

CONSEJO PERMANENTE



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ACTA
DE LA SESIÓN PROTOCOLAR
CELEBRADA
EL 12 DE ABRIL DE 2006

Para conmemorar el
Día de las Américas

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CONSEJO PERMANENTE DE LA ORGANIZACIÓN DE LOS ESTADOS AMERICANOS

ACTA DE LA SESIÓN PROTOCOLAR CELEBRADA EL 12 DE ABRIL DE 2006

En la ciudad de Washington, a las dos y cincuenta de la tarde del miércoles de 12 de abril de 2006, celebró sesión protocolar el Consejo Permanente de la Organización de los Estados Americanos para conmemorar el Día de las Américas. 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 Esteban Tomic, Representante Permanente de Chile
Embajador Paul D. Durand, Representante Permanente del Canadá
Embajador Rodolfo Hugo Gil, Representante Permanente de la Argentina
Embajador Bayney R. Karran, Representante Permanente de Guyana
Embajadora Abigail Castro de Pérez, Representante Permanente de El Salvador
Embajador Aristides Royo, Representante Permanente de Panamá
Embajador Osmar Chohfi, Representante Permanente del Brasil
Embajador Mario Alemán, Representante Permanente del Ecuador
Embajador José Luis Velásquez Pereira, Representante Permanente de Nicaragua
Embajador Fernando de la Flor Arbulú, Representante Permanente del Perú
Embajador Alejandro García-Moreno Elizondo, Representante Permanente de México
Ministro Consejero Jorge A. Seré Sturzenegger, Representante Interino del Uruguay
Consejera Patricia Bozo de Durán, Representante Interina de Bolivia
Embajador Antonio Rodrigue, Representante Interino de Haití
Ministra Consejera Mayerlyn Cordero Díaz, Representante Alterna de la República Dominicana
Embajador Luis Guardia Mora, Representante Alterno de Costa Rica
Primer Secretario Henry Leonard Mac-Donald, Representante Alterno de Suriname
Primera Secretaria Ann-Marie Layne Campbell, Representante Alterna de Antigua y Barbuda
Segunda Secretaria Betty Greenslade, Representante Alterna del Commonwealth de las Bahamas
Consejero Frank Montgomery Clarke, Representante Alterno de San Vicente y las Granadinas
Embajador Mauricio Aguilar Robles, Representante Alterno de Honduras
Ministra María Clara Isaza Merchán, Representante Alterna de Colombia
Consejero Paul Byam, Representante Alterno de Trinidad y Tobago
Embajador Timothy J. Dunn, Representante Alterno de los Estados Unidos
Ministro Consejero Michael E. Bejos, Representante Alterno de Belice
Primer Secretario José Mendez Vall, Representante Alterno del Paraguay
Tercer Secretario Jorge Eduardo Contreras, Representante Alterno de Guatemala
Primer Secretario Carlos Alberto Rodríguez, Representante Alterno de Venezuela
Ministra L. Ann Scott, Representante Alterna de Jamaica
Primer Secretario Ricardo Kellman, Representante Alterno de Barbados

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: I am pleased to call to order this protocolary meeting of the Permanent Council, which has been convened to commemorate Pan American Day.

PALABRAS DEL SECRETARIO GENERAL

La PRESIDENTA: I call upon the Secretary General, José Miguel Insulza, to address this Council.

El SECRETARIO GENERAL: Muchas gracias, señora Presidenta.

El panamericanismo es una antigua idea cuyos orígenes se remontan al Congreso Anfictiónico de Panamá en 1826. Desde entonces, ha sido una aspiración de todos los pueblos de las Américas.

Confieso, sin embargo, que hasta hace poco ignoraba la existencia de un día para conmemorarlo y probablemente este día sea útil para preguntarnos hasta qué punto hemos avanzado desde aquella lejana fecha de 1826 o desde hace 116 años, cuando en 1890 se creó la Unión Internacional de las Repúblicas Americanas, posteriormente llamada la Unión Panamericana y devenida en 1948 en la Organización de los Estados Americanos.

Ciertamente, seguimos siendo una Organización que aspira a forjar una comunidad hemisférica amplia y sólida, con pleno respeto a los derechos humanos sin exclusiones, con gobiernos eficientes y transparentes en el marco de una plena vigencia del Estado de Derecho, con seguridades; es decir, sin guerras, sin drogas, sin crimen y con un medio ambiente recientemente protegido y sustentado. Aspiramos también a erradicar la pobreza que nos avergüenza.

Esta simple aspiración, ciertamente, no ha sido suficiente y, por lo tanto, hoy nos obliga a reflexionar acerca de nuestra disposición a construir con un mismo esfuerzo y empeño una sociedad como a la que aspiramos.

Somos un continente diverso en cuanto a lenguas, razas, culturas, historias, tradiciones, pero siempre abrigamos la esperanza común de un desarrollo humano sostenible, más amable y un mejor bienestar para nuestros pueblos.

Cuando comenzamos a caminar, entonces, en la senda de este nuevo milenio, este día puede servirnos para recodar como vigentes los cimientos del ideario panamericano. Simón Bolívar dijo en una ocasión: “No olvidemos jamás que la excelencia de un sistema no consiste en su teoría, en su forma, ni en su mecanismo, sino en ser apropiado a la naturaleza y el carácter de la nación para la cual se instituye”.

Es precisamente ese carácter, esa nación la que aún se espera en nuestra América. Nuestros pueblos esperan que sus sueños y sus promesas se cumplan y que el respeto a todas las libertades sea una realidad: derrotar la tiranía, la miseria, la injusticia y el sistema de privilegios y la ignorancia y vivir en un clima de solidaridad entre nuestros países en torno a acciones colectivas y propósitos comunes.

En ese sentido es válido decir que la diversidad que nos distingue debe constituir nuestra fortaleza, porque finalmente nos unen muchos más ideales comunes que las diferencias que nos separan.

No podemos ignorar la inmensa responsabilidad que tenemos por delante en el nuevo milenio. Hemos trazado nuestras metas; hemos iniciado un proceso; hemos definido, recién iniciado el milenio, las reglas en aquel aciago 11 de septiembre del 2001 cuando firmamos la Carta Democrática Interamericana. Ahora debemos abrazar los retos y cumplir con lo prometido.

En 1961, en un discurso que conmemoraba el renacimiento del panamericanismo, el Presidente John Kennedy habló de una nueva Alianza para el Progreso para hacer frente a las necesidades básicas de la gente: empleo, salud, educación, tierras.

Hoy nuestros gobiernos de América Latina y el Caribe siguen enfrentando los mismos retos y la Organización de los Estados Americanos es la expresión más visible de una continuidad histórica que nos muestra un pasado común y nos presenta la posibilidad de un futuro colectivo y solidario.

El camino no ha sido fácil para ninguno de los 34 Estados Miembros de esta Organización. Hemos hecho avances, hemos trabajado mucho, pero nos queda un largo camino aún. Creo que recorrerlo juntos vale la pena. Por eso estamos aquí hoy, una vez más, en este día tan especial, que es el día de nuestra región de las Américas.

Muchas gracias, Presidenta.

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you very much, Secretary General. Your remarks were most inspiring.

PALABRAS DE LA PRESIDENTA DEL CONSEJO PERMANENTE

La PRESIDENTA: On this occasion, and in my capacity as Vice Chair of the Council, let me take a few moments to reflect on the significance of the events that we are commemorating today.

As the 19th century was drawing to a close, the leaders of the then independent nations of the Americas chose to acknowledge openly that it was far more beneficial to pursue national and regional objectives through dialogue and peaceful interaction than through armed conflict. This new *modus vivendi*, which was somewhat revolutionary for that era, led to the First International Conference of American States, held in Washington, D.C., in 1890. The main objective of this conference was the creation of the Pan American Union, which was finally realized in 1910.

The Pan American Union set itself the noble task of promoting friendship and cooperative action among the nations and peoples of this hemisphere. In 1930, its members agreed to observe Pan American Day on April 14 as a way to celebrate peace, friendship, and cooperation throughout the Americas.

Today, we at the Organization of American States uphold that tradition begun by the Pan American Union and proudly recall the same spirit of peace and cooperation that prevailed more than a century ago.

A brief glance at the map of the world in 1890 and at today's world map may suggest the degree of stability that has been maintained in the Americas, in comparison with other regions that have seen significant redrawing of borders and tumultuous uprooting of peoples within the past few decades alone.

Indeed, many more countries of this hemisphere have gained independence since the First International Conference of American States in 1890. However, with the rarest of exceptions, this progress has been attained through peaceful means, and the integrity of the states in this hemisphere has largely been maintained, even in the face of border disputes, through mechanisms that favor fruitful dialogue and a peaceful resolution of differences between American states, rather than bellicose and mutually destructive options.

This peaceful, fraternal, and productive climate is due in large part to the foresight of those Americans from all parts of the Hemisphere who influenced the Pan American process at its inception. It is equally the result of today's dedicated leaders, whose commitment to peace and democracy in the Americas and the world will be a legacy for our children and our children's children.

It is appropriate to recall that the essential purposes and principles of the Organization of American States are geared towards maintaining the stability of our hemisphere. In its preamble, the founding instrument of the OAS, the Charter, talks about "the desire of the American peoples to live together in peace and, through their mutual understanding and respect for the sovereignty of each one, to provide for the betterment of all." This noble calling, which requires us to work even harder to achieve "betterment of all," is as relevant and significant today as it was when the Charter was written and adopted.

Indeed, it must be said that we have made important strides towards attaining that goal. For instance, democracy has been embraced and has flourished throughout the Hemisphere. Today, we witness free and fair elections and the peaceful transition of power throughout the Americas. We see more being done to promote and preserve respect for human rights.

At the same time, however, many challenges remain. On the one hand, we witness improvements in the economies of some countries, but we also see others lagging behind. Countries and peoples are confronting the same serious economic and social problems of several decades ago, which, if allowed to further deteriorate, could quickly and dramatically affect gains achieved in other areas, democracy included.

Such situations should be of concern to all of us. If the benefits of democracy do not reach the peoples democracy proposes to empower, when democracy is threatened, those peoples are not likely to rise and defend it.

We have said countless times that the fight against poverty and the elimination of extreme poverty are essential to promoting and consolidating democracy and constitute a common responsibility. It is inconceivable, therefore, that in our region, 25 percent of our people live on less than two dollars a day. Behind Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean is the region with the greatest level of inequity, where the wealthiest 10 percent earns 48 percent of total income, whereas the poorest 10 percent earns only 1.6 percent of total income. If we compare these figures to those of industrialized countries, the upper 10 percent bracket earns 29 percent of income, whereas

the lower 10 percent earns 2.5 percent. Inequity has been identified as the single most important factor that must be addressed if we want to wage an effective fight against poverty and eventually achieve the principle of “betterment of all.”

We could continue citing statistics to illustrate the imbalances in the world and in our region, but the most important point is to have real political commitment and dedicated action to create and foster sustainable economies and stable democracies.

This morning, some of us had the opportunity to participate in a joint meeting of the Permanent Council and the Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CEPCIDI), and we received very stimulating presentations by all the regional development banks of this hemisphere. They touched on these issues and underscored the importance of investing in the development of institutional and human capacity in our member states.

For me, it is abundantly clear that the ability of countries to provide opportunities for their citizens to realize their full potential lies at the root of the challenges, and we have to work very hard to overcome these challenges.

Ladies and gentlemen, for better or for worse, the only constant is change. Change is inevitable; therefore, we must decide which side of change we will be found on when history beckons. Our ability to respond to and to manage it well will determine the success of our efforts to achieve “betterment for all” in the Hemisphere. It will determine whether we can fulfill the ideals of those great Americans who, more than a century ago, devised our institution, and of those who, in 1930, agreed to observe Pan American Day to celebrate peace, friendship, and cooperation. It will determine whether we can truly achieve an institution that works tirelessly for a better America for every American. I thank you.

LECTURA DE LA PROCLAMA DEL PRESIDENTE DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS
EN CONMEMORACIÓN DEL DÍA DE LAS AMÉRICAS

La PRESIDENTA: I give the floor to the Ambassador of the United States.

El REPRESENTANTE ALTERNO DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

With your permission, I would like to read the annual proclamation by the President of the United States in honor of Pan American Day and Pan American Week. I quote:

During Pan American Day and Pan American Week, we honor the commitment to liberty and common values we share with our Pan American neighbors.

The love of freedom has deep roots in the Pan American community. Not long after the United States won independence from Britain, patriots throughout the Americas were inspired to take their own stand. Today, there are more than 30 democratic nations in the region, and through the Organization of American States, leaders in the Western Hemisphere have an opportunity to discuss shared goals, promote prosperity, and strengthen democratic governance and institutions.

One of the surest ways to make opportunity real for all our citizens is through free and fair trade. In August 2005, I signed the legislation to implement the Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR). Our investment and trade through the CAFTA-DR will help build a better life for our citizens, and by reducing trade barriers, we can make our region more competitive in the global economy. Strong economic ties with democracies in our hemisphere foster stability and security and help lay the foundation for peace for generations to come.

The people of the Western Hemisphere are united by history, geography, and shared ideals. We will continue our important work to build a region that lives in liberty and grows in prosperity.

The President then calls on governors and other officials to honor these observances with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

La PRESIDENTA: Thank you, Ambassador.

The Chair would like to remind delegations that the regular meeting of the Permanent Council will begin immediately after this meeting. Following the regular meeting of the Council, we will have a meeting of the Preparatory Committee to receive the draft program-budget for 2007.

Ladies and gentlemen, this meeting is adjourned.

