

Colombia and Uruguay Consolidate "People's Diplomacy": Transfer of Academic Leadership and Research Dossier within the Framework of CELAC

Bogotá, March 18, 2026. Guided by a vision of regional integration and a commitment to a participatory foreign policy, the Government of Colombia, through its **Augusto Ramírez Ocampo Diplomatic Academy**, acting as the outgoing **Pro Tempore Presidency** of CELAC, and the Oriental Republic of Uruguay, as the incoming Presidency, carried out the **"Transfer of Academic and Research Leadership for People's Diplomacy."** This event stands as a key space to strengthen academic continuity and regional cooperation.

A Diplomacy for Life and Diversity

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Rosa Yolanda Villavicencio Mapy**, reaffirmed the country's commitment to an integration that includes civil society in all its organizational forms: ethnic, territorial, and sexual diversity approaches.

"These are *sui generis* initiatives that seek to support scientific production as an instrument of articulation between the agendas of the peoples and regional debates, placing the **defense of life** as the central pillar guiding the understanding between our nations," the Chancellor stated.

Furthermore, she noted that this act commemorates the **12th anniversary of the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace**, a principle that today, more than ever, demands a participatory diplomacy articulated with social realities.

Uruguay's Recognition and the Continuity of the Process

The Ambassador of Uruguay, **Martin Vidal**, praised the performance of the Colombian Presidency, stating they have **"set the bar very high."** The diplomat emphasized that the success of these efforts is measured by tangible improvements for the people,

asserting that "people's diplomacy and traditional diplomacy must move closer together; it must be from the people and for the people." In his remarks, he also reflected on the nature of the profession, highlighting that without diplomacy, **"what remains is conflict and war."**

During the session, the role of the Diplomatic Academy under the leadership of **Director Harol Gonzalez Duque** was highlighted for constructing an academic agenda that connects the CELAC–European Union birregional dialogue with the social, academic, and diplomatic voices of the region. Additionally, the official delivery of the research dossier **"From Popular Consensus to Diplomatic Consensus"** was carried out, marking a milestone in the consolidation of a more participatory diplomacy with real influence on regional integration policies.

Director of the Diplomatic Academy, **Harol González Duque**, guaranteed that this effort will not remain a mere declaration. 'We will ensure the follow-up and development of this agenda alongside Uruguay, in coordination with all members of the **Multilateral Network for People's Diplomacy** that has been established as a result of this exercise,' he stated.

Integration "From Below": Research Dossier Findings

The investigative dossier **"From Popular Consensus to Diplomatic Consensus: Strengthening Popular Diplomacy through the Construction of Advocacy Strategies"** is the result of exhaustive research conducted with data from 2016 to 2025. Researcher **Jessica Castaño Urdinola**, from the Foreign Policy Observatory, explained that the project seeks to strengthen an **"emerging diplomacy"** based on regional autonomy, aiming to integrate civil society voices into formal decision-making processes.

Toward a Multilateral Network of Popular Diplomacy

The event concluded with a key proposal: the consolidation of a **Multilateral Network of Popular Diplomacy**. This initiative, which was first seeded in Santa Marta, will now, under Uruguay's academic leadership, aim to establish a stable channel of interlocution to strengthen dialogue and facilitate the coordination of a **regional network of think tanks**.

The consolidation of this agenda reaffirms the commitment to move toward a Latin American and Caribbean integration based on knowledge and regional articulation, a

process in which the **Foreign Policy Observatory of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** played a leading role.