

MEXICO CITY CONFERENCE (1901)

The second regular Pan American Conference met in Mexico City in 1901. This conference was concerned chiefly with the establishment of machinery for the peaceful settlement of international disputes, no less than three agreements on that subject being adopted.

The first of these was a protocol by which the republics agreed to be bound by the principles enunciated in the three Hague conventions of 1899, including the Convention for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes. Later, most of the republics adhered to the three conventions.

The second arbitration agreement negotiated at the Mexico City Conference was a treaty of "compulsory" arbitration to which the United States, however, did not become a party.

The third agreement provided for the arbitration of pecuniary claims. In 1910, the latter treaty was replaced by a treaty that is still in force.

Eight other conventions were also adopted. One of these related to the codification of private and public international law, a subject that has occupied the attention of more than one Pan American conference. Among the subjects regulated by the other conventions were copyright, patents and trade-marks, the exchange of publications, extradition, the rights of aliens, etc.

Among resolutions adopted was one which reorganized the Commercial Bureau of the American Republics which now became the International Bureau of the American Republics.

RIO DE JANEIRO CONFERENCE (1906)

At the third or Rio de Janeiro Conference (1906), the main subject of discussion was the use of force in the collection of public debts owing by one State to another. In 1902, Great Britain, Germany and Italy had blockaded the ports of Venezuela in an effort to coerce that country into paying certain debts. This action was roundly criticized in the other American countries with the result that the whole question of the legality of the use of force for such purposes was put on the agenda of the Third Conference.

In the result, a resolution was adopted which referred the question to the Second Hague Conference (1907) to which all the republics had been invited. The latter conference adopted a convention outlawing the use of armed force for the collection of contract debts unless the debtor State refused to arbitrate.

Another resolution adopted at Rio recommended that the delegates of American nations at the Hague Conference be instructed to urge that Conference to adopt an effective general arbitration treaty.

The Rio Conference also adopted four conventions. The first related to the status of naturalized citizens who returned to their country of origin; the second extended the life of the pecuniary claims convention mentioned above; the third related to the protection of intellectual and industrial property; and the fourth created an International Commission of Jurists for the purpose of drawing up a code of public and private international law. The Conference also adopted a number of resolutions and motions.