

CONSEJO PERMANENTE



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ACTA
DE LA SESIÓN ORDINARIA
CELEBRADA
EL 13 DE SEPTIEMBRE DE 1999

Aprobada en la sesión del 17 de noviembre de 1999

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DOCUMENTOS CONSIDERADOS EN LA SESIÓN
(SE PUBLICAN POR SEPARADO)

CP/doc.3229/99, Informe Trimestral de la Secretaría General de la OEA al Consejo Permanente sobre las actividades de la Unidad para la Promoción de la Democracia (UPD)

CP/doc.3230/99, Informe de la Secretaría General sobre el estado de cuotas y contribuciones al 31 de julio de 1999

CONSEJO PERMANENTE DE LA ORGANIZACIÓN DE LOS ESTADOS AMERICANOS

ACTA DE LA SESIÓN ORDINARIA CELEBRADA EL 13 DE SEPTIEMBRE DE 1999

En la ciudad de Washington, a las once y treinta de la mañana del lunes 13 de septiembre de 1999, celebró sesión ordinaria el Consejo Permanente de la Organización de los Estados Americanos. Presidió la sesión el Embajador Arlington Griffith Butler, KCMG, Representante Permanente del Commonwealth de las Bahamas y Presidente del Consejo Permanente. Asistieron los siguientes miembros:

Embajador Kingsley C.A. Layne, CMG, Representante Permanente de San Vicente y las Granadinas
Embajador M.A. Odeen Ishmael, Representante Permanente de Guyana
Embajador Denis G. Antoine, Representante Permanente de Grenada
Embajador Lionel Alexander Hurst, Representante Permanente de Antigua y Barbuda
Embajador Mauricio Granillo Barrera, Representante Permanente de El Salvador
Embajador James Schofield Murphy, Representante Permanente de Belice
Embajador Carlos Portales, Representante Permanente de Chile
Embajador Peter M. Boehm, Representante Permanente del Canadá
Embajador Albert Ramchand Ramdin, Representante Permanente de Suriname
Embajador Víctor Marrero, Representante Permanente de los Estados Unidos
Embajador Michael Anthony Arneaud, Representante Permanente de Trinidad y Tobago
Embajador Alfonso Quiñónez Lemus, Representante Permanente de Guatemala
Embajadora Marlene Fernández del Granado, Representante Permanente de Bolivia
Embajadora Laura Elena Núñez de Ponce, Representante Permanente de Honduras
Embajador Carlos Alberto Leite Barbosa, Representante Permanente del Brasil
Embajador Claude Heller, Representante Permanente de México
Embajador Hernán R. Castro H., Representante Permanente de Costa Rica
Embajador Luis Alfredo Ramos, Representante Permanente de Colombia
Embajador Patricio Vivanco, Representante Permanente del Ecuador
Embajador Álvaro Sevilla Siero, Representante Permanente de Nicaragua
Embajadora Virginia Margarita Contreras Navarrete, Representante Permanente de Venezuela
Embajador Diego Abente Brun, Representante Permanente del Paraguay
Primera Secretaria Edda D. Dumont-Adolph, Representante Alterna del Commonwealth de las Bahamas
Ministra Elizabeth Astete, Representante Alterna del Perú
Embajador Juan M. Pons, Representante Alterno de Panamá
Ministro Consejero Guy Pierre, Representante Alterno de Haití
Ministro Juan José Arcuri, Representante Alterno de la Argentina
Consejera Mayerlyn Cordero Díaz, Representante Alterna de la República Dominicana
Ministro Consejero Ricardo Varela, Representante Alterno del Uruguay
Consejera Jasmine E. Huggins, Esq., Representante Alterna de Saint Kitts y Nevis
Ministra Vilma McNish, Representante Alterna de Jamaica
Primera Secretaria Martha Louis Auguste, Representante Alterna de Santa Lucía
Primer Secretario Philip St. Hill, Representante Alterno de Barbados
Ministro Consejero Michael Wallace, Representante Alterno del Commonwealth de Dominica

También estuvo presente el Secretario General de la Organización, doctor César Gaviria.

El PRESIDENTE: I am pleased to call to order this regular meeting of the Permanent Council, which has been convened to consider the items on the order of business, document CP/OD.1199/99.

[El orden del día contiene los siguientes puntos:

1. Informe Trimestral de la Secretaría General de la OEA al Consejo Permanente sobre las actividades de la Unidad para la Promoción de la Democracia (UPD) (CP/doc.3229/99)
2. Informe de la Secretaría General sobre el estado de cuotas y contribuciones al 31 de julio de 1999 (CP/doc.3230/99)
3. Aprobación de las actas de las sesiones celebradas el 26 de mayo de 1999 (CP/ACTA 1193/99); 15 de julio de 1999 (CP/ACTA 1194/99), y 23 de julio de 1999 (CP/ACTA 1196/99)

Otros asuntos.]

The Chair has received a request from the Permanent Mission of Canada to include on our order of business an item entitled "Presentation on the results of the Dialogue on Drugs." This item is intended to follow up on the dialogue between heads of delegation at the General Assembly in Guatemala last June. If there are no objections, the item will be considered after the last item currently on the order of business.

INFORME TRIMESTRAL DE LA SECRETARÍA GENERAL DE LA OEA AL CONSEJO PERMANENTE SOBRE LAS ACTIVIDADES DE LA UNIDAD PARA LA PROMOCIÓN DE LA DEMOCRACIA (UPD)

El PRESIDENTE: The first item on our order of business is the quarterly report of the General Secretariat to the Permanent Council on the activities of the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD), document CP/doc.3229/99. I give the floor to Ms. Elizabeth Spehar, Executive Coordinator of the UPD, for the presentation of this report.

La COORDINADORA EJECUTIVA DE LA UNIDAD PARA LA PROMOCIÓN DE LA DEMOCRACIA: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would like to present very briefly the report on the UPD's activities for the first quarter of 1999.

During this period, the Unit continued developing its activities in accordance with its 1999 work plan, as approved by the Permanent Council. Many of its activities also constitute support for several of the key priorities of the presidential summits in the area of democracy, such as the strengthening of electoral bodies and legislatures and of exchanges among these institutions; strengthening of municipal and regional administrations; and strengthening of the participation of civil society.

During the first quarter of the year, much of the activity of the Unit centered around planning or preparing courses, seminars, or other activities to be conducted during the year with counterparts and institutions in the Hemisphere. A few notable activities during this period were the following:

In February, the Unit collaborated with the National Congress of Honduras and the Forum of Presidents of Legislatures of Central America (FOPREL) on the Regional Seminar on Legislation for Central American Reconstruction. The objective of this seminar was to facilitate an exchange of experiences among Central American parliamentarians on the emergency situation generated by Hurricane Mitch. As a result of this meeting, the parliamentarians agreed to create model legislation to prevent and confront natural disasters.

Also in Central America during March, the Unit collaborated with the Honduran Government and the Federation of Municipalities of the Central American Isthmus (FIMICA) in holding a subregional meeting entitled "The Second Encounter to Facilitate Municipal Training in Technical Assistance." The objective of the meeting, held in Roatan, Honduras, was to facilitate an exchange of experiences and promote analysis among government representatives, local authorities, NGOs, and international organizations of the municipal training programs and technical assistance offered by governmental institutes and international agencies, and to promote the creation of a Central American databank on these services.

In the area of land mines during the first quarter of the year, the new program area entitled "Integral Action against Antipersonnel Land Mines (ICMA)" was established, as stipulated by the UPD's 1999 work plan. The creation of this new programmatic area responded to the desire of member states to count on increased support from the Secretariat for compliance with the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and specifically for assistance that would go beyond support for demining.

At the request of the Government of Grenada, the Secretary General asked the UPD to organize and deploy an observation mission for the January 18 general elections in that country. The eight-person team, headed by Dr. Joseph Edmunds, visited approximately 80 percent of the polling stations on election day and witnessed the smooth functioning of those elections. Ambassador Christopher Thomas, the Assistant Secretary General, headed the OAS's Observer Delegation on election day.

Finally, I would like to inform the Permanent Council that the Unit's second quarter report for this year is completed and is being sent for translation. Thank you.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you, Ms. Spehar.

The floor is now open to delegations. If there are no requests for the floor, the Chair suggests that the Council take note of the report and that it be transmitted to the Working Group on Representative Democracy for its consideration. It is so agreed. Agreed.

INFORME DE LA SECRETARÍA GENERAL SOBRE EL ESTADO
DE CUOTAS Y CONTRIBUCIONES AL 31 DE JULIO DE 1999

El PRESIDENTE: The next item is the report of the General Secretariat on the status of quotas and contributions as of July 31, 1999, document CP/doc.3230/99. I'm pleased to give the floor to Mr. James Harding, the Assistant Secretary for Management, to inform us on any updates to this report.

El SUBSECRETARIO DE ADMINISTRACIÓN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman; you have the report for July.

I'm pleased to report the following contributions and collections to the Regular Fund in August: Argentina, \$1,802,300; Barbados, \$34,300; Nicaragua, \$52,300; and the United States, \$11,098,900, for a total of \$12,987,800.

In addition, Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased to call to your attention the status of the payment of assessments to the Regular Fund as of August 31, 1999, pursuant to resolution AG/RES. 3 (XXV-E/98) of the twenty-fifth special session of the General Assembly, in the following categories:

1. Members up to date with all payments to the Regular Fund, in accordance with their obligation to pay quota assessments on January 1 of the Organization's fiscal year: Belize, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago.

2. Members up to date in payment for the years in which they have been in arrears and in compliance with a schedule of payment agreed upon with the Secretary General for paying quota assessments for the Organization's current fiscal year: The Bahamas.

3. Members in arrears, but have agreed to a schedule of payment by March 31, 1999, with the Secretary General for payment of the amount owed and are in compliance with that schedule: the United States.

There are no members in arrears who are facing special circumstances beyond their control, as determined by the General Assembly, for the specific period for which they have not paid.

That concludes my report, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you, Mr. Harding. I offer the floor to delegations that may wish to address this issue.

I call on the distinguished Representative of Antigua and Barbuda.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE ANTIGUA Y BARBUDA: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Harding for his report this morning, and I point out that while my country's contribution to this organization continues to be relatively small, it represents, nevertheless, a burden on Antigua and Barbuda that is as great as it might be on any other member state. Nevertheless, we are making a pledge that before the end of 1999, all arrears owed by Antigua and Barbuda will be completely paid.

Thank you very much, sir.

El PRESIDENTE: I thank the distinguished Ambassador for the information. There being no further observations, the Chair suggests that the Council take note of this report and the additional information. It is so agreed. Agreed.

APROBACIÓN DE ACTAS

El PRESIDENTE: We will now move on to the approval of the minutes of the meetings held on May 26, 1999; July 15, 1999; and July 23, 1999 [documentos CP/ACTA 1193/99, CP/ACTA 1194/99 y CP/ACTA 1196/99]. The Chair has been informed by the Secretariat that the stylistic changes made by the delegations have been duly incorporated. If there are no further changes, the minutes are approved.

The Secretariat has also distributed, in accordance with Article 65 of the Rules of Procedure of the Permanent Council, the minutes of the meeting of the Permanent Council held on August 26 of this year [documento CP/ACTA 1198/99].

PRESENTACIÓN DE LOS RESULTADOS DEL DIÁLOGO DE JEFES DE DELEGACIÓN SOBRE DROGAS DURANTE EL VIGÉSIMO NOVENO PERÍODO ORDINARIO DE SESIONES DE LA ASAMBLEA GENERAL

El PRESIDENTE: I'm now pleased to give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Canada to present the results of the dialogue on drugs.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DEL CANADÁ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Many of you will recall that at the General Assembly in June in Guatemala, in the interest of time, the Canadian Delegation chose not to offer a summary of the very rich discussion on drugs. Today, I will offer a few comments in that regard.

Mr. Chairman, the Hemispheric Foreign Ministers Dialogue on Drugs was an initiative announced by Prime Minister Chrétien at the Santiago Summit in April 1998 and was launched by Minister Axworthy in Jamaica last January. The Dialogue of the Heads of Delegation on Drugs during the General Assembly provoked a wide-ranging discussion of the human security aspects of the drug problem. My delegation was pleased that so many ministers and heads of delegation contributed to this discussion.

At that time, the Head of the Canadian Delegation, the Honorable David Kilgour, Secretary of State for Latin America and Africa, opened the discussion by reporting on the results of the consultative process. This process included travel to hemispheric capitals by envoys and culminated in a meeting of experts in San José, Costa Rica, in March.

While Canada proposed the Hemispheric Foreign Ministers Dialogue on Drugs to broaden the discussion of the drug problem by applying the human security perspective, the initiative was intended to complement progress already made through the 1996 Anti-Drug Strategy in the

Hemisphere, the Twentieth Special Session of the UN General Assembly on the World Drug Problem, and the development of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) within the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD).

Human security, Mr. Chairman, places the needs of citizens at the center of policy considerations and offers an opportunity to develop comprehensive, integrated responses to the drug problem. The drug problem, in that sense, is a quintessential human security issue, a shared problem that negatively affects the lives of individuals.

Canada's consultations revealed that there is a general acceptance of and support for the concept of human security. They also revealed a unanimous commitment to the hemispheric cooperation achieved to date, specifically through the work of CICAD and the development of the MEM. There is a recognition of the need to involve civil society in the design and implementation of anti-drug policies. Concern was also voiced that more needs to be done to implement existing anti-drug commitments. As well, there was concern that the effectiveness of anti-drug policies is sometimes undermined by a lack of integration with policies dealing with related problems. Specific issues raised were alternative development, the control of illicit firearms, corruption, and organized crime.

Mr. Chairman, delegations commenting on the human security concept agreed on the desirability of a broad approach and the need to strengthen hemispheric efforts through the exchange of expertise and cooperation. Others identified it as a challenge to governance and a threat to the consolidation of democratic institutions. It was also suggested that the drug problem should not be viewed as strictly a law enforcement issue, but as a multidimensional human problem that can only be solved through the involvement of individuals, families, and communities, and by dealing with both supply and demand. Several noted the role of youth both as the victims and as the key to the solution.

Commitment to the concept of shared responsibility and to a balanced approach was reaffirmed. One delegation called hemispheric cooperation the only tool to fight the drug problem, noting that combating the problem uses resources that could be devoted to other areas, such as health and economic development. Several delegations noted the need for effective action against illicit firearms and corruption. Alternative development was also raised as an issue of concern for delegations. Several delegations expressed an interest in some form of follow-up, especially in the related areas of firearms control and corruption.

In Guatemala City, there was universal support for the work of CICAD and for the implementation of an effective MEM. The MEM, which was concluded in Ottawa earlier this month at the Sixth Meeting of the CICAD Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG), provides a strong example of the impressive progress that can be made in the fight against drugs when countries of the Hemisphere work together.

Canada is proud that our Deputy Solicitor-General, Mr. Jean Fournier, was elected to chair the IWG and looks forward to the adoption of the MEM by CICAD at its XXVI Meeting in Montevideo, Uruguay, from October 5 to 7. We await with anticipation the testing of the MEM during 2000, and we believe strongly that the 34 individual country reports and the hemispheric report that will be presented to leaders at the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City in 2001 will provide government officials throughout the Hemisphere with an invaluable resource to effectively combat the illicit drug trade and its associated criminal activities.

Mr. Chairman, in his intervention at the General Assembly, Mr. Kilgour also said that Canada would examine how we can make modest, but concrete, contributions to provide assistance to local organizations throughout the Hemisphere and how we can expand our work with CICAD. He noted that as Canada prepares for the series of hemispheric events to come over the next two years, we will advance the human security agenda in the region. In this spirit, we propose to continue the discussion of the broader issue of human security within the OAS and to continue to work with our partners in the Hemisphere to eradicate the scourge of the illicit drug trade.

I'm handing out a little brochure that we produced in Canada on human security, and I commend it to delegations and capitals. Thank you for your attention, and thank you for adding this item to the order of business at short notice.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

El PRESIDENTE: There being no further remarks, the Chair suggests that the Permanent Council take note of the presentation and forward this information to CICAD.

PALABRAS DE RECONOCIMIENTO AL EMBAJADOR ALBERT RAMCHAND RAMDIN,
REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE SURINAME, EN OCASIÓN DE
SU ALEJAMIENTO DEL CONSEJO PERMANENTE

El PRESIDENTE: We have thus concluded the consideration of the items on today's order of business.

It is with deep regret that I inform the Council of the completion of the tour of duty of our dear colleague and outstanding diplomat, Albert Ramchand Ramdin, Permanent Representative of Suriname, who has been appointed to the post of Assistant Secretary General for Foreign and Community Relations of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). With the indulgence of the members of the Council, I would like to say a few words of farewell to Ambassador Ramdin, an esteemed friend of all representatives of this Council.

As you all know, Ambassador Ramdin has a long and distinguished record in the inter-American system. He has carried out his duties at the Organization with enthusiasm and industry. He was Chair of the Council from January to March 1998, and was elected Chair of the Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CEPCIDI) in April of this year. Unfortunately, he will be unable to complete his term, but we are sure that our loss will certainly be CARICOM's gain.

On behalf of the Permanent Council and myself, I thank Ambassador Ramdin for his invaluable contribution to the Organization, to reiterate the friendship of all his colleagues, and to join them in wishing him every success in his future endeavors. Ambassador Ramdin, to you and your family, our best wishes.

I now call on the distinguished Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for his remarks.

EL REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE SAN VICENTE Y LAS GRANADINAS:
Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I cannot resist the temptation to congratulate you and all those involved on the brevity of the program before us this morning. I wish you to continue that, sir.

On behalf of the member countries of the Caribbean Community, I bid farewell to Ambassador Ramdin, who has been with us for two very exciting years. He came straight into the position of Chair of the Permanent Council, and this year he became Chair of the Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CEPCIDI). Perhaps more significantly for us in CARICOM, he was Coordinator of CARICOM when his country held the chairmanship of the organization at a very critical period of negotiation for several things of regional importance, including the election of the Secretary General of the OAS. I wish to record our appreciation for your work, Ambassador Ramdin. Of course, you were the only one among us with responsibility for the OAS alone, which is a very important reflection of your country's wealth. [Risas.]

I remember distinctly that when we were trying to agree on the election of the Secretary General, Ambassador Ramdin displayed great maturity in his diplomacy. We were trying within CARICOM, as you all know very well, to speak with one voice. The only difference between us and a lot of other people is that we try to say what we want to say with one voice, and the others say the same thing with many voices. Ambassador Ramdin also played a very important part in trying to bring the regions of the Organization closer together, particularly the smaller constituencies of CARICOM and Central America.

In keeping with the sentiments of this meeting, I just wish to express to you, sir, our very best wishes for your future endeavors. We believe that you will carry to CARICOM the expertise that will enable you to be our ambassador to our own organization. I wish you much success, and I'm confident that you can depend on the support of all of us here in this organization.

Thank you very much.

EL PRESIDENTE: I thank the Ambassador of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for his inspiring words, and I call upon the distinguished Representative of Costa Rica.

EL REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE COSTA RICA: Muchas gracias, señor Presidente.

No podría, dentro de la brevedad a que estamos obligados en la sesión de esta mañana, dejar de decir unas breves, pero sentidas, palabras de despedida y reconocimiento sobre la labor que ha desplegado en esta Organización el Embajador Albert Ramdin, a quien todos, estoy seguro, con dolor vemos hoy alejarse de estas funciones.

Soy testigo de la labor importante que en general el Embajador Ramdin desplegó. Como centroamericano y como costarricense, quiero decir que Albert Ramdin ha sido un gran amigo de Centroamérica, ha sido un gran amigo de mi país, tanto así que es Embajador Concurrente de Suriname ante Costa Rica. Por eso, hoy no le digo adiós, le digo hasta luego, Embajador Ramdin.

EL PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much. I now give the floor to the distinguished Representative of the United States.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My delegation joins others who have expressed their appreciation for the distinguished service rendered to the Organization of American States by Ambassador Albert Ramdin of Suriname.

The United States was one of the delegations that very actively supported the candidacy of Ambassador Ramdin to chair the Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CEPCIDI). Consequently, we regret that his tenure will have been so brief, because we looked forward to the leadership that he could have given to that Council.

Ambassador Ramdin has the distinction of having served as chair of both major councils of the OAS, the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI) and the Permanent Council, and in both he performed outstandingly. We are confident that he will exercise the same vigorous leadership that he brought to those bodies in his new post. As you, Mr. Chairman, and others, have said, our loss is CARICOM's gain.

In exercising his leadership, Ambassador Ramdin assured us that Suriname remained committed to hosting next year's CIDI meeting. We look forward to meeting in Paramaribo and seeing him at that time. We wish him every success.

Thank you very much.

El PRESIDENTE: I thank the distinguished Ambassador of the United States for his remarks, and I give the floor to the distinguished Representative of Mexico.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE MÉXICO: Muchas gracias. Señor Presidente, mi Delegación, y creo interpretar el sentir de las delegaciones miembros del grupo de ALADI, sentimos la partida del Embajador Ramdin de la Organización. Sin embargo, como este no es un acto de despedida en la vida, quisiera dar una nota de mayor optimismo, refiriéndome a las nuevas funciones que va a asumir.

Creemos que sus nuevas responsabilidades en CARICOM serán de suma utilidad para nuestra Organización, porque ha tenido la posibilidad de ver, en su paso por nuestra Organización, las virtudes y limitaciones, los defectos y el potencial de la OEA.

Estoy seguro de que, como Secretario General Adjunto de CARICOM, contribuirá precisamente al objetivo esencial de esa organización que apunta hacia la integración hemisférica. Le deseo el mayor de los éxitos en el desempeño de sus gestiones. Gracias.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, distinguished Ambassador of Mexico, for your remarks. I now give the floor to the distinguished Representative of Canada.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DEL CANADÁ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I will be brief, in that other colleagues have broken the rule that we had established earlier on, but I suppose it's a good day to break a rule and I am in good company in doing so.

I think Ambassador Ramdin came to this Council with the three T's in terms of his attributes—talent, tact, and tenacity. He did not waste any time in demonstrating them, as he was dropped into the role of Chair of the Permanent Council at the very start of his tenure. This is invidious, I think, for any of us coming into an organization such as this and beginning at the highest

level. But he excelled, and we have appreciated that, as I've appreciated our numerous discussions that were always friendly, always businesslike, and always had some sort of follow-up.

I think that Ambassador Ramdin will do his usual wonderful and excellent job as Assistant Secretary General at CARICOM with the special responsibility for liaison with international institutions. The liaison with this organization, the OAS, is of great significance. Also, we look forward to increasing contact with you in your capacity as Assistant Secretary General about CARICOM as a whole as we embark on the very tortuous path of planning the next Summit of the Americas in Quebec City in 2001.

So, Albert, good luck! We will miss you very much. Thank you.

El PRESIDENTE: I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Canada for his remarks, and I now give the floor to the Secretary General.

El SECRETARIO GENERAL: Gracias, señor Presidente. Quiero agradecer esta mañana al Embajador Ramdin la particular cooperación que él ha brindado a la Organización en estos años. Estoy seguro de que su presencia en CARICOM nos va a permitir intensificar el trabajo con una institución cuya suerte, cuyos objetivos, en gran medida son compartidos por la Organización.

El Embajador Ramdin ha sido una persona juiciosa, asidua, infatigable, que ha aportado a la Organización de los Estados Americanos su inteligencia, su dedicación, su seriedad. De veras vamos a lamentar la ausencia del Embajador Ramdin.

Esperamos que en esas nuevas responsabilidades pueda continuar trabajando con la misma intensidad con que lo ha hecho en la Organización, y estoy seguro de que de tal manera va a servir a la región del Caribe y también a las causas de todos los americanos. Gracias, señor Presidente.

El PRESIDENTE: I thank the Secretary General for his remarks, and now I give the floor to the distinguished Representative of Suriname.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE SURINAME: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Your Excellency, Sir Arlington Butler, Chair of the Permanent Council; Mr. Secretary General, Dr. César Gaviria; distinguished permanent representatives; alternate representatives; permanent observers; ladies and gentlemen:

First of all, let me assure you that I, too, leave the OAS with mixed feelings. When I assumed this position some two years ago, I did not anticipate my term of duty ending after such a brief stay at the Organization. But as we all know, reality and the scope of this occupation force us to keep change in mind any at any time.

I say farewell today to a group of friends, representatives of the Hemisphere who have shared several important events over the past two years, including the 50th Anniversary of the Organization of American States. I have enjoyed my stay in this organization, and I was pleased to be part of a continuing process of renewal and further strengthening of the inter-American system. I find that the OAS is one of the best suited organizations to discuss the variety of political issues we encounter in the Hemisphere.

Distinguished ambassadors, I bring to you the greetings of my president, Jules Albert Wijdenbosch, and his appreciation for the OAS's activities in Suriname, especially in the last months. Although never officially announced in the OAS's Permanent Council or in any other body of the Organization, the OAS has been involved in a process of increasing stability in my country over the past couple of months. I thank Secretary General Gaviria and Assistant Secretary General Thomas for their involvement in this process. I thank the representatives of Canada, Brazil, and Jamaica for their support and assistance in this process of stabilizing the situation in Suriname. I thank also my CARICOM colleagues for their moral support during our difficult days. I can assure you that the Government of the Republic of Suriname remains committed to the objectives of the Organization, and that the Government will support any activity, in any field, aimed at strengthening democracy, democratic institutions, justice, security, and other basic and fundamental rights of the people of the Americas in general, but also and in particular of the Surinamese people.

We in the Hemisphere are being confronted with far-reaching changes in the international political scene. We know all about the effects of the global financial crisis. We all are deeply involved in the process of regional economic integration and the advancement in communication technology. All of that has made international relations more transparent on the one hand, but more complex on the other hand. More and more we see that important issues are being dealt with in multilateral organizations like the OAS, and this makes the OAS one of the most important political fora in the Hemisphere.

We all know about the Summit process and the involvement of the OAS and almost all the countries in the Hemisphere in the making and the direction of one agenda for the Hemisphere. We need to congratulate ourselves on creating this agenda and trying to implement it through the Summit. I also thank the Secretary General for his vision to make this organization more efficient and effective and to streamline it to better execute the given mandates.

But there is a small negative aspect. When, at the Santiago Summit, we discussed the renewal of the inter-American system, we also spoke about getting all countries involved in this process. I think it is time for the OAS to ensure that all countries in the Hemisphere—none excluded—be part of this process. That agenda is not dealt with within this organization, in my opinion, at the formal level. I think it is time to start those discussions. And as Ambassador Boehm said just now, we're already working towards the next summit. At that point, I think the OAS can play a crucial role in getting all countries in this hemisphere, including Cuba, involved in this process of renewal and unity.

Regarding the internal modernization of the OAS, a point that I have raised in bilateral discussions with several members of this body is the term of the chairmanship of the Permanent Council. Given the highly political role the Permanent Council plays in this dynamic field of new activities within the Organization and the Hemisphere, I would like to suggest that we at least start discussions on changing the term and role of the Chair of the Permanent Council. I believe the Chair of the Council should not fulfil merely a protocolary, procedural, or technical role. Rather, the post should have a political impact, not only to present to us the mandates of the General Assembly, but also to evaluate and to guide us through that process so that when this period is over, we could have at least a politically guided control of the execution of those mandates. This is more in line with international procedure. It occurs at the United Nations, and in our own organization, the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI) elects its Chair for one year, and it works fine. I

think a more political role for the Chair of the Permanent Council would help the process of integrating in the Hemisphere.

At the same time, distinguished representatives, we have experienced—not only in political organizations, but also beyond—that reform in itself cannot be an objective. Over-reforming an organization could take away the attention needed to execute the main objectives of the Organization. Maybe we should look also into prioritizing our work, and I think Ambassador Mercader of Uruguay has done a perfect job as Chair of the Special Joint Working Group of the Permanent Council and the Inter-American Council for Integral Development on the Strengthening and Modernization of the OAS. I wish all the best and great success to your successor, Ambassador Quiñónez of Guatemala. But I think there is some room there to prioritize more and to focus more on what should be done within the Organization when it comes to reform.

Distinguished representatives, I call for more attention to the problems of the smaller economies in the Hemisphere. I know that we have discussed this at several meetings, not only in this organization, but also within the Summit follow-up process. But I think what we need is genuine partnership, dedication, and focus on the real problems, especially the problems in the Caribbean.

The vulnerabilities of the smaller economies are often demonstrated. At the moment, several million people in the Caribbean feel and live with the effects of that process. We should commit ourselves to help—not only in words, but also in deeds—the smaller economies and to understand their problems, concerns, and vulnerabilities. Refocusing the CIDI program in that regard is one of the key issues in my opinion, and the new Inter-American Agency for Cooperation and Development (IACD) should take good note of that.

Finally, I express to all colleagues and friends around this table my deep appreciation for your support and assistance to myself, to my mission, and to the Government of Suriname over the past two years. I seek the same support when I take up new responsibilities in Georgetown, Guyana. Allow me to specifically thank the ambassadors of the CARICOM region in Washington for their friendship and their valuable discussions, which became lessons for me to apply to my new function, and for their support over the past two years.

I assure you—distinguished ambassadors, Mr. Secretary General, Mr. Chairman—that although I will not be physically in your midst in the coming years, I certainly will be in mind and spirit.

I thank you. [Aplausos.]

El PRESIDENTE: We thank the distinguished Ambassador for his words of wisdom, which we will remember.

ANUNCIO DEL REPRESENTANTE DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS
SOBRE LA REUNION DE LA SUBCOMISIÓN ESPECIAL DE LA CEPCIDI

El PRESIDENTE: I now give the floor to the Representative of the United States.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wondered whether, having concluded this matter, you were considering other items under "Other business."

El PRESIDENTE: I should say so.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS: I thank you. I want to call to the attention of members that tomorrow at 11:00 a.m., we have scheduled a very important meeting in this room for the Secretary General to address the Special Committee of CEPCIDI on the Inter-American Agency for Cooperation and Development (IACD). A notice to that effect was sent out, but it may not have reached all of the delegations, so I just wanted to call the notice to your attention.

The Secretary General has been invited to share with the Committee his report, which was issued last week as called for by the General Assembly. In the report, he addresses the various issues of administration, management, personnel, and financing related to the establishment of the new Agency—issues that cut across the board and are not necessarily CEPCIDI issues. Consequently, they should be matters of great importance to all of the delegations, and I hope that we can see as many of the ambassadors represented as possible.

Thank you very much.

El PRESIDENTE: There being no other "Other business," except to remind you that we're having a farewell reception upstairs in honor of Ambassador Ramdin, this meeting is adjourned.

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