

CONSEJO PERMANENTE



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ACTA
DE LA SESIÓN PROTOCOLAR
CELEBRADA
EL 9 DE MARZO DE 2006

En honor del excelentísimo señor Percival James Patterson, O.N, P.C., O.C., M.P.,
Primer Ministro de Jamaica

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CONSEJO PERMANENTE DE LA ORGANIZACIÓN DE LOS ESTADOS AMERICANOS

ACTA DE LA SESIÓN PROTOCOLAR CELEBRADA EL 9 DE MARZO DE 2006

En la ciudad de Washington, a las cuatro y treinta de la tarde del jueves 9 de marzo de 2006, celebró sesión protocolar el Consejo Permanente de la Organización de los Estados Americanos en honor del excelentísimo señor Percival James Patterson, O.N, P.C., O.C., M.P., Primer Ministro de Jamaica. Presidió la sesión la Embajadora Marina Valère, Representante Permanente de Trinidad y Tobago y Vicepresidenta del Consejo Permanente. Asistieron los siguientes miembros:

Embajador Denis G. Antoine, Representante Permanente de Grenada
Embajador Paul D. Durand, Representante Permanente del Canadá
Embajador Henry Lothar Illes, Representante Permanente de Suriname
Embajador Salvador E. Rodezno Fuentes, Representante Permanente de Honduras
Embajador John F. Maisto, Representante Permanente de los Estados Unidos
Embajador Bayney R. Karran, Representante Permanente de Guyana
Embajador Gordon V. Shirley, Representante Permanente de Jamaica
Embajador Álvaro Tirado Mejía, Representante Permanente de Colombia
Embajador Osmar Chohfi, Representante Permanente del Brasil
Embajador Mario Alemán, Representante Permanente del Ecuador
Embajador José Luis Velásquez Pereira, Representante Permanente de Nicaragua
Embajador Alejandro García-Moreno Elizondo, Representante Permanente de México
Ministro Consejero Jorge A. Seré Sturzenegger, Representante Interino del Uruguay
Consejera Jasmine E. Huggins, Representante Alterna de Saint Kitts y Nevis
Ministro Consejero Nestor Mendez, Representante Alterno de Belice
Ministra Elisa Ruiz Díaz, Representante Alterna del Paraguay
Primera Secretaria Ann-Marie Layne Campbell, Representante Alterna de Antigua y Barbuda
Segundo Secretario Rodrigo Hume, Representante Alterno de Chile
Embajador Ricardo González de Mena, Representante Alterno de Panamá
Embajador Nelson Pineda Prada, Representante Alterno de Venezuela
Primer Secretario Alejandro Beoutis, Representante Alterno del Perú
Consejero Gerardo Bompadre, Representante Alterno de la Argentina
Embajador Juan León Alvarado, Representante Alterno de Guatemala
Primer Secretario Eugene F. Torchon-Newry, Representante Alterno del Commonwealth de las Bahamas
Tercera Secretaria Judith Anne Rolle, Representante Alterna del Commonwealth de Dominica
Ministro Consejero Enrique Alberto Pino Serra, Representante Alterno de la República Dominicana
Ministro Consejero Flavio José Villacorta, Representante Alterno de El Salvador
Ministra Consejera La Celia Prince, Representante Alterna de San Vicente y las Granadinas
Embajador Antonio Rodrigue, Representante Alterno de Haití
Primer Secretario Ricardo Kellman, Representante Alterno de Barbados
Javier Viscarra, Representante Alterno de Bolivia

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: Ladies and gentlemen, please stand to receive the Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Most Honorable Percival James Patterson.

[Acompañado del Comité de Recepción, ingresa al salón el Primer Ministro de Jamaica, el excelentísimo señor Percival James Patterson.]

Most Honorable Prime Minister, on behalf of the Permanent Council, I am pleased to extend to you a very warm welcome to the Hall of the Americas.

PALABRAS DEL SECRETARIO GENERAL

La PRESIDENTA: I have the honor to give the floor to Mr. José Miguel Insulza, Secretary General of the Organization.

El SECRETARIO GENERAL: Ambassador Marina Valère, Vice Chair of the Permanent Council and Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the Organization of American States; the Most Honorable Percival James Patterson, O.N., P.C., Q.C., M.P., Prime Minister and Minister of Defense of Jamaica; Ambassador Albert Ramdin, Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States; ambassadors, permanent representatives; ambassadors, permanent observers; ladies and gentlemen:

First of all, let me say how special an honor this is for us at the Organization that you have decided, Mr. Prime Minister, to address this Permanent Council. The OAS family of nations is especially gratified to have you here today because we know that your many years as head of government in Jamaica and as an active and well-respected leader in the international arena have availed you of a wealth of experience and wisdom from which we hope to draw.

The Most Honorable Percival James Patterson is the first Prime Minister in the history of Jamaica to have held that office for three successive terms. This achievement is not difficult to understand, given his political apprenticeship, style of leadership, and a political legacy that spans more than three decades of distinguished service, during which he held several significant cabinet posts. It is a clear demonstration of his talent and of the confidence his countrymen and women place in him.

It is also equally important that Prime Minister Patterson is highly regarded regionally and internationally as an intelligent and articulate statesman. Prime Minister Patterson has always demonstrated a steadfast commitment to his beloved country and people, to the values of democracy, and to democratic institutions and development, and he has tirelessly advocated integrity in public life.

Prime Minister Patterson's long-term vision for his country embraces the idea that "his people [will] build a land of opportunity and prepare for a brand new world in which every citizen—man, woman, and child—shares a sense of self-esteem and has a personal stake in a modern and prosperous Jamaica."

Prime Minister Patterson assumed the leadership of his country in the wake of an 18-year relationship of dependency on international financial institutions (IFIs), an unstable currency, and

high inflation. Today, Jamaica has successfully and substantially reduced that dependency, stabilized its economy with lower levels of inflation and a more stable currency, increased its international reserves, and is working on a national industrial policy as a blueprint for that nation's growth and development in the 21st century.

At the social level, the Prime Minister's agenda has included a National Land and Shelter Policy, and he has conceptualized and implemented a Program for Resettlement and Integrated Development Enterprise (PRIDE), both of which will help to improve that country's ability to better address its national housing problems.

I commend the Prime Minister and his administration for their commitment to education and to the goal of integrating information technology throughout all levels of the education system.

Prime Minister, the work of your government to date augurs well for Jamaica's commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We look forward to working with you and future Jamaican governments on these objectives.

Prime Minister Patterson has always remained centered on his political mission and vision: to make Jamaica a better place for its people, a place where they feel a greater sense of self-esteem and ownership in their country's future and are empowered so as to benefit from its development.

His commitment to improving the human condition has also guided him toward playing a significant regional role. As one of the last stalwarts of an earlier breed of Caribbean politicians who personally witnessed the establishment of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Prime Minister Patterson has been a leader in widening the integration process in the Caribbean Community by expanding membership to include other countries, such as Suriname and Haiti. He also advocated the deepening of the integration process through the modernization of legal frameworks, the establishment of specialized institutions, the creation of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) and, more recently, the creation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME).

Prime Minister Patterson has long championed the cause of his people, and his name is synonymous with the fight to alleviate poverty, improve education and employment, and to give voice and attention to the plight of the poor and marginalized, not only in Jamaica, but in the rest of the Caribbean, in the Americas, and worldwide. To this end, he has spent most of his political career seeking to build consensus, to develop constituencies of support in areas of common interest, and to enhance regional, hemispheric, and international cooperation.

Under Prime Minister Patterson, Jamaica has played pivotal roles in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM); the G-15 and the G-77; the United Nations; the Organization of American States; the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States; and the Caribbean Community.

We are pleased to note that Jamaica was the first CARICOM country to join the OAS. Since then Jamaica, through its government and its permanent representatives, among whom we include your current representative, Ambassador Gordon Shirley, has continued to be intensively engaged in and has provided the most useful recommendations regarding the activities of the OAS.

Mr. Prime Minister, there is no doubt that your long and productive career in politics and government provides us with important lessons that will help us deal with the current challenges in

our countries and the Hemisphere and to build stable democracies and sustainable economies. We therefore look forward with special interest to your words of wisdom and guidance.

Thank you.

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you very much, Secretary General.

[Pausa.]

PALABRAS DE LA PRESIDENTA DEL CONSEJO PERMANENTE

La PRESIDENTA: The Most Honorable Percival James Patterson, Prime Minister of Jamaica; Secretary General José Miguel Insulza; Assistant Secretary General Ambassador Albert Ramdin; ambassadors, permanent representatives, and alternate representatives to the Organization of American States; permanent observers; special guests; ladies and gentlemen; Secretariat staff:

It is a great honor to welcome one of the leading statesmen of the Caribbean, the Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Most Honorable Percival James Patterson, to this hallowed setting, the Hall of the Americas. I deem it a privilege to be able to do so in my present capacity and on behalf of the Chair of the Permanent Council, Her Excellency Sonia Johnny, Permanent Representative of Saint Lucia. Prime Minister, on behalf of the entire Council, I offer you a heartfelt welcome to the headquarters of the Organization of American States, which represents the common heritage of all of the peoples of the Americas.

Prime Minister Patterson is an outstanding political figure who has had the distinction of being the longest-serving Prime Minister of Jamaica. As a Caribbean leader, he stands as a beacon of our region's dedication to deeply rooted democratic traditions, peaceful interaction with our neighbors, and a deepening process of intraregional integration. Such traditions are the hallmark of our political culture in the Caribbean, and Prime Minister Patterson has emerged as a sterling example of an international statesman par excellence. He has received multiple awards from governments in several countries, including Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, Venezuela, and Ghana.

Jamaica was one of the earliest English-speaking countries to join the Organization in 1969 and, under Prime Minister Patterson's leadership, has maintained an excellent track record within the OAS. The high caliber of Jamaica's diplomatic representation and of the participation of its international technocrats within the inter-American system has not gone unnoticed, as exemplified by the direction brought to the Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CEPCIDI) by Jamaica's current Permanent Representative to the OAS, His Excellency Gordon V. Shirley.

To list the many accolades that have been conferred on Prime Minister Patterson is to risk encroaching on the time allotted for his address today, so I ask your indulgence to highlight a few segments of his distinguished career.

Prime Minister Patterson was called to the Bar at Middle Temple in the United Kingdom in 1963 and was admitted to the Jamaican Bar that same year. Though an active member of the People's

National Party (PNP) since the 1950s, he entered representative politics in 1970 and began his distinguished career in the Jamaican Cabinet in 1972 as Minister of Industry, Trade, and Tourism. He has also held the portfolios of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade; Minister of Development, Planning, and Production; Minister of Finance and Planning; Deputy Prime Minister; and, since 1992, Prime Minister of Jamaica.

Over the years, Prime Minister Patterson has led his country through significant challenges and has managed to champion a beneficial development agenda, not only for his country, but also for the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The social agenda has included advances in education, the consolidation of good governance traditions through strengthened democratic institutions and programs, and the implementation of a world-class electoral system, all of which have contributed to improved opportunities and living standards for his people, whose life expectancy stands on par with that of the most developed countries. His espoused free market reforms, though not devoid of challenges, have constituted an important part of the effort to secure his country's economic future and long-term development in an age of fast-paced globalization.

Though standing firm at the helm of Jamaican politics, Prime Minister Patterson continues to be very much a man of the people. His "Live and Direct" discussions with fellow Jamaicans at town hall meetings underscore his commitment to remain in touch with the citizenry and afford them the democratic fora in which to voice their opinions directly. Such fora also provided avenues for suggestions on pragmatic strategies to combat the problems that assail modern society, such as crime, youth unemployment, the cost of living, and other infrastructural and human resource challenges.

Prime Minister Patterson has emphasized democracy and development as "essential elements for a nation's progress towards fulfilling the requirements of good governance and to establish secure foundations for peace, stability, prosperity, human dignity, and freedom across the globe." He is especially sensitive to the special needs and vulnerabilities of smaller economies in the global arena and remains concerned about the critical role of human development in assuring the prosperity of such economies.

His dedication to the cause of regional development and integration has been no less exemplary. This CARICOM political icon has been integrally involved in shaping the policy direction of CARICOM, particularly in the area of external economic relations. As the long-standing Chair of the CARICOM Prime Ministerial Sub-Committee on External Negotiations, he provided direction to CARICOM as it engaged simultaneously, and with limited resources, in three negotiating fora: within the Hemisphere, with the European Union (EU), and with the World Trade Organization (WTO). No other grouping at the international level has had to manage such a challenge.

The deepening of our integration movement through the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) is the blueprint for achieving our countries' sustainable development and an attempt to integrate our economies into the evolving dynamics at the hemispheric and global level. How fitting it was, therefore, that the CSME was launched in Jamaica on January 30 this year, with Prime Minister Patterson, the longest continuously serving CARICOM Prime Minister, as host.

While accepting one of his numerous international awards last year in Washington at a U.S. Congressional Black Caucus award ceremony, Prime Minister Patterson stated:

It has been my passionate resolve throughout my public life to engage all my energies and my intellect in the struggle to build a global framework where industrialized countries and developing nations alike have an equal voice in the determination of how best we protect and share the resources of the only planet where human life exists.

What may pass as a philosophy for others has been outlined as a desirable and attainable goal for the world. Its realization within this hemisphere will truly underlie the *raison-d'être* of this organization, whose membership remains committed to greater levels of cooperation in this noble and practicable pursuit.

[Aplausos.]

PALABRAS DEL PRIMER MINISTRO DE JAMAICA

La PRESIDENTA: Ladies and gentlemen, please join with me in extending a warm OAS welcome to the Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Most Honorable P. J. Patterson. It now pleases me to give you the floor, sir.

[Aplausos.]

El PRIMER MINISTRO DE JAMAICA: Ambassador Marina Valère, Vice Chair of the Permanent Council; Secretary General José Miguel Insulza; Assistant Secretary General, Ambassador Albert Ramdin; permanent representatives of member states; *excelentísimos Embajadores; señores y señoras; muchísimas gracias y felicitaciones a todos.*

It was indeed with great pleasure that I readily accepted the invitation extended by the distinguished Secretary General to address this august body today. I consider it a distinct honor to be doing so in this prestigious Hall of the Americas. Most importantly, the opportunity afforded me at this time takes on added significance as it comes when I am about to take formal leave from active politics. In a few weeks, my involvement in regional and hemispheric developments will henceforth be from the vantage point of the spectators' stands.

As one who has participated in these regional and hemispheric processes from very early in my political career, I have been invited to share a few thoughts with you on my vision for the Caribbean and the Americas, bearing in mind the current global realities and the commitment that we share to advance the political, economic, and social development of the Hemisphere to which we all belong. As such, I propose to focus on the nexus between developments in the regional integration process, particularly within the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and developments at the hemispheric level.

How do I see these two processes coalescing to bring about a partnership that will meet the needs of every member state, regardless of size or wealth, and will improve the quality of life for our peoples, who constitute our most important asset?

In order to fully appreciate where our countries are going, we must first understand the milieu in which we are currently operating. This will affect the vision we all have for a hemisphere in which we can enjoy sustained peace, stability, and prosperity.

Some sixty years ago when the OAS was first created, no one could have thought that we would have experienced such rapid and radical shifts in the international environment, propelled by marked transformations in the global economy. These factors, together with the emergence of new threats to international peace and security, now challenge the very survival of many of our countries.

As the twin forces of globalization and liberalization became more pronounced, new demands were thrust upon the countries of the Hemisphere, in varying degrees forcing modifications to our national objectives and priorities. Increased vulnerabilities to the vagaries of these two phenomena have led to the abandonment of traditional economic policies and the adoption of new models for economic development as we all seek to secure a greater space in the world economy and a more participatory role in international economic relations.

There is no doubt that both globalization and liberalization, especially in the last decade, have been the driving force behind the integration of the global economy. Despite the potential benefits of this process, we have to acknowledge that the long-term survival of many of our countries continues to require constant adjustments to the new realities of an international environment which, for many of us, has become increasingly hostile and unpredictable.

Notwithstanding improvements in global economic prospects and the potential benefits that can be derived therefrom, we have to admit that inequities still remain, putting a number of countries at severe economic risk, including many of those in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The quest for sustainable growth, particularly for small economies, has become even more elusive as traditional support mechanisms are being gradually eroded. There continues to be increased pressure to move more rapidly to reciprocal trade rules; all the while, we bear the brunt of rising energy prices and the weakness in non-oil commodity prices. All of these elements are occurring simultaneously as investors become increasingly risk averse and restrict capital flows, and as the fiscal positions of many of our economies weaken, with a consequent increase in our debt.

While we welcome international commitments to the Global Partnership for Development, as outlined in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and the Mauritius Declaration, we are discouraged by the limited progress we have seen to date. This means that priority projects, which form the core of our development agenda, such as poverty eradication and improvements in health and education, will continue to lag in their implementation. We remain hopeful but by no means certain that the UN General Assembly's outcome document of last September will spur renewed action with a greater degree of political will.

If this scenario were not daunting enough, emerging security concerns have brought added uncertainties, resulting in changes in objectives and priorities and causing even further delays in carrying out national agendas as we seek to be "reliable partners" in implementing international security objectives.

Against this backdrop, the current international situation poses a number of challenges to regional integration, notwithstanding the fact that the popularity of regionalism evolved from this very same process in the early 1970s as an effective response to the onset of globalization.

In this present scenario, how do we reduce our vulnerability to external shocks, achieve sustainable development, strengthen governance, promote democracy, and at the same time comply with our international, regional, and hemispheric obligations?

Jamaica and, indeed, CARICOM, have always maintained that there is an urgent need to make this process of global economic governance and integration more inclusive and thereby more beneficial to the interests of developing countries. By so doing, there would be greater prospects for tangible signs of development and strengthened democracy in countries and societies around the world.

We are reminded every day of the sense of unease and restlessness that emerges when the people we lead are not given meaningful opportunities for self-expression and self-actualization. We regard these concepts as fundamental elements of democracy and the civil society we want to establish. In order to meet the challenges that militate against peace and stability, we must provide a truly enabling environment.

It is not surprising, therefore, that we in this hemisphere share a wide range of similar problems and concerns. Our regional and hemispheric agendas are inextricably linked and have therefore become inseparable. This is reflected in both our interdependence and the elements of globalization that today characterize international relations and ultimately lead to myriad interlocking issues. Within this context, both the OAS and our respective regional integration movements have a salient role to play.

From its creation in 1948, the OAS was envisaged as the primary political forum in the Hemisphere to maintain peace and security, to promote and consolidate democracy, and to advance cooperation for integral development. Undoubtedly, the OAS has played a pivotal role in the settlement of disputes and in bringing solutions to various political crises within the Hemisphere, as we have seen through the important role it has played in dealing with the political situation in Haiti.

We welcome and applaud the return of President René Preval as the duly elected leader of Haiti. Caribbean heads are all anxious to extend a warm embrace to the democratically constituted Government of Haiti at the 27th Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, to be held in Saint Kitts and Nevis in July. CARICOM will do everything in its power to ensure that the beleaguered nation of Haiti is no longer isolated. We will help Haiti nurture a democratic tradition and receive from the international community the material and technical support it has so long deserved in order to improve the living standard of the Haitian people.

Today, we are confronted by new threats and challenges that our governments are simultaneously obliged to address and surmount. The hemispheric agenda has expanded significantly over the years to address issues such as corruption, drug abuse and drug trafficking, transnational organized crime, terrorism, money laundering, children's issues, women's affairs, and the protection of human rights.

The pursuit of these programs at the level of the OAS complements the important initiatives on which we have all embarked at the national and multilateral levels as we seek, not only to come to grips with, but also to overcome these problems. The multidimensional nature of many of these issues requires a comprehensive and cooperative approach.

The OAS has also assumed responsibility for implementing the mandates of the Summit of the Americas, aimed at creating prosperity through economic integration and trade, eradicating poverty and discrimination, and protecting the natural environment.

While the foregoing is laudable, are we satisfied, however, that in this dynamic process of globalization, the OAS is fulfilling the economic development aspects of its mandate?

I am convinced that unless we focus in a meaningful way on the intrinsic link between democracy, good governance, and international security on the one hand, and development on the other hand, our goals for peace, stability, and political and economic security will always remain elusive. We must therefore address the development agenda with the same energy and commitment with which we have sought to strengthen the democratic agenda, giving each equal dedication in order that the benefits of democracy can be widely seen and felt to improve the quality of life for our peoples.

When heads of government and state of the Hemisphere met during the Fourth Summit of the Americas in Mar del Plata, Argentina, last November, we jointly committed ourselves to the task of "Creating Jobs to Fight Poverty and Strengthen Democratic Governance" in the Hemisphere. The Declaration of Mar del Plata, which we issued at the end of the Summit, was a clarion call for sustained, long-term, equitable economic growth, which would create jobs, reduce poverty, eliminate hunger, and raise the standard of living for the most vulnerable sectors and social groups in our diverse societies.

We also stressed at this Fourth Summit the need to expand trade as a means of boosting growth and our capacity to generate higher quality and better-paying jobs. As small, open economies, CARICOM countries are highly dependent on trade as the primary driver of economic and social growth and, by extension, the stability and democracy of the region.

In 1994, when we launched the Summit of the Americas process in Miami, Jamaica and the rest of CARICOM readily put our efforts and scarce human, financial, and technical resources into ensuring that our collective vision of prosperity in the Americas would become a reality. Four years later, we formally launched the Free Trade Agreement of The Americas (FTAA) negotiations, fully cognizant of the contribution that economic integration and trade liberalization in the Americas could make to create jobs, fight poverty, and strengthen democratic governance throughout the Hemisphere of the Americas.

It is with some disappointment that on the eve of my departure from office as Prime Minister of Jamaica and Chairman of the Prime Ministerial Sub-Committee on External Negotiations of CARICOM, the FTAA is faltering on the rock of political will. Some would even say it has become comatose.

CARICOM is fully committed to the goal and objectives of the Summit of the Americas generally. If, indeed, the FTAA has no future, we must be realistic and begin to explore new alternatives soon. Given the slow progress to date in the Doha Development Round of multilateral trade negotiations, we need to quickly find a fresh hemispheric impetus for advancing discussions on key issues within the World Trade Organization (WTO).

For example, the Work Programme on Small Economies in the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) as well as the recent Aid for Trade initiative could build on the initiatives and acceptance by hemispheric heads at our Fourth Summit of the Americas that smaller economies should be recognized as a special category of countries. Special and differential treatment in favor of smaller economies has to be an accepted fundamental principle of whatever negotiations we pursue.

Our collective vision of growth, economic prosperity, and stability for the Hemisphere must not be confined to the narrow territorial boundaries of the Hemisphere. Let us broaden the boundaries of our collaboration beyond the OAS and the United Nations. It is high time for Caribbean and Latin American countries to pool our collective bargaining resources in the WTO, where we also have common goals and objectives.

Every effort must be made to bring Haiti into full participation in the various trade negotiations in the Hemisphere and the WTO. In this case, there can be no argument about the need for special and differential treatment and technical assistance.

Let me here place on record the appreciation of CARICOM for the forthcoming contribution of the OAS and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to our technical assistance and capacity building. As we contemplate the multiple trade agendas facing our region, there will be need for sustained assistance to ensure our adjustment and the implementation of the new obligations to be assumed.

How, then, can we ensure that actions taken at the hemispheric level dovetail automatically into the regional development agenda, the two processes working simultaneously towards a united objective? I will return to my thoughts on this subject later in my presentation.

The emergence of various economic blocs across the globe is not mere coincidence. It is a natural progression towards strengthening the ability of individual countries to use their collectivity to face the new era of international economic relations.

Smaller units operating on their own can no longer be viable counterweights in this rapidly changing world. Based on this recognition, we in this hemisphere have not shied away from the inevitable, and we see the integration movement as our best response to the challenges we now face. The establishment of CARICOM, the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), the Andean Group, and so on are therefore regional lifelines cast upon the turbulent waters of globalization.

As you have heard, CARICOM formally launched the Single Market (CSM) just over a month ago, and we are moving towards the Single Economy by 2008, as we envisaged in the Grand Anse Declaration of 1989 in Grenada. We have, through a methodical, comprehensive, and measured approach, taken the necessary steps to ensure that our modus operandi carries with it the philosophy that no country will be left behind. For this reason, we in CARICOM have been careful to elaborate plans for the CARICOM Regional Development Fund (RDF) in order to assist in the critical period of adjustment. We also fervently believe that at the hemispheric level, no country should be left behind.

Over the years, and even now, we have put in place a number of other institutional arrangements that seek to ensure a structured operation through which, we hope, any future transition can be both seamless and effective. CARICOM heads entertain no misconceptions about the challenges we face. If we are to effectively deliver on the objectives in our revised Treaty of

Chaguaramas, we must take some bold steps and remain unswerving in our commitment to achieve our targets.

Let me share briefly with you some of the challenges we face in the Caribbean. We have been seriously affected by the EU's stipulation as it relates to two vital commodities: bananas and sugar. In the case of the former, we have expressed the importance of the higher tariff of €2.75 per ton to ensure that adequate protection is in place for our banana farmers. For sugar, the proposed 39 percent price cut is of grave concern for us, as is the proposed implementation timetable of four years. Let us remember that in 2005, damage from Hurricane Dennis totaled some US\$40 million. The impact was even greater later in 2005, with more hurricanes affecting the agricultural and tourism sectors and causing even more horrible damage to our physical infrastructure.

Through these illustrations, which in some cases may be magnified based on the country in the region that you choose, I proffer today that our solutions for the various subregions we represent and, by extension, the Hemisphere, cannot be simple, unilateral, or implemented overnight. The moment has arrived for us to seek bipartisan commitment to national and regional goals, which will then translate into full integration into other institutional arrangements. The strength of governance will only be embraced when we are able to replace the retracing of steps by different administrations with a brisk walk forward towards our common goals.

Education, ladies and gentlemen, must be an engine driving growth and pushing development. The technology-driven world we live in today demands knowledge, skills, research, and effective solutions, and it must provide answers to the questions being asked by our youth. We must facilitate that process at all levels to ensure that progression from one level to the other, from one discipline to the next, takes place constantly. If we are to achieve these goals and objectives, which are outlined in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the charters of the OAS, and the Strategic Plan for Partnership for Integral Development 2006-2009, we must act now on this other pillar of development.

Justice and the rule of law, in all its forms, at all levels, must exist without compromise or prejudice. We have to exercise the will to maintain law and order, not merely through the imposition of penalties but through the encouragement of a sense of just, law-abiding, and ordered behavior by all our citizenry. Too many of our resources are being spent presently on managing conflict and security, therefore preventing us from providing more, as opposed to securing less, as we do now.

Sometimes when we seek to solve larger problems, such as the challenges of globalization, we overthink and overanalyze them and we bypass adherence to the fundamentals. We must always be mindful of the basic elements, the smallest cogs in the wheels, and the importance of measurements.

Let me now address an issue that is very close to my heart. The conduct of international and institutional relations can only be improved when we allow principle, integrity, honor, and justice to prevail. The people we lead and the interests we must serve are looking to us to provide enlightened and inspired leadership. That expectation becomes magnified with every decision we are called upon to take, because we are more interdependent than we have ever been before.

Security, health, and environmental issues remind us daily of our own vulnerability as individuals and countries and behoove us to be mindful of these concerns at all levels.

The recent outrage in the Muslim world recalls for us the far-reaching effect of our actions and our words and, by extension, points to some of the intolerances within our societies. We must guard against all these inclinations.

Inclusiveness and inclusion must be one of the cardinal principles that we use to dovetail our own actions and create what I call concentric circles of goodwill. The old adage holds true today that we will reap what we sow. Let us be mindful of the seeds we put down today in order to avoid reaping bitter fruit in the future.

And so, some sixty years after its creation, the OAS is summoned to face bold new challenges that confront our entire hemisphere. In order to adequately respond, the modality by which the Organization operates must also change. It must avoid sterile debate, and it must become an instrument and a catalyst for positive social change. This requires that the OAS become an effective institution for decision-making at the highest political and economic levels. This must be your quest in the decade ahead.

Your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, it has indeed been a pleasure for me to be able to address you today, to share my thoughts, and to issue a charge and a challenge to you all. As life and experience have taught me, the process of learning never ends. As we learn, we must impart, for in the words of Khalil Gibran, "to withhold is to die." We who are gathered here have a tremendous responsibility to make the world safer and better for those who have placed their confidence in us. We have many opportunities to do so every day by our own conduct and the leadership we provide. Let us not deny ourselves a hemisphere of social justice where peace, prosperity, and harmony will prevail.

Thank you. [Aplausos.]

[Pausa.]

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you very much, Prime Minister, for your very insightful remarks.

May I now ask the distinguished representatives to remain in their places so that the Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Most Honorable Percival James Patterson, can greet them. We will then have a five-minute break, after which the meetings of the Preparatory Committee and the Permanent Council will follow.

[El señor Primer Ministro de Jamaica abandona la Sala, acompañado de su comitiva.]

