

PETER D. BELL RULE OF LAW PROGRAM

The Dialogue's Mission

The Inter-American Dialogue engages our network of global leaders to foster democratic governance, prosperity, and social equity in Latin America and the Caribbean. Together, we work to shape policy debate, devise solutions, and enhance cooperation within the Western Hemisphere.

Overview

Launched in 2015, the Peter D. Bell Rule of Law Program is the Inter-American Dialogue's flagship program on democracy, human rights, anticorruption, and citizen security in the Americas.

Latin America and the Caribbean face a range of challenges, including the dismantling of democratic institutions, rising levels of violence and insecurity, longstanding failures by democracies to address poverty and inequality, as well as limited accountability and transparency amidst rampant corruption, all in a context of post-pandemic economic hardship. Strengthening the rule of law—a system in which norms that govern society are clear, fair, and effectively applied by capable and independent democratic institutions to everyone, including those in power—is key to ensure that democracy can deliver, and address people's needs.

The Peter D. Bell Rule of Law Program promotes the rule of law as an essential element of effective governance, inclusive economic growth, and strong democracies in the Americas. It enhances the quality of analysis on the main challenges to the rule of law in the hemisphere, and in doing so facilitates the development of actionable solutions to influence policymaking.

Featured Initiatives

Countering Democratic Backsliding

Our work helps curb democratic decline by supporting key actors willing to uphold democratic processes and guarantees within the boundaries of the rule of law. Early warning signs of democratic backsliding include assaults on judicial independence, efforts to undermine independent institutions that act as a check on executive power, attacks on the free press, and restrictions on independent civil society organizations. Our current projects in this area include contributing to a democratic transition in Venezuela, strengthening judicial independence in Mexico, and supporting democratic efforts in Central America.

Promoting Rights-respecting Security Policies

In light of the escalating challenges posed by organized crime and violence, and the rising popularity of abusive, punitive security policies in the region, our work identifies innovative solutions that put forward effective policies to combat security democratically. Our strategy includes hosting national-level private workshops, in collaboration with local partners, to help shift the conversation in each country and then generate a regional-level discussion to improve security within the boundaries of the rule of law.

Engaging the Private Sector

To broaden the involvement beyond traditional actors, we are creating a High-Level Task Force of committed and diverse business leaders, an innovative initiative to strengthen the role of the private sector in promoting good governance in our region. With input from current and former public officials and civil society experts, the Task Force will identify high-priority issues that deserve special attention and where private sector leadership could make a significant difference in strengthening rule of law.

Elections Series

Through a series of events featuring key aspects of presidential elections taking place in the region, we host dynamic conversations both in Washington, DC, and virtually, to provide a unique platform for new voices, experts, thought leaders, and stakeholders to engage in insightful discussions that can help shape the region's democratic future.

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