Combination Centers (1 in America and 1 in Germany) were developed to combine the Analysis Centers solutions;
5. All the results are weekly deliver to the International GNSS Service for contributing with the International Terrestrial Reference Framework;
6. 2 atmospheric data analysis centers were developed for modelling and monitoring ionospheric and tropospheric effects on GNSS;
7. 2 analysis centers were established for the definition of the Vertical Datum (1 in America and 1 in Germany);
8. Over 1 thousand colleagues have been trained through regional schools and workshops; and
9. Almost 2 thousand colleagues have participated in the annual SIRGAS’ conferences.

The establishment of UN-GGIM and the implementation of the “GGRF for sustainable development” resolution have substantially modified the scenario in which the events of Geodesy unfold. I believe that this occasion is appropriate to review the status of SIRGAS, improve its governance, and articulate its relationship with other Pan-American and International organizations.

A good example of what I have just said is the Joint Plan of Action developed in 2012 between UN-GGIM: Americas, the Pan-American Institute of Geography and History, and GEOSUR, to consolidate “the role of SIRGAS as single supplier of the geodetic reference framework for the region”, among other objectives. This plan was renewed in 2016 and will extend until 2020.

Therefore, I believe that creating the GGRF Americas Working Group as new structure or organization would mean to waste the enormous efforts done by the SIRGAS’ community to develop the regional geodetic reference framework. Instead, I think that we should find a governance mechanism to institutionalize SIRGAS through UN-GGIM: Americas, the Pan-American Institute of Geography and History, and the International Association of Geodesy, taking advantage of its achievements and the national representatives’ commitment towards the organization.