

CONSEJO PERMANENTE



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ACTA
DE LA SESIÓN EXTRAORDINARIA
CELEBRADA
EL 13 DE FEBRERO DE 2002

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CONSEJO PERMANENTE DE LA ORGANIZACIÓN DE LOS ESTADOS AMERICANOS

ACTA DE LA SESIÓN EXTRAORDINARIA CELEBRADA EL 13 DE FEBRERO DE 2002

En la ciudad de Washington, a las once y treinta de la mañana del miércoles 13 de febrero de 2002, celebró sesión extraordinaria el Consejo Permanente de la Organización de los Estados Americanos en honor de la visita del excelentísimo señor William Graham, Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores del Canadá. Presidió la sesión el Embajador Blasco Peñaherrera, Representante Permanente del Ecuador y Presidente del Consejo Permanente. Asistieron los siguientes miembros:

Embajador Denis G. Antoine, Representante Permanente de Grenada y Vicepresidente del Consejo Permanente
Embajador Lionel Alexander Hurst, Representante Permanente de Antigua y Barbuda
Embajador Hernán R. Castro H., Representante Permanente de Costa Rica
Embajadora Margarita Escobar, Representante Permanente de El Salvador
Embajador Ronalht Iván Ochaeta Argueta, Representante Permanente de Guatemala
Embajador Valter Pecly Moreira, Representante Permanente del Brasil
Embajador Esteban Tomic Errázuriz, Representante Permanente de Chile
Embajador Juan Enrique Fischer, Representante Permanente del Uruguay
Embajador Juan Manuel Castulovich, Representante Permanente de Panamá
Embajador Lombardo Martínez Cabezas, Representante Permanente de Nicaragua
Embajador Raúl Ricardes, Representante Permanente de la Argentina
Embajador Miguel Ruíz Cabañas, Representante Permanente de México
Embajador Humberto de la Calle, Representante Permanente de Colombia
Embajador Jorge Valero Briceño, Representante Permanente de Venezuela
Embajador Roger F. Noriega, Representante Permanente de los Estados Unidos
Embajador Ramón Quiñones, Representante Permanente de la República Dominicana
Embajador Paul D. Durand, Representante Permanente del Canadá
Embajador Eduardo Ferrero Costa, Representante Permanente del Perú
Embajador Henry Lothar Illes, Representante Permanente de Suriname
Embajador Raymond Valcin, Representante Permanente de Haití
Consejero Mackisack Logie, Representante Interino de Trinidad y Tobago
Ministro Consejero Ricardo Martínez Covarrubias, Representante Interino de Bolivia
Ministro Consejero Carlos Montoya Castro, Representante Alterno de Honduras
Primera Secretaria Edda Dumont-Adolph, Representante Alterna del Commonwealth de las Bahamas
Consejera Jasmine E. Huggins, Representante Alterna de Saint Kitts y Nevis
Primera Secretaria Deborah Yaw, Representante Alterna de Guyana
Primera Secretaria Yasmin Solitahe Odlum, Representante Alterna de Santa Lucía
Ministro Consejero Nestor Mendez, Representante Alterno de Belice
Ministra Elisa Ruiz Díaz-Buman, Representante Alterna del Paraguay
Ministra Delrose E. Montague, Representante Alterna de Jamaica
Consejero Frank Montgomery Clarke, Representante Alterno de San Vicente y las Granadinas

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

PALABRAS DEL PRESIDENTE DEL CONSEJO PERMANENTE

El PRESIDENTE: Les ruego tomar asiento. El señor Canciller está por ingresar a la sala. [Pausa.] Declaro abierta la presente sesión extraordinaria del Consejo Permanente, convocada para recibir a Su Excelencia, el Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores del Canadá, doctor William Graham.

Señor Ministro, constituye un señalado honor para mí y para los miembros de este Consejo brindarle una cordial bienvenida a esta Casa de las Américas. Su reconocida gestión como Presidente de la Comisión Permanente de Relaciones Exteriores y Comercio Internacional en la Cámara Baja de su país lo ha distinguido como un parlamentario de amplia experiencia en los más destacados temas de la política exterior de Canadá. Quiero destacar asimismo su desempeño como profesor en los claustros universitarios, director de importantes centros académicos y presidente de entidades interparlamentarias de indiscutida gravitación hemisférica, como es el Foro Interparlamentario de las Américas.

Señor Ministro Graham, al reiterarle nuestro reconocimiento por su visita al Consejo Permanente, me complace cederle el uso de la palabra.

PALABRAS DEL MINISTRO DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES DEL CANADÁ

El MINISTRO DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES DEL CANADÁ: *Gracias, señor Presidente.*

Señor Secretario General, Mr. Assistant Secretary General, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen:

C'est pour moi un véritable honneur et un réel plaisir que de me trouver ici en cette assemblée des Amériques au moment où je prends mes fonctions de Ministre des Affaires étrangères du Canada. L'Organisation des États Américains et la région des Amériques revêtent une importance toute particulière pour le Canada, ainsi que pour moi personnellement.

In fact, it might amuse you to know that I was in Mexico last month promoting the cause of the Interparliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA) that the Chairman referred to—the idea for which, by the way, took root upstairs in this very building some several years ago. I was in Mexico taking some Spanish lessons when the Prime Minister called me to advise me of my nomination as Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. I had to cut short my visit and return to Ottawa to be sworn in to Cabinet the next day.

Under the circumstances, I can't say that I regretted having to leave Mexico, but I do regret the piece of unfinished business—my continuing attempt to gain some proficiency in Spanish. In Mexico, I had enrolled in a two-week course; unfortunately, because of the Prime Minister's call, I only managed to get six hours in. However, *haré todo lo posible para defenderme en español* next time. [Risas.]

Ambassador Durand tells me that he and all of you have been very busy here in recent months. I was pleased to hear that, not only because we in Canada like to get our money's worth out

of our ambassadors but, more important, it confirmed what I believed about the Organization of American States, which regrettably seems to be less evident amongst our general publics at home.

The fact is, of course—and you know this better than I do—that the OAS is a relevant, integral, and important institution in our hemisphere. Working through this organization, member states, each with its own individual perspective and distinct history, have shaped a community of values. The Americas are no longer simply defined as a function of geography, but by what we hold to be important and by the objectives that we seek to achieve as a community of sovereign nations.

The Inter-American Democratic Charter, conceived in Quebec and achieved in Lima last September, is a unique instrument. No other region can boast a similar document, and no one can ignore its ringing declaration: “The peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy, and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it.” That bold statement is an unmistakable signpost to us and to future generations. There is no room for ambivalence about democracy in our hemisphere.

The Inter-American Democratic Charter is not only a statement of values; it is a pledge of support and of mutual assistance. It is no small irony that on the very day that member states committed themselves to promoting and defending democracy in the Hemisphere, the most dramatic terrorist attack in history struck home.

And this community responded. The first categorical condemnation of the attacks, which ministers issued in Lima on September 11, was reaffirmed 10 days later in Washington when foreign ministers met in this building and declared, with one voice, that this American family stands united. More than that, they put that declaration of solidarity into concrete action. The Rio Treaty was invoked, a measure that non-states parties, including Canada, fully supported.

To facilitate cooperative action against terrorism, foreign ministers mandated the negotiation of an inter-American convention against terrorism—a task that should be completed by June. The OAS moved swiftly to accelerate the work of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE) to identify urgent measures to combat terrorism. A practical program, focused on cooperation and training, has been endorsed by CICTE and is now underway. For Canada, this illustrates that the OAS not only talks; it acts. I can assure you that our government will support, in real terms, the activities of CICTE.

Does Canada have an agenda for the OAS? Absolutely. When, in 1990, we filled the seat that had been reserved for us, it was part of a deliberate plan to intensify relations with the countries of the Hemisphere and to take part in a dialogue that was defining both the Organization and the collective will of its member states. It was a fortuitous time to join this organization. Democracy was sweeping the Hemisphere, there was a growing commitment to market liberalization, the last vestiges of the Cold War were falling by the wayside, and there was a renewed openness to the possibilities of multilateral organizations.

Together, the member states have seized this moment and shaped the OAS into an instrument that is more agile and responsive to the priority interests of our citizens in this rapidly evolving international environment. The OAS is now well positioned to provide practical assistance in

consolidating democracy, strengthening prosperity, enhancing security, and promoting development throughout the Americas.

In the past dozen years, this organization has reached out to member states—from the smallest to the largest, and many in between, as my colleague from Peru testified to you this morning—in their hour of need. We have seen countries turn toward the institutions of the OAS for assistance on highly sensitive issues, such as border conflicts, human rights, and crises of democracy—something that was hardly imaginable just a decade ago. It is due to the commitment and faith of member states, together with the dedication and expertise of the representatives and staff of the General Secretariat, that the OAS and its institutions are considered trusted, credible partners in the challenges that face member states today.

This region has also proved its capacity for world leadership, particularly on the security agenda. The historic commitment to establish an antipersonnel-mine-free hemisphere provided tangible momentum to the global campaign to ban antipersonnel mines, a matter which, as you know, is dear to us in Canada and to many of our Canadian citizens. The Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials is the first of its kind in the world. What we do here matters, not only in our neighborhood, but also beyond.

It is because of these and other actions that I would like to confirm that Canadians are very pleased with the return on our collective investment in the OAS. Today, we see still greater potential. The OAS, having demonstrated its capacity and relevance, is a focal point for coordinated action. Leaders at successive Summits of the Americas have called upon the OAS and its institutions to play an increasingly important role in the fulfillment of Summit mandates.

The Quebec Summit established a balanced and coherent agenda, grounded in the values of democracy, economic prosperity, social stability, and hemispheric security. That agenda also recognized the ever-increasing interdependence that links our peoples throughout this hemisphere. This is an ambitious and challenging program that will require sustained commitment from us all. But it is also a true reflection of what our citizens expect, and it provides the road map that we need to reach our political, social, and economic goals.

This fall, as part of the Summit implementation process, we collectively reviewed the Plan of Action in the light of the attacks and negative fallout of September 11. This evaluation confirmed the relevance and underlined the importance of fulfilling the mandates given by the leaders. The Summit's flexible framework allowed for the acceleration of certain measures, but it is clear that the fundamental model is still correct. The Summit's agenda puts people first. It recognizes that our citizens can reach their full potential only when their safety is guaranteed, their rights are respected, and their access to economic and social opportunities is assured.

A key element of the Summit's agenda for prosperity is the creation of an enabling environment for a hemispheric free trade zone by 2005. Again, the challenge here is great. There are substantial differences in the size of domestic and regional markets, as well as in the level of trade and economic development throughout this region, which everyone around this table knows well. Income disparities, both between and within countries, make this one of the most unequal regions of the world.

At the same time, our region is one of great economic potential. The countries in the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) represent approximately one-sixth of the world's population and have a combined GDP of more than US\$9 trillion—that's CAN\$17 trillion in case you'd like to have that statistic as well [risas]—more than one-third of the world's economic activity.

The Summit implementation process is designed to help build the capacity of states to adapt their political, economic, and social policies to the requirements of regional and global integration and to ensure that citizens of the Americas will benefit from that integration. Good governance, trade liberalization, more equitable distribution of wealth and access to opportunities, protection of the environment, and workers' rights can and should be mutually supportive. Inclusion, transparency, and communication are all keys to our success.

Implementing the mandates of the Summit requires the participation of many partners—governments, international organizations, international financial institutions, legislatures, business, and civil society. In this respect, I am particularly pleased to note the efforts of the OAS to include civil society organizations in the work of the Organization and to promote the development of the concept of corporate social responsibility. Successful implementation of the Summit's agenda requires the energies and expertise of all sectors in our communities.

My personal experience, to which the Chairman referred, as President of the Interparliamentary Forum of the Americas, has also convinced me of the importance of ensuring that lawmakers are actively engaged in this process and have the opportunity to debate issues of regional impact with their counterparts. Indeed, foremost on the agenda of the FIPA meeting in Mexico City next month is a discussion of the steps that will be needed to implement the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism.

Although my current responsibilities require me to step down as president of that organization, I maintain a very active interest in the Forum, and I pledge that Canada will continue to play a leadership role in that important new hemispheric organization. We urge you to encourage your national legislators to play a role in it as well.

Mr. Secretary General, Canada is impressed by and can support your proposals for reform of the Secretariat with only, of course, some minor modifications that we would like to suggest. I hope that all members will make their positions known to the Secretary General so that he can proceed with this extremely important business for us all.

I understand that the Council, too, is working to modernize and reform OAS structures and practices to enhance its capacity to deliver on our very important objectives. This is a healthy sign of adaptation to the times, and I wish each and every one of you in this room the greatest of success in these important efforts.

Je vous remercie encore une fois de m'avoir offert l'occasion de m'entretenir avec vous aujourd'hui. Cette assemblée des Amériques est un lieu remarquable à visiter. Le Canada est fier de se sentir ici chez lui.

Merci, *gracias, obrigado.*

[Aplausos.]

El PRESIDENTE: Muchas gracias, señor Ministro, por su grata e importante alocución, que la Secretaría tendrá a bien registrar en el acta de esta sesión extraordinaria del Consejo Permanente, la misma que procedo a clausurar.

Se levanta la sesión.

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