

CONSEJO PERMANENTE



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ACTA
DE LA SESIÓN EXTRAORDINARIA
CELEBRADA
EL 9 DE ABRIL DE 2008

Aprobada en la sesión del 25 de febrero de 2009

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CONSEJO PERMANENTE DE LA ORGANIZACIÓN DE LOS ESTADOS AMERICANOS

ACTA DE LA SESIÓN EXTRAORDINARIA CELEBRADA EL 9 DE ABRIL DE 2008

En la ciudad de Washington, a las diez y media de la mañana del miércoles 9 de abril de 2008, celebró sesión ordinaria el Consejo Permanente de la Organización de los Estados Americanos. Presidió la sesión el Embajador Michael I. King, Representante Permanente de Barbados y Presidente del Consejo Permanente. Asistieron los siguientes miembros:

Embajador Denis Ronaldo Moncada Colindres, Representante Permanente de Nicaragua y Vicepresidente del Consejo Permanente
Embajador Izben C. Williams, Representante Permanente de Saint Kitts y Nevis
Embajador Rodolfo Hugo Gil, Representante Permanente de la Argentina
Embajadora Marina Valère, Representante Permanente de Trinidad y Tobago
Embajadora Abigaíl Castro de Pérez, Representante Permanente de El Salvador
Embajadora Deborah-Mae Lovell, Representante Permanente de Antigua y Barbuda
Embajador Aristides Royo, Representante Permanente de Panamá
Embajador Duly Brutus, Representante Permanente de Haití
Embajador Manuel María Cáceres Cardozo, Representante Permanente del Paraguay
Embajador Osmar Chohfi, Representante Permanente del Brasil
Embajador Pedro Oyarce, Representante Permanente de Chile
Embajadora María del Luján Flores, Representante Permanente del Uruguay
Embajador Graeme C. Clark, Representante Permanente del Canadá
Embajador Jacques R. C. Kross, Representante Permanente de Suriname
Embajador Efrén A. Cocíos, Representante Permanente del Ecuador
Embajador Cornelius A. Smith, Representante Permanente del Commonwealth de las Bahamas
Embajadora María Zavala Valladares, Representante Permanente del Perú
Embajador José Enrique Castillo Barrantes, Representante Permanente de Costa Rica
Embajador Héctor Morales, Representante Permanente de los Estados Unidos
Ministra Consejera Clenie Greer-Lacascade, Representante Interina de Santa Lucía
Embajador Nestor Mendez, Representante Interino de Belize
Consejera Guadalupe Carías, Representante Alterna de Honduras
Ministra Consejera Mayerlyn Cordero Díaz, Representante Alterna de la República Dominicana
Primera Secretaria Deborah Yaw, Representante Alterna de Guyana
Consejero Frank Montgomery Clarke, Representante Alterno de San Vicente y las Granadinas
Consejera Patricia D. M. Clarke, Representante Alterna de Grenada
Embajador Nelson Pineda Prada, Representante Alterno de Venezuela
Ministra L. Ann Scott, Representante Alterna de Jamaica
Primer Secretario Ricardo Kellman, Representante Alterno de Barbados
Ministro Luis Javier Campuzano Piña, Representante Alterno de México
Ministro Consejero William Torres Armas, Representante Alterno de Bolivia
Ministro Carlos Iván Plazas, Representante Alterno de Colombia

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.

APROBACIÓN DEL PROYECTO DE ORDEN DEL DÍA

El PRESIDENTE: I am pleased to call to order this special meeting of the Permanent Council, which has been convened to consider the items in the draft order of business, document CP/OD.1642/08.

[El proyecto de orden del día contiene los siguientes puntos:

1. Discurso de la excelentísima señora Paula Gopee-Scoon, Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores de Trinidad y Tobago.
 - Nota de la Misión Permanente de Trinidad y Tobago (CP/INF.5659/08)

2. Palabras de los Coordinadores Regionales:
 - ALADI: Embajadora María del Luján Flores, Representante Permanente de Uruguay.

 - CANADÁ: Embajador Graeme Clark, Representante Permanente de Canadá.

 - CARICOM: Embajador Cornelius Smith, Representante Permanente de las Bahamas.

 - SICA: Embajadora Abigaíl Castro de Pérez, Representante Permanente de El Salvador.

 - ESTADOS UNIDOS: Embajador Héctor Morales, Representante Permanente de Estados Unidos.]

If there are no objections, to the draft order of business, I take it that you approve it as presented. Approved.

PALABRAS DE LA MINISTRA DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES DE TRINIDAD Y TOBAGO

El PRESIDENTE: On behalf of the Permanent Council and on my own behalf, it is with great pleasure that I welcome to the Permanent Council and to the Bolívar Room Her Excellency the Honorable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Minister, I am confident that I speak for all the members of this body in thanking you for visiting us today to address the Council on preparations for the Fifth Summit of the Americas, to be held in Port of Spain, Trinidad, in April 2009.

The distinguished Minister holds the distinction of being the first female Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago since the country gained its independence in August 1962.

An attorney-at-law with a background in business, Minister Gopee-Scoon is a graduate of the University of the West Indies (UWI), where she earned a bachelor of science degree in public administration and law, and the University of London, where she gained a bachelor of laws (LLB) degree with honors.

Prior to joining the Government last year, she held senior executive positions at Republic Bank, Workers' Bank, and the Royal Bank of Trinidad and Tobago (RBTT). Minister Gopee-Scoon also served as a director of Sunspot Plastics Limited and at Biochem (Trinidad and Tobago) Limited.

It is with great pleasure that I give the floor to the distinguished Foreign Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, the Honorable Paula Gopee-Scoon.

La MINISTRA DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES DE TRINIDAD Y TOBAGO: Thank you very much.

Your Excellency Ambassador Michael King, Permanent Representative of Barbados to the Organization of American States and Chair of the Permanent Council; Your Excellency José Miguel Insulza, Secretary General of the OAS; Your Excellency Albert Ramdin, Assistant Secretary General; permanent representatives; alternate representatives; permanent observers; staff of the OAS; ladies and gentlemen:

It is my distinct pleasure to address this special meeting of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States and to present formally the final concept paper for the Fifth Summit of the Americas, which Trinidad and Tobago has the honor to host in April next year. Preparations are well in train for this watershed event under the coordination of the National Summit Secretariat, headed by our distinguished Special Envoy to the Americas and National Summit Coordinator, Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodríguez.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, I wish to extend our sincere appreciation to all member states, past Summit hosts, the institutions of the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG), and the citizens of our hemisphere for their rich contributions, assistance, and advice thus far in this important hemispheric undertaking. We would like to say special thanks to our friends in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) for their continuing support throughout this endeavor. The strength of the Summits of the Americas process rests in part on our ability to build strong consensus around a viable inter-American agenda and an effective implementation strategy.

The unwavering engagement of the OAS Secretariat remains vital to the Summits of the Americas, and I take this opportunity to thank the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary General, and the staff of the OAS Secretariat for the support Trinidad and Tobago has received since assuming the chairmanship of the Summits process in September 2006. As we pursue our objective of making the Fifth Summit more inclusive and people-focused, we are convinced that collaboration with the Secretariat, and, indeed, with all our partners, will provide the basis for delivering tangible benefits to all our citizens.

As the foremost political institution in the inter-American system, the OAS has been able, through its organs, entities, and high-level meetings, to tackle frontally the plethora of issues affecting the development of our countries. In so doing, it has remained faithful to the vision of its founding fathers, an element of which, as enshrined in Article 2 f) of the OAS Charter, is to promote, by cooperative action, the economic, social, and cultural development of the Organization's member states. Article 3 k) of the Charter further reinforces that "economic cooperation is essential to the common welfare and prosperity of the peoples of the continent."

Lest we forget the guidelines of the wise men of 1948, the relatively recent vintage of the Inter-American Democratic Charter records, in Article 12, member states' shared commitment regarding the problems associated with development and poverty. The Democratic Charter's Article 11, which states that "democracy and social and economic development are interdependent and are mutually reinforcing," puts in perspective the nexus between prosperity and the dividends of democracy.

Trinidad and Tobago sees the OAS as the natural channel through which the Hemisphere's development objectives must be coordinated. There already is a commendable track record of achievement in facilitating dialogue and action in areas such as strengthening democracy, education, labor, science and technology, multidimensional security, sustainable development, culture, gender issues, telecommunications, the rule of law, and integral development.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished permanent representatives, Trinidad and Tobago is committed to playing its part in regional and international affairs in pursuit of the common good. We are active participants internationally and within the multilateral system.

A former Prime Minister and President, Arthur Robinson, was instrumental in the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC). The headquarters of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), which groups together 25 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, is in Port of Spain. We enjoy excellent relations with countries in Asia, particularly India and China, whose influences are imbued in the rich and diverse sociocultural fabric of Trinidad and Tobago as a result of different waves of immigration in centuries past. Our deep ties to Africa have been reinforced by increased bilateral interaction, most recently with Trinidad and Tobago launching its West Africa Energy Initiative to share our expertise in this sector with our African friends.

At the subregional level, we execute our obligations conscientiously, given our Prime Minister's portfolios of crime and security and energy in the quasi-CARICOM Cabinet. We are working with other CARICOM countries towards the establishment of the CARICOM Single Economy, having attained the goal of the CARICOM Single Market (CSM) in 2006.

A few days ago, Prime Minister Manning hosted a Special Summit on Regional Security to address issues of concern to CARICOM member states that are similar to those being faced by all countries throughout this hemisphere.

Last September, Trinidad and Tobago hosted a Special CARICOM Summit on Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases (CNCDs) in light of findings of the Caribbean Commission on Health and Development (CCHD) that, for our subregion, "five times as many people die from noncommunicable diseases as from all the other illnesses combined." This is also a global concern, given the 2007 report of the World Health Organization (WHO) that projects that by 2030,

noncommunicable diseases will account for 70 percent of the deaths of the world's increasingly aging population. Trinidad and Tobago and CARICOM have now taken decisive action to address our subregional situation.

Trinidad and Tobago also intends to build on its strong ties with all countries in the Americas. In respect of the hemisphere's collective goals, Trinidad and Tobago has consistently sought to play its role in the inter-American system. Within recent years, we have had the honor of chairing the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD); the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE); the IV Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Education; and currently, the XV Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML). We are also integrally involved in the operations of the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB) and in the work of the Central Authorities and Other Experts on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters and Extradition, as set up by the Meeting of Ministers of Justice or of Ministers or Attorneys General of the Americas (REMJA).

Our participation in fora convened by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL), the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials (CIFTA), the Inter-American Children's Institute (IIN), among others, is reflective of our sustained engagement in hemispheric affairs and the value we place on rich collaboration and cooperation.

Many of the issues facing our countries transcend national boundaries, and the highest priority must be given to developing a coordinated, sustained regional response.

To date, however, Trinidad and Tobago's confidence in and support for future strides in the Hemisphere's progress has not been more evident than in our unequivocal commitment to the Summits of the Americas process and our hosting of the Fifth Summit in Port of Spain in April next year.

With the Fifth Summit, Trinidad and Tobago will take its rightful place in the inter-American community by playing a strategic role in bridging ideas among member states and finding common approaches to the major challenges facing our hemisphere. In this process, we will continue to involve all our CARICOM partners to bring to the forefront the issues and perspectives of our subregion.

Since assuming the Summit's chairmanship in 2006, we have reiterated that, for us in Trinidad and Tobago, the success of the Fifth Summit will be defined by three factors.

First, the Fifth Summit must reconnect with the people of the Hemisphere by developing resources that are relevant to their needs and make a positive difference in their lives.

Second, it must forge a consensus around a viable implementation strategy that engages our regional and national institutions.

Third, the Fifth Summit must serve to renew the commitment to deeper integration and cooperation among member states and regional institutions. The benefits to be derived from stronger hemispheric cooperation must never be underestimated. As individual countries, we all stand to gain considerably by the sharing of resources, knowledge, expertise, and information.

In our deliberations on the theme for the Fifth Summit, we carefully examined global trends and possible scenarios for the future. We also could not ignore the fact that poverty, marginalization, and inequality continue to incapacitate many of our people and that energy, crime, violence, natural disasters, and climate change are important considerations. The sad truth is that:

- 96 million of our people live in extreme poverty;
- 400 million say that they suffer some form of discrimination;
- 22 million youth are neither studying nor working and therefore have limited prospects;
- 1.3 million of our children receive no education beyond the primary level;
- Noncommunicable diseases have become the leading cause of mortality in the Caribbean, causing 10 times more deaths than HIV/AIDS;
- 67 percent of Latin Americans report that they fear being out of work in the next 12 months; and
- Latin America and the Caribbean have the dubious distinction of having the highest level of inequality in the world.

2009 will mark 15 years since the First Summit of the Americas in Miami, and so much has changed since 1994. Indeed, the international scenario has evolved considerably since the Fourth Summit was held in Mar del Plata in 2005:

- Although the Latin America and Caribbean region has continued to make very encouraging economic strides, a global economic slowdown amidst recessionary trends now threatens to weaken the momentum.
- The price of oil rose to unprecedented levels, with the resultant adverse impact on all sectors of our societies.
- Crime and security issues, including the growing incidence of gang activity, have emerged as new threats to the stability of our societies.
- The latest report from the United Nations states that there is a 75 percent chance of global temperatures rising by two to three degrees over the next 50 years, which, in essence, means that we are leaving future generations to face more droughts, hurricanes, and rising sea levels. No country is exempt.

Arriving at the theme of the Fifth Summit, “Securing Our Citizens’ Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security, and Environmental Sustainability” was, therefore, a challenging task, but the final result encapsulates the essence of the vision that Trinidad and Tobago has for our region. The Americas of the future must give all our citizens the opportunity to participate fully in society; to benefit from economic development and growth; and to enjoy peace, security, and prosperity in their daily lives.

We are energized by the desire that the Fifth Summit will produce results that are recognized and felt by the average man or woman in the street, be he or she in Caracas, Kingstown, Lima, San Salvador, Paramaribo, Montevideo, Rio de Janeiro, Louisiana, Port-au-Prince, Belmopan, or Quebec.

In its development of the theme and the concept paper, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has consulted widely. The National Summit Coordinator and Special Envoy to the Americas has met with many of you here in Washington, D.C. and has visited many of your capitals to consult with your authorities. We have listened very carefully to your views and have examined all of your contributions with eager interest. In the upcoming months, we will move to continue the engagement with member states, institutions, and civil society as we proceed to draft the Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain.

The concept paper, distinguished representatives, outlines the paramount issues and strategic initiatives being put forward by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for the Fifth Summit. Importantly, it also takes into account the views and perspectives articulated by your countries, the institutions of the Joint Summit Working Group, and representatives of the region's citizenry since December 6 last year when the preliminary version was circulated for comment. This final document has therefore evolved from being a Trinidad and Tobago document to one in which you can all legitimately claim ownership. This paper is our paper, the Hemisphere's conceptual framework for the next gathering of the 34 democratically elected heads of state and government of the region.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished representatives, the concept paper integrates the three pillars of the theme of the Fifth Summit—human prosperity, energy security, and environmental sustainability—with the common denominator being the cross-cutting issues of democracy, good governance, and human rights, as well as economic growth and competitiveness.

Human prosperity embraces a multidimensional social agenda that integrates essential strategies for achieving human well-being and happiness. The focus is on:

- promoting economic growth and global competitiveness;
- ensuring quality education and training, as well as decent employment;
- reducing poverty, crime and violence, and inequality and discrimination;
- improving the health status of our citizens by reducing communicable as well as noncommunicable diseases;
- ensuring food security and adequate nutrition;
- improving environmental quality; and
- promoting democracy, good governance, and human rights.

In terms of energy, the fundamental challenge for the region is to initiate a transition to a secure, low-carbon energy system without undermining economic and social development. Very high on the agenda is the diversification of the energy matrix in the region and the movement to cleaner technologies and alternatives, such as biofuels and geothermal, wind, solar, and hydropower. In

addition, the rising cost of food is now being largely driven by the high cost of energy and the diversion of significant grain supplies to other uses.

The paper also proposes a governance structure that will allow for a manageable number of mandated actions to be monitored and evaluated effectively in order to determine the extent to which policy initiatives implemented may need to be adjusted so as to ensure universal reach and applicability in the region.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished representatives, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to consulting widely during the lead-up to the Fifth Summit and to hearing firsthand from the citizens of the region through civil society groups representing them or via other appropriate channels. As I have stated, the Fifth Summit of the Americas must result in positive, tangible, and practical outcomes for the peoples of the Americas, especially the most vulnerable. Without their views, our efforts would ring hollow.

There is no doubt that the OAS is the foremost forum in the Western Hemisphere for political dialogue and cooperation and that the pursuit of the Hemisphere's development goals is a multifaceted process. As we move towards April 2009, we look forward to the contributions that will emanate from the many high-level fora on the inter-American agenda. Closest on the horizon are the Seventh Meeting of Ministers of Justice and/or Attorneys-General (REMJA-VII), to be held later this month; the thirty-eighth regular session of the General Assembly in Colombia in June, which will focus on youth and democratic values; and the First Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Social Development in Chile in July. These will be important cogs in the wheel of progress towards the Fifth Summit, as will be the finalization of negotiations for the Social Charter of the Americas.

In respect of the engagement of civil society, the National Summit Secretariat is planning a hemispheric civil society forum early next month that will bring together civil society representatives from across the region to engage in a dialogue on the three main pillars of the theme of the Summit.

As I close, Mr. Chairman, I want to assure member states that work is also progressing well on the logistics for the Fifth Summit. Trinidad and Tobago will meet its responsibilities as host of the Americas in 2009 and will take the necessary action to ensure that your stay is productive and enjoyable.

Finally, I look forward to providing you with an update on the status of preparatory work on the Fifth Summit during the Ministerial Meeting of the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG) in early June at the General Assembly session in Colombia.

I thank you.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you, Madam Minister, for that comprehensive and enlightening exposition on the preparations for the Fifth Summit of the Americas and your information on Trinidad and Tobago's active participation in the inter-American system.

PALABRAS DE LA REPRESENTANTE DEL URUGUAY EN
NOMBRE DE LOS PAÍSES DE LA
ASOCIACIÓN LATINOAMERICANA DE INTEGRACIÓN (ALADI)

El PRESIDENTE: I now offer the floor to the regional coordinators for their remarks and responses, and I will start by giving the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Uruguay, Embajadora María del Luján Flores.

La REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DEL URUGUAY: Muchas gracias, señor Presidente.

Señor Presidente, en nombre del grupo de países miembros de la Asociación Latinoamericana de Integración (ALADI), damos la bienvenida en esta sesión especial del Consejo Permanente a la señora Ministra de Relaciones Exteriores de Trinidad y Tobago, señora Paula Gopee-Scoon y le agradecemos su tan completa presentación. El contar con su presencia en este cuerpo reafirma la trascendencia que tendrá la Quinta Cumbre de las Américas, a efectuarse en Puerto España el año entrante.

Las iniciativas que se emprenden en los ámbitos multilaterales permiten institucionalizar el trabajo y mancomunar acciones para lograr un efecto acumulativo en los procesos. La intensa labor preparatoria desplegada tendrá sin duda sus frutos.

Esta nueva reunión, guiada por un verdadero espíritu de compromiso, será una oportunidad de incrementar los esfuerzos para superar los problemas que afectan a nuestro continente. El combate a la pobreza y la desigualdad en el marco del Estado de Derecho y del pleno respeto de los derechos humanos implica la clara conciencia que la persona humana está en el centro de nuestras preocupaciones. El concepto de vida digna y trabajo decente no pueden ser ignorados.

La implementación de políticas públicas en las distintas áreas abordadas en el documento es imprescindible. En este sentido, se destaca la importancia de la educación a todos los niveles y la cultura como promotora del progreso social y la creación de sociedades inclusivas.

Una característica propia del mundo en que vivimos es que la globalización no permite la mayoría de las veces la solución aislada de los grandes problemas. Por el contrario, nos obliga a realizar esfuerzos a nivel externo e interno en nuestras sociedades en un marco de amplia participación de todos los sectores. En lo interno, debemos generar las mejores condiciones de respuesta y en lo externo utilizar los canales y oportunidades que nos dan los foros multilaterales para encaminar el accionar conjunto.

Señor Presidente, la Quinta Cumbre de las Américas constituirá un excelente foro para abordar los grandes desafíos con que se enfrenta nuestro hemisferio en el nuevo milenio, y al tiempo que ofrecemos nuestro total apoyo le auguramos al Gobierno de Trinidad y Tobago el mayor de los éxitos en este emprendimiento.

Muchas gracias.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, Ambassador, for speaking on behalf of the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI) group.

PALABRAS DEL REPRESENTANTE DEL CANADÁ

El PRESIDENTE: I now give the floor to Ambassador Graeme Clark, the Permanent Representative of Canada.

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

First of all, I'd like to thank you, Minister Gopee-Scoon, for your comprehensive presentation and update, and we congratulate the Government of Trinidad and Tobago on the finalization of the concept paper for the Fifth Summit of the Americas, which you tabled with us today.

We are very pleased that you chose to present your vision for the Fifth Summit of the Americas here at the Permanent Council today, and the commitment of your government to the Summit process was amply demonstrated by the productive Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG) meeting that was held in Tobago in February. We take away from that meeting, Mr. Chairman and Madam Minister, and from your remarks today, that you wish for a process that promotes the well-being of all citizens and people that is made possible by accountable, transparent democracy; economic development with equity; and security from crime and violence, disease, and natural threats. This shared concern with fundamental issues of democracy, prosperity and security, and a focus on transnational practicable solutions will animate, we believe, the agenda of the Fifth Summit.

The concept paper you have presented here today synthesizes well, in our view, the many challenges facing the Hemisphere and the links that exist between them. The concept paper also demonstrates that as we turn our attention to practicable, realistic solutions, we must consider the hemispheric architecture of cooperation and follow-up. Proper coordination between the diverse fora of the inter-American system will strengthen our effectiveness, and we believe that the OAS has an essential role to play in supporting the Summit process and in ensuring coherence. Canada is in favor of a regular, focused, and predictable Summit process that establishes clear lines of communication and accountability between the Summit and inter-American ministerial meetings and other hemispheric processes.

Mr. Chairman, Madam Minister, there is only one year between today and the Summit. The tabling of this paper is an important milestone and will help structure our efforts during the intense schedule of work that lies before us.

Minister, you have spoken of Trinidad and Tobago taking its rightful place in the inter-American system, and we fully support the engagement and leadership of Trinidad and Tobago in this regard. Your country can count on the engagement and cooperation of Canada, of your CARICOM partners, and, indeed, of all member states and institutions as we work towards a successful Summit in Port of Spain next year.

Thank you very much.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, Ambassador Clark.

PALABRAS DEL REPRESENTANTE DEL COMMONWEALTH DE LAS BAHAMAS
EN NOMBRE DE LOS PAÍSES DE LA COMUNIDAD DEL CARIBE (CARICOM)

El PRESIDENTE: I now give the floor to the Ambassador of The Bahamas, Cornelius A. Smith, who will speak on behalf of the countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE LAS BAHAMAS: Thank you so very much, Mr. Chairman.

Let me, on behalf of the member states of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), through you, thank the Honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for her presence here today to formally present the concept paper that would serve as the basis for the outcome document for the Fifth Summit of the Americas, a part of the whole process of regeneration and growth of the peoples of the Hemisphere.

Honorable Minister, we in CARICOM are pleased that your government has offered to serve as host of this crucial meeting, the first of its kind to be held in a CARICOM member state, and we are heartened that the Summit will focus on our most important resource, our people. For The Bahamas, it gives us great pleasure to support you, a sister CARICOM state, in this momentous undertaking by your government. As we stated during our participation in the recent meetings held in Trinidad and Tobago, The Bahamas stands ready to assist and support you wherever possible.

The theme chosen by your government for the Fifth Summit of the Americas, "Securing Our Citizens' Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security, and Environmental Sustainability," demonstrates the commitment of your government to building on the achievements of the past four Summits and two Special Summits, with a view to giving direct attention to the needs of our peoples through the promotion of their well-being politically, economically, socially, and environmentally. Your focus on cross-cutting issues that affect the entire Hemisphere should provide meaningful direction to address the challenges and find viable solutions aimed at improving the quality of life of our citizens.

As agreed by the Conference of the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community at their Nineteenth Inter-Sessional Meeting, held in Nassau, The Bahamas, on March 7 and 8, 2008, CARICOM governments pledged their support to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in ensuring the successful hosting of the Fifth Summit. We in the region commend you for the work undertaken thus far and the meetings already held with the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG) and the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG). We assure you, madam, of our unwavering commitment to you as you endeavor to advance efforts to ensure a fruitful Summit.

I thank you.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you, Ambassador Smith.

PALABRAS DE LA REPRESENTANTE DE EL SALVADOR EN
NOMBRE DE LOS PAÍSES DEL
SISTEMA DE INTEGRACIÓN CENTROAMERICANA (SICA)

El PRESIDENTE: I now give the floor to the Representative of the Central American countries, Embajadora Abigaíl Castro de Pérez of El Salvador. You have the floor, Ambassador.

La REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE EL SALVADOR: Gracias, señor Presidente.

Señores Secretarios General y Adjunto, señoras y señores Embajadores y Embajadoras, Delegados y Delegadas:

En nombre y representación del grupo SICA, integrado por Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, República Dominicana, Panamá, Belize, Guatemala y mi país El Salvador, me complace intervenir para saludar a la Honorable Ministra de Relaciones Exteriores de Trinidad y Tobago, la distinguida señora Paula Gopee-Scoon. Señora Ministra, agradecemos su presencia, inscrita en las importantes contribuciones que su país realiza al sistema interamericano, las cuales se caracterizan por su proactividad.

Permítame, señora Ministra, expresarle el reconocimiento de nuestro grupo subregional por su completa y detallada presentación sobre el documento consensual referente a la Quinta Cumbre de las Américas.

El tema que su ilustrado Gobierno ha planteado para la Cumbre referida, “Asegurando el futuro de nuestros ciudadanos mediante la promoción de la prosperidad humana, la seguridad energética y la sostenibilidad ambiental”, resulta de pertinencia e implicaciones de largo alcance y profundas ramificaciones para los esfuerzos de desarrollo de los Estados Miembros.

En efecto, los Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno que se darán cita en Trinidad y Tobago encuentran en la temática presentada por su país el mérito de una propuesta sobre el futuro de pueblos ávidos de ejercer cada vez más una ciudadanía democrática en la formulación e implementación de políticas públicas sobre asuntos trascendentales.

Los países del Grupo SICA estamos conscientes de que la gobernabilidad se sustenta precisamente en propiciar la toma de decisiones legítimas, informadas, democráticas y plurales, así como en los compromisos mutuos. Es el signo democrático de la Cumbre de las Américas.

Con propiedad han señalado sus palabras la interrelación entre la prosperidad humana, la seguridad energética y la sostenibilidad ambiental. Al correlacionar dichas categorías, el documento que usted nos plantea impulsa el propósito de crear objetivos mejor centrados, integrados y orientados hacia resultados concretos. Como resultado, la prosperidad de los pueblos del Hemisferio y su bienestar habrán de recibir de la Cumbre de las Américas en su país el valor agregado de una mayor institucionalización del proceso.

El texto, en su etapa preliminar, constituyó una excelente base de discusión e intercambio de ideas sobre los intereses y posiciones de los Estados, como se puso de manifiesto durante la reunión que el Grupo de Revisión de la Implementación de Cumbres (GRIC) celebró en su país el 28 de febrero pasado.

Estimamos comprensible que la multiplicidad de mandatos recibidos de las Cumbres anteriores esté presente en las preocupaciones e interrogantes de las instituciones responsables de ejecutarlos. Su presentación y el documento conceptual visibilizan, esquematizan y cumplen con focalizar puntos sobre el tema de la Cumbre, lo que agradecemos.

Señora Ministra, aguardamos con grata expectativa la reunión que el GRIC celebrará paralela a la Asamblea General de la Organización en junio próximo, en la que habrán de delinearse las aristas de un proceso que, bajo su digna conducción, asumirá a partir de ese momento el mayor de los impulsos.

Nuestro Grupo SICA sabrá presentar individual y colegiadamente iniciativas en el marco de la negociación sobre temas atinentes a aquél en el que se centra la Cumbre. Le ofrecemos, en ese sentido, nuestro mejor concurso para contribuir al éxito de la Cumbre y de su proceso negociador.

Con esa visión, la Secretaría Pro-témpore del Grupo SICA está a disposición de su ilustrado Gobierno, a fin de coordinar toda iniciativa que nos involucre en relación con la Quinta Cumbre de las Américas.

Por lo anterior, damos la bienvenida, señora Ministra, a su presencia, a las propuestas de su país de cara a la Cumbre de las Américas, al documento de concepto y a la oportunidad que ellas nos brindan dentro de los esfuerzos que llevan a cabo los Estados Miembros en este proceso centrado en el beneficio de nuestras poblaciones.

Gracias, señor Presidente.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, Ambassador.

PALABRAS DEL REPRESENTANTE DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS

El PRESIDENTE: I give the floor now to Ambassador Héctor Morales of the United States of America.

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

Let me begin by thanking the Foreign Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, the Honorable Paula Gopee-Scoon, for presenting the concept paper for the Fifth Summit of the Americas to the Permanent Council today. The United States welcomes the theme presented by the Honorable Foreign Minister, and we are encouraged and motivated to work with our Summit partners in the Americas towards securing our citizens' future by promoting human prosperity, energy security, and environmental sustainability.

This will be a very important Summit, and the theme presented by the distinguished Foreign Minister addresses some of the most pressing issues facing our hemisphere today. In particular, we believe that focusing on energy security and environmental sustainability is timely and pertinent, and it presents us with the opportunity to achieve meaningful goals. As the Foreign Minister articulated so eloquently, we strongly agree that we must work to identify concrete, relevant, and achievable

measures. Our goals should have a meaningful impact on the lives of all citizens, and we must work together to build consensus for more effective implementation.

The issues of human prosperity, such as reducing poverty, improving health and education, and promoting growth, opportunity, and competitiveness, have become important goals in the Summit process. We should seek to continue to implement these goals in concrete and measurable ways.

With respect to energy security, we believe that the Summit should focus on the importance of a diverse and reliable supply of energy, science, and technology endeavors; sustainable energy resource development; energy-efficiency and conservation; energy infrastructure protection; and fiscal and regulatory frameworks. The National Summit Coordinators have a very good reference for informing the work in this area in the Declaration of Panama, adopted at the thirty-seventh regular session of the General Assembly.

Environmental sustainability is also extremely important, and it should be addressed comprehensively beyond just climate change. Important issues include conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, urban environment and sustainable cities, access to safe water and sanitation, integrated management of water resources, cleaner production, and sound management of chemicals and wastes, as well as enhancing resilience to climate variability and change.

We must not turn away from the issue of climate change. It cuts across energy security and environmental sustainability. Energy must be seen as part of the solution to climate change, not the problem. We believe that the Bali roadmap serves as a good basis for informing the work of the National Summit Coordinators.

My delegation would like to point out that this theme offers member states the opportunity to deepen commitments at the Summit regarding citizens' security and the rule of law, as well as to further strengthen democracy, good governance, and the promotion of human rights. These issues, contained within this concept paper, form the cornerstones of the Organization of American States.

In sum, the United States views the concept paper as a positive opportunity for the Summit process and for bringing real opportunities to the people of the Americas. We are eager to work closely with Trinidad and Tobago, and on a personal note, I look forward to working with my former colleague at the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Ambassador Rodríguez, as well as with our Summit partners throughout the Hemisphere, to achieve a successful, optimistic, cohesive, and meaningful Fifth Summit of the Americas.

Thank you.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, Ambassador Morales.

PALABRAS DEL SECRETARIO GENERAL

El PRESIDENTE: I now give the floor to the Secretary General, who would like to make a few remarks.

El SECRETARIO GENERAL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Excellency, for your very important statement this morning and for the concept paper you have brought before us. We are very happy to see you, and I must commend you and your government for this effort.

Given the way the Summit is developing, I think we are in very good shape, and we're moving very strongly towards having an excellent meeting next year. I want to commend you for your leadership and to thank the Government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Patrick Manning. We recognize the very strong work by the National Summit Secretariat, headed by the Special Envoy for the Americas, Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodríguez, who is present today with us. I think you have done excellent work, and it is reflected in these very consistent and important pages on the substance of the Summit we are going to have.

It's very important that we recall today that the Americas are in a very good period of our history, a period of growth. The recent figures on growth show that Latin America and the Caribbean are going to have their sixth consecutive year of growth, which is something we have not experienced in several years. Growth in the past five years has been greater than it had been in the previous 15 years, and that's very important.

We have also received very good figures recently from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) on the reduction of poverty. Poverty has continued to decrease, and extreme poverty is decreasing even faster. That's also very good news for our region.

We've said it often but I'll say it again: for the first time in history, ours is an organization in which only democracies sit at the table to deliberate. This is a good moment to start thinking about precisely the issues you have been putting before us.

The Americas are in a condition in which we can really speak about promoting human prosperity and overcoming our basic problems, limitations, and vulnerabilities, some of which are precisely energy security and environmental sustainability.

We believe that this will be a very important Summit. Given the moment in which it's taking place, I think it's going to be a visionary Summit in which our leaders will discuss not only their concrete problems, but their vision for the future. It's an opportunity to really work out a meaningful agenda to lead us on the path of multilateral action and cooperation, which is the only one that can really be followed for the progress of our region.

We thank you, therefore, for your leadership on this matter, and we look forward to a very successful Summit next year and to working with you, with the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG), which is going to meet soon, and with the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG). Some members of the JSWG from other international organizations are here with us this morning, and we welcome them to this meeting.

Thank you very much.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you, Secretary General.

This topic of the Fifth Summit of the Americas has been well received. Having heard from all of the speakers on this topic, the Chair wishes to suggest that the Council take note of the presentations by the Honorable Minister, the regional coordinators, and the Secretary General. If there are no objections, we will so take note. Agreed.

Before I adjourn this meeting, I would like to express the appreciation of the Permanent Council to you, Madam Minister, for taking time to deliver remarks to us and for keeping the Council informed on your government's preparations for the Fifth Summit of the Americas. Thank you again for joining us.

I now ask the distinguished representatives around the table to remain in your places as I escort the Minister to greet you.

[La Ministra de Relaciones Exteriores de Trinidad y Tobago saluda a los Representantes y, acompañada de su comitiva, abandona la Sala.]

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