

CONSEJO PERMANENTE



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ACTA  
DE LA SESIÓN PROTOCOLAR  
CELEBRADA  
EL 17 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 2006

En honor del excelentísimo doctor Denzil L. Douglas,  
Primer Ministro de Saint Kitts y Nevis

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## CONSEJO PERMANENTE DE LA ORGANIZACIÓN DE LOS ESTADOS AMERICANOS

### ACTA DE LA SESIÓN PROTOCOLAR CELEBRADA EL 17 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 2006

En la ciudad de Washington, a las diez de la mañana del jueves 17 de noviembre de 2006, celebró sesión protocolar el Consejo Permanente de la Organización de los Estados Americanos en honor del excelentísimo doctor Denzil L. Douglas, Primer Ministro de Saint Kitts y Nevis. Presidió la sesión la Embajadora Marina Valère, Representante Permanente de Trinidad y Tobago y Presidenta del Consejo Permanente. Asistieron los siguientes miembros:

Embajadora Sonia Merlyn Johnny, Representante Permanente de Santa Lucía y Vicepresidenta del Consejo Permanente  
Embajador Michael I. King, Representante Permanente de Barbados  
Embajador Ellsworth I. A. John, Representante Permanente de San Vicente y las Granadinas  
Embajador Izben C. Williams, Representante Permanente de Saint Kitts y Nevis  
Embajador Henry Lothar Illes, Representante Permanente de Suriname  
Embajador John F. Maisto, Representante Permanente de los Estados Unidos  
Embajador Francisco Villagran de León, Representante Permanente de Guatemala  
Embajadora Deborah-Mae Lovell, Representante Permanente de Antigua y Barbuda  
Embajador Aristides Royo, Representante Permanente de Panamá  
Embajador José Luis Velásquez Pereira, Representante Permanente de Nicaragua  
Embajador Alejandro García-Moreno Elizondo, Representante Permanente de México  
Embajador Pedro Oyarce Yuraszeck, Representante Permanente de Chile  
Embajador Carlos Sosa Coello, Representante Permanente de Honduras  
Embajadora María del Luján Flores, Representante Permanente del Uruguay  
Embajador Camilo Alfonso Ospina Bernal, Representante Permanente de Colombia  
Consejera Patricia Bozo de Durán, Representante Interina de Bolivia  
Embajador Carlos Zapata López, Representante Interino del Perú  
Primer Secretario Eugene F. Torchon-Newry, Representante Interino del Commonwealth de las Bahamas  
Embajador Nelson Pineda Prada, Representante Interino de Venezuela  
Ministra Consejera Mayerlyn Cordero Díaz, Representante Interina de la República Dominicana  
Embajador Luis Menéndez-Castro, Representante Alterno de El Salvador  
Embajador Rodrigo Sotela Alfaro, Representante Alterno de Costa Rica  
Primera Secretaria Deborah Yaw, Representante Alterna de Guyana  
Ministro Consejero Nestor Mendez, Representante Alterno de Belice  
Ministra Elisa Ruiz Díaz, Representante Alterna del Paraguay  
Ministra Silvia María Merega, Representante Alterna de la Argentina  
Consejera Patricia D. M. Clarke, Representante Alterna de Grenada  
Consejero Douglas G. Fraser, Representante Alterno del Canadá  
Tercera Secretaria Judith Anne Rolle, Representante Alterna del Commonwealth de Dominica  
Ministro Consejero Fernando Simas Magalhães, Representante Alterno del Brasil  
Ministra L. Ann Scott, Representante Alterna de Jamaica  
Embajador Antonio Rodrigue, Representante Alterno de Haití  
Consejero José María Borja, Representante Alterno del Ecuador

También estuvieron presentes el Secretario General de la Organización, doctor José Miguel Insulza, y el Secretario General Adjunto, Embajador Albert R. Ramdin, Secretario del Consejo Permanente.

La PRESIDENTA: I am pleased to call to order this protocolary meeting of the Permanent Council, which has been convened in honor of His Excellency the Honorable Dr. Denzil L. Douglas, Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

Ladies and gentlemen, please stand to receive the Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

[Pausa.]

Ladies and gentlemen, let us give a warm welcome to His Excellency the Honorable Dr. Denzil L. Douglas, Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

[Aplausos.]

Distinguished representatives and alternate representatives, permanent observers, Secretary General José Miguel Insulza, Assistant Secretary General Ambassador Albert Ramdin, ladies and gentlemen:

It is my distinct pleasure and honor to welcome His Excellency Dr. Denzil Douglas to the Organization of American States and to the House of the Americas. In quick succession, this Council has had the privilege of welcoming two distinguished Caribbean heads of government, my own Prime Minister having been here just a few weeks ago.

#### PALABRAS DEL SECRETARIO GENERAL

La PRESIDENTA: Mr. Prime Minister, with your permission, I would like to share your many achievements with the members of this Council and other invited guests here today, but first, I give the floor to Secretary General José Miguel Insulza to welcome you to the House of the Americas.

El SECRETARIO GENERAL: Thank you very much.

Madam Chair of the Permanent Council, Her Excellency Ambassador Marina Valère; Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis, the Honorable Dr. Denzil Douglas; Assistant Secretary General; permanent and alternate representatives; special guests; ladies and gentlemen:

We are very pleased to welcome to the Organization of American States the Honorable Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis, His Excellency Dr. Denzil Douglas. A physician by profession, Dr. Douglas has led his country for quite some time. He was elected Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis in July 1995 after having served in Parliament for many years.

Since taking office, Prime Minister Douglas has worked very hard to enhance the standard of living of his people through improvements in the quality of education; through economic diversification; through job creation; and in engagement with the private sector and civil society. A few years ago, he took the bold decision to transition Saint Kitts and Nevis out of a monocrop, sugar-based economy into a more diversified, knowledge-based society. That decision is indicative of his willingness to make hard decisions in the interest of his people. Those of us who have had the opportunity to visit Saint Kitts and Nevis recently have seen that very bold initiative working in that

country, as well as the big challenges that lie ahead of the Prime Minister and his government in completing that process.

Prime Minister Douglas is well regarded regionally and internationally for his contributions to the areas of health and the promotion of democracy, and he is probably best known for passionately advocating for social justice and economic empowerment for small island developing states. Here at the OAS, which he has visited before, he has consistently championed the causes of our smaller member states, frequently reminding us of the special challenges and opportunities that they face. At the World Bank, he has chaired the Caribbean Group for Cooperation in Economic Development (CGCED) and has skillfully represented the interests of the smaller island states of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the South Pacific in other international fora. We know that as Chair of CARICOM, he will continue to work tirelessly in the service of his people, his subregion, and the Hemisphere.

Prime Minister Denzil Douglas is a physician by profession, and he has developed a very strong commitment to the fight against HIV/AIDS, as reflected in his chairing the issue of AIDS in the Caribbean through his work with the Pan-Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS (PANCAP). In that capacity, he has helped to negotiate significant reductions in the cost of treatment for HIV/AIDS sufferers. He continues to work to develop mechanisms and to draft legislation to fight the stigma that prevents people suffering from the disease from receiving inexpensive care and an opportunity to live more normal lives.

Mr. Prime Minister, I commend you for your work and thank you very deeply for taking this rostrum to address the community of the Americas. You have the authority of your office, your professional training, and your body of work to show us the way in dealing with some of the very important issues that you have addressed as Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

I thank you very much. Welcome to the OAS!

[Aplausos.]

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you, Secretary General.

[Pausa.]

#### PALABRAS DE LA PRESIDENTA DEL CONSEJO PERMANENTE

La PRESIDENTA: Your Excellency Dr. Denzil L. Douglas, Secretary General Insulza, Assistant Secretary General Ramdin, distinguished permanent and alternate representatives, permanent observers, ladies and gentlemen:

His Excellency Dr. Denzil Douglas was sworn in as the second Prime Minister of the Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis in July 1995. He was re-elected in March 2000 and again in October 2004, when he was sworn in for his third term as Prime Minister.

Dr. Douglas assumed the chairmanship of the Conference of the Heads of State and Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on July 1 of this year for six months.

As a trained physician, Dr. Douglas has received important recognition in the area of public health, serving in the 1980s as President of the Saint Kitts-Nevis Medical Association.

In addition to his successful medical career, Dr. Douglas distinguished himself in the political landscape of Saint Kitts and Nevis. He was elected Deputy Chairman of the St. Kitts-Nevis Labour Party in 1987. Two years later, he was elected National Political Leader of the St. Kitts-Nevis Labour Party.

As Prime Minister, Dr. Douglas has continuously played an active leadership role in many regional and international organizations, such as the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB), CARICOM, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank.

Prime Minister Douglas made history by being the first Caribbean leader to receive the Gandhi-King-Ikeda Peace Award, created to inspire and empower people to take responsibility for the improvement of the human condition, and was also honored as an outstanding graduate of the University of the West Indies (UWI). He is the recipient of a Legacy Award from the American Foundation of the University of the West Indies (AFUWI) in New York.

His Excellency Dr. Douglas was also recently decorated by the Government of Taiwan with the Order of Brilliant Star with Special Grand Cordon, and by the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela with the Order of the Liberator, First Class.

Dr. Denzil Douglas has been recognized by U.S. President George W. Bush, former U.S. President Bill Clinton, and New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg for his outstanding leadership, not only in Saint Kitts and Nevis, but also regionally and internationally, and his consistent advocacy for better access to health care and inexpensive drugs for persons suffering from HIV/AIDS.

In November 2005, U.S. Congressman Charles Rangel presented Prime Minister Douglas with a plaque for his distinguished and unblemished record of service to humanity and for his leadership and tireless progressive contribution to his country and the entire Caribbean Community. He was similarly recognized by the U.S. Congressional Black Caucus.

Mr. Prime Minister, those of us in the Caribbean have borne witness to your consistent leadership efforts and applaud the passion and commitment with which you have dedicated yourself to causes larger than yourself and that extend beyond the borders of your own country.

#### PALABRAS DEL PRIMER MINISTRO DE SAINT KITTS Y NEVIS

La PRESIDENTA: It is my distinct pleasure and honor to give the floor to His Excellency Dr. Denzil L. Douglas, Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis. [Aplausos.]

El PRIMER MINISTRO DE SAINT KITTS Y NEVIS: Thank you, distinguished Chair of the Permanent Council, Ambassador Marina Valère; Secretary General, Dr. José Miguel Insulza; Assistant Secretary General, Ambassador Albert Ramdin; excellencies, distinguished permanent and alternate representatives and permanent observers to the Organization of American States; dedicated staff of the OAS General Secretariat; esteemed ladies and gentlemen:

Let me first say what a pleasure it is for me to be here today at this House of the Americas, to visit and to engage our many esteemed friends in Washington, including loyal and valued citizens of Saint Kitts and Nevis who reside here in the metro Washington area, many of whom I see here in this great Hall this morning. I am particularly pleased to be visiting the OAS when the chairmanship of the Permanent Council is being held by a Caribbean Community (CARICOM) state, Trinidad and Tobago. I congratulate you, Madam Chair, on your performance.

Secretary General, both you and the Assistant Secretary General have visited Saint Kitts and Nevis since your assumption of office last year. I hope you both left with very favorable impressions of our cherished country and of our hospitable and industrious people. My visit here today is, in a way, therefore, an opportunity to reciprocate your visits and to forge an even stronger connection between my government and the OAS, which is so important to us.

More important, it is an opportunity to sensitize the Organization to the role that Saint Kitts and Nevis and the Caribbean Community must play and how we envision the OAS as the small island developing states of the Caribbean Community seek to advance our interests. This role of the OAS is increasingly critical as our nations act in the face of the evolving scheme of global factors that challenge our resourcefulness and ingenuity.

It is imperative that the OAS become our genuine partner as we strive to deliver on the promises of development, poverty alleviation, and equitable prosperity to our expectant and deserving peoples. I am most delighted to have this opportunity, therefore, to reiterate some of the critical challenges that are before us as small island developing states of the Caribbean.

I am confident that we have made some measurable gains since those early days of dialogue on issues pertaining to the development of small states, but undoubtedly, there is very much still to be done. Our message has to be consistent and persistent for the ears and consideration of those whom we believe should be concerned.

Allow me for a moment, Secretary General, to take my beloved country, Saint Kitts and Nevis, as an example. You mentioned earlier in your own statement that a little over a year ago, due to the very negative impact of trade liberalization on our small and fragile economy, we as a people, as a government, and as a country were forced to cease the production of sugar for export.

Saint Kitts and Nevis is one of 18 African-Caribbean-Pacific (ACP) countries that have been impacted by changes to the European Union (EU)-ACP Sugar Protocol that will result in a 36 percent reduction in the intervention price of sugar in the EU market over a four-year period, beginning this year. Sugar production for export, therefore, became economically unfeasible. It was costing us far more to produce it than the price we could demand for it. Its continued production would simply have strangled our economy.

Saint Kitts and Nevis is the first of the countries so affected to make this very bold political decision. Our people were fully consulted, and they must be complimented to a large extent for supporting our decision, despite their realization of its anticipated attendant hardships.

Sugar cane had hitherto been cultivated and processed in Saint Kitts and Nevis for over 350 years and had been the mainstay of our economy, directly employing a little more than ten percent of the island's work force. Its cessation has indirectly impacted the livelihood of much wider sectors

and, consequently, has been a major shock to the emotional, social, and cultural landscape of our beloved country.

My government took this bold decision with regard to the sugar industry against the backdrop of a contemporary global economic scene that presents Saint Kitts and Nevis with extremely difficult challenges, including preferential trade arrangements; changes brought about by advanced technological developments, particularly in the field of information and communications; the declining availability of concessionary aid; a widening and intensifying of international linkages between trade, finance, and production; and increased competition in the wider global economy.

In addition to the change in the external environment, there are mounting domestic challenges, including high levels of public sector indebtedness, fiscal imbalances aggravated by the closure of the sugar industry, and unacceptable pockets of poverty in the country. Economic restructuring and transformation in Saint Kitts and Nevis is therefore necessary in order to meet these challenges and, ultimately, to face greater integration into the world economy.

It needs to be said, Madam President, that the combination of monoculture and primary production, together with economies of scale in production and the openness of the economy, resulted in economic vulnerability and a lack of sustained economic growth over time. These factors are all applicable also to Dominica, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in relation to bananas, as well as to Antigua and Barbuda in relation to internet gaming barriers and to all the small and vulnerable states in other regards.

I should emphasize that consequent upon our bold decision to abandon sugar production for export, Saint Kitts and Nevis has put forward an adaptation strategy that attempts to chart the course of economic transformation over the next ten years towards achieving increased competitiveness, economic diversification, and empowerment of our people. Fortunately, in anticipation of this move, we began some years earlier an economic diversification drive with particular emphasis on new industries, such as tourism, financial services, and information and communication technology (ICT). These sectors are growing, and we endeavor to build further on them.

In anticipation of this growth, several retraining programs were implemented and are ongoing as we seek to equip our displaced work force with new skills and opportunities for self-employment and assimilation into other areas of economic activity.

The programs that emanate from the adaptation strategy elaborated by my government require cooperation on multiple levels. The strategy explicitly acknowledges that the public sector, the business community, and all elements of civil society must contribute to the success of this national transformation initiative. It will require, I emphasize, an upward shift from the way we have previously operated and it must, of necessity, result in a cultural change among our people. The Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis is therefore taking the lead, as we are duty bound to do.

And so on this morning, we are inviting the Organization of American States, as well as resourceful member states that are part of this eminent body, to journey and to partner with us on a path toward sustainable development and a secure future for the people of Saint Kitts and Nevis. This is, indeed, a challenging undertaking in which we must have full success. The acceleration and sustainability of economic growth in Saint Kitts and Nevis, so important for social development, reduction of unemployment and poverty, improved fiscal performance, and ensuring a much more

sustainable external position, will depend significantly on the country's ability to improve competitiveness. In addition, we will focus on the following areas:

1. Macroeconomic policies to reduce vulnerability and facilitate investment;
2. Social policies to support economic development and the most vulnerable in our communities;
3. Ensuring an environmentally sustainable development agenda; and
4. Addressing the necessary cross-cutting issues that will bring cohesion to our efforts.

The impact of economic fluctuations could be quite difficult, and it is therefore crucial that human resource development in the context of small island vulnerabilities is pursued aggressively. This means that our education and training policies must be structured to reflect and anticipate the challenges peculiar to small island states. While there is general recognition of the relevance and importance of human resources as a response to such challenges, it is also important that relevant international agencies and institutions continue to strengthen their own programs, funding, and technical assistance to ensure that desired outcomes can be achieved.

Herein, I stress, lies an opportunity for bilateral and multilateral donors to enhance, rather than to decrease, assistance to our beloved country. Obviously, when we speak to the issues of human resource development, we speak not only in terms of education and training, but also in terms of health, poverty alleviation, housing, and the overall enhancement of human dignity. Addressing these areas of vulnerability is quite pertinent to the long-term success of our sustainable development.

We have to create avenues to enhance functional cooperation; to establish and maintain regional bodies, systems, and mechanisms; and to ensure that public sector reform is implemented to optimize levels of efficiency, promote savings, strengthen our institutions, and build our capacity.

While we commend the OAS for assisting small island states to address their peculiar difficulties in the past, it is critical that this momentum not diminish. Rather, we must work towards accelerating programs to address those needs, lest we lose ground hitherto gained.

Mr. Secretary General, I was very pleased to learn that as recently as last year, the OAS embarked on a restructuring program. I shall continue to follow closely the progress of this undertaking. I hasten to caution, however, that the Organization should not allow itself to become too introspective, lest its own attempts at reform undermine its very relevance. By this I mean that the OAS must learn to survey the landscape and plan its alteration while traveling purposefully toward its desired goals. No longer can the Organization afford to commit resources to projects that are inherently top-down. If the national reality does not inform how programs and projects are developed and executed, then the OAS may very well squander that tremendous opportunity for genuine partnerships with the member states, and the Organization may then seem more like a drain on national resources than an asset to its own membership.

I am aware that the OAS has done some invaluable work in member states. If, however, a culture of bureaucratic lethargy and a pandering to narrow agendas is allowed to prevail, this organization, our organization, could become a peripheral player in this important hemisphere. I am

convinced that the Organization's track record should rightfully give it pride of place in our national consciousness and accord it priority on the agenda of the finance ministers of the Hemisphere, because they matter in terms of support.

For example, we continue to call for the development of a natural disaster fund and a special renewable energy resources fund. We know that the Caribbean islands are most vulnerable to natural disasters, especially hurricanes. We know that the rising cost of fossil fuel is creating severe problems for the majority of Caribbean countries. These two areas are a tremendous challenge to the sustainable development of small island economies, and we are yet hopeful that they would receive deserved attention within the inter-American system.

Madam Chair, I believe that the OAS, with its convening powers, can be a valuable partner in and forum for the exchange of relevant ideas, best practices, and expertise on trade negotiation. I do understand that the Organization cannot and should not be all things to all people, but when a significant number of its constituents suffer a common problem, it seems to me that the Organization has an obligation to demonstrate its relevance and to show that its reforms are quite essential to making it much more responsive to its membership.

I am one of those who believe that we have to continue sending the message loud and clear that Caribbean trade under special preferences is definitely no threat to global trade liberalization. For that matter, the granting of trade concessions to small island developing states is in no way inimical to the interests of larger states. We must continue our call for special and differential treatment with respect to trade and other relevant matters, and we must continue to lobby quite strongly for a refocus so that development issues become integral to the sustainability of small island states.

Likewise, the Organization should pay great attention to development. I am pleased that the Secretary General and the Assistant Secretary General appreciate the inherent linkages between democracy, human rights, good governance, security, and development. These issues are inextricably entwined. I therefore use this forum this morning to commend the present leadership for their commitment to addressing this nexus and making it an integral part of the Organization's focus in the coming years.

It is worthy of mention that the security and, consequently, governance and democratic integrity of small Caribbean societies is under considerable threat by the influx of displaced persons, deported persons. This is especially the case in considerably smaller jurisdictions in the Hemisphere, where family or other support systems are nonexistent, and acquired and well-practiced skills are incompatible with social order and good governance. I speak of the deportees phenomena because it contributes to a new security reality, one characterized by violence, gangs, and related domestic and transnational criminal activities.

We are, of course, aware of and applaud the work of the OAS Special Committee on Transnational Organized Crime. We hope and trust that its hemispheric plan of action would soon translate into meaningful results to offset this epidemic of violence that plagues societies in the Caribbean. At the same time, I urge this organization to broaden its understanding and interpretation of the Bridgetown Declaration so that the work of the OAS can faithfully reflect the multidimensional character and diverse nature of security.

As the CARICOM Prime Minister with responsibility for health, I am acutely aware of the tremendous impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on our region and on the world. I have come to appreciate how it undermines productive activities and destroys families and societies, imposing in the process financial burdens on governments and obligating them to dedicate scarce resources to prevention, treatment, and care, to the exclusion of essential development activities.

HIV/AIDS may appear at face value to be a health issue, but it is much more than that. I assure you that it is cross-cutting and as much a security matter as any other listed in the Declaration on Security in the Americas. Again I exhort this organization, within its multidimensional security framework, to partner with agencies within and without the inter-American system, such as the Pan-Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS (PANCAP), in addressing this very mammoth and manifold threat to human security, specifically in the Hemisphere.

In the context of good governance and the nurturance of democratic values, Saint Kitts and Nevis is now embarked on an electoral reform initiative. In this process, my government has held the widest possible consultations with nationals at home and abroad and with all political parties, the private sector, and civil society. At the same time, we are continuing to build confidence between stakeholders on our two islands as part of the ongoing constitutional reform initiative that has been well supported by the OAS. We are grateful, therefore, for the role that the OAS is committed to play in the related matter of our civil registry, and we look forward to continuing and broadening our engagement with the Secretariat for Political Affairs (SPA) as we further consolidate our democratic structures.

Madam Chair, on September 11, 2001, the very day that terrorists challenged our resolve to defend the values that we hold so dear, the Inter-American Democratic Charter was signed in Lima, Peru, at a special session of the General Assembly. This Charter speaks to the promotion and consolidation of democracy in the Americas. Some five years later, we are embarked on the framing of an Inter-American Social Charter, which should give much greater meaning and relevance to the principles espoused in the Democratic Charter.

My government welcomes this initiative and sincerely hopes that the Inter-American Social Charter will be a bold and imaginative document that will challenge our very resolve to produce a solution-focused mindset and a very rich aggregate of ideas with which to build some key pillars of democracy: development, poverty alleviation, and equitable prosperity.

The Organization of American States, Madam Chair, is one of our most treasured institutions. Today, we praise its strengths and fully appreciate its limitations. I know that in the past we have asked it to do much more with less. The time has now come for us to reconcile resources with expectations. The time has also come for the Organization to live up to the true meaning of its Charter and to acknowledge its mandates.

The OAS must embrace and value the cultural diversity of our hemisphere, and the profile of the General Secretariat must truly reflect that actuality. I do believe in democracy, and I place premium value on social equity, human rights, and all the important tenets that venerate human dignity. These are important, however, not only within and among states, but also within regional and hemispheric organizations that have been tasked, appropriately, with shepherding the interests and policies of our member states. I know that my CARICOM colleagues share that philosophy. I

commend that philosophy today for the consideration of this great organization of our beloved hemisphere.

I thank you once again for this opportunity to share some thoughts, and through you, Madam Chair, I wish the Organization of American States great success in the future.

[Aplausos.]

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you, Prime Minister Douglas.

On behalf of the members of the Permanent Council, I extend to you my heartfelt appreciation for joining us here today and for sharing your perspectives on a range of important issues that resonate with this body and with the people of the Americas.

I now invite the distinguished representatives to remain in their places so that the Honorable Prime Minister can greet you all.

[El Primer Ministro de Saint Kitts y Nevis saluda a los señores Representantes.]

This protocolary meeting is now adjourned.



