

# OAS

by Gina Ochoa



## Peruvian Cuisine: Cultural Heritage of the Americas

IN A CEREMONY to mark the official beginning of the Inter-American Year of Culture, the OAS declared Peruvian cuisine to be part of the “Cultural Patrimony of the Americas.” The award was presented by OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza to the Peruvian Minister of

Commerce and Tourism, Eduardo Ferreyros.

This recognition seeks to “highlight the cultural expressions that best represent the patrimony of the countries in the hemisphere,” said Secretary General Insulza, who also expressed his satisfaction at being able to honor Peruvian gastronomy since “it has become a great ambassador

and attraction for this beautiful country and continues to be a living representation of its cultural treasures.”

“Cuisine,” Insulza said, “is not just the sum of flavors and products; it is the reflection of the relationship that is born between human beings and their environment; between a person and his land, his history, his geography, his people; it is a reflection of the ties that individuals create with the fruits, colors, and customs of their land.”

As he received the award, Minister Ferreyros recalled that Peru’s cuisine has been “enriched throughout history with the culinary traditions of many colonial settlers, such as the Italian and the French, leading to new recipes that express the great creativity of Peruvians through their food. We are very honored to have a place in the cultural history of the Americas,” he continued, “and that our cuisine is recognized as our regional contribution to the world.”

The awards ceremony was held at the OAS headquarters in Washington DC with the participation of high officials and representatives of the Organization’s member

countries. Well-known Peruvian chefs served samples of the country’s traditional foods.

Peru is the first country of the region to receive this award created by the OAS in order to publicize the cultural contributions of the hemisphere and to reaffirm the dynamic, living, and constantly evolving presence of the Americas on the international scene. In the coming year, other aspects of the region’s cultural heritage will also be recognized with this award.

## Elections in Haiti

ON MARCH 20, the OAS-CARICOM Joint Election Observation Mission (JEOM) was present once again for the second round of presidential and legislative elections in Haiti. The Mission had a presence in all eleven electoral departments and stayed in the country until the final results were announced.

The 201 election observers deployed throughout Haiti were able to witness some improvements as compared with the first round of elections. These included: the political climate on election day which was calmer and more relaxed; better



From left to right: OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza, Kamlia Persad-Bissessar, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, and CIM President Rocío García Gaytán

## Women in Leadership for a Democratic Society

IN EARLY APRIL, the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), with the support of the UN Women and of the Ibero-American General Secretariat, organized the First Hemispheric Forum on “Women’s Leadership for a Citizens’ Democracy.” The Forum sought to improve understanding about the challenges the democratic system is currently facing in its efforts to guarantee women the ability to exercise substantive political citizenship.

In the opening session of the Forum, OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza highlighted the progress that has been made towards equal rights for women in the region and the fact that “all of the Constitutions of the countries in the region establish equal rights for women and men.” In spite of this, however, he noted that “significant challenges” remain, such as “prejudices and stereotypes” in the political environment.

“Prejudices and resistance to the equality of women in political institutions and the state present serious obstacles for the construction of a citizens’ democracy that works proactively to make citizenship substantive and diverse both ethnically and culturally,” said Insulza who also advocated for increasing the political representation of women in the various branches of government.