

**FORTY-FIFTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**“PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES”**

**DIALOGUE OF THE HEADS OF DELEGATION, THE SECRETARY GENERAL, AND THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL WITH THE HEADS OF DELEGATION OF THE PERMANENT OBSERVERS**

**REMARKS BY ANASTASIOS KEZAS**

**ALTERNATE OBSERVER OF GREECE TO THE OAS**

**Washington, D.C., June 14, 2015**

Your Excellency Secretary General,

Your Excellency Assistant Secretary General,

Your Excellency Assistant Secretary General-elect,

Your Excellences Heads of Delegation,

Esteemed Colleagues,

Greece and the Americas have enjoyed strong bonds of friendship and fruitful cooperation. Ourlong lasting traditional ties are basedon shared values of freedom and democracy as well as the rich cultural heritage.

Greece recognizes the region's contribution to the promotion of democracy, the eradication of poverty and the peaceful settlementof conflicts.

In this new momentum for the Organization, Greece wants to further contribute to the strengthening of the democratic values of the Organization, its respect of human rights and mutual understanding between countries and regions.

As a Permanent Observer to the Organization since 1979, Greece has actively participated to the promotion of the OASfour pillars of integral development, democracy, multidimensional security and human rights.

In particular, we have been supporting OAS common interest programs fordemocratic governance, education and sustainable development, enhancementof human rights protection, as well as the fight against human trafficking and drug trafficking.

For the time being, Greece contributes with the amount of 30.000$ for the support of the program "Inter American Education Agenda: Virtual Platform for the Americas Network for education and Development".

Greece is actively participating in all EU fora dealing with relations with North and Latin America. In this framework, we are strongly interested in the Americasandwe welcome anypositive developments within the region.

We welcome the courageous steps for the rapprochement of the United States of America with Cuba. The historic decisions on both sides will contribute to the elimination of one of the last dividing lines in the world, to the progress and prosperity of the Cuban people, and to the stability of the American continent. We acknowledge the valuable support of Canada and the Holy See in this process.

We firmly believe in the power of multilateralism, open diplomacy and frank political dialogue as the only means to provide peace, security and prosperity in the region.

Greece has expressed its strong opposition to the use of force in international relations and has always been a proponent of the respect of international law and the need for global disarmament as meansfor creating a safe and peaceful world for future generations on the planet. It was, therefore, during the Greek Presidency of the European Council in 2003 that the EU adopted its strategy on Weapons of MassDestruction for Disarmament and Non Proliferation (EU*WMD* Strategy).

Greece was pleased with the establishment of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco 1967). That initiative created an environment of prosperous coexistence andmutual respect among people. It is an example to be followed in other parts of the planet. Greece fully supports the strengthening of Non-proliferation in areas of tensionsand conflicts for a permanent establishment of peace and security for the world population.

Moreover, the protection and promotion of democracy, human rights and the rule of law constitute the cornerstone of the Greek Constitution and form an integral part of national legislation.

Greece recognizes the relevance of freedom of expression in fostering peace, good governance and the effective promotion of the full enjoyment of human rights by all persons.

Therefore**,** Greece follows closely and supports recent developments on the EU and international levels, which aim at enhancing the role and work of civil society organizations, active in the promotion and protection of human rights.

Greece looks forward to building upon successful cultural and educational cooperation in order to create newperspectivesand partnerships. We are particularly interested in encouraging cooperation between Universities and Research Centers in the area of technology and innovation.

Atthe same time, we wish to continue promoting inter-cultural dialogue; classical antiquity, after all, has influenced - and still informs – cultural andpolitical theories and practices.