

CONSEJO PERMANENTE



OEA/Ser.G
CP/ACTA 1366/03
29 abril 2003

ACTA
DE LA SESIÓN EXTRAORDINARIA
CELEBRADA
EL 29 DE ABRIL DE 2003

Aprobada en la sesión del 22 de octubre de 2003

ÍNDICE

	<u>Página</u>
Nómina de los Representantes que asistieron a la sesión	1
Palabras del Presidente del Consejo Permanente.....	2
Palabras del Secretario General Adjunto	4
Actividades desarrolladas por la OEA sobre promoción y consolidación de la democracia representativa 2002-2003	7
Elecciones generales celebradas en el Paraguay.....	12
Presentación especial por el excelentísimo doctor Miguel Ángel Rodríguez Echeverría, ex Presidente de Costa Rica	13
Comentarios de los Representantes sobre la presentación del ex Presidente de Costa Rica.....	16

DOCUMENTO CONSIDERADO EN LA SESIÓN
(SE PUBLICA POR SEPARADO)

CP/doc.3735/03, Inventario de actividades – Promoción y consolidación de la democracia representativa 2002-2003

CONSEJO PERMANENTE DE LA ORGANIZACIÓN DE LOS ESTADOS AMERICANOS

ACTA DE LA SESIÓN EXTRAORDINARIA CELEBRADA EL 29 DE ABRIL DE 2003

En la ciudad de Washington, a las diez y treinta de la mañana del miércoles 29 de abril de 2003, celebró sesión extraordinaria el Consejo Permanente de la Organización de los Estados Americanos de conformidad con la resolución AG/RES. 1907 (XXXII-O/02), “Promoción de la Democracia”. Asistió el excelentísimo doctor Miguel Ángel Rodríguez Echeverría, ex Presidente de Costa Rica. Presidió la sesión el Embajador M. A. Odeen Ishmael, Representante Permanente de Guyana y Presidente del Consejo Permanente. Asistieron los siguientes miembros:

Embajador Walter Niehaus Bonilla, Representante Permanente de Costa Rica y
Vicepresidente del Consejo Permanente
Embajador Denis G. Antoine, Representante Permanente de Grenada
Embajadora Margarita Escobar, Representante Permanente de El Salvador
Embajador Valter Pecly Moreira, Representante Permanente del Brasil
Embajador Esteban Tomic Errázuriz, Representante Permanente de Chile
Embajador Juan Enrique Fischer, Representante Permanente del Uruguay
Embajador Juan Manuel Castulovich, Representante Permanente de Panamá
Embajador Miguel Ruíz Cabañas, Representante Permanente de México
Embajador Jorge Valero Briceño, Representante Permanente de Venezuela
Embajador Ramón Quiñones, Representante Permanente de la República Dominicana
Embajador Eduardo Ferrero Costa, Representante Permanente del Perú
Embajador Seymour St. E. Mullings, O. J., Representante Permanente de Jamaica
Embajadora Marina Annette Valère, Representante Permanente de Trinidad y Tobago
Embajador Víctor Hugo Godoy Morales, Representante Permanente de Guatemala
Embajador Horacio Serpa Uribe, Representante Permanente de Colombia
Embajadora Carmen Marina Gutiérrez Salazar, Representante Permanente de Nicaragua
Ministra Silvia María Meregá, Representante Interina de la Argentina
Consejera Gwyneth A. Kutz, Representante Interina del Canadá
Consejera María Guadalupe Carías, Representante Alterna de Honduras
Primera Secretaria Deborah Yaw, Representante Alterna de Guyana
Ministro Consejero Kevin M. Isaac, Representante Alterno de Saint Kitts y Nevis
Ministra Elisa Ruiz Díaz-Buman, Representante Alterna del Paraguay
Primera Secretaria Ann-Marie Layne Campbell, Representante Alterna de Antigua y Barbuda
Embajador Peter DeShazo, Representante Alterno de los Estados Unidos
Primera Secretaria Cristina Aparicio, Representante Alterna de Bolivia

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

El PRESIDENTE: I declare open this special meeting of the Permanent Council, which has been convened pursuant to resolution AG/RES. 1907 (XXXII-O/02), adopted by the thirty-second regular session of the General Assembly. The meeting has two main purposes:

- to review actions undertaken by the Organization in calendar year 2002 to promote and strengthen democracy; and
- to determine such additional actions as may be deemed appropriate.

As this Council will recall, the structure of this special meeting was decided after close consultations by the Chair with all delegations. The order of business that is before us reflects our agreement on that matter. Nevertheless, the Chair would like to explain some minor adjustments that have become necessary.

First, at the request of the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica, the presentation of His Excellency Dr. Miguel Ángel Rodríguez Echeverría will be the last one of the meeting. Second, I am pleased to announce that in the absence of the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary General, Ambassador Luigi Einaudi, will make a general presentation on the topic under consideration. He will be followed by Dr. Elizabeth Spehar, the Executive Coordinator of the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD), who will present an inventory of activities carried out by the Organization to promote democracy in the Americas. That inventory can be found in document CP/doc.3735/03.

PALABRAS DEL PRESIDENTE DEL CONSEJO PERMANENTE

El PRESIDENTE: At this time, I would like to make a brief presentation on the topic under consideration.

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

One week ago here at the Organization of American States, we launched the book "*Inter-American Democratic Charter – Documents and Interpretations.*" On that occasion, we heard most profound statements on the significance, interpretation, and challenges of the Inter-American Democratic Charter from the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Peru, Ambassador Manuel Rodríguez Cuadros; the editor of the book, Ambassador Humberto de la Calle; and the Secretary General of the OAS, Dr. César Gaviria.

Today, at this special meeting of the Permanent Council on the promotion of democracy, we will hear from our invited guest, the former President of Costa Rica, Miguel Ángel Rodríguez Echeverría, the representatives of regional groups, and the Assistant Secretary General. I am sure that their remarks will not only help to shape the ongoing definition of democracy in our hemisphere, but also add a new dimension to the philosophical outlook of democracy as it impacts all of our citizens.

I believe that while we work to build and strengthen democracy, we also have to ensure that the democratic future of our people is firmly shaped. I am therefore of the opinion that our young

people, especially those who are now being educated in our school systems, should be prepared for the challenges that an evolving democracy will place on them.

The great American, Thomas Jefferson, wrote: "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never shall be." He added:

People may be born with an appetite for personal freedom, but they are not born with the knowledge about the social and political arrangements that make freedom possible over time for themselves and their children. . . . Such things must be acquired. They must be learned.

I see a clear and meaningful relationship between education and democracy, for it is through the process of teaching and learning that we acquire the tools to control and guide our lives. We have to educate our people about their basic freedoms. We have to provide them with learning and skills to shape their lives. We have to enable them to develop the critical eye to discern the choices needed in public life. Failure to do these things can be very damaging to our democracies. We must keep our people informed, for a people educated about freedom with a critical eye will be able to avoid the hazards that arise out of such setbacks.

We constantly promote the development of a democratic culture in our societies to allow the growth of democracy. A democratic culture is formed by the behaviors, practices, and norms that define the competence of a people to govern themselves, but I emphasize that we have also to develop a culture of democracy that will inspire a determination in our citizens to want to defend democracy.

Nearly twenty-four hundred years ago, Aristotle in his book *Politics* defined the democratic citizen as one who "has a share in judgment and office." Through the development of a culture of democracy, we will develop the democratic citizen who will want to participate in the day-to-day affairs of his community, a situation that today is more and more desirable in many of our societies.

We certainly see a decline in the turnout at elections in many countries. This form of apathy, which seems to be affecting the political process, may be damaging to the advance of democracy, since too often bad officials are elected by good people who do not vote.

As we examine the process of democracy and observe its advantages and sometimes its weaknesses, we often note the patterns and practices of democracy in the course of history. It may be of interest to note that about seventeen hundred years ago, the citizens of Athens carried out the democratic practice of ostracism, taken from a Greek word that literally means "pottery." It was a reverse election by which its citizens decided which leading politician should be sent into exile for 10 years. In this practice, the voters scratched or painted the name of their preferred politician to be banished on a piece of broken pottery. If less than six thousand citizens voted, the ostracism was not valid, but this type of election always had a popular turnout.

By no means am I recommending that the practice of ostracism be applied today. I have made reference to it so that we can at least see an illustration of how democracy has evolved from centuries ago.

Ostracism fulfilled its objective for almost one hundred years, and it helped to prevent serious civil unrest and even civil war. However, at the end of the fifth century of the Christian era, it was replaced by a legal procedure managed by the people's courts. This replacement procedure, adopted by Athens to deal with corrupt officials, has some influence on the legal systems operating today.

In our hemisphere, different patterns of democracy exist. Where the experience of democracy is still relatively new, problems continue to surface as forces that thrived under the antidemocratic process still remain very strong. In some of our countries, serious efforts are being made at peaceful engagement, with the assistance of civil society, to involve all these forces in the democratic process. It is an onerous task, but it has to be done, and these new democracies need the support of their partners in the OAS to help them keep democracy on its tracks. An expanded engagement of a similar nature can help to strengthen democracy throughout this entire hemisphere.

As we know, a democracy is ideally governed by the freely elected majority and protects the rights of the minority, with checks and balances firmly entrenched. For a democracy to show success, it should support competing ideas, part of an evolving process marked by the advance of technology. It must also support freedom of speech, guarantee human rights, and allow citizens to be critical of the ruling authority without fear of victimization.

As democracy evolves in our hemisphere, it must continue to have as its objectives life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. For these objectives to be fulfilled, the weakest in the society must be offered protection. Mahatma Gandhi wrote in 1948: "My notion of democracy is that under it, the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest. This can never happen except through nonviolence."

As a strong believer in Mahatma Gandhi's principles, I firmly support this view. The objectives of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness can only be ensured when democracy is all embracing, when it expands from representative democracy to include consultative and participatory democracy. This expansion will provide for a greater role for all sectors of the society, particularly women, and will ensure the realization of not only civil and political rights, but also economic, social, and cultural rights.

But what is most important to understand is that democracy will take firm roots only when the economic and social empowerment of the people moves hand in hand with political empowerment. We therefore have to ensure that political democracy results in economic and social democracy. This will help all our people to live a full, enriched, and satisfied life.

Let me thank you for your very careful attention to what I've said, and we will now move into the rest of the order of business.

PALABRAS DEL SECRETARIO GENERAL ADJUNTO

EL PRESIDENTE: I now give the floor to the Assistant Secretary General for remarks on the actions by the Organization to promote and strengthen democracy.

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

The Secretariat is handing out an inventory of activities that has been prepared by the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD). Dr. Elizabeth Spehar, the Executive Coordinator of the UPD, is with us and will address it shortly. I thought, however, that I would make a couple of introductory comments. I apologize if they are somewhat disjointed on occasion, because I am not working from a text. I arrived from Paraguay less than two hours ago, and I have not had a chance to develop this as fully as I would like.

My first point, a very simple one, is that the ideal of freedom is identical with the origins of the Americas from a European perspective. The lure of freedom has contributed fundamentally to the migration and settlement of the Hemisphere, and it is reflected in the preamble of the OAS Charter and in the evolution of the Charter itself, which, unlike the UN Charter, spends considerable time on the question of democracy.

However, this ideal has very often been mocked through much of our history by countervailing forces and very hard realities. These include the marginalization of indigenous peoples, slavery, authoritarian models for the maintenance of order, and in some cases, independence. Having just come from Paraguay, I am extremely aware that perhaps the purest authoritarianism in the history of the Hemisphere, that of Dr. Francia, was instituted in part to preserve the independence of Paraguay. Under conditions of this kind, questions of diversity and freedom were too often cast aside, even within the memory of those of us living here.

My third point is that time and tides have made it clear that the original ideal, though mocked and battered too often by realities, is more than an inspiration. It has become a necessity for the development of our peoples, even a necessity, from a very conservative standpoint, for preserving stability.

The complexity of our societies and of the world in which we now live means that authoritarianism is more and more irrelevant and difficult to sustain where it still exists. Put more simply, you cannot rule a modern society from horseback, and the result of this realization has been the process of democratization that we have witnessed over the past generation. It has led to:

- an emerging regional jurisprudence of democracy that sets the Americas apart from many areas of the world, and in some ways from Europe;
- the development early on, before fully articulated into a concept of democracy, of human rights principles and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR);
- the adoption by the General Assembly in Chile in 1991 of resolution AG/RES. 1080 (XXI-O/91), which seeks to avoid and react to any interruption of a legal and constitutional process of democracy, regardless of its origins; and
- the adoption of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

I was very struck by the fact that if one reviews the resolutions of the Barbados General Assembly, the only regular session of the General Assembly since the adoption of the Charter, and the resolutions of this Permanent Council, one realizes the extent to which the Inter-American Democratic Charter has become central to our work and is invoked in many ways on a wide variety of

subjects. I do not have the time to give a lengthy exegesis, but I will note that no less than seven resolutions adopted in Barbados made reference to the Charter and that an even larger number of resolutions approved by the Permanent Council have also done so. These resolutions have been quite varied.

The Charter has been invoked in debates and resolutions approved by the Council with regard to five member states: Venezuela, Haiti, Nicaragua, Colombia, and Bolivia. The images evoked in our minds are of very different situations, yet all of them somehow had a solution or a contribution inspired by the Charter.

One can cut the issue in a different way and look at specifics rather than countries or generalizations. On the airplane this morning I counted repeated references to articles 1 and 3, significant references to Article 2, and references to articles 4, 7, 8, 11, 13, and 20. In other words, in the attempt to implement the compilation of agreements that we have reached among ourselves affecting democracy, we have covered a very wide range of matters. As those of you who negotiated the Charter will remember, these articles cover not only the essential elements of democracy, but also human rights, the importance of economic and social conditions, and the importance of avoiding coups and other interruptions of established democratic order.

So we have before us an important instrument, and we are at the center of its evolution. The OAS is in effect the center of what I would call an *engranaje* between the domestic and the foreign, between the internal and the external, within countries and among countries' promotion and defense of democracy. In an interesting way, when we are working at our best, we are giving new life in a modern context to the old saying of Benito Juárez that "peace is respect for the right of others." That is a profoundly democratic way of looking at the world and at ourselves.

This can be very good; this can have extraordinarily positive results. You will be hearing in due course the report of the Technical Observation Mission that worked on behalf of this organization, through the UPD, to assist in the presidential elections in Paraguay. Let me tell you that I have rarely in my professional life been prouder of an interaction between the OAS, as the representative of the international community at a technical and modern level, and the authorities of a member state. It was an extraordinary example of horizontal cooperation in which Brazil and the United States played important roles, with the sustenance of electoral commissions and representatives of perhaps as many as one third of the member states. The result was really quite extraordinary.

Article 1 of the Democratic Charter has this very dramatic phrase: "The peoples of the Americas have the right to democracy." Well, let me tell you that the ability of the Paraguayan people to use a computerized system of voting showed that the citizens of a country that is often maligned as backward are every bit as capable of turning a mechanical device into a civic celebration as anybody. They certainly proved their right to democracy, and I am proud of our ability to have contributed to it.

This brings me to a very last and, I think, important point. When we speak of high principle, as I have tried to do a historical evolution, sometimes it is easy to lose sight of the nitty-gritty of implementation. I may have bored you slightly on Pan American Day when I commented that support for the political bodies sometimes suffers due to the efforts by the Secretary General and I to

support specific democracies. Today, when you review the document prepared by the UPD and when you listen to Elizabeth Spehar, keep in mind that the Regular Fund of this organization probably accounts for less than 20 percent of the work of the UPD, so we must be extremely aware of the fragility of our work. We may be at the center of things, but I believe you need to be aware of our need for your support and that of your governments.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, Ambassador Einaudi, for your presentation.

ACTIVIDADES DESARROLLADAS POR LA OEA SOBRE PROMOCIÓN Y CONSOLIDACIÓN DE LA DEMOCRACIA REPRESENTATIVA – 2002-2003

El PRESIDENTE: I now give the floor to Dr. Elizabeth Spehar, Executive Coordinator of the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD).

La COORDINADORA EJECUTIVA DE LA UNIDAD PARA LA PROMOCIÓN DE LA DEMOCRACIA: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD) is pleased to have been invited to this very important special meeting of the Permanent Council on the activities of the Organization of American States in promoting and strengthening democracy. I thank the Permanent Council for this opportunity to present the inventory of democracy promotion activities of the OAS Secretariat and specialized bodies during today's meeting.

As representatives will recall, the UPD has been preparing this inventory for several years at the request of delegations and as expressed through various General Assembly resolutions. I must admit that its appearance has been sporadic, largely due to the challenge the UPD has faced in getting timely information from all parts of the Secretariat as well as from some of the specialized organs of the Organization. However, we have tried to produce a quality document and something that would present a fairly complete set of standardized information.

Resolution AG/RES. 1907 (XXXII-O/02), "Promotion of Democracy," adopted at last year's regular session of the General Assembly, makes it quite clear why the UPD was asked to prepare the inventory. We understand it as a recognition of our role as the principal entity within the General Secretariat tasked with democracy promotion activities. Very importantly for us, the member states tasked us in AG/RES. 1907 to coordinate the activities and programs of the various organs, units, and offices of the OAS relating to the promotion of representative democracy. The production of the inventory is a first step in a larger effort that might be needed to promote greater coordination among us all within the Secretariat, with the specialized bodies, and certainly with the political bodies, so that we can provide you with as timely and useful information as possible.

I'd like to comment very briefly on how the inventory was produced, to talk about some of the information that I have extracted from the inventory that can be useful for your discussions today, and to provide a few closing comments on what some of this information might indicate for the future.

With respect to how the inventory was produced, the UPD sent out a memorandum and a basic chart that it devised electronically to the areas that were asked to provide information regarding their democracy promotion activities. Some very obvious categories were placed in the chart:

- the area of the Organization that was responsible for the project or activity;
- the project or activity carried out;
- the description of the project and its objectives;
- the mandate of the project; and
- whether there was coordination with the UPD.

I think the last two columns are very important, especially the second to last, the mandate. Delegations asked that it be very clear that every activity in the inventory be linked in some way to a mandate that had been given to the Organization. The last column explicitly asked, in cases where the executing entity is not the UPD, whether there was any coordination with the UPD. This was done in response to the expressed interest of the member states that there be ongoing collaboration and that there be general knowledge of what was happening in the Secretariat with respect to democracy promotion activities.

The Unit integrated the information that was coming from different sources into the chart before you and attempted to standardize that information as much as possible. We did receive, over time, responses from a large number of entities of the Organization, although we did not receive responses from all of the entities that we contacted.

The areas were asked to identify the democracy promotion activities that they had undertaken in 2002, as well as activities that are either underway or planned for 2003.

The current inventory covers the activities of 13 entities of the General Secretariat or OAS specialized bodies. It also includes the activities of the Permanent Council, taking into account the supporting role of the Permanent Council Secretariat and the Office of the Assistant Secretary General. I take this opportunity to thank all areas that provided us with timely and opportune information on this topic.

The following is some of the general information that I extracted from the inventory and which might be useful:

First, it's very clear that a broad range of activities is being undertaken in the Organization with respect to democracy promotion, and various institutions are involved.

Second, based on the information in the last column, and if you recall earlier versions of the inventory, I believe it's fair to say that the coordination of information exchange, at least within the Secretariat and with some specialized agencies, has improved and certainly has increased, although I still believe that it could be much further strengthened.

Third, in a few cases there appears to be some overlapping of activities between areas; for example, between the UPD and the Inter-American Agency for Cooperation and Development (IACD).

It is interesting to note the three most frequently cited sources of the mandates for this work:

- a long series of General Assembly and Permanent Council resolutions;
- the Summits of the Americas, in particular the Quebec Summit; and
- the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

This supports Ambassador Einaudi's comment that the Inter-American Democratic Charter has had a critical impact in so many ways on the work of this organization, from the political to the instrumental and even the very technical.

Another very positive feature is that a large proportion of the activities in the inventory were undertaken at the hemispheric or subregional level as opposed to the national level. Many of those activities involve an important exchange of experiences and identification of best practices among the institutions and key actors in the member states in the field of democracy, and that responds well to the OAS's role as a multilateral organization that emphasizes regional cooperation and integration. Within the UPD, this trend is a significant shift from six or seven years ago when there was a high concentration of individual, smaller, nationally-based activities and not quite as many at the subregional or hemispheric level.

The strongest technical assistance component of this list of democracy promotion activities is found in the electoral field and in the related field of civil registries. The OAS, through the UPD, has had a long and vast experience in that field, particularly with respect to the latest technologies, but there has been an interesting shift or additional aspect to this work in the electoral field, which has tended to be quite technical.

The Unit has been increasing its role over the last couple of years in fomenting greater exchanges of experience among electoral authorities and promoting, as Ambassador Einaudi noted in the example of Paraguay, greater horizontal cooperation among electoral authorities in the Hemisphere. The collaboration between the UPD and the Paraguayan and Brazilian electoral authorities is a fairly well known example that has generated great interest among the electoral institutions in the Hemisphere. We are looking at potential agreements with other electoral institutions in order to continue to help electoral institutions in the Hemisphere share best practices in electoral technology.

The UPD's advisory services and technical assistance are still quite strong in the field of modernization of the legislative branch of government. The Unit usually helps a country's legislature in the beginning stages of designing a modernization plan for its parliament or pursues that plan with resources from the multilateral banks.

Also, the IACD is currently developing and implementing a program of services for countries interested in e-government, which looks like it will be expanding significantly.

It's also notable that the inventory reflects considerable activity in the area of training, leadership, and education for democracy. Twelve activities are registered in this area.

Let me mention a few other points from the inventory. It shows the large number of seminars, fora, studies, and publications on democracy promotion and consolidation, quite a bit produced by the UPD, but some also produced by other parts of the Secretariat. This activity has allowed the Secretariat to increase its analytical output in these areas for the benefit of institutions in the member states. It's often difficult to track the impact of such analytical work, but sometimes one has an echo of the interest or the importance of some of the things that we produce.

For example, we were very happy to learn recently that one of our publications on decentralization policy was picked up by the World Bank, which is using the publication consistently in the courses it conducts in the Hemisphere on decentralization policy. We consider that development a vote of confidence in the quality and relevance of that publication.

Another point of interest in this inventory is the continuing strong demand for electoral observation missions. Since the early 1990s, the Organization has undertaken, through the UPD, well over seventy electoral observation missions in over half of the member states. We have increased our experience in this field, and we try constantly to refine our methods and our techniques in this area as circumstances evolve in the Hemisphere.

However, we still believe that there is a serious need to look for more stable funding for election observation missions, since they are fairly costly operations in many cases and, as representatives know, we are not authorized to use regular funds for this purpose. It would be very useful if the member states were amenable to looking at strengthening the capacity of the permanent voluntary fund for financing electoral observation missions to more fully support these activities.

The inventory also shows the activities of the Secretariat that support or promote democracy in member states that are experiencing challenging or difficult circumstances. This has been increasing with the support work for Haiti, Venezuela, and a number of other countries. It's also clear that there is a need to strengthen the Organization's capacity to respond to such challenges.

Overall, the inventory shows that the Secretariat and related bodies of the OAS indeed do have a rich set of experiences and a number of very important activities, either ongoing or that have recently been concluded, that are designed to assist in the promotion of democracy around the Hemisphere. It is increasingly imperative, given the number and breadth of activities, that there be a greater and more sustained flow of information among these OAS entities and certainly between them and the member states. That would be very useful and would most likely increase the impact of those activities.

It's clear from the inventory that the subjects addressed under democracy promotion by the Secretariat and other bodies are quite varied. There are probably eight principal topics but, very importantly, all of them have resulted from very specific mandates set by the member states.

It seems that there are two additional ways in which we might increase the impact of our activities:

First—and I know that a number of member states have mentioned this in the past—it’s very important to find a better and more extensive way to disseminate information on the Organization’s work in promoting democracy. It’s not that we are not doing important things, but our work may not be very well known beyond this organization or beyond the member states that benefit from that work.

Second, it might be useful to focus more on the specific ways in which we fulfill mandates in each of the thematic areas. Whether we are looking at education for democracy, electoral issues, or justice, we will need to focus on actions that most correspond to the role of an organization like the OAS, a multilateral political organization. The UPD is thinking more about this approach, and it would be very important to receive feedback from the member states on this topic. We need to determine how our work can be used to this organization’s comparative advantage, which in most instances implies taking the leadership role in an issue, assisting in coordinating broader efforts on that issue, supporting sustained exchanges of experience, and supporting consideration of the policy side of an issue through high-level political dialogue. From the Secretariat, I believe that this could be done and supported much more consistently across a range of issues.

Peru’s Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Manuel Rodríguez, stated two key challenges to democracy at the recent launching of the book on the Inter-American Democratic Charter. One challenge was the crisis of legitimacy. The Secretariat’s current work with key democratic institutions that are frequently poorly regarded by citizens in many countries, such as the judicial and legislative branches, could be strengthened to address their legitimacy as key functioning democratic institutions. Likewise, the promotion and ratification of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption, the training of young democratic leaders, and the relatively recent political party and party system reform and modernization could contribute increasingly to addressing the deteriorated legitimacy of politics and politicians in many of our democracies.

It seems clear, based on the precepts of the Democratic Charter, on resolution AG/RES. 1869 (XXXII-O/02), “Promotion of Democratic Culture,” and on many discussions that have taken place in this Permanent Council, that the member states are very strongly in agreement—and the Secretariat must take up the challenge—to undertake many more effective initiatives to promote and strengthen a democratic political culture in the Americas. As the inventory indicates, the UPD, together with the Unit for Social Development and Education (USDE), is attempting to play a greater supportive role in that respect.

Finally, in view of the upcoming regular session of the General Assembly, which intends to focus on democratic governance, it may be important to find and develop greater links between our specific work on democracy promotion and other key aspects of governance involving economic development and integration, social equity, and so on. I believe we do have the infrastructure within the Secretariat for that, but we would need to create greater opportunities for exchange and collaboration among different thematic areas of the Organization. We also would need to reach out more consistently to consolidate strategic partnerships with multilateral banks and others who also have a very strong interest and mandate in studying and acting upon the challenges of democratic governance.

I thank you very much for your attention.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, Dr. Spehar, for your very informative report. The inventory was recently circulated, but I ask delegations to hold their comments until the formal part of the program is completed. Thank you very much.

ELECCIONES GENERALES CELEBRADAS EN EL PARAGUAY

El PRESIDENTE: The Delegation of Paraguay has asked for the floor.

La REPRESENTANTE ALTERNA DEL PARAGUAY: Gracias, señor Presidente. Entiendo que el orden del día está establecido, pero voy a llamar la atención de ustedes solamente por unos minutos.

El 68% de los paraguayos y paraguayas han acudido el pasado domingo 27 de abril a elegir libremente a sus autoridades en el marco de las terceras elecciones generales convocadas dentro de la Constitución nacional de 1992, evento para el cual se han inscrito candidatos de once partidos políticos y cuatro movimientos independientes.

La Delegación del Paraguay quiere agradecer las palabras expresadas por el Secretario General Adjunto de la Organización, Embajador Luigi Einaudi, sobre la celebración de las elecciones generales en la República del Paraguay, en las que resultó electo el doctor Nicanor Duarte Frutos, de la Asociación Nacional Republicana, Partido Colorado, con el 39% de los votos, según los datos preliminares.

Asimismo, deseo agradecer a la Secretaría General y a la Unidad para la Promoción de la Democracia (UPD) por su activa y permanente colaboración, y por la asistencia prestada, no solo en estas elecciones sino desde la creación del Tribunal Superior de Justicia Electoral. Aprovecho también para agradecer al Gobierno del Brasil y al Superior Tribunal Electoral del Brasil, quienes han colaborado con el Tribunal Superior de Justicia Electoral del Paraguay a través del Programa de Cooperación Horizontal implementado por la UPD para la modernización de procesos electorales, el cual ha permitido que el 45% de los ciudadanos habilitados utilice las urnas electrónicas para depositar su voto.

Finalmente, deseo manifestar nuestro agradecimiento al Gobierno de los Estados Unidos, el cual, a través del proyecto de asistencia técnica de la Fundación Internacional para Sistemas Electorales (IFES) y la Agencia para el Desarrollo Internacional (USAID), ha posibilitado la asistencia de los observadores electorales. Nuestro sincero agradecimiento para todos ellos y nuestro compromiso de seguir velando por los principios democráticos contenidos en la Carta de la Organización de los Estados Americanos y la Carta Democrática Interamericana.

Muchas gracias.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, Delegation of Paraguay, for that information.

PRESENTACIÓN ESPECIAL POR EL EXCELENTÍSIMO DOCTOR
MIGUEL ÁNGEL RODRÍGUEZ ECHEVERRÍA,
EX PRESIDENTE DE COSTA RICA

El PRESIDENTE: The former President of Costa Rica, Miguel Ángel Rodríguez, is here with us, and we invite him to come to the head table.

[Pausa.]

We shall continue with the program as stated on the order of business. Ambassador Castulovich of Panama has asked for the floor.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE PANAMÁ: Señor Presidente, con su venia quisiera reflejar lo que piensan muchos de los colegas alrededor de la mesa. Entendí que la razón por la cual el distinguido ex Presidente de Costa Rica no hacía uso de la palabra en primer lugar era porque, por razones de fuerza mayor, no podía estar en la sala al inicio de la sesión. Pero –en este caso expreso la opinión personal mía– me parece que en esta etapa sería beneficioso para todos escuchar, antes de las intervenciones programadas, la presentación del doctor Miguel Ángel Rodríguez. Creo que en el orden del desarrollo de la sesión sería muy provechoso escuchar sus palabras y después tener reacciones y comentarios sobre ellas.

Así es que me permito sugerir, señor Presidente, que haga uso de la palabra en primer lugar el doctor Miguel Ángel Rodríguez y después continuemos con las otras intervenciones. Muchas gracias.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, Ambassador Castulovich. As you know, we always depend on the wisdom that you impart within this Council. I'm sure that there would be no objection to that proposal; therefore, I concede your request.

It is therefore an honor for me to welcome the former President of Costa Rica, His Excellency Miguel Ángel Rodríguez Echeverría. On behalf of this Council, I wish to extend to you, sir, a warm welcome to this House of the Americas. We are honored that you have accepted our invitation to address this meeting. I now have the greatest pleasure in giving the floor to you.

El EX PRESIDENTE DE COSTA RICA: Señor Presidente del Consejo Permanente, señoras y señores Embajadores Representantes Permanentes, señor Secretario General Adjunto, señoras y señores:

Mucho agradezco el honor de poderme dirigir a ustedes en representación del Grupo Centroamericano (GRUCA), en este acto que recoge y resalta uno de los más trascendentes hitos de la Organización de los Estados Americanos, cual es la promulgación de la Carta Democrática Interamericana. Y porque acabo de arribar de Paraguay, donde estaba presidiendo una delegación de observadores de un proceso democrático, les pido me disculpen por haber llegado después de la hora prevista para el inicio de esta importante actividad.

Como demócrata y como Presidente de la delegación de observadores de *International Foundation for Election Systems* (IFES), mucho me complació presenciar unas elecciones que reflejan claramente el modo como Paraguay ha dejado atrás el autoritarismo y consolidado su sistema

democrático electoral. Por su ejemplar trabajo, merece una felicitación el organismo encargado de la justicia electoral en ese hermano país, así como las autoridades y el pueblo paraguayo.

También fui testigo del éxito del programa para llevar a cabo el voto digital en gran escala, cuyo impulso es mérito de esta Organización de los Estados Americanos así como del Gobierno del Brasil; de la misma manera, las autoridades electorales del Paraguay contaron en los últimos años con el valioso apoyo del Gobierno de los Estados Unidos. A esta Organización y a esos Gobiernos mi reconocimiento, y en especial, repito, al pueblo paraguayo.

Del mismo modo, todos reconocemos la relevancia del proceso electoral realizado el pasado domingo en Argentina. No podría haber mejor marco para esta actividad que el regocijo que nos causan esas muestras de vigencia de la democracia en esos países hermanos.

Señor Presidente, señoras y señores: Precisamente por consagrarse a promover y fortalecer la libertad, la democracia, los derechos humanos y el desarrollo sostenible, a partir del diálogo y la acción consensuada de nuestros países, esta es una Organización dedicada a los más sagrados valores de las americanas y los americanos.

Una aspiración tal conlleva también, es evidente, un reto importante y enorme. Y los Estados Miembros de la OEA deben sentirse orgullosos del modo en que las Américas han avanzado, paulatina y seguramente, en todos estos campos. Analizados en perspectiva histórica, los avances son realmente extraordinarios. Estos son, por supuesto, fruto del esfuerzo de todos nuestros pueblos, pero también de la acción de la Organización de los Estados Americanos para promover instrumentos y acciones continentales que estimulen y garanticen la vigencia de nuestros principios comunes.

Nadie osaría negar, por ejemplo, el espectacular avance en la promoción y el respeto de los derechos humanos en el Hemisferio, y el papel fundamental que en ello ha jugado el sistema interamericano de derechos humanos.

Del mismo modo, es muy clara la acción sostenida durante muchos años por la Organización de los Estados Americanos en pro de la vigencia de la libertad y de los principios democráticos. Para el GRUCA es motivo de particular orgullo participar en este acto, porque en los años ochenta, en la época de la Guerra Fría y de conflictos graves, se tuvo en la región la visión de escoger la democracia como el único camino para alcanzar la paz y promover el desarrollo humano. Los frutos de los esfuerzos de muchos de nuestros países y de la OEA se reflejan en que hoy día, con una sola excepción, funcionan democracias en toda América.

Esto nos lleva a recordar que los organismos vivos están en perpetua evolución. Así, los avances logrados por la Organización de los Estados Americanos en sus distintas etapas históricas no significan, en modo alguno, que ya todo esté hecho. Lo que sí significan es que se ha avanzado y que por ello mismo es posible –y me atrevería a decir que es preciso– alcanzar nuevas metas para consolidar los logros e impulsar etapas aun más avanzadas. Porque esto permitirá que nuestros pueblos alcancen mayores niveles de desarrollo y bienestar.

Por ello, del mismo modo que el éxito del sistema interamericano de los derechos humanos se reflejó y refleja en la necesidad de fortalecerlo con nuevos procedimientos y con recursos adicionales,

el éxito de la promoción de la libertad y la democracia debía llevar a adoptar instrumentos para defender y garantizar de modo efectivo la vigencia de esos principios cuando fuese necesario.

Tal fue el entendimiento que fue surgiendo y diseminándose por todo el Continente, como muestra del antecedente sentado por los países del Mercado Común del Sur (MERCOSUR) al adoptar su Declaración Presidencial sobre el Compromiso Democrático, así como la decisión que adoptamos en la Tercera Cumbre de las Américas, realizada en Quebec, para establecer una cláusula democrática en el proceso del Acuerdo de Libre Comercio de las Américas (ALCA) y que culminó con la decisión adoptada en el trigésimo primer período ordinario de sesiones de la Asamblea General, celebrado en San José, para promulgar la Carta Democrática Interamericana; el intenso trabajo de construcción de consensos realizado por ustedes en un plazo muy corto; y la adopción definitiva de ese instrumento en el vigésimo octavo período extraordinario de sesiones de la Asamblea General, reunido en Lima.

Resaltar en toda su dimensión la Carta Democrática Interamericana, que ya ha demostrado su eficacia, y el proceso que llevó a su adopción es, por ello, una tarea imprescindible y valiosa. Por realizarla con singular acierto en este libro “Carta Democrática Interamericana: Documentos e interpretaciones”, merecen sus autores una sincera felicitación; y por la decisión de realizar este importante acto, damos nuestro más profundo reconocimiento al Consejo Permanente.

Señor Presidente, señoras y señores: La Carta Democrática Interamericana refleja, creo, tres elementos indispensables e indisolublemente unidos para asegurar que la Organización de los Estados Americanos tendrá una actuación relevante ante los nuevos retos del presente y el futuro: compromiso irreductible con los principios y valores fundamentales para el bienestar y desarrollo de nuestros pueblos, y que son la razón básica de ser de esta Organización; adopción de mecanismos y medidas concretas para defender y garantizar esos principios; y capacidad para responder ágilmente a nuevos retos, como demostró en este caso y reafirmó, poco después, en lo relativo a la lucha interamericana contra el terrorismo.

Es claro, por supuesto, que la feliz conjunción de estos tres elementos en la Carta Democrática Interamericana no implica, en modo alguno, que esté automáticamente asegurado que prevalecerá la democracia en el Hemisferio. En cualquier caso que esta llegue a verse amenazada, sin embargo, los gobiernos de nuestros países y la OEA estoy seguro de que sabrán hacer gala de determinación y especial lucidez para aplicar los principios de la Carta.

A partir de esos principios, y con base en los tres elementos ya citados, que se me antojan típicos de una receta para el éxito, se abre ahora ante la Organización de los Estados Americanos la oportunidad histórica de elaborar, bajo la conducción de ustedes, señoras y señores Embajadores, una nueva visión del derecho internacional para la convivencia democrática. Tal elaboración haría de la Carta Democrática Interamericana una contribución muy especial del Hemisferio a la vigencia y desarrollo de la democracia, y a la promoción de los derechos humanos, civiles y políticos en el planeta.

Sabemos bien que la democracia, como toda obra humana, es imperfecta, pero también sabemos que es perfectible. Este proceso de perfeccionamiento, de fortalecimiento de la democracia, requiere de constancia en la observación de los valores democráticos y de la humildad necesaria para buscar permanentemente las mejores formas de hacer las cosas. La democracia por sí misma no

asegura que se adoptarán las mejores decisiones o que no se cometerán errores, pero sí permite revisar aquéllas y corregir estos.

Por ello, a partir del fortalecimiento democrático, nuestros países y la OEA en su conjunto podrán concentrar esfuerzos en la ineludible tarea de impulsar mayores niveles de bienestar y de combatir, a través de la cooperación y la generación de oportunidades para el crecimiento, la pobreza que aqueja a millones de familias del Continente y que es la causa principal del, así llamado, desencanto democrático.

Esta Organización, estoy seguro, puede afrontar y superar ese nuevo reto. Porque ya ha demostrado su capacidad de éxito en la tarea de promover, mediante el diálogo y el esfuerzo consensuado, la efectiva vigencia de los principios que unen a los pueblos de América.

Muchas gracias, señor Presidente, señoras y señores.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, Your Excellency, for your interesting thoughts on this issue.

COMENTARIOS DE LOS REPRESENTANTES SOBRE LA PRESENTACIÓN DEL EX PRESIDENTE DE COSTA RICA

El PRESIDENTE: I am now pleased to offer the floor to our regional coordinators for the presentation of comments and suggestions by member states. I give the floor to Ambassador Esteban Tomic of Chile, who will address the meeting on behalf of the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI) member states.

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

Señor ex Presidente de Costa Rica, Miguel Ángel Rodríguez Echeverría, señoras y señores:

Por cierto, las intervenciones que hemos escuchado esta mañana me llevan a mencionar muy brevemente, antes de entrar a la lectura del documento que traigo, lo que nuestro Presidente nos decía en relación con el contexto en el cual se sitúa esta reunión.

El Presidente del Consejo nos remitía a los pensadores griegos y a la democracia, con sus raíces más lejanas. Creo que eso es importante hacerlo, reiterar ese contexto.

Recientemente leía algunas páginas de Cicerón en las cuales relataba un viaje por el Mar Egeo. Desde su nave veía los restos de las antiguas ciudades griegas: Tebas, Corinto, y le comentaba a un amigo en una carta con qué dolor veía esas ciudades abandonadas, destruidas, que habían sido la génesis del pensamiento que animó a los romanos posteriormente. La destrucción provino de los propios romanos que habían invadido Grecia y la habían conquistado 150 años antes de que Cicerón hiciera este viaje. Pero al propio Cicerón le tocó ver en su vida el término de la República romana y el inicio, desde luego, de la dictadura y luego del Imperio.

¿Qué quiero decir con esto, Presidente? Si uno hace el salto de los dos mil años que han transcurrido desde entonces y trata de hacer una breve síntesis en relación con el desarrollo del ser humano en esos dos mil años, yo diría que hay dos rasgos muy centrales. Primero, el increíble desarrollo tecnológico y segundo, la democracia. Esta idea, que ya estaba en Aristóteles –como usted decía– y que, sin embargo, le costó tanto echar raíces en el mundo, en la civilización, entre las sociedades humanas, también ha ido avanzando; por supuesto, no a los niveles vertiginosos del desarrollo tecnológico, pero sin duda de una manera efectiva.

Ayer mismo en esta sala me tocaba a mí citar la circunstancia de una Asamblea General de la OEA que se desarrolló en Chile en 1976, donde la OEA estaba paralizada frente a las violaciones de los derechos humanos por una razón muy sencilla: porque un buen número de los países que aquí estaban representados, que aquí estaban sentados, eran países no democráticos. Aquí teníamos dictaduras sesionando en la OEA. Y hoy día eso es impensable. Hoy día no puede haber ninguna dictadura sentada en esta sala. Porque nos hemos dado unas normas para que ello ocurra, para proteger la democracia en nuestro continente.

En estos treinta años la democracia ha avanzado de una manera impresionante en América. Los 34 países representados en la OEA tienen democracias elegidas, más o menos perfectas, en general imperfectas, pero democracias al fin. Y ese es un avance gigantesco. Yo creo que el Presidente hace muy bien en colocarnos en el contexto y en la importancia de esta reunión. Yo diría que, volviendo a la imagen de los pueblos antiguos, o de la antigua Grecia o de Roma, aquí hay dos fuegos sagrados en esta institución. Uno son los derechos humanos y el otro es la democracia. Creo no exagerar si pudiera señalar que simbólicamente esos dos fuegos sagrados están en el centro de esta sala. La función de los Representantes aquí presentes es, justamente, custodiar esos dos fuegos sagrados: los derechos humanos y la democracia.

América Latina, a pesar de sus avances en la vigencia de la democracia política, es una región caracterizada por la existencia de grandes sectores de su población que desconocen qué es la democracia, cuáles son sus características, posibilidades y limitaciones. Subsiste una inexistente o reducida importancia en la agenda pública de la discusión sobre los valores democráticos, tales como la tolerancia, la diversidad cultural, el respeto a las minorías, el Estado de derecho, los derechos civiles, políticos, socioeconómicos y culturales, las garantías para esos derechos, y los mecanismos para su difusión.

El contexto en América Latina está marcado por la exclusión, la pobreza y sus secuelas, que azotan a una parte considerable de sus habitantes, acompañada por la inseguridad ciudadana y en algunos países por la violencia política, además de un saldo de actitudes y prácticas nefastas, como el autoritarismo y la corrupción, el clientelismo, la intolerancia y la elitización del poder.

Si bien en la Cumbre de Miami en 1994 se estableció que el desarrollo cultural es un componente fundamental e integral del desarrollo de las Américas, solo en el Plan de Acción de Santiago, en 1998, los gobiernos se decidieron a incorporar proyectos educativos destinados a fomentar valores democráticos. La Cumbre de Quebec, en 2001, fue un paso adelante pues finalmente la cultura y la democracia ingresaron como temas transversales en la agenda hemisférica. Las decisiones de Quebec reflejan la idea de que el proyecto de integración que impulsan las Cumbres se basa en el respeto de las especificidades culturales y la incorporación de estas en las políticas públicas nacionales.

Hoy nadie duda que es imposible consolidar las democracias sin tener en cuenta las características culturales de cada comunidad.

En este contexto, el tipo de democracia que queremos para nuestra región –inclusiva, participativa, solidaria y tolerante– va de la mano de la voluntad política de los Estados Miembros de la OEA por crear las condiciones para que las decisiones gubernamentales se legitimen a través de una amplia participación ciudadana, en un marco de respeto irrestricto por la diferencia y el disenso. Este ambiente favorable a la democracia nos dará las mejores garantías para la gobernabilidad del Continente.

La Carta Democrática Interamericana, como señalaba el ex Presidente Rodríguez, contiene una sección completa sobre la promoción de la cultura democrática, en la que se pone énfasis en el desarrollo de actividades y programas dirigidos a promover los principios y prácticas democráticas, a fortalecer la cultura democrática, la gobernabilidad, la buena gestión y la participación plena e igualitaria de las mujeres en las estructuras políticas. Asimismo, se señala en ella que se prestará especial atención al desarrollo de programas y actividades para la educación de la niñez y la juventud, a fin de asegurar la permanencia de los valores democráticos, incluidas la libertad y la justicia social.

La democracia, como señala la Carta Democrática Interamericana, no es solo un tipo de gobierno caracterizado por elecciones libres, informadas y justas. Es un conjunto de valores, creencias y principios de carácter permanente en nuestra sociedad, que promueven la consolidación de la democracia; un sistema cultural a través del cual construimos el proyecto de sociedad que queremos. La justicia, la igualdad y la libertad constituyen los valores fundamentales hacia cuya realización se orienta la vida democrática; mientras que la participación, el pluralismo y la responsabilidad representan las actitudes más esenciales dentro de una cultura democrática.

Finalmente, una cultura democrática, como todo tipo de cultura, no es algo estático sino un fenómeno en constante dinamismo y cambio, como también señalaba el ex Presidente Rodríguez. En consecuencia, la construcción de una determinada cultura democrática constituye un proceso continuo, aunque dentro de este se pueden distinguir determinados momentos o períodos sobre los cuales se va conformando lo que podríamos llamar la historia de una cultura democrática particular.

Muchas gracias.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, Ambassador Tomic, for your remarks. I now give the floor to Ambassador Juan Manuel Castulovich of Panama, who will make a presentation on behalf of the Central American Group (GRUCA).

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE PANAMÁ: Gracias, señor Presidente. ¿No me estoy saltando al representante de la Comunidad del Caribe (CARICOM), que estaba en el orden antes que yo?

Señor Presidente, muchas gracias. Creo que esta es una ocasión importante y feliz para hacer algunos comentarios sobre un tema medular de la Organización, como es la promoción de la democracia representativa en las Américas. Es importante que en el día de hoy hayamos tenido el privilegio de escuchar a don Miguel Ángel Rodríguez, distinguido ex Presidente de Costa Rica, con reflexiones importantes sobre el contenido y alcance de la Carta Democrática Interamericana, al igual

que las presentaciones previas del Presidente del Consejo Permanente y del Secretario General Adjunto, complementadas por la Coordinadora Ejecutiva de la Unidad para la Promoción de la Democracia (UPD).

Hace ocho meses celebramos el primer aniversario de la Carta Democrática Interamericana, que nació en Lima –como todos recordamos– el 11 de septiembre de 2001. Ese instrumento, que en nuestra opinión es, sin duda, el más importante que ha adoptado el sistema interamericano desde la aprobación de la Carta de Bogotá en 1948, culminó un proceso que tiene sus antecedentes más relevantes e inmediatos en la aprobación del Compromiso de Santiago con la Democracia y en la histórica resolución AG/RES. 1080 (XXI-O/91).

Pero la Carta Democrática Interamericana es más que la culminación de un proceso de perfeccionamiento de los instrumentos jurídicos interamericanos para reafirmar que la democracia representativa es la forma de vida que han escogido los pueblos de las Américas. También es, ejemplarmente resumida, la nueva carta de navegación del sistema interamericano y de los países que lo integran.

La importancia de la Carta es que no se queda en los aspectos, condiciones o características que definen la democracia, sino que también incursiona para relacionarlos como un todo con aquellos elementos o condiciones que se requieren para que la democracia se fortalezca y, sobre todo, perdure.

La existencia de la democracia se comprueba por la presencia de elementos esenciales descritos en la Carta Democrática, específicamente en los artículos 3 y 4. Pero su efectividad, que es la que asegurará su permanencia, requiere además de la concurrencia de pilares adicionales, tan importantes como los descritos en las normas citadas. El respeto a los derechos humanos y las libertades fundamentales; el acceso al poder y su ejercicio con sujeción al Estado de derecho; la celebración de elecciones periódicas, libres, justas y basadas en el sufragio universal y secreto; el régimen plural de partidos y organizaciones políticas; y la separación e independencia de los poderes públicos, son elementos esenciales de la democracia. En términos generales, queremos decir que todos se encuentran presentes en las democracias que hoy, con una sola excepción, existen en el continente americano.

Sin embargo, las insatisfacciones que expresan los pueblos, lo que el ex Presidente Rodríguez llamó el desencanto democrático, que los llevan, como también la realidad ha demostrado, a ensayar fórmulas o caminos que pueden hacer peligrar hasta la existencia misma de alguna de nuestras democracias, deben alertarnos para que no olvidemos que la vigencia de la democracia, si bien se sustenta en los aspectos mencionados, se mide por sus resultados, por su capacidad para ofrecer y realizar las soluciones que los pueblos esperan.

Si las democracias no pueden ofrecer esperanzas concretas, la impaciencia de quienes están al límite de su capacidad para esperar puede constituirse en el mayor riesgo para la gobernabilidad democrática.

Dos elementos que en mi opinión son imprescindibles para que los pueblos, si no de manera total por lo menos ampliamente mayoritaria, recobren su fe democrática, son los siguientes. Uno, la promoción de una auténtica cultura democrática. A ese aspecto se refirió de manera extraordinariamente elocuente el Embajador Tomic. Debe ser una tarea del conjunto de nuestras

sociedades; gobiernos, partidos políticos y sociedad civil deben entender que la promoción y consolidación de una cultura democrática les conviene a todos.

Sin embargo, la realidad demuestra que en muchos de nuestros países se ha desatado una confrontación para disminuir el rol de los partidos políticos, por ejemplo, elevar el rol de la sociedad civil o disminuir el rol de los gobiernos, en una lucha que representa un perjuicio para todos. Porque de lo que se trata no es de que rivalicen los diferentes sectores de la sociedad sino de que todos concurren a fortalecer una cultura democrática, porque del fortalecimiento de la cultura democrática nos beneficiamos todos.

En este aspecto, que se refiere a la promoción de la cultura democrática –así se titula uno de los capítulos de la Carta Democrática Interamericana– nuestra opinión es que la responsabilidad es principalmente de cada uno de los países. Todas nuestras sociedades tienen realidades diferentes. No hay fórmulas trasplantables en este aspecto. Es una responsabilidad que tienen que compartir al interior de cada uno de nuestros países los sectores de cada sociedad, gobiernos, partidos políticos y sociedad civil, para construir una cultura democrática. La fortaleza de la cultura democrática al interior de nuestros países es lo que asegurará ese espacio de tolerancia para que las democracias puedan desarrollar con efectividad su tarea y para que exista la gobernabilidad.

El segundo elemento es resolver con urgencia el flagelo de la pobreza. Aquí el enfoque debe ser diferente. Creo que no nos sirve mucho hablar de desarrollo en términos generales. El primer paso para poder colocarnos en la senda del desarrollo es asumir con decisión y con una responsabilidad compartida la lucha contra la pobreza.

En ese sentido, la Carta Democrática nos marca el rumbo. Pero poco hemos hecho, concretamente, para enfrentar el problema. La agenda social sigue siendo la gran ausente de nuestros debates.

Para hacer el diagnóstico correcto del estado y realidad de las Américas debemos comenzar por valorar y sobre todo trabajar sobre aquellos factores que empañan el horizonte de la consolidación democrática. El capítulo III de la Carta es premonitorio pero también es alentador. Democracia, desarrollo y combate contra la pobreza son elementos iguales de una sola ecuación. Sin democracia no puede haber desarrollo y tampoco las condiciones para superar la pobreza. Pero si no superamos la pobreza la verdadera democracia no será posible.

La principal contribución que podemos hacer de ahora en adelante para promover y consolidar la democracia es no demorar nuestro compromiso político, moral y humano, de asumir como prioritaria la lucha contra la pobreza y especialmente la lucha contra la pobreza extrema.

Muchas gracias.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, Ambassador, for your presentation.

I do want to apologize to Ambassador Mullings for the mix-up in the order. In the old draft order of business, which I have in front of me, Ambassador Castulovich is before Ambassador Mullings, but the new draft that was circulated had it the other way around. I am sure Ambassador Mullings does not mind coming after Ambassador Castulovich; therefore, I have pleasure in giving

the floor now to Ambassador Mullings, who will speak on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) delegations.

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

Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentleman: It augurs well that we are holding this special meeting of the Permanent Council to review actions undertaken by the Organization of American States to promote and strengthen democracy so soon after the presentation of the book on the Inter-American Democratic Charter. Both events serve to remind us of the diligent work that went into the elaboration of the Charter, which embodies the vision of our leaders for the Hemisphere. They also demonstrate in a clear and unambiguous manner that the Hemisphere, member states, and the General Secretariat do not intend the Charter to remain static.

Article 1 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter states in part that “democracy is essential for the social, political, and economic development of the peoples of the Americas.” The review of the work undertaken by the Secretariat in calendar year 2000 spans all these aspects, as evidenced by the inventory of activities prepared by the General Secretariat. The document indicates that activities have been undertaken in accordance with all the chapters of the Charter:

- Chapter I – Democracy and the Inter-American System;
- Chapter II – Democracy and Human Rights;
- Chapter III – Democracy, Integral Development, and Combating Poverty;
- Chapter IV – Strengthening and Preservation of Democratic Institutions;
- Chapter V – Democracy and Electoral Observation Missions; and
- Chapter VI – Promotion of a Democratic Culture.

Of course, the level and intensity of activities vary among the six specific areas. We must take stock periodically of progress and review the Charter to ensure that it remains responsive to the goals and aspirations that the Hemisphere holds dear and serves the purposes for which it was intended.

The Prime Minister of Barbados, in his wide-ranging and insightful inaugural address at the thirty-second regular session of the General Assembly in Bridgetown, speaking of the Charter, said:

This instrument cannot remain static in this dynamic political environment in which we live. It will be necessary to revisit the Charter from time to time to incorporate elements that will allow it to become truly representative and keep us on the path of true democracy and of the creation of a truly democratic culture.

The range of activities conducted and implemented in the political sphere by the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD) is impressive, and we commend the UPD and those entities with

which it has collaborated. We in CARICOM are pleased to note that there has been some focus on the most vulnerable in all our societies—women and children.

Two of the most high-profile activities of this organization over the past year have been the OAS's involvement in Haiti and in Suriname. These two situations have provided a daunting challenge to the OAS, but the OAS has the fortitude to rise to the challenge, as it has done in the past. Both situations require our continued attention and engagement. The OAS Special Mission for Strengthening Democracy in Haiti has a critical role to play in the continued efforts to resolve the situation in Haiti, and the Organization cannot and must not lose sight of this fact.

It may be opportune to reflect on the fact that the Democratic Charter is not one-dimensional. It encompasses many elements and, as the Prime Minister of Barbados cautioned in the aforementioned inaugural address:

Neither must the Charter be seen merely as a punitive instrument. It should serve both as a yardstick as well as a reference point from which we continue our supportive activities, such as election monitoring, training and education, and the strengthening of other complementary instruments.

Mr. Chairman, our work over the past year demonstrates a preponderance of activities in the political sphere. This is commendable, and we do need to pull out all the stops to ensure peace and stability in the Hemisphere.

However, advances in the political arena in the promotion, strengthening, and consolidation of democracy will be jeopardized or eroded if a similar fixity of purpose is not displayed in the area of development. Failure to address a development agenda in a hemisphere in which more than 170 million inhabitants live in poverty is an open invitation to instability, strife, and even more ominous, the danger of rejection of democracy and the rule of law. People will want no part of democracy if this much-vaunted principle cannot satisfy their basic needs and improve their quality of life.

While not negating the import of the Democratic Charter in its entirety, CARICOM would like to turn the spotlight on Chapter III, which recognizes the critical linkages between democracy, integral development, and poverty. In light of the fact that the Hemisphere is described as having a great disparity among our peoples with respect to economic and social conditions, we are ignoring these linkages at our own peril.

The risks to democracy resulting from socioeconomic malaise were graphically underscored by the Prime Minister of Saint Lucia, the Honorable Kenny Anthony, who has CARICOM responsibility for justice and good governance, in his address to the Third Summit of the Americas in Quebec City on the theme "Democracy in CARICOM and in the Western Hemisphere." The Prime Minister stated, among other things:

Democracy is undermined by the anger of disaffected youth and the disillusionment of the impoverished in the countryside. It is compromised by our preoccupation with maintaining law and order at the expense of fighting poverty and social degradation. Even the strongest traditions of democracy will pale in the face of overwhelming poverty, social exclusion, and economic marginalization. There are those who say democracy brings

prosperity, but democracy is compromised if the economic policies it champions deepen and accelerate poverty. Until we can wipe out poverty in this hemisphere, we cannot claim to have built successful democracies.

Mr. Chairman, the call to focus on Chapter III of the Charter in no way signifies any intent to diminish the importance of the other areas and the value of the accomplishments over the past year. However, it is now more imperative than ever that we pay particular attention to the development agenda. The inclusion of integral development and all of its related issues, in both the OAS Charter and the Democratic Charter, is a reflection of the considered view of the shapers of these two key documents that the political cannot be pursued in exclusivity. It must be accompanied by the economic and the social elements for true democracy to be achieved and maintained.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, Ambassador Mullings, for your presentation and the most profound thoughts that it expressed.

I am now pleased to give the floor to the Interim Representative of Canada, Gwyneth Kutz.

La REPRESENTANTE INTERINA DEL CANADÁ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Excellencies and friends, the Organization of American States has long held democracy as its guiding tenet. However, it is only in the past dozen years or so, once the democratic fabric of participating OAS member states was sufficiently reinforced, that it became politically possible for the Organization to undertake a more coherent and coordinated approach to the collective promotion and defense of democracy. Such moments in history must be seized when they appear, and fortunately we have seized this one.

From resolution AG/RES. 1080 (XXI-O/91) in Santiago, where foreign ministers committed to collectively address any irregular interruption of the democratic process in any member state, through to the Quebec City Summit, where leaders set out for the first time that democracy is essential for participation in the Summit of the Americas process, we have consistently and persistently moved toward the vision and the implementation of a democratic hemisphere. This process has culminated in the clearest articulation yet of democracy as the defining value of the Hemisphere in the Inter-American Democratic Charter. This is one of the most immediate and significant elements of the legacy of the Quebec City Summit.

The Charter does more than simply repackage and reiterate its precedents; it creates a multipurpose toolbox:

- It can be used as a tool of information so that citizens from all of the Americas know their rights and their responsibilities;
- It can be used as a conceptual framework for the implementation of policies and programs aimed at strengthening democracy in all our countries;

- It can be used as a preventive instrument to be employed by countries facing special challenges and by their friends in order to prevent crises; and
- It can be used as a corrective instrument to collectively preserve democracy when it is at risk and to adopt decisions for its restoration.

No other region has been as progressive in moving the democratic agenda forward so far in such a short period, nor has any organization been as proactive in making democracy the sine qua non condition for participation. Moreover, consultation with civil society actors from throughout the Hemisphere was unparalleled and has set a new benchmark for the cooperation and participation of civil society in negotiations of profound importance for democracy in the Americas.

As we meet today to review actions undertaken by the Organization to promote and strengthen democracy and to determine such additional actions as may be deemed appropriate, we need to keep in mind the comprehensive and far-reaching nature of the Charter. Indeed, even when the Democratic Charter is not specifically invoked, it has acted as a guide to our collective action.

At the same time, we must recognize that even before the articulation of this Charter, we have built a strong foundation and important history of efforts to consolidate democracy and strengthen democratic institutions. This organization, principally but not uniquely through the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD), has been particularly active. Among the most important activities of the past year, we note:

- the Second Annual Meeting of the Inter-American Forum of Political Parties (IAFPP), held in Vancouver, and other hemispheric activities aimed at reforming and modernizing political parties;
- the Second Plenary Meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA) in Panama;
- the numerous electoral observation missions;
- the dissemination of the Charter in the four official languages of the Organization; and
- the Special Meeting of the Permanent Council on Women's Participation in Political Processes.

This list could go on—and it does go on in the inventory presented to us today. All of the efforts made by the Organization and by individual member states to promote human rights, to create and to share prosperity, to strengthen democratic institutions, and to realize human potential throughout the region are integral parts of the continuing quest to develop strong democratic societies that reflect the principles of the Democratic Charter. We need to recognize that it is the day-to-day work, as ordinary as it may seem—the nitty gritty, as our illustrious Assistant Secretary General calls it—that supports these principles in practical terms and gives them life and meaning.

Given the nature, the seriousness, and the number of challenges, both acute and systemic, that we face collectively, it is particularly appropriate that the theme of the regular session of the General

Assembly in Santiago will be democratic governance. Participation, transparency, and accountability are key steps in the journey to democratic governance and without these, the credibility and legitimacy of governance are at risk. Where trust in the democratic institutions, in elected governments, and in democracy itself is undermined, concrete examples of commitment to democratic governance at the highest political level and throughout government are needed to help restore confidence. In this context, we should also consider additional actions to undertake, pursuant to last year's General Assembly resolution AG/RES. 1869 (XXXII-O/02) on the promotion of a democratic culture.

The General Assembly's discussion on democratic governance in the Americas will undoubtedly underline the importance of sound economic and social development and inclusion to stable, strong democratic societies. These issues will be further considered and developed by our heads of state and government at the Special Summit of the Americas this fall. Our efforts to promote and strengthen democracy will be deepened and widened by these deliberations and their follow-up activities.

The role of the Charter as a hemispheric beacon, a declaration of principle in the noblest sense of the expression, is, of course, not limited to the activities of the Organization. More important is what we as member states undertake to do to protect and promote democracy in our own nations. The principles of democracy cannot be imposed; they must be voluntarily integrated. Our governments have the primary responsibility to work to ensure that our constitutions, our laws, and our institutions continually move closer to the implementation of the democratic ideals articulated in the Charter.

With this in mind, we believe that in the future, in addition to evaluating the Organization's activities relative to democracy, we should use this kind of meeting as an opportunity for countries to present their achievements in strengthening democracy at the national level. This, in our view, is an essential aspect of the promotion and implementation of the Charter.

Mr. Chairman, the Inter-American Democratic Charter is our roadmap toward the achievement of strong, healthy democracies throughout the Hemisphere. We are all traveling this road together. It is not by any means an easy one. There will undoubtedly obstacles along the way; we have encountered some already and we would be wise to prepare for more en route. The important point is that we have chosen to make this journey together and we have promised to help each other along the way. Our challenge now—and our commitment to one another—is to ensure that no one is left behind.

Thank you.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, Madam Interim Representative of Canada, for your remarks.

I am now pleased to give the floor to Ambassador Peter DeShazo of the United States.

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

A little over a year ago, still in the aftermath of September 11, we determined that we wanted to keep the issue of the follow-up to the Inter-American Democratic Charter as a permanent item on the agenda of the Permanent Council. We did so because we recognized the great significance of this document for us and for the citizens of this hemisphere in promoting and defending their right to democracy. In doing so, we reaffirmed our obligation, as representatives of the democracies of this hemisphere, to promote and defend that right. Gradually, we have come to realize that the Charter stipulates not only the democratic values that we hold in common, but provides the Organization with the essential tools to prevent or address threats to democracy.

We meet today under General Assembly resolution AG/RES. 1907 (XXXII-O/02) to “review actions undertaken by the Organization in calendar year 2002 to promote and strengthen democracy in order to determine such additional actions as may be deemed appropriate.” In fact, the Democratic Charter is the spirit of the OAS, and virtually everything that the Organization did in the year 2002 was done in the spirit of the Democratic Charter.

We also should overcome the hesitation of using Article 17 of the Democratic Charter. In fact, every time a member state makes a request for technical assistance from the OAS, such as technical electoral assistance, strengthening institutions, promoting dialogue and conflict resolution, or leadership training, in essence it invokes the Democratic Charter.

We have two questions before us today. First, what did we do in the year 2002 to promote and strengthen democracy? We can look at our efforts in two categories.

The first category is technical assistance or promotion of a democratic culture by the organs and entities of the OAS. The long-awaited inventory of democratic activities in the Organization that we have before us today is an impressive list. There is, indeed, a lot going on in the area of democracy, and not just in the work of the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD). I wonder whether anyone in the Secretariat, let alone any of the permanent representatives, was aware of all that the Organization is doing in this area. The level of technical activity is very reassuring.

Our delegation commends the UPD for putting this chart together, as well as all of the organs and entities that provided the information. We hope this will prove to be a catalyst for even greater coordination throughout the Organization in the future. To facilitate this, I propose that we make this very informative report an annual part of our review in preparation for the General Assembly. While we in the Permanent Council and our ministers in the General Assembly give the policy orientation for the Organization, it is in the daily implementation of these activities that we will make progress in promoting and defending democratic institutions, practice, and culture.

The second category of what we did in 2002 is more political in nature. Clearly, the Permanent Council has become more proactive in lending solidarity to member states, as we did in the case of Venezuela, Haiti, and Bolivia. Clearly, we are recognizing the need to speak up when the rights of the Hemisphere’s citizens are being violated, as we did yesterday in the discussion on Cuba. Clearly, when representatives of OAS member states traveled to South Korea in November 2002 to meet with member states of the Community of Democracies from other parts of the world, we were promoting our values of democracy and the instrument we drafted to promote it. The June 5-6 meeting in Miami between OAS members of the Community of Democracies and members of the African Union (AU)/New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) is another such proactive

initiative to share our values. Clearly, when the Secretary General offers assistance to the Government of Bolivia to help resolve conflicts in that country or speaks out in support of the Government of Nicaragua's anticorruption efforts, he is representing our democratic values. As the Permanent Council considers and votes on a resolution defending human rights in Cuba, we will be projecting those fundamental values.

The second question before us today is: What more can we do or should we be doing? I am sure that all of us could come up with a long list of projects and activities we would like to see developed by the Organization were there sufficient money and time to do it all. But I have a few concrete proposals to make.

One of the strongest ways we have of supporting these organs and entities of the Organization that are actively promoting democracy is to fund them adequately. We talk about providing increased financial support for the inter-American human rights systems. We need to ensure that we also are providing adequate financial support for the democracy programs of the UPD and other organs and entities of the Organization. Without an increase next year in the regular program-budget, it will be difficult to maintain the current levels, let alone enhance support for these essential democracy programs. Each member and observer state should consider making voluntary contributions to these collective programs. My government has approved a substantial increase in what we will contribute to democracy activities this year. Frankly, we hope these additional funds will leverage greater contributions from other donors.

We should actively seek ways to promote a democratic culture in the Americas based on our shared values. There are many ways that we can do this:

- Long-distance learning programs for teachers is one venue. The UPD and the Unit for Social Development and Education (USDE) are developing a proposal to inform elementary and secondary teachers about the Inter-American Democratic Charter. We should support this.
- We should urge our education ministers to make a commitment at their August meeting to incorporate civic education, including the Inter-American Democratic Charter, into the curriculum of each of our member states.
- Last year's special meeting of the Permanent Council on women's participation in political processes was highly successful and attracted outstanding speakers. I propose that the Permanent Council, following on the Education Ministerial and with the help of the UPD and the USDE, consider holding a special meeting in September on promoting a democratic culture through civic education.
- Inter-parliamentary exchanges are useful. Representatives of the U.S. and Venezuelan legislatures have been meeting for the last year to learn more about each other's methods and understand more their differences. We should encourage more such practical exchanges.
- Horizontal cooperation is productive. Brazil and Paraguay have shown us the way with their pilot program to share Brazil's electronic voting machines and software for the

Paraguayan elections held this past Sunday. Peru is inviting members of the Rio Group to share best practices and experiences in the area of political party reform. The Inter-American Forum on Political Parties (IAFPP) is encouraging greater sharing of experiences among the current and future leaders of our countries, and we should encourage these efforts. We should make horizontal cooperation a strong element of political party reform.

- An annual evaluation of democracy activities is essential. We have discussed follow-up activities to the Democratic Charter at least six times since we adopted it on September 11, 2001. I propose that we hold an annual meeting of the Permanent Council, as we are doing today, to evaluate the level of activity in the previous year. To prepare for this meeting, we should ask the UPD to provide us with an updated inventory of activities each year. The results of this meeting should be included in our report to the General Assembly on the promotion of democracy and follow-up to the Democratic Charter.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, Ambassador DeShazo, for your statement and for the very worthwhile comments, which are duly noted.

Ambassador Ferrero of Peru has asked for the floor.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DEL PERÚ: Gracias, señor Presidente.

El Grupo de Río fue el primer mecanismo latinoamericano en tener una cláusula democrática, y su existencia, como sabemos, está íntimamente asociada con la naturaleza democrática de sus miembros. En mi condición de Embajador del país que este año ejerce la Secretaría Pro-témpore del Grupo de Río, en esta ocasión deseo dar a conocer, muy brevemente, algunos aspectos relativos a la actividad que el mecanismo viene desarrollando en defensa de la democracia y de la gobernabilidad democrática.

En la reunión de Cancilleres del Grupo de Río celebrada con ocasión de la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas de 2002 se definieron dos temas centrales para el Grupo durante el presente año, que forman parte de la agenda de la Cumbre a realizarse en mayo en el Cuzco y que se encuentran estrechamente vinculados a la noción de gobernabilidad democrática.

Por un lado está el tema de los partidos políticos –ya mencionado– y la gobernabilidad democrática. En este aspecto, el objetivo es el fortalecimiento de nuestra sociedad democrática, con énfasis en los partidos políticos como pilares fundamentales del sistema político, en razón de las funciones que desempeñan en la articulación y la delegación de intereses, la legitimación, socialización y participación ciudadanas, así como en la formación de cuadros dirigentes, sin perjuicio de las funciones que cumplen con otras instancias organizadas de la sociedad civil con las cuales se complementan.

El segundo tema es el establecimiento de mecanismos financieros innovadores destinados a fortalecer la gobernabilidad democrática mediante la atención de las más urgentes necesidades de la

sociedad, en tanto sufren los efectos de los programas económicos y en tanto se desarrollan programas de reactivación actualmente en marcha.

En la reunión de Cancilleres del Grupo de Río realizada en Trujillo la semana pasada, los Ministros trabajaron también en la formulación de una visión estratégica o agenda latinoamericana, que identifique los asuntos más relevantes para la región y represente los intereses de los países miembros, para permitir una acción de consulta y concertación concreta y efectiva.

Respecto al tema de la gobernabilidad democrática, el documento que analizaron y que será utilizado para la elaboración de la próxima Cumbre, aborda los siguientes asuntos. Primero, el Grupo de Río tiene un compromiso con la consolidación y fortalecimiento de la democracia, con sus valores y con la defensa de sus instituciones. Segundo, la situación internacional exacerba las dificultades existentes en la gobernabilidad interna de muchos países de la región. Tercero, nuestros pueblos reclaman del sistema democrático una atención prioritaria a sus legítimas demandas sociales, por lo que asegurar que la democracia logre un grado eficaz de gobernabilidad se vuelve una necesidad urgente. Cuarto, la consolidación de la democracia en la región exige avanzar en la efectiva reforma del Estado. Y, finalmente, el Grupo de Río renueva, una vez más, su compromiso invariable con la aplicación de la Carta Democrática Interamericana.

Gracias, señor Presidente.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, Ambassador Ferrero, for your statement.

This morning we have heard a range of very interesting concepts and some inspiring ideas for future actions that the Organization can take to contribute to the promotion and strengthening of democracy in the Hemisphere. To this end, the Council has taken careful note of ex President Miguel Ángel Rodríguez's reminder that our organization is dedicated to the values held most sacred by the men and women of the Americas. The former President has enjoined us to perfect the democracy we now have as a contribution to the creation of better standards of well-being through cooperation, the generation of opportunities for growth, and our common fight against poverty, which afflicts so many of our people in the Americas and which has engendered sentiments of disenchantment with democracy. Once again, Excellency, please accept our special thanks for sharing your vision regarding the Inter-American Democratic Charter with us.

There being no other matters to discuss, I now adjourn this meeting.

AC00753T01

ISBN-0-8270-4599-9