

CONSEJO PERMANENTE



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ACTA  
DE LA SESIÓN PROTOCOLAR  
CELEBRADA  
EL 24 DE SEPTIEMBRE DE 2004

En honor de la visita del excelentísimo señor Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan,  
Presidente de la República de Suriname

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## CONSEJO PERMANENTE DE LA ORGANIZACIÓN DE LOS ESTADOS AMERICANOS

### ACTA DE LA SESIÓN PROTOCOLAR CELEBRADA EL 24 DE SEPTIEMBRE DE 2004

En la ciudad de Washington, a las once y cincuenta de la mañana del viernes 24 de septiembre de 2004, celebró sesión protocolar el Consejo Permanente de la Organización de los Estados Americanos para recibir al excelentísimo señor Rinaldo Ronald Venetiaan, Presidente de la República de Suriname. Presidió la sesión la Embajadora Carmen Marina Gutiérrez Salazar, Representante Permanente de Nicaragua y Presidenta del Consejo Permanente. Asistieron los siguientes miembros:

Embajador Denis G. Antoine, Representante Permanente de Grenada  
Embajador Joshua Sears, Representante Permanente del Commonwealth de las Bahamas  
Embajador Valter Pecly Moreira, Representante Permanente del Brasil  
Embajador Michael I. King, Representante Permanente de Barbados  
Embajador Jorge Valero Briceño, Representante Permanente de Venezuela  
Embajador Paul D. Durand, Representante Permanente del Canadá  
Embajador Henry Lothar Illes, Representante Permanente de Suriname  
Embajador Rodolfo Hugo Gil, Representante Permanente de la Argentina  
Embajador Luis Enrique Chase Plate, Representante Permanente del Paraguay  
Embajador Salvador E. Rodezno Fuentes, Representante Permanente de Honduras  
Embajador Horacio Serpa Uribe, Representante Permanente de Colombia  
Embajador Marcelo Hervas, Representante Permanente del Ecuador  
Embajadora Sofía Leonor Sánchez Baret, Representante Permanente de la República Dominicana  
Embajador John F. Maisto, Representante Permanente de los Estados Unidos  
Embajador Alberto Borea Odría, Representante Permanente del Perú  
Embajador Francisco Villagrán de León, Representante Permanente de Guatemala  
Embajadora Abigail Castro de Pérez, Representante Permanente de El Salvador  
Embajador Gordon V. Shirley, Representante Permanente de Jamaica  
Embajador Aristides Royo, Representante Permanente de Panamá  
Consejera Jasmine E. Huggins, Representante Alterna de Saint Kitts y Nevis  
Embajador Luis Guardia Mora, Representante Alterno de Costa Rica  
Primera Secretaria Deborah Yaw, Representante Alterna de Guyana  
Ministro Consejero Starret D. Greene, Representante Alterno de Antigua y Barbuda  
Ministro Consejero Jean Ricot Dorméus, Representante Alterno de Haití  
Consejero Juan Sandoval Mendiola, Representante Alterno de México  
Ministro Consejero Jorge A. Seré Sturzenegger, Representante Alterno del Uruguay  
Ministro Consejero Ricardo Martínez Covarrubias, Representante Alterno de Bolivia  
Primera Secretaria Julieta M. Blandón Miranda, Representante Alterna de Nicaragua  
Primer Secretario Patricio Powell, Representante Alterno de Chile  
Ministro Consejero Michael E. Bejos, Representante Alterno de Belice

También estuvieron presentes el Secretario General de la Organización, doctor Miguel Ángel Rodríguez, y el Secretario General Adjunto, Embajador Luigi R. Einaudi, Secretario del Consejo Permanente.

La PRESIDENTA: Declaro abierta la presente sesión protocolar del Consejo Permanente, que ha sido convocada en honor del excelentísimo señor Presidente de la República de Suriname, doctor Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan.

Señoras y señores, les solicito que nos pongamos de pie para recibir al excelentísimo señor Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan, Presidente de la República de Suriname.

[Acompañado del Secretario General, el Presidente de Suriname ingresa al salón con la Ministra de Relaciones Exteriores de Suriname y la Comisión de Recepción del Consejo.]

### PALABRAS DE LA PRESIDENTA DEL CONSEJO PERMANENTE

La PRESIDENTA: Excelentísimo señor Presidente de la República de Suriname, es para mí motivo de especial satisfacción brindarle en nombre del Consejo Permanente la más cordial bienvenida a esta Casa de las Américas. Le reiteramos nuestra complacencia también por habernos acompañado ayer en la ceremonia de investidura del Secretario General, doctor Miguel Ángel Rodríguez.

Excelentísimo señor Presidente de la República de Suriname, doctor Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan; señora Ministra de Asuntos Exteriores, doctora Maria Levens; distinguidos miembros de la comitiva presidencial; señor Secretario General, doctor Miguel Ángel Rodríguez; señor Secretario General Adjunto, Embajador Luigi Einaudi; señoras y señores Embajadores Representantes Permanentes; señoras y señores Representantes Alternos; señoras y señores Observadores Permanentes; señoras y señores:

En mi carácter de Presidenta del Consejo Permanente, constituye un señalado honor tener la oportunidad de pronunciar, en nombre de los señores Representantes Permanentes de los Estados Miembros, las palabras de bienvenida en esta sesión protocolar que se celebra en ocasión de la visita de Su Excelencia doctor Runaldo Venetiaan. Su ilustre presencia en esta Casa de las Américas reviste una particular relevancia por ser esta la primera vez que un Presidente de Suriname visita la Organización de los Estados Americanos. El Consejo agradece y valora en toda su magnitud este gesto especial de amistad y de solidaridad de su parte hacia los gobiernos que integran este foro hemisférico.

Representa usted, señor Presidente, a un país en el cual las distintas culturas que lo conforman constituyen, como usted lo ha dicho en distintas ocasiones, el más importante componente del potencial humano de su pueblo. Ciertamente la condición de una plural y armónica cultura surinamesa ha venido, desde 1977, enriqueciendo el cónclave de Estados Miembros, sus consideraciones, debates y decisiones en esta Organización. La participación del Representante Permanente de Suriname, Embajador Henry Lothar Illes, gran amigo, ha sido siempre un aporte para el análisis de los temas prioritarios de nuestra agenda.

Señoras y señores Representantes, nos honra hoy una distinguida figura política que ocupó la Primera Magistratura de su país durante el período de 1991 a 1996 y fue elegido nuevamente Presidente de Suriname en los comicios del año 2000.

Su trayectoria incluye también otros cargos desempeñados en la función pública, como Ministro de Educación, miembro del Parlamento, Director del Departamento de Educación Científica e investigador del Departamento de Estadísticas. En el sector privado, su experiencia profesional ha estado principalmente orientada a la enseñanza universitaria de las matemáticas. Se ha distinguido asimismo como miembro del Directorio Ejecutivo de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura.

Doctor Venetiaan, recientemente en la Cumbre Extraordinaria de las Américas, en Monterrey, señalaba usted que la democracia, el Estado de Derecho y la equidad son prerequisites para un crecimiento económico sostenido y para la buena gobernabilidad a nivel de los sectores público y privado. En ese contexto, deseamos expresarle que este Consejo es consciente de que su Gobierno ha empeñado sus mejores esfuerzos para fortalecer las instituciones, consolidar el diálogo político, erradicar la pobreza y fomentar el crecimiento económico de su país.

Por otra parte, deseamos mencionar que en la estructura de la Conferencia de los Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno de la Comunidad del Caribe (CARICOM) le corresponde al Presidente Venetiaan la responsabilidad primaria de coordinar importantes temas vinculados al desarrollo comunitario y la cooperación en materia de cultura, asuntos de género, juventud, deporte, y a partir de enero de 2005 ejercerá la presidencia de esta importante Conferencia.

Los méritos del doctor Venetiaan han alcanzado reconocimiento internacional al otorgársele, entre otras prestigiosas condecoraciones, la Cruz Grande de Oranje Nassau, de los Países Bajos, el Collar de la Orden del Libertador, de Venezuela, y la Ordem Nacional do Cruzeiro do Sul, del Brasil.

Señor Presidente, me complace reiterarle en nombre de todos y cada uno de los miembros de este Consejo Permanente la más cálida bienvenida a usted, a su delegación, a la señora Ministra, a esta Casa de las Américas.

Muchísimas gracias. [Aplausos.]

#### PALABRAS DEL SECRETARIO GENERAL

La PRESIDENTA: Siguiendo con el orden del día, me complace conceder la palabra al Secretario General de la Organización de los Estados Americanos, doctor Miguel Ángel Rodríguez.

El SECRETARIO GENERAL: His Excellency Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan, President of the Republic of Suriname; Her Excellency Maria Levens, Foreign Minister of Suriname and member of the official delegation; members of the official delegation; Ambassador Carmen María Gutiérrez, Chair of the Permanent Council and Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the Organization of American States; Mr. Assistant Secretary General; ambassadors; ladies and gentlemen:

What a coincidence that at the first meeting in which I have the privilege of taking part in the business of the Permanent Council as Secretary General, you are visiting this House, Mr. President!

This is a very special occasion that has a lot of meaning. You have been known in your country for your leadership in promoting austerity programs to make good use of your country's always scarce resources. It's even more important to take care of those scarce resources in member

states, such as many of ours, that have not yet achieved high levels of wealth. In those cases, resources are even scarcer and the need to take good care of them is even greater.

In your first term as President, you ended your term with a *superávit* in the public finances. In your second term, you have begun controlling spending and raising taxes to bring balance to the public finances. Sir, in this House, we are trying to follow your example of austerity and of making the best use of the resources, always scarce and very valuable, that the member states have placed at the disposition of the Organization of American States.

Also, as our Chair of the Permanent Council has already expressed, you represent a society whose cultural diversity makes it very rich. Very often, we have no way of understanding the richness of cultural diversity. Our region has expressed itself creatively through the interchanges of people from different traditions and who do things differently. This creates tremendous potential for progress and for the well-being of the people. We admire the way in which your country handles its diversity, and we want to learn from your experience, for this hemisphere consists of diverse cultures.

The day before yesterday, your government, Mr. President, together with the Government of Guyana, requested the use of our facilities to discuss the maritime boundaries that your two countries are endeavoring to pursue. The same day, of course, we answered that the facilities, personnel, and knowledge of this organization are at your full disposal and that of the Government of Guyana, to facilitate a good environment in which to conduct that constructive endeavor. It is through this process of pacific and negotiated settlements that this organization has promoted peace in this hemisphere since 1889, so we are very happy to be of service to Your Excellency.

One area of his relations with the OAS in which the President of Suriname has been more interested in the programs that the OAS and his government have put together to promote a full understanding by the population of the importance of proper observance of human rights. This is the basis for protecting and defending the dignity and liberty of every person, and it's a privilege to be able to work with your government, Mr. President, in the pursuit of these common goals.

Thank you so much for your presence here today. Thank you so much for giving importance to this organization by coming here to present your points of view. Thank you very much, Mr. President. [Aplausos.]

La PRESIDENTA: Muchas gracias, señor Secretario General.

#### PALABRAS DEL PRESIDENTE DE SURINAME

La PRESIDENTA: A continuación me complace dejar en el uso de la palabra al excelentísimo señor Presidente de la República de Suriname, doctor Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan.

El PRESIDENTE DE SURINAME: Esteemed Chair of the Permanent Council, Ambassador Carmen Marina Gutiérrez; distinguished Secretary General, Miguel Ángel Rodríguez; distinguished Assistant Secretary General, Ambassador Luigi Einaudi; distinguished dean of the OAS permanent representatives, Ambassador Denis Antoine; esteemed permanent representatives; distinguished alternate representatives; distinguished permanent observers; specially invited guests; ladies and gentlemen:

Today, it is a distinct pleasure that I, as President of the Republic of Suriname, have the opportunity to address you, the political and administrative leadership of the Organization of American States, and to do so in this most magnificent and prestigious Hall of the Americas makes it an even more privileged occasion.

Mr. Secretary General, your remarks yesterday in your inaugural address reflect clearly your determination to fulfill this task in the most efficient and effective manner. I congratulate you on your assumption of this high office and, as a member state, Suriname stands ready to provide you with all the assistance you will need, both political and administrative.

Over the past ten years, this, the oldest regional organization in the world, has been led by a distinguished politician. Secretary General César Gaviria has, indeed, lifted the stature and political relevance of the OAS. I commend the former Secretary General for his sterling contributions, his vision, and his stewardship. We look forward to his continued engagement in the Western Hemisphere and with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in particular.

I take this opportunity also to extend my sincere appreciation to the leadership of the OAS for facilitating the implementation of a resolution to the political crisis encountered by our sister nation, the Republic of Haiti. Haiti has become, since its inception as the first black independent republic, the symbol of struggle and of hardship, but also of courage, survival, and solidarity. This longtime battered nation needs more profound, constructive, and long-term assistance to improve its living conditions and to solve its political, economic, and social problems.

Distinguished Chair and permanent representatives, Suriname became a member of the Organization of American States in 1977, two years after gaining its independence. Our membership in this important political organization became soon thereafter relevant and opportune, since the young republic was confronted in 1980 with an unconstitutional alteration of its government. Within months, the already butchered democracy came to a firm halt, which included the disruption of the effective functioning of representative and legislative bodies.

While the gaining of independence in one of the most culturally and ethnically complex communities in the Western Hemisphere was characterized as an example of the peaceful ending of colonial rule, the experience of military rule was extremely painful for the people of Suriname. This experience included the killing of innocent citizens and the detaining of political leaders. This brief description of the Surinamese experience will certainly contribute to understanding the position of Suriname with respect to the case of Haiti.

Armed resistance in the interior; negotiations among political parties, civil society, and the military régime; and the influence of a number of governments in the Hemisphere resulted in general and free elections in 1987, observed by many countries and institutions, such as the OAS. Since then, Suriname has held three successful elections, and we stand on the eve of new general elections in the first half of 2005.

The Organization of American States, through its National Office in Suriname, but more so through the activities of the Special Mission led by Edgardo Reis, has played a critical role in the process of redemocratization. Without a doubt, the OAS's engagement in Suriname is a most significant expression of the relevance of this body. More recent is the support received from the OAS to begin clearing land mines dating back to the war in the interior of Suriname between the

National Army and opponents of the military régime. On behalf of the people and Government of the Republic of Suriname, I once again extend my sincere appreciation for the assistance by the OAS.

Today, the Republic of Suriname is again a democracy where there is respect for basic human rights; where democratic institutions function effectively; and where general, free, and fair elections are held on a regular basis. It is within this atmosphere of democratic values, high levels of religious and ethnic tolerance, and economic potential that my government and people are building a society that can prosper and engage with the region and with the world beyond.

Mr. Secretary General, distinguished representatives, we are again at one of those turning points in the history of mankind. The shaping of a new world political and economic order is taking place when many countries are struggling domestically to provide long-term economic growth and opportunity, and, at the same time, are engaged internationally in carving out a niche market of their own in the several theatres of external economic negotiations. For countries like Suriname, it becomes a costly challenge to simultaneously and effectively participate in trade negotiations in the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the European Union (EU), the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), as well as in several CARICOM-driven bilateral trade arrangements.

At the same time, the international as well as the regional agenda is dominated by efforts to battle the threats emanating from terrorism and illegal drug trafficking. Small countries, with their limited budgets and personnel, are expected to comply with the new standards set to ensure security and safety, most of the time in other places than their own. These requirements add enormous financial difficulties to vulnerable Caribbean economies. In a time of declining revenues, these security measures may result in a further decrease in income for these countries.

At this point, I wish to express sympathy, on behalf of the Government and people of Suriname, to the peoples in our region battered by the recent hurricanes. My special thoughts go to the island of Grenada, which has been so severely damaged, and to the Haitian people, who once again had to suffer a tough blow from the forces of nature.

Ladies and gentlemen, the world today is characterized by uncertainty at all levels. There is no doubt that globalization, trade liberalization, and the rapidly changing technological innovations have brought opportunities as well as new challenges and, in some cases, difficulties for the nations. The more relevant question is: Opportunities for whom and problems for whom? There seems to be awareness that the imbalance in the sharing of the benefits and problems should be addressed.

The nations of the Western Hemisphere have not escaped from this dilemma. While democratization has taken us away from the dark days of military rule and of dictatorships, the dark clouds over our peoples and nations have not completely shifted. Our nations in the Hemisphere are still awaiting the day when full and bright sunlight will shine over them, expressing prosperity, equality, and peace.

Beyond the existing challenges and demands to build stable democratic societies in which human rights are observed and the rule of law prevails, our nations are being confronted with new problems. Representative democracy in many of our countries has not resulted in strong economies in which the people at large, the youth and the women, can benefit from income generation and social progress. Inequality is increasing in most of the affected countries.

Recent surveys of the United Nations show that the first priority of a majority of the people in Latin America is not democratically elected leadership. Political instability as a result of the financial and economic crises in many newly-established democracies is a serious impediment to progress and sustainable growth.

This trend cannot and should not be ignored by the Organization. I urge you to dedicate full attention to these developments that could be devastating to the establishment of democratic architecture and to consider appropriate responses in preempting the outburst of new political crises.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Republic of Suriname joined the Caribbean Community in 1995 and is now intensively involved in the subregional integration process that aims to make the vulnerable economies of the Caribbean more competitive in the global economy. That process is geared towards the creation of a CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) that will bring together 15 countries and 14 million people—a community working toward free movement of people, capital, and skills and establishing its own judicial framework. This is a challenging task and, in many ways, is an integration that cannot be delayed.

What is taking place in the Caribbean Community reflects the ideals of great liberators such as Simón Bolívar and visionary Caribbean politicians, such as Michael Manley, Eric Williams, and Forbes Burnham. It is at the same time an aspiration to be followed by the community of nations belonging to this organization, a vision to create a family of nations in the Americas on the basis of political will, constructive engagement, mutual respect, and understanding, all in the context of the premier multilateral political platform in this hemisphere, the Organization of American States.

In this process of renewal of the inter-American system, the increasing engagement between the different groups of countries, and the commitment of the Caribbean Community to be a relevant part of this hemispheric body, Suriname stands ready to contribute to a stronger and more inclusive OAS. The Caribbean countries share with the other nations of this hemisphere not only the Western Hemisphere, but also the same ideals and objectives, as well as their immediate problems, challenges, and interests.

In building this unified and inclusive OAS, the Caribbean Community has demonstrated its commitment in the past decades on many occasions: in the debate on how to resolve political crises, whether in Peru, Bolivia, Haiti, Guyana, or Venezuela; in the contributions made towards creating a more comprehensive, balanced, and effective Inter-American Democratic Charter; or by taking leadership in defining the new and multidimensional nature of security.

This political commitment and ambition requires also that we contribute to the administrative leadership of this organization. Even before his inauguration, the newly elected Secretary General, Miguel Ángel Rodríguez, spoke of the need to restructure the administrative body of the OAS.

Ambassador Albert Ramdin, the former Assistant Secretary General of the Caribbean Community, a former Permanent Representative of Suriname to the OAS who has chaired the same august body and the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI), who has the qualification of having worked at various levels in the Hemisphere and within the OAS, both on the political and administrative sides, in a meeting of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF) earlier this month outlined the new challenges for the OAS and the Americas in terms of strengthening and defending democracy, eliminating poverty and social injustice, and resolving

conflicts. The political insight, vision of change and inclusion, managerial skills but, above all, belief in and dedication to the inter-American system of men like Ambassador Ramdin can make a meaningful and beneficial difference in the OAS.

I take this opportunity to draw your attention to the candidacy of Ambassador Ramdin for the post of Assistant Secretary General of the OAS and to thank my CARICOM brothers and sisters for the support given to him and to Suriname for this candidacy. I extend my thanks also to other countries that have signaled their positive considerations.

Madam Chair, Mr. Secretary General, distinguished permanent representatives, ladies and gentlemen, we have indeed made progress over the past decades, and the OAS has been at the forefront of many of the political achievements in the Americas. We have developed many inter-American instruments and signed many conventions, treaties, and declarations. We have established, through the Summit of the Americas process, a mechanism for consultation and debate at the highest political level in the Western Hemisphere, but much more needs to be done to create peace and prosperity for the peoples of the Americas. There is, indeed, a need to revisit many of the instruments developed in terms of their implementation and their applicability in these challenging days. For this, we need to build a strong and inclusive OAS, an OAS that will be capable of addressing the many political, economic, and social challenges to come in an effective manner.

One of the most important tasks of this organization will be to provide political momentum and political leadership to tackle in a meaningful manner the problems related to poverty, HIV/AIDS, and a degrading environment.

The OAS has to become more proactive in resolving political crises in its member states so as to avoid unexpected and undesirable occurrences beyond the multilateral framework agreed upon.

Given its political impact and effects on developments, the debate on poverty, social development, and social justice should be a standing item on the agenda of the OAS. Poverty and inequality are the source of the instability we are experiencing in the political functioning of states and their democratic bodies. The anticipated increase in assistance for the resolution of crisis situations will not only require wisdom and political finesse, but also, certainly, an alert and consistent application of existing instruments, not in the least invocation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

Madam Chair, in closing, let me take this opportunity to assure the membership of the Organization of American States of the commitment of the Government and people of the Republic of Suriname to the principles and purposes laid down in the Charter of the OAS. The OAS has gained political stature over the past 10 years; it is time to enter the next stage and make this organization one of great strength to serve the new needs of the people of the Americas. The Government and people of Suriname are convinced that this objective can be achieved through strong leadership, teamwork, dedication and, above all, respect and understanding for each other.

Thank you. *Muchísimas gracias. Muito obrigado.* [Aplausos.]

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you very much for sharing your most profound thoughts with us.

Señor Presidente, nuevamente le expreso a usted la gratitud de este Consejo Permanente por habernos acompañado el día de hoy.

Ruego a las señoras y los señores Representantes Permanentes que permanezcan en su sitio para aguardar el saludo del Presidente de la República de Suriname.

[El Presidente de Suriname saluda a los señores Representantes y luego, acompañado del Secretario General, la Presidenta del Consejo y la comitiva oficial, abandona el salón.]

Se levanta la sesión.

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