

CONSEJO PERMANENTE



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ACTA
DE LA SESIÓN EXTRAORDINARIA
CELEBRADA
EL 29 DE AGOSTO DE 2001

Aprobada en la sesión del 27 de febrero de 2002

ÍNDICE

	<u>Página</u>
Nómina de los Representantes que asistieron a la sesión.....	1
Invitaciones al vigésimo octavo período extraordinario de sesiones de la Asamblea General que requieren autorización del Consejo Permanente	2
Anuncio de la Presidencia sobre el proyecto de Carta Democrática Interamericana	2
Palabras de reconocimiento al Representante Permanente de Jamaica en ocasión de su alejamiento del Consejo Permanente.....	3
Página Web sobre el vigésimo octavo período extraordinario de sesiones de la Asamblea General, que se realizará en Lima, Perú.....	13

DOCUMENTO CONSIDERADO EN LA SESIÓN
(SE PUBLICA POR SEPARADO)

CP/doc.3508/01 add. 2, Memorando de la Secretaría General sobre las invitaciones al vigésimo octavo período extraordinario de sesiones de la Asamblea General que requieren autorización del Consejo Permanente (Artículo 10 del Reglamento de la Asamblea General)

CONSEJO PERMANENTE DE LA ORGANIZACIÓN DE LOS ESTADOS AMERICANOS

ACTA DE LA SESIÓN ORDINARIA
CELEBRADA EL 29 DE AGOSTO DE 2001

En la ciudad de Washington, a las doce y cincuenta de la tarde del 29 de agosto de 2001, celebró sesión ordinaria el Consejo Permanente de la Organización de los Estados Americanos. Presidió la sesión el Embajador Hernán R. Castro H., Representante Permanente de Costa Rica y Presidente del Consejo Permanente. Asistieron los siguientes miembros:

Embajador Richard Bernal, Representante Permanente de Jamaica
Embajador Denis G. Antoine, Representante Permanente de Grenada
Embajador Lionel Alexander Hurst, Representante Permanente de Antigua y Barbuda
Embajadora Sonia Merlyn Johnny, Representante Permanente de Santa Lucía
Embajadora Laura Elena Núñez de Ponce, Representante Permanente de Honduras
Embajador Diego Abente Brun, Representante Permanente del Paraguay
Embajadora Margarita Escobar, Representante Permanente de El Salvador
Embajador Marcelo Ostría Trigo, Representante Permanente de Bolivia
Embajador Joshua Sears, Representante Permanente del Commonwealth de las Bahamas
Embajador Valter Pecly Moreira, Representante Permanente del Brasil
Embajador Esteban Tomic Errázuriz, Representante Permanente de Chile
Embajador Blasco Peñaherrera, Representante Permanente del Ecuador
Embajador Juan Enrique Fischer, Representante Permanente del Uruguay
Embajadora Lisa Shoman, Representante Permanente de Belice
Embajador Juan Manuel Castulovich, Representante Permanente de Panamá
Embajador Michael I. King, Representante Permanente de Barbados
Embajador Lombardo Martínez Cabezas, Representante Permanente de Nicaragua
Embajador Manuel Rodríguez Cuadros, Representante Permanente del Perú
Embajador Raúl Alberto Ricardes, Representante Permanente de la Argentina
Embajador Miguel Ruíz Cabañas, Representante Permanente de México
Embajador Humberto de la Calle Lombana, Representante Permanente de Colombia
Embajador Jorge Valero Briceño, Representante Permanente de Venezuela
Embajador Ellsworth I. A. John, Representante Permanente de San Vicente y las Granadinas
Embajador Ramón Quiñones, Representante Permanente de la República Dominicana
Embajador Roger Francisco Noriega, Representante Permanente de los Estados Unidos
Embajador Paul D. Durand, Representante Permanente del Canadá
Ministro Consejero Jean Ricot Dorméus, Representante Interino de Haití
Segundo Secretario Henry Leonard Mac-Donald, Representante Interino de Suriname
Primera Secretaria Deborah Yaw, Representante Interina de Guyana
Consejera Jasmine E. Huggins, Representante Alternativa de Saint Kitts y Nevis
Primera Secretaria Jennifer Marchand, Representante Alternativa de Trinidad y Tobago
Consejera Carla Anaité Aguilar, Representante Alternativa de Guatemala

También estuvo presente el Secretario General Adjunto, Embajador Luigi R. Einaudi, Secretario del Consejo Permanente.

El PRESIDENTE: Declaro abierta la presente sesión, que ha sido convocada para considerar el asunto indicado en el orden del día [CP/OD.1291/01].

[El orden del día contiene los siguientes puntos:

1. Memorando de la Secretaría General sobre las invitaciones al vigésimo octavo período extraordinario de sesiones de la Asamblea General, que requieren autorización del Consejo Permanente – Artículo 10 del Reglamento de la Asamblea General (CP/doc.3508/01 add. 2)
2. Otros asuntos.]

Si los señores Representantes no tuvieran objeciones, daríamos por aprobado el orden del día e iniciaríamos de inmediato su consideración. Aprobado.

INVITACIONES AL VIGÉSIMO OCTAVO PERÍODO EXTRAORDINARIO DE SESIONES DE LA ASAMBLEA GENERAL QUE REQUIEREN AUTORIZACIÓN DEL CONSEJO PERMANENTE

El PRESIDENTE: La Secretaría General ha elaborado y distribuido el documento CP/doc.3508/01 add. 2, que incluye la identificación de las organizaciones y entidades que manifestaron su interés en concurrir, en calidad de invitados especiales, al vigésimo octavo período extraordinario de sesiones de la Asamblea General, en Lima, Perú. La Secretaría también me informa que el Gobierno del Perú ha confirmado la anuencia correspondiente. En consecuencia, la Presidencia estima que estaríamos en condiciones de autorizar al señor Secretario General a extender las invitaciones pertinentes. Así se acuerda. Acordado.

ANUNCIO DE LA PRESIDENCIA SOBRE EL PROYECTO DE CARTA DEMOCRÁTICA INTERAMERICANA

El PRESIDENTE: Como es del conocimiento de los señores Representantes, el Grupo de Trabajo del Consejo Permanente que, bajo la distinguida presidencia del Embajador Humberto de la Calle, viene adelantando el estudio y redacción de los artículos del proyecto de Carta Democrática Interamericana tiene previsto ultimar ajustes y revisiones de estilo al texto durante los días 30 de agosto y 6 de septiembre próximos.

Sobre el particular, la Presidencia desea dejar formal constancia de estas decisiones en las actas de este Consejo, así como de su intención de convocar a una sesión ordinaria del Consejo Permanente de aquí al día 6 de septiembre, con el fin de recibir el antes mencionado proyecto, considerarlo, aprobarlo y elevarlo de inmediato al conocimiento de nuestros respectivos gobiernos. Así se acuerda.

PALABRAS DE RECONOCIMIENTO AL REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE JAMAICA
EN OCASIÓN DE SU ALEJAMIENTO DEL CONSEJO PERMANENTE

El PRESIDENTE: Es para mí motivo de particular orgullo rendir hoy especial tributo al Embajador Richard Bernal, Representante Permanente de Jamaica, a quien vemos, con pesar, alejarse de esta Casa de las Américas. Su paso por este foro será recordado por todos nosotros como una experiencia enriquecedora en lo personal y en lo profesional.

Desde 1991, el Embajador Richard Bernal ha venido representando a su país en la OEA con brillo diplomático inusitado y con un conocimiento profundo de los objetivos que nos unen y de los matices que nos distinguen. Su actuación ha sido una permanente contribución al desarrollo de los más relevantes temas hemisféricos, fueran estos de naturaleza económica, presupuestaria, administrativa o de delicado acento jurídico-político.

Por último, debo mencionar su muy destacada actuación como presidente de varios grupos y comisiones y del propio Consejo Permanente, con posterioridad a la Asamblea General celebrada en Haití.

Ambassador Bernal, on behalf of the Permanent Council and on my own behalf, I thank you for your invaluable contribution to the inter-American system. I would like to reiterate our friendship and that of the staff of the General Secretariat, who all join me in wishing you every success in your future endeavors.

Ambassador Bernal, our very best wishes for you and your family.

Tiene el uso de la palabra el Embajador Bernal, Representante de Jamaica.

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

I am keeping tradition today in that I am breaking the established tradition and protocol, and you have been kind enough to accede. I wanted to say something now; I can do my “thank you” at the very end. You have been very kind to permit me to do that.

Let me recognize the Chair of the Permanent Council, my good friend and Ambassador of Costa Rica, and Ambassador Einaudi, who served here with me many years ago and who has happily returned as the Assistant Secretary General. I was pleased to play a part in ensuring his election, and I feel fully vindicated by the work that he has done to date.

I would like to recognize all the distinguished ambassadors permanent representatives. You have been my colleagues, friends, and tutors. I have learned a great deal, and I have forged some friendships that will stay with me forever. We are like a group that went to war. We have bonded in the trenches of the struggle for democracy, peace, and development.

I want to pay a special tribute to the alternate representatives, because they do a tremendous amount of work and we don't often give them as much recognition as they deserve. There is an old adage that behind every good man, there is a good woman, but I would say that behind every good permanent representative, there is an outstanding alternate representative.

I should apologize to the Secretariat for all the changes I have made to tradition and protocols, for arriving one minute before the time and then changing my seat. You have been very tolerant, and I apologize, but I also thank you for your support and friendship.

I am pleased and honored to have served here over the last 10-and-a-half years and having survived 11 General Assemblies. I have served here in numerous capacities as Jamaica's Permanent Representative to the Organization. Indeed, my assignment here has afforded me the opportunity to join forces with a cadre of professionals and distinguished colleagues who are accomplished, committed to the Hemisphere, do an outstanding job, and often don't receive sufficient credit publicly.

During these years, I have met many distinguished colleagues. Some of them have gone on to become foreign ministers, and I have no doubt that we will soon produce a president from our ranks, given the talent and experience that we have here.

Over the 53 years of the existence of this great organization, it has truly proven time and again to be the leading hemispheric forum for political dialogue and for collective and concerted actions aimed at finding solutions to political, economic, and social challenges in the Hemisphere.

During my 10 years here, the OAS has changed. I remember well that the first regular session of the General Assembly that I attended lasted one week. If you add the day of travel before and after, the whole operation took nine days. We have certainly reduced that time, and we seem to be accomplishing as much, if not more.

But during these 10 years, I have seen the operations of the OAS streamlined, sometimes out of financial adversity, but also out of a sense of reorganization for greater efficacy. I have witnessed the redimensioning of its goals. I say redimensioning because the long-term goals to which we are committed remain enshrined in our Charter, and we have found different ways of giving expression to achieving those goals.

We have also sharpened our focus in meeting the challenges of a changing world. These efforts have been rewarded by remarkable achievements in the promotion and consolidation of democracy, the protection of human rights, and the fostering of economic and social development throughout the Americas. I, for one, have always felt that there would be no peace and democracy if we did not tackle the problems of poverty and economic development.

I have seen much change over the last 10 years. When I came here, e-mail was not a much-used thing. The Internet was very new. Now, we take these things for granted. At my first General Assembly, only very affluent and powerful people had cellular phones. Now, everybody has a cellular phone. I don't know how we managed before these things, but we have changed.

One of the most notable achievements, Mr. Chairman, has been the restoration of democracy in Haiti in 1994. We continue to support that process. I well remember the weekends, the late nights, and the trips to and from Haiti. It was a momentous time, and it was a signal achievement for this organization. I am very pleased that Jamaica and the CARICOM partners participated fully in this process and continue to contribute to the maintenance of democracy in Haiti.

Today, our organization's unwavering commitment to sustainable democracy has gone beyond the restoration of democracy to a very important step: the prevention of the breakdown of democracy. The OAS has worked tirelessly in building peace and strengthening democratic institutions and values throughout the Hemisphere. Its electoral observation missions and special missions have contributed to strengthening the credibility and transparency of the democratic process and the peace process in several states through very difficult circumstances.

Notably, on the eve of my departure, the OAS is seeking to further enhance hemispheric mechanisms through the conclusion of the Inter-American Democratic Charter. During the last 10 years, I have witnessed the expansion of the OAS's agenda although, unfortunately, our financial resources have not increased commensurately. New issues appeared increasingly when the post Cold-war period started, and they span a spectrum of social and economic development. Indeed, the OAS has been at the forefront of the international arena in addressing such issues as drug trafficking, corruption, and illicit trafficking in small arms.

Mr. Chairman, a significant achievement for the Organization in this new era and new millennium was its resolve to tackle issues of critical poverty and sustainable democracy. Let me also mention sustainable development, Ambassador, which has led to the creation of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI). I think it's an innovative development and shows that the OAS is capable of new developments in response to changing circumstances.

I was fortunate to have arrived at the OAS when economic and development issues were beginning to gain some prominence on the agenda. My training and professional experience in economics and banking allowed me to play some small role in this process. In particular, I well remember chairing the Working Group to Study the Enterprise of the Americas Initiative, in which for two years before we had not been able to conclude our work program. Indeed, we were able to do that and to move the agenda.

Also, I was fortunate to have the confidence of my colleagues and to chair the Working Group of the Special Committee on Trade and the Inter-American Economic and Social Council (CIES). One of the important developments in that time was the decision to create a trade unit. I well remember that once Secretary General Gaviria had been elected, the then Permanent Representative of Colombia, Ambassador Londoño, made contact for me, and we spoke about the Trade Unit even before he assumed office. In this regard, I must place on record my appreciation for the support of a dedicated team from the Secretariat, as well as from members of our organization.

Mr. Chairman, there is no way that I could make these remarks without referring to the special concerns—especially security concerns—of small states and smaller economies. One of my achievements came during the drafting of documents for the First Summit of the Americas. We were pushing for including different levels of development, and we were being resisted by some large and developed countries who shall remain nameless and who have now come around to see the virtue and wisdom of taking this into account. We were expelled from the plenary and asked to go into a small, uncomfortable room and to not return until we had found suitable language. As the evening went on, it occurred to me that “smaller economies” was a definition that could work, and it was a reality that nobody could contest. So in my innocence I said “smaller economies” and, lo and behold, this phrase was taken up and has since taken on a life that I am very pleased about, because I think it is very important. The security of small states is an issue that we must keep before the OAS in all its dimensions. I am pleased to see the attention given to this issue.

Now, Mr. Chairman, this has been a glowing report for the OAS, and justifiably so. Notwithstanding these considerable accomplishments in the last 10 years, the problems and challenges we face don't allow complacency. We have to be vigilant, we have to be innovative, and we have to work consistently. I recognize that the challenges include drugs, corruption, diminished resources for technical assistance, the myriad Summit mandates and, of course, the problem of poverty in the Hemisphere.

Mr. Chairman, I want to assure you that my experience here has been definitive. I wanted to come to the OAS because early in my student life, my professor told me: "You can't know everything." He advised me to pick one region of the world, and I picked Latin America and the Caribbean. I have had a long interest in this area, and coming here was the fulfillment of a desire to serve and to know the region. Serving here has allowed me to accomplish that desire.

I want to assure you that my leaving this position doesn't mean that I'm leaving the cause of the inter-American system or of the Organization of American States. I remain confident that the Organization will overcome its challenges, and I pledge my support and that of the Government of Jamaica to the continuing efforts to achieve these goals.

My 10 years here have not only been rewarding in terms of the knowledge, experiences, friendships, advice, and learning I have gained. I have been pleased to make whatever small contribution I have been able to in this organization. I recognize that we are fortunate to have the caliber of leadership in this room, supported by an outstanding staff.

I would like to especially mention and pay tribute to former Secretary General, Ambassador Baena Soares, and place on record my gratitude and appreciation for the outstanding work of the current Secretary General, César Gaviria, whose vision and leadership have served this organization well. They deserve the due credit for much of the success of this organization, and I thank them for their support to me personally and to my delegation.

I would also like to pay tribute to the Assistant Secretary Generals, both of whom I hold in the very highest regard: Ambassador Christopher Thomas—now Senator Thomas in Trinidad and Tobago—and Ambassador Luigi Einaudi.

I thank the staff of the Secretariat. The staff is outstanding. There are too many people that I would have to thank, and I ask them to forgive me if I thank them as a group. However, I couldn't fail to mention Mrs. Ana O'Brien, the Chief of Protocol, and the staff of the Columbus Memorial Library—where I set a record that I exceeded several times by being the person who has borrowed a book the longest. Indeed, I returned my last book today. [Risas.] I don't recommend that you do that because the Library is not pleased, but they have supported a lot of my research and publications. Indeed, the only time that I was forced to exert and abuse my diplomatic privileges was when the Library staff had the temerity to request the return of a book that I was using that was overdue. I said: "Don't call me; I will call you." [Risas.] But I closed my account with them today.

I want to end by thanking the staff that has worked in the Permanent Mission of Jamaica. I did not win many friends in my foreign ministry in selecting that staff, because I always fought for the best people and I did whatever was necessary. You well know that in love, war, and diplomacy, all is fair. Well, I used every fair means to get the people I wanted, and I was vindicated, because I have had five deputy permanent representatives. Four have departed, and all of them have become

ambassadors. Three have been posted in Latin America and the Caribbean, and I now report to one—which I find quite interesting.

Finally, I thank all of you for your friendship. I pledge to continue to work with you and with the governments of the Hemisphere to achieve the goals to which this organization is committed. I have been deeply honored and most privileged to have served here. This will always be a definitive experience for me—one of which I have the fondest memories.

Thank you all very much.

[Aplausos.]

El PRESIDENTE: Muchas gracias, señor Embajador. Tiene el uso de la palabra el Secretario General Adjunto, Embajador Luigi Einaudi.

El SECRETARIO GENERAL ADJUNTO: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Richard Bernal, you are a hard act to follow. I will be very quick. When Richard Bernal replaced the very much esteemed Keith Johnson in 1991, he himself was relatively little known outside the often inarticulate circle of those who practice what Keynes once called “the dismal profession of economics.” We’ve just heard that Ambassador Bernal may be an economist and a banker, but he certainly is not inarticulate. Today, he leaves us as one of the most respected ambassadors in the entire Washington diplomatic corps.

On behalf of the Secretary General, on my own behalf, and on behalf of all of those who have worked with him in the General Secretariat over this past decade—which he has described better for us than we could—I would like to simply record a very real sense of loss, even dismay.

Ambassador Bernal, you were not always the easiest man in the world to reach [risas], but your contributions were always authoritative, reliable, and helpful. Since you have referred to your research and your use of the Columbus Memorial Library, for which I am very grateful, I will use your own words to describe what we will expect of you in the future. The excuse is that words once written take on a life of their own. We expect that you will help address—and here I am quoting you—the most urgent challenge facing CARICOM countries: to undertake strategic, global repositioning of their economies and to help cope with the challenges and seize the opportunities of globalization in order to ensure economic progress and preserve and deepen democracy. You have already done a great deal in that regard, and we are confident that with your wife, Margaret, making her usual vital contributions, you will continue to achieve much more.

Thank you.

El PRESIDENTE: Gracias, Embajador Einaudi. Tiene el uso de la palabra el Representante de Grenada, Embajador Denis Antoine.

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

Assistant Secretary General, ambassadors, members of delegations, ladies and gentlemen:

Having just listened to Ambassador Bernal and then to the Assistant Secretary General, I am trying to figure out what to say. However, I have the honor to speak today on behalf of the CARICOM delegations at the OAS in bidding farewell to Ambassador Richard Bernal, Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the Organization of American States.

It is with mixed feelings that I proudly convey the sentiments of farewell, but to me, it is more a congratulatory expression to a man whom I admired in the performance of his duties.

Over the past 10 years, Ambassador Bernal has graced the OAS with his eloquence; his knowledge of hemispheric affairs; and his enviable expertise in matters pertaining to trade, finance, and economics, with particular reference to the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) agreement process. I have only known him in this function for five years, of course, but I got the history.

Ambassador Bernal has shown remarkable leadership within the OAS and among his colleagues in CARICOM. You would agree with me that he has become a part of the institutional memory of the OAS, and his contributions will indeed be missed as he turns his feet in new directions.

As a representative of a CARICOM member state, I am pleased that our governments have recognized his worth and negotiating skills and have appointed him chief negotiator of CARICOM's Regional Negotiating Machinery (RNM). It is fitting that this servant leader is elevated to this new plane. He is a senior Caribbean diplomat with hands-on experience in frontline issues of the OAS and the entire Hemisphere. An intimate knowledge and understanding of the problems that challenge our countries will be some of the qualities that our new chief negotiator will bring to the table as we come together to finalize the FTAA agreement.

Needless to say, Ambassador Bernal is widely regarded as the premier authority on the FTAA process. He was at the meeting at the White House in 1994 when President Clinton announced plans for the Summit of the Americas, and he was at Airlie House in November and December 1994 when the Plan of Action for the Miami Summit was negotiated and finalized.

Ambassador Bernal was at the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG) meeting of May 1995 and fought intensely for many long hours for the formation of the Working Group on Smaller Economies, of which he became the first Chairman. His arduous efforts in this working group saw him emerge within a very short time as the leading authority on issues relating to smaller economies. The leaders of CARICOM turned to him for advice, as they still do, and he provided that advice and his opinion in a very forthright manner. His frankness in expressing his views and pointing to the flaws of the economic agenda of CARICOM helped tremendously in forging what is regarded as CARICOM economic unity.

Shakespeare, in *Pericles Part I*, might have been thinking about the personality of Ambassador Bernal when he wrote: "Thou art no flatterer. I thank thee for it; and heaven forbid that kings should let their ears hear their faults hid!"

Ambassador Bernal continues his work in forging hemispheric integration on a new stage, speaking out not just for Jamaica, but for the entire group of CARICOM countries. We have confidence in his skills as a negotiator, and while he goes out to bat for us, we will be there cheering and supporting.

We are all aware that Ambassador Bernal has been ably complemented by his wife, Margaret, who herself has been doing her significant part in advancing the cultural integration of this hemisphere. Her work in promoting the virtual museum of the Americas cannot go unnoticed. In this regard, she is an invaluable asset to her country and to this organization. We join in paying tribute to her on this occasion.

Ambassador Bernal, I could tell what I have learned about your avid handball playing and your love for authentic music. Sometimes we wonder how you find the time to do all of these things.

As you leave this organization to work for the Caribbean region, we know that you are cognizant that sometimes obstacles may stand in your path and prevent you from achieving your ideals during your planned timeframe. But you must remember, as some unknown writer has stated: "Ideals are like stars; you will not succeed in touching them with your hands. But like the seafaring man on the desert of waters, you choose them as your guide, and following them you would reach your destiny."

Ambassador Bernal, as you step out on your new stage, lots of thoughts may be spinning in your head. The Ambassador of Guyana wishes me to remind you of the words of his national poet, Martin Carter, who vividly wrote: "Over the shining mud, the moon is blood falling on ocean at the fence of lights, my course I set. I give my sail the wind and navigate the islands of the stars."

On behalf of CARICOM delegations, I celebrate and congratulate you on a job well done. As we bid you farewell, we wish you and your wife, Margaret, good health, best wishes, and a great future.

Thank you.

El PRESIDENTE: Muchas gracias, Embajador. Tiene el uso de la palabra el Embajador Miguel Ruíz Cabañas, Representante de México.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE MÉXICO: Muchas gracias, señor Presidente.

En nombre del grupo ALADI, tengo el muy honroso encargo de decirle hasta luego a nuestro querido amigo el Embajador Richard Bernal. Desde luego, a propósito uso las palabras "hasta luego" porque la vida siempre nos muestra que en estas lides diplomáticas los adioses generalmente no existen y siempre se vuelven hasta luego, uno siempre se vuelve a ver, sobre todo tratándose de una personalidad de la talla del Embajador Bernal.

Señor Presidente, creo que no exagero si subrayo que el Embajador Bernal es uno de los diplomáticos más conocidos, más reconocidos y más influyentes que ha habido en la última década, no solo en la Organización de los Estados Americanos sino en la ciudad de Washington. He tenido la curiosidad de ver quiénes son los diplomáticos que participan en las principales actividades que se hacen en esta ciudad, los círculos políticos, diplomáticos, *think tanks* y organizaciones de diverso tipo, y casi siempre uno encuentra el nombre del Embajador Richard Bernal entre las personas que participan en esas actividades. Creo que es uno de los diplomáticos más completos que se han dado en los últimos años en la Organización. Me parece que con lo que nos dijo hoy mostró una vez más cómo enriqueció los debates en el Consejo y la manera en que dirigió muchos de los grupos, de las actividades, incluyendo el Consejo Permanente.

Ya se dijo pero hay que subrayarlo. No creo que haya muchos otros funcionarios en todo el Continente que conozcan tan bien como él los detalles, las minucias y, por supuesto, que tengan toda una visión sobre lo que es el libre comercio y las negociaciones del libre comercio en nuestro continente. Es más, creo que el Embajador Bernal se ha convertido en uno de los símbolos de las causas y de los retos más importantes, no solo para su país y para el Caribe, sino para toda nuestra Organización, todo el Hemisferio, que es lograr una exitosa integración de las economías más pequeñas no solo a las negociaciones del Área de Libre de Comercio de las Américas sino, en general, a todas las actividades económicas en el Continente.

Como ya lo dijo el Secretario General Adjunto, el Embajador Bernal no es un negociador fácil, no es un negociador suave, pero es uno de los negociadores más eficaces, sólidos y exitosos que conozco. Basta recordar la dignidad con la que expuso los puntos de vista de Jamaica y de toda la CARICOM en la última Asamblea celebrada en San José, y cómo esa contribución está enriqueciendo en estas últimas semanas el texto de la Carta Democrática Interamericana que estamos preparando y que esperamos que pueda ser adoptada en Lima el 11 de septiembre próximo.

Además, creo que siempre que uno platica con el Embajador Bernal de temas importantes tiene uno la sensación de estar tratando con una persona que tiene una enorme fineza y un extraordinario sentido del humor. No recuerdo una sola conversación con el Embajador Bernal donde haya salido siempre ese finísimo sentido del humor.

Creo que el Embajador Bernal se distingue porque es un forjador de instituciones. No es posible decir esto de todos los funcionarios públicos de un gobierno. Los forjadores de instituciones siempre están en una categoría especial porque son los que les dan gobernabilidad y permanencia a las actividades de los Estados.

Una nota personal, señor Presidente, si se me permite. Cuando llegué a este foro, hace seis meses, tuve oportunidad de conversar con el Embajador Bernal. Puedo asegurar que sus observaciones, sus consejos, sus comentarios sobre el estado de la Organización, sobre lo que se puede hacer en ella, no solo fueron exactos, claros y precisos, sino sumamente alentadores, y se lo agradezco. Le agradezco también su amistad y la de su esposa Margaret. Los vamos a extrañar en la OEA, pero no de forma definitiva, porque en sus próximas actividades el Embajador Bernal estará muy en contacto con la ciudad de Washington.

En este sentido, señor Presidente, sí felicito al Embajador Bernal por las nuevas responsabilidades que va a desarrollar en el cargo que asumirá próximamente. Sin embargo, francamente, felicito más a la CARICOM por haber decidido que el Embajador Bernal sea su negociador para asuntos comerciales en los próximos meses y años.

El Embajador Bernal nos comentaba ahora que varios de sus representantes alternos han sido promovidos a embajadores en estos últimos años. Quizás sea prematuro pero quizá no tanto, yo quisiera extenderles una felicitación a los representantes alternos de Jamaica. Me consta su profesionalismo; la vecindad geográfica en este Consejo nos permite una estrecha comunicación. Los felicito también, entonces, por su promoción en el futuro próximo.

Gracias, señor Presidente.

El PRESIDENTE: Muchas gracias, señor Embajador. Tiene el uso de la palabra la Embajadora Laura Elena Núñez de Ponce, Representante de Honduras.

La REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE HONDURAS: Gracias, señor Presidente.

Tengo el honor en esta ocasión de tomar la palabra en nombre de los países centroamericanos, Panamá y la República Dominicana, para despedir a nuestro estimado colega y buen amigo, y vecino del otro lado, el Embajador Richard Bernal, de Jamaica, quien cesa en sus funciones como Representante Permanente de su país ante esta Organización, cargo que ha venido ocupando con singular prestancia desde el mes de mayo de 1991.

Me voy a referir un poco a las actividades en las que él ha destacado en esta Organización, pues, justo al poco tiempo de haber iniciado sus funciones como Embajador, fue elegido Presidente del Grupo de Trabajo encargado del estudio de la "Iniciativa para las Américas", para el cual posteriormente fue reelegido en 1992 y 1993. Sirvió como Presidente de la Comisión Ejecutiva Permanente del Consejo Interamericano Económico y Social en 1992 y 1993. De igual manera y con el alto sentido de responsabilidad que lo caracteriza, dirigió la Primera Reunión de la Comisión Especial de Comercio, tema al que dedicó especial interés y en el que, definitivamente, como ya lo han destacado mis colegas que me antecedieron en el uso de la palabra, ha sobresalido.

Fue Presidente del Consejo Permanente en 1995 y Presidente del Grupo de Trabajo encargado de elaborar el Programa Interamericano sobre Desarrollo Sostenible del Turismo en 1997, habiendo presidido sobre la preparación del mencionado Programa. En 1998 ejerció como Vicepresidente de la Comisión de Seguridad Hemisférica y, como tal, se aseguró de que se concediera la debida atención a las preocupaciones especiales de seguridad de los pequeños Estados insulares. Con esto, repito, recojo solamente algunas de las actividades tan meritorias en las que se ha involucrado y destacado.

Bajo la dirección del Embajador Bernal, la actuación de la Misión Permanente de Jamaica ha tenido una especial relevancia en los trabajos de nuestra Organización. Su eficiente equipo de trabajo se ha destacado en particular en la conducción de los temas políticos, jurídicos y comerciales, que actualmente llenan nuestra agenda interamericana, así como también en los temas de la Comisión de Asuntos Administrativos y Presupuestarios y en el Consejo Interamericano para el Desarrollo Integral.

El espíritu de trabajo en equipo, el acucioso profesionalismo, la enorme capacidad de negociación y la cordialidad que han caracterizado al Embajador Bernal han generado especial simpatía y aprecio hacia él en lo particular y han consolidado la imagen de respeto y liderazgo de su apreciada nación caribeña.

Por lo anterior, Embajador Bernal, lamentamos su partida, pero al mismo tiempo le auguramos un futuro brillante, en compañía de su esposa Margaret, y le deseamos que Dios lo acompañe ahora y siempre en sus nuevos destinos.

All the best, Ambassador.

Muchas gracias.

El PRESIDENTE: Gracias, señora Embajadora. Tiene el uso de la palabra el Embajador Roger Noriega, Representante de los Estados Unidos.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I don't intend to speak for very long, because I am sure we are all interested in taking full advantage of Ambassador Bernal's hospitality as we bid him farewell and as the lunch hour approaches.

The U.S. Delegation is pleased to have this opportunity to recognize the exceptional contribution that Ambassador Bernal has made in strengthening the inter-American system and the bilateral relationship between our two countries. The Caribbean is the third border of the United States, as Ambassador Bernal has heard me say before, and it is the geographical heart of the Americas. It is a region of great importance to my country and to the Hemisphere.

During his sustained tenure in Washington, Ambassador Bernal has represented Jamaica with dignity, skill, talent, and intensity, all of which have been alluded to this morning. He has forged strong bilateral ties while promoting a rational, coherent regional agenda.

Ambassador Bernal and his delegation have played an important role in helping to fashion consensus around key issues leading up to the Summit in Quebec. They were also vital in drafting the resolution in San José that formed the base for the ongoing talks that we expect will produce the Inter-American Democratic Charter that we will adopt in Lima.

Inasmuch as Ambassador Bernal will be working as the regional trade representative of CARICOM, we will continue to work together cooperatively and often, as Ambassador Bernal knows, because he attended my public job interview a few weeks ago. At that time, I alluded to the importance that I attach, both professionally and personally, to the success and prosperity of the small island states. We are relieved to say that we really do not have to bid you farewell, as you will continue to work on these issues. Instead, we say "good luck" as you begin this new chapter in your service to your country, to your region, and to the Americas.

Thank you, Ambassador Bernal. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

El PRESIDENTE: Muchas gracias, Embajador. Tiene el uso de la palabra el Representante del Canadá, Embajador Paul Durand.

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

I understand that the tradition is that one speaker represents each group. As I represent one country group like the United States [risas], I am going to avail myself of this opportunity, but I promise you that I won't abuse it at all times.

This is not an ordinary occasion; rather, it is a very special occasion. Ambassador Bernal has rendered very distinguished service to this organization and to this entire region, not just to CARICOM.

I have obviously not known him for a long time here because of my recent arrival, but I have known him in other incarnations, and I have a profound respect for his intellectual ability, especially his negotiating ability, and the way he articulates his positions, which is hard to beat.

I wish him a great deal of success in his next position—not too much success, because it might be at the expense of others. [Risas.] I am sure that he will find the right measure and do extremely well by his region, which—and that goes without saying—will also be good for the entire region.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

El PRESIDENTE: Gracias, señor Embajador. Tiene el uso de la palabra el Embajador Bernal.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE JAMAICA: Friends and colleagues, thank you very much.

[Aplausos.]

PÁGINA WEB SOBRE EL VIGÉSIMO OCTAVO PERÍODO EXTRAORDINARIO DE SESIONES DE LA ASAMBLEA GENERAL, QUE SE REALIZARÁ EN LIMA, PERÚ

El PRESIDENTE: Pregunto a los señores Representantes si desean referirse a algún otro asunto. Tiene el uso de la palabra el señor Representante del Perú.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DEL PERÚ: Muchas gracias, señor Presidente.

Seré sumamente breve. No quiero, con una intervención, diluir el homenaje emotivo que se ha hecho al Embajador Bernal. Deseo poner en conocimiento de todos los Representantes que el Gobierno del Perú ha abierto una página Web sobre el vigésimo octavo período extraordinario de sesiones de la Asamblea General, que se realizará en Lima, cuya dirección será remitida el día de hoy por fax a todas las misiones permanentes, para que encuentren información sobre la organización del mismo y las facilidades que el Gobierno del Perú otorgará a los Representantes. Quiero expresar, además, que en gran medida la Carta Democrática se hará realidad por el aporte de todos ustedes, particularmente el que el Embajador Bernal hizo en San José de Costa Rica.

Gracias, señor Presidente.

El PRESIDENTE: Muchísimas gracias, señor Embajador. Antes de levantar la sesión, quisiera invitarlos a concurrir al Salón de los Héroes, donde tendrá lugar la recepción de despedida del Embajador Richard Bernal.

No habiendo otros asuntos que tratar, se levanta la sesión.

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