

CONSEJO PERMANENTE



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ACTA
DE LA SESIÓN ORDINARIA
CELEBRADA
EL 1 DE ABRIL DE 2008

Aprobada en la sesión del 13 de enero de 2010

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CP/doc.4279/08, Nota de la Misión Permanente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela sobre la I Reunión de Altas Autoridades Nacionales en Materia de Reducción de Desastres Naturales y Gestión de Riesgos

CONSEJO PERMANENTE DE LA ORGANIZACIÓN DE LOS ESTADOS AMERICANOS

ACTA DE LA SESIÓN ORDINARIA CELEBRADA EL 1 DE ABRIL DE 2008

En la ciudad de Washington, a las once y diez de la mañana del martes 1 de abril de 2008, celebró sesión ordinaria el Consejo Permanente de la Organización de los Estados Americanos. Presidió la sesión el Embajador Michael I. King, Representante Permanente de Barbados y Presidente del Consejo Permanente. Asistieron los siguientes miembros:

Embajador Denis Ronaldo Moncada Colindres, Representante Permanente de Nicaragua y Vicepresidente del Consejo Permanente
Embajador Denis G. Antoine, Representante Permanente de Grenada
Embajador Izben C. Williams, Representante Permanente de Saint Kitts y Nevis
Embajadora Marina Valère, Representante Permanente de Trinidad y Tobago
Embajador Bayney R. Karran, Representante Permanente de Guyana
Embajador Francisco Villagrán de León, Representante Permanente de Guatemala
Embajador Aristides Royo, Representante Permanente de Panamá
Embajador Duly Brutus, Representante Permanente de Haití
Embajador Manuel María Cáceres Cardozo, Representante Permanente del Paraguay
Embajador Roberto Álvarez, Representante Permanente de la República Dominicana
Embajador Pedro Oyarce, Representante Permanente de Chile
Embajador Carlos Sosa, Representante Permanente de Honduras
Embajadora María del Luján Flores, Representante Permanente del Uruguay
Embajador Camilo Ospina, Representante Permanente de Colombia
Embajador Graeme C. Clark, Representante Permanente del Canadá
Embajador Efrén A. Cocíos, Representante Permanente del Ecuador
Embajador C. A. Smith, Representante Permanente del Commonwealth de las Bahamas
Embajadora María Zavala Valladares, Representante Permanente del Perú
Embajador José Enrique Castillo Barrantes, Representante Permanente de Costa Rica
Embajador Héctor Morales, Representante Permanente de los Estados Unidos
Embajador Anthony Johnson, Representante Permanente de Jamaica
Consejero Frank Montgomery Clarke, Representante Alternativo de San Vicente y las Granadinas
Primer Secretario Ricardo Kellman, Representante Alternativo de Barbados
Ministra Consejera Carmen Luisa Velásquez de Visbal, Representante Alternativa de Venezuela
Ministro Luis Javier Campuzano Piña, Representante Alternativo de México
Primera Secretaria Joy-Dee Davis-Lake, Representante Alternativa de Antigua y Barbuda
Ministro Consejero Agustín Vásquez Gómez, Representante Alternativo de El Salvador
Ministro Consejero William Torres Armas, Representante Alternativo de Bolivia
Ministro Consejero Lineu Pupo De Paula, Representante Alternativo del Brasil
Ministro Martín Gómez Bustillo, Representante Alternativo de la Argentina
Primer Secretario Joseph Aguilar, Representante Alternativo de Belize

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.

APROBACIÓN DEL PROYECTO DE ORDEN DEL DÍA

El PRESIDENTE: I am pleased to call to order this regular meeting of the Permanent Council, which has been convened to consider the items on the draft order of business, document CP/OD.1640/08.

[El proyecto de orden del día contiene los siguientes puntos:

1. Aprobación del orden del día (CP/OD.1640/08)
2. Primera Reunión de Altas Autoridades Nacionales en Materia de Reducción de Desastres y Gestión de Riesgos
 - Nota de la Misión Permanente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela (CP/doc.4279/08)
3. Acuerdo sobre la duración de la sesión conjunta del Consejo Permanente y de la CEPCIDI, “Pobreza, equidad e inclusión social: Seguimiento a la Declaración de Margarita” [AG/RES. 2307 (XXXVII-O/07)]
4. Transmisión de documentos:
 - Nota del Presidente del Comité Jurídico Interamericano remitiendo la resolución CJI/RES. 139 (LXXII-O/08) “La Situación Jurídica de los Trabajadores Migratorios y Sus Familias en el Derecho Internacional” (CP/doc.4283/08)
 - Nota del Presidente del Comité Jurídico Interamericano remitiendo la resolución CJI/RES. 140 (LXXII-O/08) “Promoción de la Corte Penal Internacional” (CP/doc.4284/08)
5. Otros asuntos.]

If there are no objections, the draft order of business is approved.

ENTREGA DE UN MALLETE AL REPRESENTANTE DE LAS BAHAMAS, PRESIDENTE SALIENTE DEL CONSEJO PERMANENTE

El PRESIDENTE: Before we proceed, I would like to take a moment to present the commemorative gavel to our very good colleague and friend, Ambassador Cornelius Smith, Permanent Representative of The Bahamas. Ambassador Smith was our Chairman for the past three months, and I am confident that I speak for all the members of this body in praising his excellent work, especially during some very touchy moments.

I will now ask Ambassador Smith to come to the podium so that I may present him with this symbolic gavel in recognition of his chairmanship.

[El Presidente hace entrega de un malleto al Representante de las Bahamas.] [Aplausos.]

I have a request for the floor from the immediate past Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Permanent Council, who would both like to say a few words to the Council.

EL REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE LAS BAHAMAS: Mr. Chair, I consider myself most privileged and honored to have had the opportunity to serve my country, the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, and this distinguished hemispheric organization as Chair of the Permanent Council for the past three months. The experience was invaluable; the challenges rare but pregnant with possibilities and opportunities.

The Permanent Council experienced a very active three-month period during which there were 14 regular and special meetings, a Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, and two critical missions.

I was part of the mission to Haiti to provide support for the strengthening of democratic institutions in the socioeconomic development of Haiti. I gained a fuller appreciation and understanding of the daunting task faced by our sister nation as it attempts to consolidate democratic and human rights issues; provide a peaceful, safe, and secure environment for its citizens; strengthen its relationship with its neighbor; facilitate economic development; and reduce poverty.

Now is the time for the international community, donor countries, and the Organization of American States to stop the discussions about what is wrong in Haiti and to seize the limited window of opportunity available to us to provide all the human and financial resources to ensure that Haiti continues its upward path toward becoming a democratic and economically successful partner.

The success of our mission to Haiti depended upon the hard work and the assistance of members of the team, including the distinguished ambassadors of Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Peru, Uruguay, the United States, Mexico, and Chile. I wish to record my thanks and appreciation to each of you and to your capitals for ensuring a successful mission.

The conflict between two member—Ecuador and Colombia—tested the mettle and resolve of this body to live up to the high ideals expressed in its Charter: to resolve conflicts among member states through investigation and conciliation, direct peaceful negotiations and dialogue, rather than at the end of a gun or the discharge of bombs.

I believe that the facts speak for themselves. The speed with which the Permanent Council acted and the results that were achieved speak to your ability and resolve to meet this and, God forbid, future challenges of this nature.

The events leading up to this specific conflict are born of half a century of history and, therefore, will take some time to resolve. Resolution can and will come through a real effort on the part of all concerned to work towards a peaceful solution. We at the OAS must be guided by the principle that prosperity and democracy will only survive in this hemisphere as long as there is peace in the Hemisphere.

In this regard, the Secretary General, as mandated by the Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, must continue to use his good offices and engage the parties until diplomatic relations are restored.

Negotiations to resolve this conflict required patience, long sleepless hours, diplomacy, the art of listening, and the courage to spend time in the inhumane jungles of Ecuador, but a number of your colleagues did just that, and I wish to thank them personally. They included the ambassadors of Brazil, Argentina, Panama, and Peru, led, of course, by the Secretary General.

I thank the dedicated staff of the Bahamian Permanent Mission to the OAS for helping to make my transfer from The Bahamas to Washington as easy as it was. I thank the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary General, and the staff of the Secretariat, especially Molly and Sherry, for their able assistance, which made the task easy and the experience so beneficial.

The distinguished Ambassador of Panama was always available for guidance and to take charge when called upon. Ambassador, I thank you for your able assistance.

On assuming the chairmanship of the Permanent Council, I resolved to improve a specific practice: our timekeeping at this organization. I must confess that I failed. The extent of that failure was brought home on Friday last when a colleague said to me that in all his experience at the OAS, he had found it impossible to come late to a meeting.

That remark reminded me of a chairman that I once served under. He instituted a very simple practice: he would start every meeting on time, and the person or persons arriving 10 minutes after the meeting started would be responsible for buying lunch that day for all members present. Needless to say, there was never a time that the chairman had to wait for a quorum. Meetings started on time, with all present. I thought that might be food for thought for you, incoming Chairman.

Your Excellency, the distinguished Ambassador of Barbados, Mr. Michael King, it was with great pleasure and a deep sense of pride that I handed over to you the gavel, your instrument of authority. As I said earlier, it is a powerful instrument, but I am confident that you will exercise the authority that this gavel provides, to the benefit of this organization. Congratulations!

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much for your kind words. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Panama.

EI REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE PANAMÁ: Muchas gracias, Presidente.

En primer lugar, quisiera felicitarlo y congratularnos de que asuma usted la presidencia de este Consejo Permanente. Estoy seguro de que va a contar con la colaboración de todos los Estados y, naturalmente, con la colaboración de Panamá porque usted sabe bien que los *Barbadians* son casi como panameños por toda la contribución que dieron a la construcción del Canal y su presencia allí.

Suele hablarse siempre del rey puesto y no del rey muerto. En este caso usted es King, rey puesto, pero quiero decir algo también sobre la figura y la persona de C.A. Smith, el anterior Presidente, el *past president*. Estaba seguro –y por eso pedí la palabra– de que él no iba a hablar sobre sí mismo y quisiera que todo el Consejo Permanente supiera dos cosas.

Primero, cuando se discutió aquí la resolución del 5 de marzo, después de alrededor de catorce horas y media de discusiones, quiero que sepan que en las discusiones, que en muchos momentos fueron auténticamente difíciles, la presencia, la participación, el sentido de equidad, la paciencia, la coordinación, el sentido de justicia que desplegó el Embajador Smith fueron muy, muy positivos para la solución a la cual llegamos y así fue también para el resto de las discusiones. Tiene un buen juicio y hubiera sido un magnífico magistrado de haberse dedicado a los temas judiciales.

Lo segundo que quiero decir es lo siguiente: Se ha expresado en muchas ocasiones que en el golf, en los viajes, se conoce bien a las personas. Agradezco haber sido compañero de viaje del Embajador Smith porque me permitió en esos cinco días de viaje conocerlo intensamente. No oímos de él ni como Presidente del Consejo ni como persona jamás una sola queja; estaba siempre dispuesto a acudir a todos los lugares, a todas las horas, a todas las reuniones, concedió las entrevistas que le fueron puestas y realmente fue un excelente proveedor de equilibrados conceptos.

Agradezco mucho esta oportunidad que he tenido de haber sido Vicepresidente, colaborador y compañero de viaje del Embajador Smith. Para él, mi más calurosa enhorabuena.

Muchas gracias, Presidente.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, Ambassador Royo.

It was not our intention, really, to open up the floor for debate because of the lateness of the hour and the items on our order of business, but I have two requests here, and I am entertaining only these two requests. At a later time, you can say your kind words.

I give the floor to the Ambassador of Colombia first.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE COLOMBIA: Seré muy breve, señor Presidente.

En primer lugar, señor Presidente, quisiera felicitarlo y manifestarle nuestra intención de colaborar con usted en el buen éxito de su labor que, no tenemos duda, con su experiencia y su capacidad será la mejor para la Organización en este momento previo a la Asamblea General de Medellín. Muy especialmente quisiera agradecer al Embajador Smith que, como Presidente de este Consejo, participó en este proceso de acercamiento entre Colombia y Ecuador, toda esta coyuntura, y lo hizo de una forma brillante, lo hizo de una forma muy profesional, de una forma muy importante para nosotros.

Quisiera agradecerle enormemente su buena voluntad, su actitud positiva, su visión de largo plazo. También le agradezco enormemente toda la amabilidad que tuvo para las dos partes y la sabiduría con que supo manejar este proceso. Muchas gracias, Embajador Smith, y bienvenido, Embajador King.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Ecuador.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DEL ECUADOR: Gracias, señor Presidente.

La Delegación de mi país quiere expresarle a usted su congratulación por haber asumido el liderazgo del Consejo Permanente. Estamos absolutamente seguros de que con su presencia, su capacidad, su ilustración, usted va a conducir acertadamente por los cauces que corresponden a la Organización de los Estados Americanos y a su alto organismo.

No quisiera dejar de agradecer también al Embajador Cornelius Smith, Presidente saliente, bajo cuya conducción se produjeron los acontecimientos que son del conocimiento de todos. El Ecuador está muy agradecido por la conducción acertada y el liderazgo expresados en las múltiples reuniones y gestiones que se tuvieron que hacer para volver a los cauces de la normalidad y de la legalidad en ese problema que tuvimos quienes estamos ahora representando a los diferentes países aquí en el seno de la Organización de los Estados Americanos.

Gracias, Embajador Cornelius Smith, por su gestión, por su comprensión y por la labor desarrollada en beneficio de la defensa de los principios de la Organización de los Estados Americanos que han quedado incólumes desde todo punto de vista.

Quiero expresarle que usted, señor Presidente Michael King, va a encontrar en la Delegación del Ecuador toda nuestra colaboración y todo nuestro respaldo.

Muchas gracias.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you also for your very kind words.

PALABRAS DEL REPRESENTANTE DE BARBADOS
AL ASUMIR LA PRESIDENCIA DEL CONSEJO PERMANENTE

El PRESIDENTE: I think you have to listen to me now as I make a few remarks to the Council. I shall be very brief. I will not follow the example of King Henry VIII, who once told one of his many wives: "This shall not last long."

Mr. Assistant Secretary General, colleague permanent representatives of the member states, alternate representatives, distinguished permanent observers to the Organization of American States, the representatives who are joining us today, ladies and gentlemen—and I include the staff of the Secretariat in that group:

I would like, again, to thank the outgoing Chairman, Ambassador Cornelius A. Smith of The Bahamas, for the diligence with which he discharged his duties on behalf of the Organization during the preceding three months. It is my hope that, with your cooperation, we will all be able to manage the affairs of the Permanent Council with alacrity and dispatch during my tenure as Chairman of this august body.

You will be interested to know that I have focused upon the theme of promoting a culture of peace and equality in this hemisphere as a guide to help frame our work as we tackle the challenges that confront us daily. Colleagues, this theme encapsulates two timely topics that are currently occupying the attention of the governments and peoples of the member states of the Organization of American States: the concept of traditional security and the necessity of building lasting peace

through the creation of opportunities for persons, not only to meet their needs but also to develop the full range of their capabilities.

The latter point builds on this organization's acceptance of the concept of the multidimensional nature of security in the Hemisphere. It is clearly understood that individuals who are prevented from participating in the economic, social, and political affairs of their countries will eventually participate in eroding the existing political economic and social framework.

I do not believe that any of us would discount the fact that the best way to safeguard the health of this hemisphere's political and democratic system is to deepen the emphasis on social justice. Yet, there remains a dire need for significant portions of our populations to be treated with respect and decency.

The need for equality within countries is apparent when the condition of afro-descendants, indigenous people, women, youth, and the disabled is observed. Many of them are reduced to an intolerable state of poverty, through no fault of their own, and without the necessary access to the means that will promote their advancement. All of our governments, by virtue of being democratically elected, have a political and moral obligation to ensure that there is equitable access to education, health care, social interaction, and economic opportunities.

As much as I would love to lay claim to youth, I am quite hindered by reality. The OAS celebrates its 60th year of existence this year, and Barbados, as the second state from the English-speaking Caribbean to join the body, has been actively involved in the work of this organization for just over forty years. Some of my country's most outstanding citizens and diplomats have devoted their time and energy as members of the Delegation of Barbados to the OAS and as persons serving from within the Organization and the inter-American system to promote a hemispheric culture that is inclusive and that promotes the deepening of the democratic process.

This is evident, for example, in my country's keen support of the human rights agenda since it joined the OAS in 1967. Our contribution, along with that of the other member states of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in emphasizing the need for governments to respect and promote the fundamental human rights of their citizens at a time when much of the Hemisphere was under authoritarian rule and military dictatorships, certainly contributed to hastening the end of these systems. Representatives of OAS member states were adamant that our governments should represent all the people that live in their countries. These statements no doubt encourage citizens and policymakers who yearn for a better way of life for themselves and their compatriots in order to improve their lot.

It is also my hope that by reflecting on how we can promote a culture of peace and equality in this hemisphere, we will underscore and complement the theme of the thirty-eighth regular session of the General Assembly, "Youth and Democratic Values." Indeed, the focus of member states and the General Secretariat will be on the preparations for the upcoming General Assembly session in Medellín, Colombia, but I shall strive, with the thought of promoting a culture of peace and equality ever in view, to discharge the work before us in a true spirit of multilateralism.

In this regard, I call upon all of you, colleagues, for your assistance in making sure that the interests of the Organization of American States and the people of the Hemisphere are duly represented in a very determined and manageable manner.

I thank you very much.

BIENVENIDA AL NUEVO EMBAJADOR REPRESENTANTE DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS

El PRESIDENTE: It is now a great pleasure for me to welcome Ambassador Héctor Morales, Jr., who on March 14 presented credentials as the Permanent Representative of the United States to the Organization of American States.

Ambassador Morales has nearly 20 years of experience in U.S. commerce in the Americas, both as a businessman and as a lawyer.

He served as the United States Executive Director of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and as an Alternate Executive Director of the IDB.

Prior to his positions at the IDB, Ambassador Morales served as a consultant to companies focused on providing financial services to the Latin American and U.S. Hispanic markets, including the world's leading micro-lender to Latin America and a community development bank based in New York.

Between 1997 and 2000, Ambassador Morales worked in Argentina as President and General Manager of Reliant Energy Argentina. He joined Reliant Energy, a publicly traded company based in Houston, Texas, in 1993 as an attorney in the international law department. In 1995, he became Director of Project Development for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Before joining Reliant, Mr. Morales was in private practice as a business lawyer. He received his juris doctor from the University of Texas School of Law and his bachelor of arts degree in history from Columbia College in New York City.

Ambassador, we look forward with enthusiasm to your participation in the Organization's work and to sharing in and benefiting from your wealth of experience in multilateral affairs. I give you a warm welcome, and I now have the honor of inviting you to take the floor and say a few words.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Let me also welcome you in your role as Chairman and express support for you and your work, because it is extremely important.

I would also like to express gratitude to the outgoing Chairman, Ambassador Smith, for his fine stewardship during these past months. It has certainly been an interesting and challenging time, and his success is a measure of his great ability. It directly reflects his leadership.

Mr. Chairman, Secretary General, Assistant Secretary General Ramdin, esteemed colleagues: I am deeply honored with the confidence that President Bush, Secretary Rice, and the United States Congress have placed in me as the Representative of the United States to the Organization of American States.

Last year, President Bush delivered an address emphasizing our hemisphere's shared history. On behalf of the people of the United States, he pledged that the goal of our great country is to extend the blessings of liberty to every person in this hemisphere and that by doing so together, we will fulfill the destiny of this new world and set a shining example for others. Today, as I assume the U.S. chair as Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States, I am determined that this pledge be the guiding principle for my delegation's engagement in this institution.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to specifically thank Bob Manzanares and the entire U.S. Permanent Mission to the OAS for the fine work that they have done in representing the Mission.

My government's pledge speaks to a shared hemispheric vision of a more hopeful world. Secretary of State Elihu Root, when participating in the dedication of this wonderful building nearly 100 years ago, called for a hemisphere committed to peace and prosperity. In this tradition, we seek a community of nations on the path towards greater prosperity, liberty, and social justice, determined to make good on democracy's promise for all of our peoples.

I bring to this position my own personal conviction in the importance of vigorous multilateral engagement. I will do my utmost to find common ground. I greatly value consensus, and while it sometimes may be one of the hardest things to achieve, it is absolutely worth striving for.

As many of you know, I have had the opportunity to work multilaterally in the inter-American system in the area of development. I hope that my experience in another consensus-based institution will inform my work at the OAS and better enable me to advance the interests of the United States with our partners here in the OAS and to ensure that the Organization remains true to the core principles upon which it was founded.

The Inter-American Democratic Charter reaffirms the primacy of democracy and recognizes that it is essential for the social, political, and economic development of the peoples of the Americas. The Charter states further that development and democracy reinforce one another.

The United States is firmly committed to working through the OAS to foster democratic governance and protect fundamental rights and liberties. Governments must invest in the capacity of their people so that economic and social opportunities become meaningful to all members of society.

The rule of law is also essential to democracy. Citizens need to feel protected, for without security, development stops. The ultimate question is not whether government comes from the left or from the right, but whether a democratically elected government can govern democratically and engender prosperity for its citizens.

Over recent decades, the Western Hemisphere has undergone profound changes. Democracy prevails in all countries except one—Cuba—and respect for human rights is the norm, not the exception. Elected leaders must govern justly and democratically to maintain their legitimacy and to facilitate the growth of a domestic culture of democracy. We know that this is critical to the progress and development of economies and just societies, but it is also expected of us by our region's young people, and it will be of central interest at our upcoming General Assembly session in Medellín.

Many member states of this institution have benefited directly from OAS programs to strengthen their democracies. Our work here is critically important to further strengthen political

institutions in the Americas, but its influence extends beyond this hemisphere. Organizations, such as the African Union (AU), look to the OAS for models of democratic leadership and of best practices through the Community of Democracies process. Our successes here can redound to the benefit of countries throughout the world.

The United States remains committed to our Summit of the Americas process, which continues to enjoy bipartisan support in our Congress. As we approach the Fifth Summit of the Americas in 2009, I look forward to working closely with Trinidad and Tobago. I commend the excellent work it is carrying out to develop concrete, measurable goals that will show the citizens of this region how the Summit process positively impacts their lives. From the U.S. standpoint, this means fostering multilateral engagement in the Americas to ensure that the OAS and the Summits of the Americas continue to enhance their catalytic role in advancing our hemispheric agenda.

On a final note, Mr. Chairman, I wish to underscore my own strong belief in the importance of striving to reach consensus. Every day, in multilateral institutions, countries with diverse interests come together to put differences aside and strive for something that collectively can be stronger than individual wills.

The OAS has a dynamic that is balanced by individual national interests. Through its support and participation in this institution, the United States recognizes the need to work collectively to address the challenges faced by the countries of our hemisphere. While this dynamic can foster both stronger and better decisions, the process only works when there is a genuine commitment to engage.

Through my own personal experience, I have learned that consensus starts with respect, conversation, and a serious deliberation of the views and opinions of others. I understand that personalities and relationships can determine consensus-building and decision-making as much as any single government policy. We may have our differences, but by demonstrating good faith, integrity, and a willingness to listen, we can achieve admirable and durable results for the greater good of our countries and our citizens.

Mr. Chairman; Mr. Assistant Secretary General; fellow permanent and alternate representatives; the new Permanent Representative from Jamaica, Ambassador Johnson; outgoing Ambassador Villagrán—even though we won't have a great amount of time to work together, but I hope so in another capacity; I look forward to working alongside all of you as we move forward together on this extremely important path.

Thank you very much.

[Aplausos.]

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, Ambassador Morales.

BIENVENIDA AL NUEVO EMBAJADOR REPRESENTANTE DE JAMAICA

El PRESIDENTE: I now welcome, on behalf of the members of the Permanent Council and on my own behalf, Ambassador Anthony Smith Johnson, Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the Organization of American States.

Ambassador Johnson, who presented his credentials on March 20, 2008, is a graduate of the University of California in the area of international trade and finance, and he was a senior lecturer in the Department of Management Studies at the University of the West Indies (UWI) in Mona, Jamaica.

He was elected Senator in Jamaica in 1993 and served until 2007. During that period, he also served as Minority Leader of the Senate. In previous administrations, from 1983 to 1989, he served as Minister of State in the Ministries of Industry and Commerce and Agriculture and was a Member of Parliament of Jamaica.

Ambassador Johnson was Executive Director of the Private Sector Organization of Jamaica and was a Managing Director of Jangro Ltd., a manufacturing company.

Ambassador, we are honored to have you with us and hope that your tour of duty here will be long and fruitful. You bring to this organization a wealth of knowledge and experience, and we are certain that the deliberations of this Council and its various subsidiary bodies will be greatly enhanced by your contributions.

It is my honor to give you the floor.

EL REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE JAMAICA: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Assistant Secretary General, colleague permanent representatives, alternate representatives, permanent observers, members of the General Secretariat, ladies and gentlemen:

It is an honor to address the Permanent Council as Jamaica's Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States, having duly presented my credentials to the Secretary General on March 20.

Ambassador King, I am particularly pleased to be making this maiden presentation to the Permanent Council today as you assume the chairmanship of the Council. I look forward to working with you, Chairman; with all the distinguished members of the Permanent Council; and with the officials of the Secretariat in furtherance of the hemispheric agenda, particularly as we prepare for the upcoming General Assembly session in Medellín, Colombia.

My delegation heartily congratulates Ambassador Smith on his stewardship of the Council during the past three months. I had the honor to meet him just before he took part in that historic and epochal event that ended in restoring amity between two of the great countries of the Andes. I advised him on sanitary methods that are best taken in the tropical jungles, since The Bahamas is just outside the tropical zone but Jamaica is right inside the tropical zone. We were pleased that he and other members of the delegation were able to go to the Andes, close to one of the highest peaks in the world which, nonetheless, has one of the most severe climates in the world. We are happy that they are back and more than happy with the results of their deliberations.

Mr. Chairman, last September, Jamaica completed yet another democratic transfer of power following general elections, which resulted in the installation of a new government. The orderly and peaceful change in administration, the eighth since Jamaica gained independence in 1962, underscored the maturity of our democracy and our commitment to the rule of law and respect for human rights.

Whenever there is a peaceful transfer of power in a nation state, everyone who honors and respects the dignity of the human person must feel pleased. We in Jamaica continued in that great tradition last year. It is therefore a distinct honor and privilege to be representing the Government of Jamaica in this position at a time of such enormous challenges in the Hemisphere and, indeed, in the global community.

Many of our countries are facing serious economic and social challenges that are exacerbated by the growing challenges at the international level, underscoring the inextricable ties between national interests and global development. Rising oil and food prices, coupled with the uncertainties in the international capital markets, have placed further constraints on national development priorities.

Middle-income countries, such as Jamaica, face even greater challenges in terms of indebtedness, inequality, and poverty, and we are highly susceptible to abrupt changes in international capital flows and increased volatility in economic growth.

At the same time, we rejoice with those who have petrochemicals and resources that can take advantage of the opportunities that the higher food prices bring. When the prices are low, we complain that the prices are low and that earners have a difficulty in meeting their debts. When the prices are high, we complain that the prices are high and that we are having a problem paying them. This is what is called the model of the market. One must expect to ride through the circumstances and, whatever happens, not to look on the pessimistic side, but to look at the opportunities that it allows. We think that this is such a time in human affairs.

The Government of Jamaica remains determined to tackle these challenges head on and to seek to benefit from the opportunities inherent in trade and financial globalization and, in so doing, provide a national framework that will attract new investments, develop export markets, create new jobs, and promote accelerated growth. The collaboration and support of the international community remain critical to these efforts.

It is the view of the Government of Jamaica, and certainly my personal view, that in the world of commerce, there are no losers; there are only winners. All it takes is for everyone to ensure that he or she gets a good deal when sitting at the table. If it means working a little harder, losing a little more sleep, then let us be prepared to work harder and to lose sleep but to gain the advantage for our countries, because it is possible for all of us to be winners.

Mr. Chair, Jamaica's commitment to the principles of multilateralism has been unswerving and is guided by strong adherence to the tenets and principles of respect among sovereign states, territorial integrity, noninterference, and the peaceful settlements of disputes, all of which are underlying principles of the OAS Charter. In that regard, we reaffirm the continued importance and relevance of the Organization of American States in fulfilling its objectives of consolidating democracy, maintaining peace and security, and promoting economic development. When I listen to those words, they ring very much with the *Carta de Jamaica*, which the Great Liberator wrote in the city of Kingston, *Jamaica*, so many years ago, and which continues to inspire all of us, even those of you who are not from *Jamaica*.

Over the years, and particularly in the recent past, the OAS has recorded notable achievements in respect to several of these objectives, responding to requests for assistance in

reducing tensions and brokering disputes within and between countries. It remains our firm position that dialogue, in an atmosphere of mutual respect, constitutes the best—indeed, the only—way forward to resolve such crises.

The challenges facing our nations are many and varied, and they affect member states to varying degrees, leading, understandably, to different priorities and approaches. The vulnerabilities and special needs of small island states are a case in point. It is imperative that we continue to pursue collective and concerted actions, given the transnational nature of these challenges.

In mentioning small island states, Chair, I refer to the fact that we do have another organization within the OAS family, the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), of which I have the honor to be a distinguished representative. All of us within the Caribbean Community are dedicated to the principles of which I speak.

Additionally, we are faced with new and emerging challenges of energy and food security, as well as the overwhelming effects of climate change, which precipitate considerable economic, social, and environmental costs.

It is understandable, Chairman, that I would make special mention of the deleterious effects of natural disasters. We are all told by the experts that the Caribbean—and, indeed, the Western Hemisphere—has entered into a zone of increased economic activity with respect to the hurricanes and climate change.

Jamaica was ravaged by Hurricane Dean last August, after severe damage by Hurricane Ivan in 2004 and considerable losses from hurricanes Dennis and Emily in 2005. The heavy rains and winds associated with the hurricanes and the subsequent flooding in certain parts of the island caused considerable damage, particularly to Jamaica's agricultural sector and its infrastructure. The total cost to roads, housing, schools, hospitals, and farms is estimated to exceed US\$2 billion.

We therefore value the role that all institutions can play in responding to humanitarian needs, not only in Jamaica but wherever they arise, and in developing risk reduction and risk management strategies. In that regard, Jamaica looks forward to participating in the First Inter-American Meeting of National Authorities on National Disaster Reduction and Risk Management, to be held in Caracas, Venezuela, in June.

Mr. Chairman, the challenges to hemispheric security are no less daunting. Sustained vigilance is essential in the fight against the borderless phenomena of illicit drugs, illicit traffic in drugs and small arms, transnational organized crime, and terrorism, to which all our countries are vulnerable and which undermine our efforts to maintain stable and prosperous societies. Indeed, in this area, there are no winners; only losers.

In that regard, we would wish to make special mention of the pivotal role of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) in the fight against drugs in our hemisphere. Jamaica remains convinced that this mechanism is the most appropriate instrument to assess our efforts in this area, as it reflects the principle of shared responsibility.

As we prepare to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the Declaration of Security in the Americas later this year in Mexico City, the proposal of the Secretary General to convene a meeting

of ministers of public security to tackle these interrelated security issues in a single forum is worthy of our consideration. We also anticipate that the conclusions of the VIII Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas (CDMA), which Canada will host in September, aimed at enhancing defense and security at the regional and subregional levels, will dovetail into the broader discussions on security in the Americas and its multidimensional nature.

Mr. Chair, taking into account the priorities of my government, it would be imperative that Jamaica continue to show special interest in the issue of economic development and poverty reduction in our deliberations in this organization. We therefore continue to advocate the timely preparation of the Social Charter of the Americas, which should serve as a blueprint for action on the social agenda of the OAS in the fight against poverty. The commitment of all parties to forge consensus on this important, historic, hemispheric instrument is essential as we seek to ensure balanced treatment between the political, the economic, and the social agendas of the Organization.

Over the years, Jamaica has reiterated the importance of the development cooperation agenda of this organization. We have always advocated the partnership for development framework, which underpins the OAS's approach to integral development. Only recently, the Management Board of the Inter-American Agency for Cooperation and Development (IACD) approved the execution of 100 projects to be financed by resources from the Special Multilateral Fund of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (FEMCIDI). These projects will no doubt go a long way in assisting hundreds of communities and in building national and regional capacity. Unfortunately, there has been a decline in funding, but the OAS's unique cooperation mechanism, based on the common and shared responsibility of member states and on their needs, is worthy of our continued support and strengthening.

In this regard, the ongoing discussions within the Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CEPCIDI) to strengthen the political and institutional framework of the Organization's development portfolio, including the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI), represent a step in the right direction. For Jamaica, the measure of our success in this exercise must be reflected in the extent to which the reforms produce greater and more effective coordination of our activities and generate meaningful programs and projects tailored to the development needs of member states.

Jamaica also values the sectoral processes under way in the OAS through the various technical committees and ministerial encounters. These have been especially significant in the areas of social development, education, labor, culture, sustainable development, and decentralization within the local government reform agenda.

The issue of human resource development, with particular emphasis on education, is a top priority for Jamaica. The availability of and access to training opportunities contribute significantly to a productive workforce, which is, in turn, critical and, indeed, the basis of all development in all countries. We therefore continue to place great importance on the OAS Scholarship Program.

Mr. Chair, we have taken note of the timely visit of the OAS delegation to Haiti last February and were pleased to receive in the Permanent Council last week the Prime Minister of Haiti, who pointed to the considerable progress and accomplishments, as well as the concerns and challenges facing his country. It is necessary that we always have a balanced view, and many people were

hearing for the first time that, indeed, there have been successes within the Haitian agenda. All of us must feel pleased, which is not to say that there are not even more challenges ahead.

Jamaica maintains its call for the international community to provide the assistance pledged to Haiti in order to support the development efforts of that valiant country, in accordance with the Government's priorities. The OAS, in coordination with other partners in the international community, must continue to remain engaged with Haiti, the second country in the Western Hemisphere to gain its independence, as the Government seeks to tackle its economic and social challenges.

Mr. Chair, Jamaica looks forward to the Fifth Summit of the Americas, to be held in Port of Spain in 2009—the first occasion for the Caribbean to play host to the Summit process. Jamaica and its CARICOM partners are committed to supporting our sister nation, Trinidad and Tobago, in promoting a successful outcome based on the objective of securing our citizens' future by promoting human prosperity, energy security, and environmental sustainability.

Mr. Chairman, the overriding objective of Jamaica's foreign policy remains the pursuit of a global order that is conducive to peace and stability and that can promote sustainable development with justice and equity. This is the philosophy underlying the conduct of our relations, including those at the hemispheric level. You can be assured of my delegation's continued, active participation in the work of the Organization of American States, and I look forward to playing my part in a spirit of partnership and mutual respect.

I thank you.

[Aplausos.]

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, Ambassador Johnson.

PRIMERA REUNIÓN DE ALTAS AUTORIDADES NACIONALES EN MATERIA DE REDUCCIÓN DE DESASTRES Y GESTIÓN DE RIESGOS

El PRESIDENTE: The next item refers to the note from the Permanent Mission of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela regarding the First Meeting of High-level National Authorities on Natural Disaster Reduction and Risk Management, document CP/doc.4279/08.

At its meeting on January 30, 2008, this Council adopted resolution CP/RES. 928 (1627/08), in which it agreed that the above-mentioned meeting should take place in Caracas, Venezuela, from March 26 to 27, 2008.

I am pleased to give the floor to the Alternate Representative of Venezuela, who would like to make an intervention on this matter.

La REPRESENTANTE ALTERNA DE VENEZUELA: Gracias, Presidente.

La Delegación de Venezuela tiene el privilegio de tomar la palabra en un momento de despedidas y de bienvenidas. Queremos felicitar al Embajador Cornelius Smith por su gestión,

caracterizada por una paciencia y una sapiencia en el manejo de temas fundamentales en esta Organización.

También queremos darle la bienvenida a usted y manifestarle el compromiso de nuestra Delegación con su gestión. Nos ha gustado muchísimo el énfasis que ha puesto en el tema social y creemos que desde su permanencia en el Consejo Permanente va a ser muy importante para los trabajos que adelantamos en el tema de la Carta Social.

Igualmente, queremos aprovechar la oportunidad para darles la bienvenida al Embajador Héctor Morales, de los Estados Unidos, y al Embajador Anthony Johnson, de Jamaica, y también por integrarse a este grupo de trabajo.

Respecto a las despedidas tomaremos la palabra también para reconocer el trabajo del Embajador Francisco Villagrán y de su equipo, de Rita Claverie de Sciolli, que se separan de la Organización, pero nos han prometido seguir estando pendientes de nosotros.

Quisiera referirme ahora al punto relativo a la Reunión de Altas Autoridades Nacionales en Materia de Reducción de Desastres Naturales y Gestión de Riesgos, que se convoca en virtud de la resolución CP/RES. 928 (1627/08). Como usted informó, esta reunión se había programado para marzo y por una serie de actividades que se han dado en la OEA y la necesidad de ajustarlo también con otras actividades en Venezuela, se proponen como nuevas fechas, y estas ya están consensuadas también con la Secretaría –tratamos de ajustar esto también a la programación–, el 25 y 26 de junio. Nos parece que son unas fechas bien cómodas en términos de que eso nos permite salir de toda la preparación de la Asamblea.

En ese sentido, presentamos al Consejo Permanente la información respecto a las nuevas fechas, 25 y 26 de junio, de la Reunión de Altas Autoridades Nacionales en Materia de Reducción de Desastres Naturales y Gestión de Riesgos que mi país tiene el orgullo de hospedar.

Eso es todo, señor Presidente.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, Mrs. Velásquez. If there are no requests for the floor, I suggest that the Council agree to postpone the First Meeting of High-level National Authorities on Natural Disaster Reduction and Risk Management and that it take place in Caracas, Venezuela, on June 25 and 26, 2008. I also suggest that the Council request the Secretariat to revise resolution CP/RES. 928 (1627/08) accordingly. If there are no objections, it is so agreed.

ACUERDO SOBRE LA DURACIÓN DE LA SESIÓN CONJUNTA DEL
CONSEJO PERMANENTE Y DE LA CEPCIDI:
“POBREZA, EQUIDAD E INCLUSIÓN SOCIAL:
SEGUIMIENTO A LA DECLARACIÓN DE MARGARITA”

El PRESIDENTE: The next item refers to agreement on the duration of the joint meeting of the Permanent Council and the Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CEPCIDI) as a follow-up to General Assembly resolution AG/RES. 2307 (XXXVII-O/07), “Poverty, Equity, and Social Inclusion: Follow-up to the Declaration of Margarita.”

The chairs of the Permanent Council and CEPCIDI, in consultation with the General Secretariat, have concluded that this joint meeting could be reasonably held tomorrow, April 2, 2008, from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Since the agenda of this meeting was agreed by member states, I wish to submit for your kind consideration the shortening of this meeting to half a day. I do believe that with some diligent work, we can conclude our deliberations in that time.

The Delegation of Mexico has the floor.

EL REPRESENTANTE ALTERNO DE MÉXICO: Muchas gracias, señor Presidente.

Mi Delegación tiene entendido que en el marco de la Comisión Ejecutiva Permanente del Consejo Interamericano para el Desarrollo Integral (CEPCIDI) hubo un acuerdo en cuanto a que esta reunión durara todo un día. Tomando en consideración el calendario que se aprobó, vemos que se cuenta con una parte muy importante de presentaciones, tanto por parte de usted como de la Embajadora Abigaíl Castro, Presidenta de la CEPCIDI. Se espera una presentación del Embajador Ramdin, Secretario General Adjunto. También habrá presentaciones de distintas organizaciones. Finalmente, se espera también que haya un intercambio, que creo que es uno de los puntos más importantes de esa reunión con los Estados.

Entonces, mi Delegación considera que se debería respetar el acuerdo al que se llegó en la CEPCIDI y no limitar el tiempo para que los países puedan pronunciarse sobre el tema que compete, que es "Pobreza, equidad e inclusión social: Seguimiento de la Declaración de Margarita".

Por eso, señor Presidente, mi Delegación consideraría pertinente mantener el tiempo de un día para la sesión o, en todo caso, culminar con la discusión cuando se hayan agotado las participaciones de todos los Estados y se haya podido dar ese diálogo.

Muchas gracias.

EL PRESIDENTE: Thank you. I give the floor to the Delegation of Venezuela.

La REPRESENTANTE ALTERNA DE VENEZUELA: Gracias, Presidente.

Como lo ha manifestado la Delegación de México, en la CEPCIDI fue aprobada la convocatoria de esta reunión con un día de duración, y nosotros creemos también que debe ser la dinámica de la reunión la que determine el tiempo de finalizar. Es decir, que tomemos un día. Como va a haber siete presentaciones, ¿cuál es el espacio que tendrían los Estados Miembros?

Hemos estado discutiendo muchísimo en la CEPCIDI sobre la importancia de que las reuniones en la OEA den prioridad a la participación de los países, que haya un diálogo entre los países. Nos parece que al acortar la reunión a medio día solamente estaríamos oyendo las presentaciones de los invitados. En ese sentido, solicitamos que se mantenga el espacio de un día, tal como lo habíamos acordado en la reunión de CEPCIDI.

Gracias.

EL PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, Representative of Venezuela.

May I take the opportunity to intervene on this subject? If you were to look at the draft agenda that was prepared for this meeting, I do believe that with a little discipline we can start promptly at 9:30 a.m.—which is the way in which I like to do business, for the record—and dispose of the welcoming remarks within half an hour. If after three hours, four presentations cannot be made, as well as the interventions and statements from other delegations, we can continue beyond one o'clock until the meeting finishes, but I really have great difficulty, as Chair, in suggesting that we meet until five o'clock on this matter.

What is important is to be focused and to ensure that all of our bases are touched. We are looking more for quality rather than quantity at this time. I can assure you that the Secretariat will prepare the meeting well and that the presenters will all have enough time to do justice to the topics on which they will be speaking, so I beg of you to allow me to suggest that we look at finishing the meeting after one session, rather than come back after the lunch break. I am not too sure that we really need that much time.

I give the floor to the Representative of Venezuela.

La REPRESENTANTE ALTERNA DE VENEZUELA: Gracias, Presidente, y disculpe por tomar la palabra de nuevo.

Creemos que hay que reflexionar sobre la práctica; es decir, un grupo de Estados estuvimos negociando un tema, hicimos una propuesta y, después de la aprobación, se reciben unas contribuciones en términos de recortar la reunión. Creo que esto debe ser un trabajo previo de manera de no alterar algo que los Estados están recomendando.

Entendemos sus razones también en el sentido de que estaría ocupado. Quizá le pudiéramos pedir al Vicepresidente del Consejo Permanente que nos acompañe, pero creo que no es un asunto de nueve y media a cinco de la tarde. Dejemos que sea la misma dinámica de la reunión la que determine la duración. Ojalá que comencemos temprano, que quizás las presentaciones no sean de más de diez minutos y que sea la participación de los países la que determine —y también nos ajustáramos a unos diez minutos o algo parecido— en qué momento debe finalizar la reunión; ojalá que sea antes de las tres, las dos de la tarde, porque entendemos que tenemos muchos temas pendientes por atender.

Creo que el punto aquí es la práctica. Un grupo de países estuvo negociando, se llegaron a unos acuerdos y se trae hoy un punto a esta sesión respecto a la duración de la reunión. Creo que este es un punto que debió ser tratado en el momento en que estábamos armando el temario de la reunión y el calendario.

Gracias.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much. I give the floor to the Representative of Mexico.

El REPRESENTANTE ALTERNO DE MÉXICO: Muchas gracias, señor Presidente. Seré muy breve.

Simplemente para reiterar lo que acaba de señalar la Delegación de Venezuela. Creemos que la dinámica misma de la reunión debe determinar la duración; si se da la circunstancia de que para la

una de la tarde ya hemos concluido, perfecto. Sin embargo, si hay todavía interés de diversas delegaciones de seguir participando, creo que sí se debe respetar el acuerdo al que se había llegado en la CEPCIDI.

Muchas gracias.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you, sir. Your views are the same views that I have shared and presented to the Council because with all due respect, I do believe that we can conclude our work, with discipline and good planning, by 1:30 p.m. tomorrow, but the meeting will remain open until we are finished.

I give the floor to the Ambassador of Chile.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE CHILE: Muchas gracias, señor Presidente. Dos o tres ideas muy breves sobre este punto:

Primero, el tema de los Objetivos de desarrollo del Milenio tiene relevancia política para esta Organización y para el sistema multilateral en general. No daré mayores fundamentos de por qué el tema social es central.

Segundo, creo que podríamos hacer un esfuerzo, en particular en el punto 2 del proyecto de temario, para restringir las presentaciones. Hay veces –y lo quiero decir con el mayor respeto y franqueza–, que agencias o instituciones vienen al Consejo o a una reunión conjunta como esta y hacen una presentación –el otro día, no voy a mencionar quien la hizo– de una hora o una hora cinco.

Me parece que la atención que se puede prestar a ese tipo de presentaciones, por importante que sea el tema y la calidad de las personas que la hacen, es limitada. El rendimiento y la productividad baja. El tiempo de que se dispone es limitado. Entonces, se podría hacer un esfuerzo en hacerles una solicitud en ese sentido a la Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL), al Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD), a la Organización Panamericana de la Salud (OPS) y al Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID); son cuatro instituciones extraordinariamente relevantes para entender el funcionamiento de lo social –no el funcionamiento retórico, sino que real–; creo que ahí se podría hacer un esfuerzo.

Mi tercer punto sería que intentemos concluir al final de la mañana, pero, si no fuera posible, hay que dejar abierta la posibilidad de extender la reunión.

Señor Presidente, me parece que es lo más armónico y lo más equitativo. Lo contrario va a generar una tensión absolutamente innecesaria sobre un texto en que aparece aquí la reunión hasta las cinco y media. Comprendemos que la economía de tiempo es importante, pero tratemos de ser lo más ecuanímenes posible y ojalá empecemos a las nueve y media, ojalá alguien de la Secretaría –reitero, alguien de la Secretaría–, les haga ver a estas cuatro instituciones que tienen un tiempo limitado y también los Estados hagamos un esfuerzo para referirnos al tema y podamos distribuir, como lo planteó mi Delegación en la CEPCIDI, los avances que hemos tenido en cada país.

Este es un ejercicio, señor Presidente –perdone que me alargue un minuto–, que ya se ha visto en las Naciones Unidas, en que la CEPAL ha trabajado. Vamos mañana a lo práctico, a lo que la

OEA puede hacer para mejorar esa alianza en el cumplimiento de los Objetivos de desarrollo del Milenio.

Simplemente es una sugerencia que quiero compartir para hacer esto lo más justo posible.

Gracias.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, Ambassador.

Before I give the floor to the ambassadors of Grenada and Nicaragua, let me say that the intention of the Chair was to have item 2 of the agenda for tomorrow disposed of within half an hour. The words of welcome from the Chair of the Permanent Council, the Chair of the Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CEPCIDI), and the Assistant Secretary General would be restricted to half an hour. That means that from 10:00 a.m. to 11: a.m., each of the four presenters can speak for 15 minutes. Then we can open the floor from 11:00 a.m. until at least 1:30 p.m., for two and one-half hours, for general debate and presentations from delegations. So it is not that you will be cut off; I just feel that with a little discipline, as the Ambassador of Chile said, you can make your presentations in 15 minutes and then the floor can be opened for interaction, so that in two to three hours, we can dispose of this agenda.

I give the floor to the Ambassador of Grenada—unless you have, sir, some other issues to add. I suggest that we try to push on with this topic and come to a resolution that is agreeable to all. Thank you.

Ambassador of Grenada, you have the floor.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE GRENADA: Mr. Chairman, the Chair must have a good motivation for his recommendation. Maybe the Secretariat, in its technical capacity, can inform my delegation how long it took to plan the agenda that we have for tomorrow. Will we be able to meet the desired outcome in half a day?

Now, we are discussing critical areas of our body of work, the economic and social areas. What do we want to achieve from tomorrow's meeting? I agree that we have to save time, but we should also know whether we can meet the mandate for which the meeting was called in that abbreviated time.

Mr. Chairman, I did not take the floor only to be more informed. I really wish we weren't putting time into this discussion. However, a lot happened this morning, and I wanted an opportunity to speak. I don't know if I should speak now, so perhaps I will let others speak at this time and then speak under "Other business." I want more information on why we are abbreviating this meeting.

Thank you.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you. The Ambassador of Nicaragua has the floor.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE NICARAGUA: Gracias, señor Presidente.

Primero, quisiera felicitarlo por asumir la responsabilidad en el Consejo Permanente. Quisiera saludar y reconocer también la labor del Embajador Smith.

La Delegación de Nicaragua apoya las preocupaciones expresadas por las Delegaciones de México, Venezuela y también la propuesta del Embajador de Chile.

Señor Presidente, los temas que se van a abordar son de interés de toda las delegaciones de nuestro hemisferio. Si bien es cierto que coincidimos en que hace falta racionalizar los tiempos y las organizaciones y los programas en la OEA, de pronto como que fue muy apresurada la intención de comenzar a racionalizar con el programa de la CEPCIDI y el Consejo Permanente.

Entonces, pienso y sugiero, señor Presidente, que no limitemos el tiempo establecido, sí racionalizar, como decía el Embajador de Chile, las participaciones de algunos organismos internacionales y respetar los tiempos que ya están reglamentados en la participación de los Representantes de los Estados en los organismos de la OEA.

Muchas gracias, señor Presidente.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much. I give the floor to the Representative of El Salvador.

El REPRESENTANTE ALTERNO DE EL SALVADOR: Gracias, señor Presidente.

En primer lugar, siendo esta la primera vez que mi Delegación hace uso de la palabra, quisiera felicitarlo por haber asumido la presidencia del Consejo Permanente y desearle el mejor de los éxitos durante los próximos tres meses. Desde ya le brindamos nuestro apoyo en su gestión.

En segundo lugar, es imperativo para nosotros, como Delegación de El Salvador, pronunciamos sobre este tema que se está discutiendo esta mañana, teniendo en consideración que estamos ejerciendo la presidencia de la Comisión Ejecutiva Permanente del Consejo Interamericano de Desarrollo Integral (CEPCIDI).

Ciertamente, tal como lo han mencionado las Delegaciones de Venezuela, México y las otras que se han pronunciado, hay un acuerdo, adoptado en el marco de la CEPCIDI, sobre la duración, el contexto y el contenido de esta reunión que se va a desarrollar el día 2 de abril en seguimiento a la Declaración de Margarita. También tenemos conciencia de la economía de tiempo y de recursos que la Organización requiere en este momento. Se manifiesta en la presentación que nos hizo el Secretario General esta mañana en la Comisión Preparatoria sobre el proyecto de programa-presupuesto para 2009.

Como presidencia de la CEPCIDI, señor Presidente, coincidimos con la posición planteada por la Delegación de Chile. Creo que hay que tomar una decisión ecuánime, escuchar a las delegaciones que insisten en que se respete el acuerdo que se ha adoptado en la CEPCIDI, pero, como señalé, también hay que ser conscientes de la economía de tiempo y de recursos.

Así como se ha solicitado que se pida a los ponentes que traten de limitarse al tiempo establecido para que las delegaciones podamos tener un diálogo sustantivo, considero que las delegaciones, por nuestra parte, debemos ser disciplinadas y empezar a la hora que ha sido planteada.

Creo que si comenzamos la sesión a las nueve y media en punto, las delegaciones fácilmente vamos a poder desarrollar un diálogo sustantivo, probablemente hasta la una y cuarto o una y media. Como se ha mencionado, siempre se dejaría abierta la posibilidad de que si no logramos hacerlo – pero tomando en consideración que las delegaciones asumimos la autodisciplina de empezar a la hora programada– se continuaría por la tarde.

Esa sería la posición de la Presidencia de la CEPCIDI en cuanto a este punto, señor Presidente. Instamos a las delegaciones a ser disciplinadas en cuanto a que empiece a las nueve y media esta sesión en particular, respecto a la cual se ha presentado esta moción en esta mañana. De igual manera, se pide a la Secretaría coordinar con los ponentes para que traten de ajustarse al tiempo que se les ha establecido.

Gracias, Presidente.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, Representative of El Salvador. I know that you were speaking on behalf of the Chair of Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CEPCIDI), and I wish to thank you for your intervention.

It would seem to me that there is general agreement that we keep the conclusion time open, so I will listen to the words of wisdom of colleagues around the table. I suggest that we work until we finish the agenda. If, at one o'clock, we need to continue in the afternoon, so be it. Otherwise, we will try, with the collaboration and assistance of our invited guests, to work towards reaching a conclusion by the time that is required.

I do not believe that our other colleagues will now need to take the floor. [Aplausos.] [Risas.]

With all due respect to my colleagues from Saint Kitts and Nevis and Honduras, I will offer them the floor, but I saw that other members have declined their earlier requests. If you insist, Ambassador of Saint Kitts and Nevis, I will give you the floor. Please do not change the decision. [Risas.]

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE SAINT KITTTS Y NEVIS: Chair, I thank you.

I have come to know that it is unwise to go against the wishes of the King, even though he has been demoted to Chairman.

I am glad that an agreement has been tacitly arrived at with regard to keeping the conclusion time open. That, in its essence, is what I had hoped for.

Since you graciously, Your Majesty, accorded me the opportunity to continue, I want to congratulate you on your assumption of the chairmanship of this Council; to acknowledge the valuable contribution of Ambassador Smith during his tenure as Chair to the deliberations and activities of the Council; and to welcome Ambassador Johnson of Jamaica as a brother Caribbean Community (CARICOM) ambassador and to assure him of the unswerving support of my country.

Thank you, Chair.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much. So it is agreed that the meeting will remain open until we conclude the work. I wish to thank all members of the Council for your input.

TRANSMISIÓN DE DOCUMENTOS A COMISIONES

El PRESIDENTE: Item 4 relates to two issues that have been brought to the Council for consideration.

I wish to recommend strongly that resolution CJI/RES. 139 (LXXII-O/08), “The Legal Status of Migrant Workers and Their Families under International Law,” and resolution CJI/RES. 140 (LXXII-O/08), “Promotion of the International Criminal Court,” both presented by the Inter-American Juridical Committee (CJI), be referred to the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP) for its consideration. If there are no objections, it is so agreed.

PALABRAS DE RECONOCIMIENTO AL EMBAJADOR FRANCISCO VILLAGRÁN DE LEÓN, REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE GUATEMALA, EN OCASIÓN DE SU ALEJAMIENTO DEL CONSEJO PERMANENTE

El PRESIDENTE: Our next item is “Other business.” Unless members have issues to bring to the attention of this Council, I wish to take this opportunity to bid farewell to our good friend and colleague, Ambassador Francisco Villagrán de León of Guatemala.

Ambassador Villagrán was appointed Guatemala’s Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States in April 2004. He came to the OAS with an outstanding record in diplomacy, including serving as Guatemala’s Ambassador to Germany, Norway, Denmark, and Canada, and as Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the United Nations.

During his tour of duty at the OAS, he served as Chair of the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP) and of the Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs (CAAP). He also served as Coordinator of the Central American Integration System (SICA) group.

I had the pleasure of working with Ambassador Villagrán as an Alternate Representative to the OAS more than twenty-five years ago, and I always enjoyed engaging him and recognizing his depth of knowledge, his professionalism, and his sense of humor.

Ambassador Villagrán’s enthusiasm and involvement in the Organization will be greatly missed. We are sure that you will continue to serve your country with distinction, and even though you are not leaving this town, I am quite sure that you will always be part of the Organization of American States. On behalf of the Council, I wish you and your family best wishes and every success.

I offer the floor to the subregional coordinators and the delegations of the United States and Canada for comments on the life and times of Paco Villagrán *aquí en el Consejo Permanente de la OEA*. The Ambassador of Uruguay has the floor.

La REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DEL URUGUAY: Muchas gracias, señor Presidente.

Por ser la primera vez que hago uso de la palabra, quisiera aprovechar esta ocasión para darle la bienvenida al Embajador Héctor Morales y desearle, en nombre del grupo de países miembros de la Asociación Latinoamericana de Integración (ALADI) y de mi Delegación, la más cordial bienvenida y ofrecerle toda la colaboración.

Asimismo, también deseo darle la bienvenida al Embajador Anthony Johnson, Representante Permanente de Jamaica ante la OEA, y ofrecerle toda nuestra cooperación y la del grupo ALADI.

Aprovecho también la oportunidad para felicitarlo por la nueva asignación de presidencia del Consejo Permanente. Deseo agradecerle al Embajador Cornelius Smith por su excelente gestión y expresar el placer que fue haber compartido con él el grupo de la misión a Haití, donde se destacó por su ponderación e intervenciones siempre acertadas.

Señor Presidente, en nombre del grupo ALADI hoy nos corresponde la triste tarea de despedir al Representante Permanente de Guatemala ante la OEA, Embajador Francisco Villagrán de León. Siempre el alejamiento de un colega nos produce pesar y, en este caso, se trata, además, de alguien particularmente valioso con una amplia trayectoria en su desempeño como Embajador de su país ante la Organización.

Con la calma y ponderación que lo caracterizan, con espíritu de servicio y gran profesionalismo en las distintas comisiones que presidió, supo dar lo mejor de sí. Por suerte, su alejamiento se mitiga por el hecho de que, esperamos, contaremos con su presencia, aunque sea esporádica, ya que ha sido distinguido con una nueva asignación de funciones en Washington.

Querido amigo, a ti y a tu esposa Donna les deseamos todo lo mejor en su nueva responsabilidad que estará coronada, sin duda, por el mayor de los éxitos.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much. I give the floor to the Ambassador of Panama.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE PANAMÁ: Muchas gracias, Presidente.

La verdad que esta tarea no me es muy grata, pero el grupo de países miembros del Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana (SICA) me ha pedido que hable en nombre de todo nuestro grupo para despedir a Francisco Villagrán; así que comenzaremos por la parte triste.

En primer lugar, quisiera decir que ya yo venía predispuesto a ser amigo de Paco porque diríamos que yo heredé esa amistad de su padre, de Francisco Villagrán Kramer, quien ha sido y continúa siendo un gran amigo mío desde hace más de treinta años y que, además, fue miembro del Comité Jurídico Interamericano de la OEA. Así que ya había ahí esa proclividad y me atrevo a decir aquí, sin perjuicio de muchos amigos que he adquirido en esta OEA, que ha sido mi mejor amigo, la persona a quien he estado más cercana, cuyo hogar he visitado muchísimas veces, incluso en momentos muy memorables y muy familiares él ha tenido la gentileza de recibirme en su casa junto con Donna y su hija Beatriz, que, además, es amiga de mis nietos, así que hemos establecido una relación.

Sin embargo, no se va del todo porque por aquí lo vamos a tener cerca. Él está pasando a una embajada bilateral muy importante para su país, muy importante para su carrera diplomática. Espero, Paco, que no tenga que pedirte cita para irte a ver ahora a la Embajada, y vamos a ser vecinos porque tu residencia está muy cercana de la que ocupó yo como Representante de Panamá.

El Presidente ya nos ha hablado de las gestiones de Francisco Villagrán aquí en esta OEA. Me atrevo a mencionar nada más un par más: él ha sido negociador entre Guatemala y Belize para la solución de los diferendos, tarea que ha desarrollado con las cualidades que aquí varios ya le han atribuido y que, naturalmente, yo también reconozco.

Ha sido también miembro del Grupo de Amigos de Haití y acompañó a al Secretario General Adjunto Luigi Einaudi en una interesante visita a Haití y, también, a Albert Ramdin, Secretario General Adjunto, a una formidable visita a la República Popular China.

Es un hombre cuyo criterio vamos a extrañar. Sus opiniones han sido siempre muy bien exteriorizadas, muy bien vertidas, y creo que ha colaborado muchísimo. Debo dejar constancia aquí de que esto que tratamos esta mañana respecto del apoyo presupuestario que le estamos dando a la presentación que ha hecho la Secretaría General es una tarea en la cual Francisco Villagrán de León se empeñó muy a fondo cuando fue Presidente de la Comisión de Asuntos Administrativos y Presupuestarios.

Me atrevería a decir que gracias a la inteligencia del gobernante actual de Guatemala, supo escoger sin banderillas políticas, sin filiaciones partidarias, a un gran diplomático guatemalteco para que continúe prestándole servicio a su país. Solamente espero que de vez en cuando podamos vernos, compartir el pan, como lo hemos hecho en gran cantidad de ocasiones en nuestras casas, en los restaurantes, con nuestras familias, y que sigas prestándole servicios por muchos años más a la diplomacia de tu querido país, que es Guatemala.

Muchas gracias, Presidente.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much. I give the floor to the Ambassador of The Bahamas.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE LAS BAHAMAS: Thank you very much, Chair. Let me offer to you the support of The Bahamas in your new duties. We know that you come well recommended, and we look forward to working with you in your new responsibilities.

It is always sad to say goodbye to someone who has worked so diligently on behalf of his country and of the Organization of American States. As we say farewell to the Ambassador of Guatemala, who discharged his duties in a warm, engaging, and professional way, we wish you well. Even though you are leaving the Organization of American States, you will be in Washington, continuing to work on behalf of your country.

May the winds be in your sail, and may you continue to provide the service that you have offered in the past.

It is a great pleasure to welcome two new colleagues this morning. It is very important, however, for us first to thank the Interim Representative of the United States, Robert Manzanera, for

his stewardship prior to the appointment of Ambassador Morales. I had the great pleasure of working with the Interim Representative, not only here but on the mission to Haiti, and the insight that he brought to our deliberations provided us signposts and guidance in our deliberations.

Ambassador Morales, you join us at a very important time in the history of the OAS and the region. Many issues face the region—trade; energy and security; the environment; criminal activity, such as the trafficking of drugs and humans—but poverty reduction is the main topic on our minds. It is, perhaps, the most important task facing this organization. We look forward to benefitting from your experience, first as a businessman who created jobs, and second, as an executive director at the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) who provided opportunities for jobs to be created. We also look forward to your guidance, advice, and deliberations as we continue to provide opportunities for our people in their hemisphere.

We in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) have begun to appreciate what we consider as recognition by your government of the value of becoming more engaged with your neighbors in the region, your third border. We invite you to use your skills and contacts to continue that engagement for the betterment of all of us.

You give me double pleasure, Ambassador Johnson, to welcome you. As Chair of the CARICOM caucus, I welcome you, as Representative of Jamaica, to the Permanent Council. In the caucus, we have already had the opportunity to recognize the great skill, temperament, advice, and thoughtfulness that you bring to bear on CARICOM issues. I am confident that you will bring that same clarity of vision to the weighty hemispheric issues we deliberate here. Your wide and well-rounded experience in the civil service, the private sector, education, and in government—both in opposition and in government—will do us well as we chart the way forward, both for CARICOM and for the Hemisphere. We look forward to your deliberations.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I thought there was somebody else. [Risas.]

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you, Ambassador Smith. I think your coins ran out in the phone booth. [Risas.]

We are really saying farewell to Ambassador Villagrán. Unfortunately, I have an appointment upstairs at one o'clock with some young students, so in about 10 minutes I will turn the meeting over to the Ambassador of Nicaragua, who is the Vice Chair of the Council.

I offer the floor to the delegations of Canada and the United States. Ambassador of Saint Kitts, I do hope that you are not speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), but in some other capacity, given the lateness of the hour.

I give the floor to the Ambassador of Canada.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DEL CANADÁ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Permit me to be a bit facetious, as was my colleague from Panama. You are our Chairman, but you are also our King here in this august assembly. Many in this region have given up on monarchs and kings—and in the case of Brazil, emperors—but some of us in the Hemisphere still

cling passionately to our institutions and to our constitutional monarchies. You, of course, sir, as our Chairman, our constitutional monarch, hemmed in by convention and rules, rule only with the advice and consent of the members and the regional groups. I know that you will rule in that way, that you will listen to and consult with us and then, having consulted, render your judgments with the full solemnity and, indeed, majesty of your office. So we welcome you and pledge our allegiance and our best wishes to you.

To C. A. Smith, we say, sir, that you have been a true gentleman, that you are a true gentleman, and that you have defined grace under pressure in this baptism of fire that you have had as Chairman of the Permanent Council.

Ambassadors Morales and Johnson, we have listened with great attention to what you had to say. We have been impressed with the substantive knowledge and insight that you have brought to your remarks and, indeed, that you will bring to our deliberations here in this Permanent Council, and we welcome you both warmly.

I, too, would like to say a few words about Bob Manzanares, who valiantly held the fort, waiting for reinforcements for almost a year. He has been an extraordinarily effective advocate for his country's interests at a difficult time, and we wish him well in his next steps. In his very quiet, low-keyed way, he has been extraordinarily effective, at least in part, I think, because he has been able to deploy that most devastating of weapons around the diplomatic table: his likeability. So even when we disagree with him, because he is so likeable and because he has been able to forge those personal relationships that you, Ambassador Morales, spoke of as key to success in a multilateral forum, Bob has been very effective as Interim Representative of the United States.

Finally, to the subject at hand—Mr. Chairman, thank you for your forbearance. Paco Villagrán has been an extraordinary model for me as a relatively young diplomat. I'm not saying that he is relatively old; I am simply saying that I am relatively young and that he has been a wonderful model of what a diplomat ought to be—with content, with ponderation, with reason, and with wisdom in the approaches he has made in our debates and deliberations here and behind the scenes. We will truly, truly miss him.

He has enabled his country to punch above its weight, and the fact that he has been chosen to ascend to a higher office is a sign that others, including in his capital, agree with that assessment. We wish you all the best, Paco; you will be missed.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much. I give the floor to the Ambassador of the United States.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a day of beginnings and farewells. I didn't know that I would be honored to do a little bit of both.

I want to thank those ambassadors who have spoken so eloquently about the U.S. Mission and particularly Bob Manzanares. As I said in my remarks, I am extremely grateful for the fine work that he has done, and my preparation is in direct relation to the great work that that whole team has done. So on behalf of the Mission, I thank you for all those remarks about Bob.

We are here to bid farewell to our colleague, Ambassador Villagrán. I have not had the privilege to work with him as much as many of you have, but I have reaped the benefits of that hard work. He has certainly left his mark as Chair of the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP) and the Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs (CAAP). It certainly sounds like he was extremely busy.

He clearly has been a leading voice in efforts to combat transnational threats to security in Central America, and for that matter, throughout the Hemisphere. He has been an ardent defender of democracy and the human rights principles and norms that characterize a rich contribution to international relations in the inter-American system, and he has been a faithful exponent of something that I think is equally powerful in any institution: common sense. He will sorely be missed, but the benefit is that he is not going far.

Y si me permiten, me gustaría decir esto en español. Lamento que la despedida del Embajador coincida con mi llegada. Todos en nuestra Misión le deseamos lo mejor y muchísimo éxito. Trataré de seguir su buen ejemplo y espero que tengamos la oportunidad de seguir trabajando, si no en esta gran Organización, en otras oportunidades en un futuro no muy lejano.

Muchas gracias, mucho éxito y un fuerte abrazo.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much. The Ambassador of Paraguay has a point of order.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DEL PARAGUAY: Señor Presidente, creo que estamos confundiendo las cosas. Estamos despidiendo al Embajador Villagrán, así por lo menos entiende esta Delegación. Se merece este respeto; estuvo con nosotros cuatro años; estamos mezclando las cosas. A la Delegación de Paraguay le gustaría escuchar al Embajador Villagrán.

Gracias, Presidente.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, Ambassador Cáceres. I had indicated earlier, when the ambassadors of Canada and the United States were about to take the floor, that unless these were farewell comments to Ambassador Villagrán, I would have to entertain them at another time. I notice that the delegations of Saint Kitts and Nevis, Grenada, and Mexico have asked for the floor. I might have forgotten the Delegation of Mexico in offering it an opportunity to say a farewell to Ambassador Villagrán, but unless Grenada and Saint Kitts are speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which has already spoken, I would prefer that they defer on this occasion.

I notice that Ambassador Williams is insisting. Please be very brief.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE SAINT KITTS Y NEVIS: Chair, forgive me, please. I wish only to correct an unfortunate omission so that the record will reflect my country's faithfulness to good order.

I was on the phone with my capital for quite a bit this morning, so I was not here when the distinguished Ambassador of the United States made his inaugural address. I was unable to welcome him and to indicate that I look forward to building with him on that foundational relationship and advancing the level of warm camaraderie that I have enjoyed with his predecessor, Bob Manzanares. I wish Bob success in his endeavors.

I don't wish to add to what the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) group spokesperson has already said with regard to Ambassador Villagrán, except to endorse it.

Thank you, Chair.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much for understanding, Ambassador Williams. I now give the floor to Ambassador Villagrán.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE GUATEMALA: Muchas gracias, señor Presidente, gracias por sus generosas palabras y gracias también a los distinguidos Representantes Permanentes del Uruguay, Panamá, Bahamas, Canadá, Estados Unidos y Saint Kitts y Nevis, por sus palabras de despedida, todas muy generosas; las agradezco sinceramente.

Al Presidente también quiero felicitarlo por estar asumiendo la presidencia del Consejo y le deseo los mayores éxitos en esa importante responsabilidad. A la vez, quiero darle la más cordial bienvenida al nuevo Representante Permanente de los Estados Unidos, Embajador Héctor Morales, y al nuevo Representante Permanente de Jamaica, Embajador Anthony Johnson. También a ellos les deseo muchos éxitos en la gestión que comienzan.

Al concluir mi misión como Representante Permanente de Guatemala me siento muy satisfecho de haber tenido la oportunidad y el honor de participar en el trabajo de este Consejo y de la Organización y, a la vez, muy agradecido por el apoyo y la consideración que recibí de todos ustedes, estimados colegas, de sus delegaciones, del personal de la Secretaría General, así como de todos y cada uno de los funcionarios y del personal de apoyo de la Misión de Guatemala, que me acompañan hoy día.

Esta fue una segunda ocasión en la que serví como Representante de mi país ante la OEA y quiero decirles que fue diferente de la primera en muchos sentidos. La Organización cambió y adquirió mayor relevancia política, lo que hizo más interesante la experiencia desde un punto de vista profesional. Al mismo tiempo, se me dio la oportunidad de participar de manera más directa en distintas funciones y actividades del Consejo y de otros órganos de la OEA, lo cual fue muy gratificante.

Señor Presidente, distinguidos Representantes Permanentes y Alternos, distinguidos Observadores Permanentes:

En este Consejo expresamos las posiciones de nuestros gobiernos y no nos corresponde dar opiniones personales, pero este espacio de despedida es el único que se nos presenta para ese propósito. Por eso quiero que se me permita hacer algunas reflexiones de tipo personal.

Considero que el valor y la utilidad de esta Organización están muy ligados al futuro de la democracia en el Hemisferio y creo que este Consejo tiene una enorme responsabilidad de promover la consolidación de la democracia y el apoyo a las instituciones democráticas. Son muchos y muy diversos los instrumentos jurídicos que surgen del trabajo de este Consejo, pero muy pocos los que le corresponde al propio Consejo implementar y velar por su plena vigencia. La Carta Democrática Interamericana es uno de ellos.

Las acciones previstas en esa Carta para la defensa y la promoción de la democracia no le corresponden solo al Secretario General. Además de darle mayor apoyo a las que él lleva a cabo, me parece importante que el Consejo dedique mayor atención a esta materia. La discusión y la negociación de otros instrumentos de similar relevancia no eximen al Consejo de esa responsabilidad.

Eso es, por cierto, lo que esperan diversos sectores interesados en la vida pública en muchos de nuestros países, lo que espera la sociedad civil en el continente americano. No solo esperan acciones de la Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos en el ámbito de la protección de los derechos humanos, también esperan acciones de la OEA en el ámbito de la democracia, la defensa de la institucionalidad y el apoyo a la gobernabilidad. Hay que reconocer que el Secretario General Insulza está cumpliendo con su parte y lo está haciendo con convicción y con admirable criterio político. Hay que apoyar sus acciones, desde luego, pero, además, hay que tener presente que el Consejo Permanente también tiene un papel importante que jugar en este ámbito.

No quiero abundar en esta opinión personal porque no quiero polemizar sobre el tema, pero me parece, para finalizar, que es oportuno recordar el axioma de que los gobiernos democráticos son más proclives a resolver sus conflictos por la vía pacífica del diálogo y la negociación, y también son más proclives a acudir a las instancias internacionales de solución de controversias. Esto lo hemos visto precisamente en las últimas semanas cuando se han suscitado conflictos entre Estados de nuestro hemisferio y confirma la afirmación de que un hemisferio democrático le da mayor vigencia y relevancia a la OEA.

Esta Organización, que está cerca de cumplir sesenta años de existencia –cien años si incluimos a las entidades precursoras de esta Organización– puede hacer más para contribuir a la construcción de un hemisferio de paz y democracia y, desde luego, puede hacer más para contribuir a la búsqueda de sociedades más justas y solidarias.

Me siento privilegiado de haber estado vinculado a la OEA por tantos años, no solo los años que serví como Representante Permanente en esta última oportunidad y espero, de alguna manera, seguir siempre cerca del sistema interamericano y de todos ustedes.

Muchas gracias.

[Aplausos.]

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much.

BIENVENIDA AL NUEVO EMBAJADOR REPRESENTANTE DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS (CONTINUACIÓN)

El PRESIDENTE: Before I adjourn the meeting, I see a long list of speakers who have requested the floor, and I will offer the floor very, very briefly to each one of you. I give the floor to the Ambassador of the Dominican Republic.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE REPUBLICA DOMINICANA: Muchas gracias, señor Presidente.

Seré muy, muy breve. A mí se me había pedido darle la bienvenida al Embajador Héctor Morales de los Estados Unidos en nombre del grupo SICA, nuestro grupo regional. Lamentablemente, en el momento debido no hubo la oportunidad para hacerlo. Consideramos impropio mezclar los tiempos, porque considerábamos que estábamos en la despedida del Embajador Villagrán. Le haremos llegar al Embajador Morales nuestro escrito en nombre de nuestro grupo.

Muchas gracias.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much.

BIENVENIDA AL NUEVO EMBAJADOR REPRESENTANTE DE JAMAICA (CONTINUACIÓN)

El PRESIDENTE: The Ambassador of Honduras has the floor.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE HONDURAS: Muchas gracias, señor Presidente.

De la misma manera, “nunca es tarde”, dicen en mi país, “si la dicha es buena”. Vamos a ser brevísimos.

El Embajador de Jamaica, don Anthony Johnson, es un hombre con amplia experiencia parlamentaria. Va a encontrar aquí terreno propicio, un ex senador, ex miembro del Parlamento, para poner en práctica esas virtudes que seguramente desarrolló en tan larga carrera política y parlamentaria.

Es un profesor de universidad. Aquí tendrá oportunidad de enseñarnos de su experiencia. Es un hombre del Caribe con el cual compartimos, por eso, esa nacionalidad del Caribe que, si bien corresponde a la soberanía de varios Estados, corresponde a una sola esencia anímica, cultural, de cierta irreverencia en el tratamiento de las personas y suma seriedad en el tratamiento de los asuntos, tratando, de alguna manera, de coincidir con el gran Germán Arciniegas en el sentido de que el Caribe es una nación con muchas soberanías.

Además, vemos con alegría, con simpatía, que sea usted un hombre que también cree en causas difíciles y desesperadas, como muchos de los que estamos aquí, porque entre sus intereses está el combinar la ética con los negocios.

Por otro lado, sabemos que es un hombre de una gran sensibilidad porque entre sus aficiones está la música clásica. Quiero encargarle a usted, entre otras cosas, la tarea de revitalizar la vida cultural de esta Organización y pongo mis servicios y los de mi Misión a sus órdenes para ese fin. Quiero advertir que en mi Misión contamos con una pianista de concierto.

Bienvenido, don Antonio.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, Ambassador, for those kind words on behalf of your colleagues.

CAMBIO DE FECHA DE LA NOVENA REUNIÓN ORDINARIA
DEL COMITÉ CONSULTIVO DE LA CONVENCION INTERAMERICANA
CONTRA LA FABRICACION Y EL TRAFICO ILICITOS DE ARMAS DE FUEGO,
MUNICIONES, EXPLOSIVOS Y OTROS MATERIALES RELACIONADOS (CIFTA)

El PRESIDENTE: I give the floor to the Representative of Mexico, and after that I will adjourn the meeting and invite you all to the Patio to say farewell to Ambassador Villagrán.

El REPRESENTANTE ALTERNO DE MÉXICO: Muchas gracias, señor Presidente.

Pido una enorme disculpa por tratar en este momento un punto que estaba previsto para "Otros asuntos", pero que es de mucha importancia por cuestiones de programación.

Como es del conocimiento del Consejo Permanente, la resolución AG/RES. 2341 (XXXVII-O/07), en su párrafo dispositivo 3, resolvió convocar para los días 29 y 30 de abril de 2008 en la sede de la OEA la Novena Reunión Ordinaria del Comité Consultivo de la Convención Interamericana contra la Fabricación y el Tráfico Ilícitos de Armas de Fuego, Municiones, Explosivos y Otros Materiales Relacionados (CIFTA) de conformidad con el artículo XXI de la Convención, y respaldar, asimismo, las reuniones preparatorias que sean pertinentes. Dicha resolución, en su punto 11 resolutivo, dispone que las reuniones del Comité Consultivo se lleven a cabo de acuerdo con los recursos asignados en el programa-presupuesto de la Organización y otros recursos, y solicita a la Secretaría General que brinde el apoyo administrativo y de secretaría técnica requeridos para tal efecto.

Al respecto, dado que la Séptima Reunión de Ministros de Justicia o de Ministros o Procuradores Generales de las Américas (REMJA-VII) fue convocada para esos mismos días, también en la sede de la OEA, se considera oportuno establecer una nueva fecha para la Reunión del Comité Consultivo para asegurar una participación activa en la misma.

Por lo anterior, como Secretaría Pro t mpore del Comit  Consultivo de la CIFTA, quisiera proponer que el Consejo Permanente convoque la Novena Reunión Ordinaria del Comit  Consultivo de la CIFTA para el 9 de mayo de 2008 en la sede de la OEA en Washington, D.C., de conformidad con lo dispuesto en la resoluci n AG/RES. 2341, antes citada. Este elemento es muy importante para que las convocatorias se puedan enviar y pueda contarse con la participaci n oportuna en esa reuni n.

Much simas gracias.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much. The Council takes note of your request and will consider it at our next meeting.

The Secretary General has the floor.

El SECRETARIO GENERAL: Ante todo quiero agradecer la solicitud de cambiar la fecha de la reuni n. Estamos tratando tambi n de ver c mo hacemos con la REMJA el 30 de abril, porque el 30 de abril son los sesenta a os de la firma de la Carta de la Organizaci n de los Estados Americanos y ese d a queremos hacer alguna celebraci n en esta Organizaci n de los sesenta a os de vida de la OEA. Es cierto que se van a celebrar en la Asamblea de Medell n, pero la fecha de suscripci n de la Carta es el 30 de abril y queremos darle la solemnidad que corresponde. En la

próxima sesión del Consejo vamos a informar de las actividades que queremos realizar, pero quería también introducir ese punto en la discusión del tema, señor Presidente.

Muchas gracias.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much, Secretary General.

BIENVENIDA AL NUEVO EMBAJADOR REPRESENTANTE DE JAMAICA
(CONTINUACIÓN)

El PRESIDENTE: I now give the floor to Ambassador Johnson of Jamaica for a final word.

El REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE DE JAMAICA: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to apologize to the Secretary General for not having thanked him for so graciously receiving me on March 20. Let me say, sir, that I suspected at the time that you might not have been here; therefore, since you are here, it is only proper that I should proffer these thanks to you.

I wish also to thank all those persons who have been so gracious as to welcome me this morning and to hope that the high hopes they have expressed for my tenure would, indeed, be realized.

Thank you.

El PRESIDENTE: Thank you very much. We can adjourn this meeting now and move to the Patio to say farewell to Ambassador Villagrán.

Thank you very much, and thank you to the staff for their support to this meeting.

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