

CONSEJO PERMANENTE



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ACTA
DE LA SESIÓN PROTOCOLAR
CELEBRADA
EL 10 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 2010

Para recibir a la excelentísima señora
Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Primera Ministra de la
República de Trinidad y Tobago

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CONSEJO PERMANENTE DE LA ORGANIZACIÓN DE LOS ESTADOS AMERICANOS

ACTA DE LA SESIÓN PROTOCOLAR CELEBRADA EL 10 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 2010

En la ciudad de Washington, a las tres y cincuenta y siete de la tarde del miércoles 10 de noviembre de 2010, celebró sesión protocolar el Consejo Permanente de la Organización de los Estados Americanos para recibir a la excelentísima señora Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Primera Ministra de Trinidad y Tobago. Presidió la sesión el Embajador Joaquín Alexander Maza Martelli, Representante Permanente de El Salvador y Presidente del Consejo Permanente. Asistieron los siguientes miembros:

Embajadora María Isabel Salvador, Representante Permanente del Ecuador
y Vicepresidenta del Consejo Permanente
Embajador Izben C. Williams, Representante Permanente de Saint Kitts y Nevis
Embajador Bayney R. Karran, Representante Permanente de Guyana
Embajadora Deborah-Mae Lovell, Representante Permanente de Antigua y Barbuda
Embajador Duly Brutus, Representante Permanente de Haití
Embajadora María del Luján Flores, Representante Permanente del Uruguay
Embajador Gustavo Albin, Representante Permanente de México
Embajador Cornelius A. Smith, Representante Permanente del Commonwealth de las Bahamas
Embajador Jorge Skinner-Kléé, Representante Permanente de Guatemala
Embajadora La Celia A. Prince, Representante Permanente de San Vicente y las Granadinas
Embajador Michael Louis, Representante Permanente de Santa Lucía
Embajador Nestor Mendez, Representante Permanente de Belize
Embajador Roy Chaderton Matos, Representante Permanente de Venezuela
Embajador Héctor Virgilio Alcántara, Representante Permanente de la República Dominicana
Embajador John E. Beale, Representante Permanente de Barbados
Embajador José E. Pinelo, Representante Permanente de Bolivia
Embajador Ruy Casaes, Representante Permanente del Brasil
Embajador Guillermo Cochez, Representante Permanente de Panamá
Embajadora Gillian M. S. Bristol, Representante Permanente de Grenada
Embajador Luís Alfonso Hoyos Aristizabal, Representante Permanente de Colombia
Embajador Hugo de Zela, Representante Permanente del Perú
Embajador Hubert J. Charles, Representante Permanente del Commonwealth de Dominica
Consejera Donna Henry, Representante Interina de Trinidad y Tobago
Ministro Martín Gómez Bustillo, Representante Interino de la Argentina
Consejero Michiel Glenn Raafenberg, Representante Interino de Suriname
Consejera Margarita Riva-Geoghegan, Representante Alterna de los Estados Unidos
Embajador Luis Menéndez-Castro, Representante Alterno de El Salvador
Lynen Ann Scott, Representante Alterna de Jamaica
Segunda Secretaria Agnés María Alvarado Guevara, Representante Alterna de Nicaragua
Ministro Consejero Christian Rehren, Representante Alterno de Chile
Consejero Pierre Giroux, Representante Alterno del Canadá
Embajadora Rita María Hernández Bolaño, Representante Alterna de Costa Rica
Ministro Juan Miguel González Bibolini, Representante Alterno del Paraguay

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.

El PRESIDENTE: Declaro abierta la presente sesión protocolar del Consejo Permanente de esta Organización, convocada para recibir a la excelentísima señora la honorable Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Primera Ministra de la República de Trinidad y Tobago. Nos ponemos de pie para recibir a la señora Primera Ministra, por favor.

[La Primera Ministra de Trinidad y Tobago entra el salón y toma su asiento a la mesa principal.]

Distinguido señor Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores de Trinidad y Tobago, doctor Surujrattan Rambachan; señor Secretario General don José Miguel Insulza, señor Secretario General Adjunto, Embajador Albert Ramdin; distinguidos Representantes y Representantes Alternos; señores Observadores Permanentes:

Permítanme extender, en nombre del Consejo Permanente y del mío propio, una muy cálida bienvenida a Su Excelencia la honorable señora Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Primera Ministra de la República de Trinidad y Tobago y agradecerle su visita a esta casa, la Casa de las Américas. Señora Primera Ministra, ¡bienvenida!

Me complace también ofrecer una cordial bienvenida y un especial saludo a todos los distinguidos miembros de su honorable delegación. Sean todos bienvenidos.

PALABRAS DEL SECRETARIO GENERAL

El PRESIDENTE: Tengo ahora el honor de invitar al señor Secretario General, doctor José Miguel Insulza, quien ofrecerá las palabras iniciales de esta sesión que se celebra en honor de la señora Primera Ministra de la República de Trinidad y Tobago. Señor Secretario General, usted tiene el uso de la palabra.

El SECRETARIO GENERAL: Gracias, Presidente. Thank you very much.

Honorable Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Foreign Minister, Chairman of the Permanent Council, Assistant Secretary General Albert Ramdin, members of the Permanent Council, ladies and gentlemen:

It is a distinct honor and privilege for me to welcome today the Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the Honorable Kamla Persad-Bissessar, members of the Foreign Ministry of Trinidad and Tobago and members of her delegation to this House of the Americas on this your first visit in this capacity. We are delighted that you took time from your busy schedule to be with us today, and I want to assure you that this house is as much yours as it is that of all the other member states.

As is well known, Prime Minister Persad-Bissessar created history when she successfully led her People's Partnership to victory in the May 24, 2010, general elections in Trinidad and Tobago. A few days later, she was sworn in as the country's first female Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Persad-Bissessar is a symbol of change. Indeed, she campaigned on a platform that promised change, and ever since she was elected, she has shown herself to be committed to this goal, most especially in the area of governance. The People's Partnership Government, under her leadership, is working toward greater transparency and accountability, based on a process of continuous consultations with the people and participation by the people. We are witnessing a revisiting of the ideals of government that promise to lay a firm foundation for a more sustainable, lasting, and meaningful development in nations such as Trinidad and Tobago.

We should also note Prime Minister Persad-Bissessar's strong interest in gender affairs, education, and young people. We applaud the establishment of the Children's Life Fund, set up to provide funding for life-saving medical interventions for critically ill children.

In the area of foreign affairs, in particular, regionalism, the Prime Minister is a product of the Caribbean. She was born in Trinidad and Tobago and studied in both Barbados and Jamaica, where she also worked. This regional involvement is reflected in the new Government's focus on regional integration, which has its roots in the manifesto of the People's Partnership, which states that priority attention will be given to multilateralism. This focus will be manifested at the regional level through the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and at the inter-regional level through the inter-American system. Further, we note that the Government has committed itself to the implementation of a foreign policy that will be guided by the principles of good governance.

The hosting of the Fifth Summit of the Americas in Port of Spain in April 2009 was challenging for the Government and the people of Trinidad and Tobago. The mere fact that all 34 heads of state and government were present was one measure of the success of this event, and the fact that they were all elected heads of government was also very important for the strengthening of democracy and the inter-American system. The deliberations there were frank and were conducted in a cordial manner, and we look forward to the continued implementation of the decisions contained in the deliberations of the Commitment of Port of Spain as we move to the Sixth Summit in Colombia.

We at the Organization of American States look on with great interest and with the true promise of doing all that we can, Madam Prime Minister, to assist your government. We know the role that you play in the Caribbean and that you have played in the Americas during some very crucial moments. Success in Trinidad and Tobago will redound to the benefit of the rest of the Caribbean and can provide a model for all the member states of the Organization of American States.

Once again, we warmly welcome you to the House of the Americas. Thank you very much.

El PRESIDENTE: Muchas gracias, señor Secretario General.

PALABRAS DEL PRESIDENTE DEL CONSEJO PERMANENTE

El PRESIDENTE: Señoras y señores, nuestra ilustre visitante, la señora Primera Ministra Kamla Persad-Bissessar, primera mujer electa a ocupar la jefatura del Estado de Trinidad y Tobago,

es graduada de la Universidad de las Indias Occidentales, el Colegio Técnico Norwood de Inglaterra y la Facultad de Derecho Hugh Wooding de su país.

Obtuvo una licenciatura con honores, un diplomado en educación, una licenciatura con honores en derecho y un certificado en educación legal. En 2006, obtuvo una Maestría Ejecutiva en Administración de Empresas de la Escuela de Negocios Arthur Lok Jack de Trinidad.

Al terminar sus estudios, la señora Primera Ministra Persad-Bissessar comenzó a ejercer la docencia. Fue profesora en el Colegio Secundario Saint Andrew, en Kingston, Jamaica, y en el Mona Campus de Jamaica. Posteriormente, enseñó en el campus San Agustín de la Universidad de las Indias Occidentales en Trinidad. Su carrera profesional se caracterizó por su trabajo social y, luego de dedicarse a la docencia durante muchos años, comenzó a ejercer la abogacía a tiempo completo.

En 1987, la señora Primera Ministra incursionó en el campo de la política, llegando a desempeñarse como regidora del Consejo del Condado de Saint Patrick, parlamentaria de la coalición Congreso Nacional Unido, parlamentaria y Procuradora General, Ministra de Asuntos Legales y Ministra de Educación entre 1995 y 2001.

El 24 de mayo de 2010, la señora Kamla Persad-Bissessar hizo historia al ser elegida como la primera mujer en ocupar el cargo de Primera Ministra de la República de Trinidad y Tobago.

Señora Primera Ministra, usted tiene una envidiable historia de una larga y honorable carrera al servicio de su país y, por ello, la saludamos muy atentamente. Su país ha colaborado y colabora con los trabajos de la Organización; su contribución se manifiesta en todos los ámbitos de la agenda interamericana. La celebración en su país de reuniones ministeriales de varios sectores, así como la Quinta Cumbre de las Américas en abril de 2009, es prueba fehaciente de ello.

PALABRAS DE LA PRIMERA MINISTRA DE TRINIDAD Y TOBAGO

El PRESIDENTE: Señora Primera Ministra, su presencia en este augusto foro nos honra. Le reitero la bienvenida a esta Organización y con el mayor de los gustos le ofrezco el uso de la palabra. ¡Bienvenida nuevamente!

La PRIMERA MINISTRA DE TRINIDAD Y TOBAGO: Thank you very much.

May I say good evening to you? I always say good evening. It's a great evening, and it's a great honor for us to be here amongst you all, very distinguished members. Excellency Martelli—have I said it right?—Chairman of the Permanent Council and Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the Organization of American States, distinguished permanent representatives to the OAS, other excellencies, ambassadors all; Excellency José Miguel Insulza—I met you several times, sir.

El SECRETARIO GENERAL: Several times, yes.

La PRIMERA MINISTRA DE TRINIDAD Y TOBAGO: I think it was in Jamaica. Caribbean people here would be very happy to know we met first in the Caribbean, in Jamaica. I think we met thereafter...

El SECRETARIO GENERAL: ...in some airport. [Risas.]

La PRIMERA MINISTRA DE TRINIDAD Y TOBAGO: In an airport, okay, and then recently at the United Nations.

Excellency Albert Ramdin, Assistant General Secretary, whom I had the honor to meet in Trinidad and Tobago not too long ago in our parliament building—is that correct, sir?—I'm very happy to see you again. Permanent observers to the OAS, members of the diplomatic corps, distinguished ladies and gentlemen all:

I have a stock start to a speech. Is it okay if I do it here this evening with you? We talked about introductions, so, Excellency, I thank you for your very warm and wonderful introduction. Wherever I go, I share one of the best introductions I've ever had, because in public life you do get people introducing you all the time.

I was Minister of Education in my country in one of my incarnations, and at that time, I had to give a special graduation address at one of our schools. Listen, I've done this before because it always stays in my mind. I went down there and the teachers in their wisdom decided they would not use an adult to introduce me but would ask one of the students. So they got a Form 1 student, a 12-year-old who walks up to the platform, goes to the microphone, and says: "My job here is very simple. All I have to do is introduce Kamla. So I am not going to make any long, boring speech, but I will now introduce you to the person who will, Kamla Persad-Bissessar." [Risas.]

Excellencies all, I trust that this evening, in light of the honor you have given me, I will try not to be what that young man thought I was and will stay on point.

It is a very distinct honor for us to be in this House of the Americas and to address such a very distinguished gathering of ambassadors of countries with which my country, Trinidad and Tobago, has enjoyed very warm, fraternal relations. I welcome this opportunity to address you, especially at a time when the need for stronger partnerships among our states is so great. Why? To try to deal with the myriad problems that challenge our individual states and to find solutions, for which oftentimes we have been found wanting.

It has become obvious that we cannot and will not solve the problems that affect our region without unprecedented levels of cooperation. The OAS, as the premier political organization in this hemisphere, provides such an opportunity, bringing together North America, South America, Central America, and the Caribbean. I always say that the Caribbean is the appendage.

Excellency, you spoke of the Charter. We must keep at the forefront the Charter's aim to strengthen peace and security in our region; promote democratic principles, good governance, and respect for human rights; and strive to eradicate extreme poverty.

Given today's global realities and challenges, the inter-American system must prioritize regional cooperation to achieve economic, social, and cultural development. Our countries are now emerging from what has been described as the worst global economic collapse in 70 years—which, of course is more years than some of us have lived on this earth. While our countries have generally been praised for sound macroeconomic policies, which have helped us to weather the crisis, progress has been very slow in several countries. A few are expected to experience negligible growth this year, and many expect zero growth this year. Limited recovery in residential construction, high unemployment rates, long unemployment duration, low lending levels, slower remittances, and external shocks affect several of our states.

And so, despite impressive gains made prior to 2008, the economic downturn in Latin America added approximately 12 million people to the ranks of the region's poor and one million people to the ranks of the unemployed. I will not stress this fact because that is within your own knowledge. Central America and the Caribbean were already forecast to experience slower growth than the rest of the Hemisphere.

Then we come to the impact of Hurricane Tomas. All of that forecasting was before the fury of Hurricane Tomas, which caused considerable damage in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, in Saint Lucia, and, sadly, once again, in Haiti—another blow to Haiti. I accompanied Prime Minister Stephenson King on a tour of Saint Lucia last Friday and truly, the devastation was very widespread and the plight and distress of the people was heart-rending. From media reports, the citizens of those other countries hit by the hurricane have similar experiences to share.

Today, I respectfully call upon us as colleagues, as neighbors, as brothers and sisters of this hemisphere, and as the OAS family, where possible, to expand the outreach to our sister nations in their hour of need and to bring relief to people in Kingstown, in Castries, and in Port-au-Prince. Trinidad and Tobago will continue to do so.

I know that hemispheric economic restraints are a reality for all of us, but we all have to be vigilant with the resources of our people. Economic limitations notwithstanding, we must not and will not compromise our commitment to support our brothers and sisters in this hemisphere. My administration intends to find the critical balance and extend a helping hand to our brothers and sisters in need. Friends, may I say to you all that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, and to a lesser extent, Barbados—and, of course, our family in Haiti, for whom our heart bleeds—are in dire need of your help at this time.

And that brings me to an issue that is really a concern for all states in the OAS and globally: climate change. The very extreme weather patterns forcefully emphasize why climate change, including the impact of natural disasters, is among the special security concerns of my subregion. As acknowledged in the annual OAS General Assembly resolution on that issue: "Multilateral cooperation is the most effective approach for responding to and managing threats and concerns of small island states."

While each of us here today in these hallowed halls has our own unique challenges and domestic issues, we recognize that there is strength in unity and in the multilateral process. Indeed,

that multilateral process is what the OAS is about. To be united, we must open the doors to dialogue. We may not always agree on issues, but we must always agree to talk with a view to finding consensus. Disagreements occupy our time and use resources that could be better directed towards advancement of the causes to be pursued on behalf of our citizens.

I turn now to regional problems. Who am I to tell you the problems? You have been here; you are the permanent representatives. These regional problems are well known to all of us—the burden of debt; the effects of rapid climate change; drug trafficking; the infiltration of drug traffickers into the social, economic, and political landscape; the build-up of arms and ammunition, especially small arms in many of our states; poverty and hunger, especially amongst children; HIV/AIDS; the effects of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) on health and productivity; corruption and the development and sustainability of democratic institutions. These are the concerns that impact the quality of life of our people in North America, South America, Central America, and certainly the Caribbean. How we choose to not only address these issues but also provide hope, beyond the rhetoric of meetings, will be the real test for all member states.

Mr. Chairman, today it has become fashionable to speak of good governance. What does it mean? We all know what it means. We know it is about good democratic practices and values-driven government. We know that good governance really must be the effectiveness and the efficiency with which institutions and leaders solve the problems of our people. We know that good governance must no longer just look good, but good governance must also feel good and must do good.

Trinidad and Tobago's commitment to democratic governance is reflected in the seamless transitions that follow free and fair elections. The Secretary General and the Chairman both spoke of the transition of May 24, but we've had other free-flowing transitions from one government to another, which is really one of the hallmarks of democracy and adherence to the rule of law.

And so while we advocate partnering among nations as an important step towards the resolution of hemispheric problems, we need more than ever a partnering with our people. It is when people are not invited into the process of governance that their claims of alienation and marginalization begin to surface, sometimes with very disastrous impacts.

Global governance cannot be limited to the crafting of instruments related to the promotion of democracy. The key component of good governance must be the creation of fair and equitable rights, as well as rules to enhance the development prospects of developing nations.

In this regard, my government has begun to pursue a mandate of putting people at the center. Here in the United States and throughout the democratic world, we talk about governments of the people, by the people, for the people. There was a debate in my country about new politics and old politics, and I said very clearly that it's not about new politics or old politics; it is about people politics. We crafted our policies and philosophies on seven pillars, which we see as a guide to our development and, even more importantly, as essential to sustainable development.

Pillar one: people-centered development. My mantra, and that of our new government and our ministers, has been based on three priorities. Priority one: serve the people; priority two: serve the people; priority three: serve the people.

Pillar two: poverty eradication and social justice.

Pillar three: national and personal security. Many of us are challenged by personal security issues, such as security to property, to limb, and to life. The scourge of crime is a major challenge for Trinidad and Tobago, and I know it is a major challenge for other states. Indeed, in Jamaica, it is a major challenge. I put it to you clearly: all the wealth and joys in the world cannot come to citizens—and I'm going to use some Trini language here—if they're dead. Therefore, personal security and safety has to be a priority for us in the region, as elsewhere in the world. In other words, you have to be alive to enjoy an improvement in the quality of your life.

Pillar four: information and communication technologies (ITC). Indeed, I know that I'm pushing an open door here. It is the way of the world now. As I speak, within one second what I'm saying will probably be broadcast to Trinidad and Tobago and to the region. Technology is so vital to us now.

Pillar five: a diversified, knowledge-intensive economy. Trinidad and Tobago has put its eggs in the energy basket. We have spent all these years resting our hopes upon the goose that lays the golden egg—the energy sector: oil and natural gas. As a result, we have experienced price shocks that have nothing to do with us, external shocks that one day put us very high up and the next day find us very low down. Why? We've put all our eggs into the energy basket. And so for us, it is very important to diversify our economy. This holds true for the entire CARICOM region.

We all remember when the main source of revenue and driver of the economy was King Sugar. When King Sugar collapsed, what happened? Trinidad and Tobago went to oil and natural gas. These engine drivers of the economy had been exploited by multilateral corporations. In Jamaica, it was all about bauxite at one time. Bauxite was the main engine driver. When that collapsed, what happened? I lived in Jamaica for 14 years; I was there when the price shocks rocked the bauxite industry. For Trinidad and Tobago, it was oil. They talked about oil going through the nation like a dose of salts, and so it is very important for us—and for any economy—not to depend solely upon whatever may seem so lucrative and so important, not to put all the eggs in one basket, but to go towards a diversified economy.

Pillar six: good governance. Good governance has two components: substantive good governance and procedural good governance. Time will not permit me to expand on that now, but procedural good governance has to do with electoral machinery that allows for free and fair elections, while substantive democracy will ensure that the institutions of the nation are free and fair and independent.

Pillar seven: foreign policy. This is very important. We are a very small island developing state (SIDS), and it is imperative that when we engage in regional and international environments, we support and advance our national development objectives. I am of the view, respectfully, a view

shared by many of us around this table today, that smallness must never be seen as an impediment to achieving global influence. I say that to my CARICOM brothers and sisters because we are all very small in size. Smallness must never be seen as an obstacle.

At the United Nations, Trinidad and Tobago and our CARICOM brothers and sisters succeeded in our call for international attention to tackle the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases. You will recall the conviction articulated at last year's Fifth Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago that governments can:

. . . reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) . . . through collaborative programs, partnerships and policies supported by governments, the private sector, the media, civil society organisations, communities and relevant regional and international partners.

The Fifth Summit also pledged support for the Pan American Health Organization's (PAHO) Regional Strategy and Plan of Action on an Integrated Approach to the Prevention and Control of Chronic Diseases Including Diet, Physical Activity, and Health.

We now have in place a resolution that provides for the convening in September 2011 of a high-level meeting of the UN General Assembly on noncommunicable diseases. Friends, colleagues all, much work has to be done if we are to have a successful meeting next year on this very important resolution. To achieve the desired results of the Summit, the UN would have put in place a common set of principles to tackle this global public health concern.

And so today, Trinidad and Tobago urges all member states of the OAS to participate in this meeting at the level of heads of state or government. Our 33 votes—or perhaps 34, if Honduras is back in the fold—bolstered by the votes of the Commonwealth states, can make a tremendous difference when we go to speak and vote at the United Nations and when we go to multilateral fora. May I say with all modesty that I hold the position of Chairperson-in-Office of the Commonwealth, which is another 54 nations—but some of us are doubling up as members of the Commonwealth and of the OAS.

I like to use a Trinidadian expression that says that if we take one finger and try to push, the force of that one finger is so very weak, but if we can put all of those fingers together, if we can take our voices everywhere—the strength of all our nation states—then, think of it: do you know what this fist can do? It can do so much more than one finger.

I put it to you, respectfully, that on issues that impact our region and our people, as small, developing nations and as nations of the OAS, if we can put all our fingers together in strength, what a great force we can be! Remember that the OAS comprises big nations and small nations, but the majority of our nations are indeed developing, weaker. As Chair-in-Office of the 53 or 54 Commonwealth nations, let me tell you that 48 of those nations are SIDS or emerging nations.

We're not really emerging economies, you know. I always find an ironic way of looking at this issue. As long as I've known myself, in academia, looking at the world, we have been told and

we say that we are developing states. My God, how much longer will we be developing? We're always developing states. When will we ever reach developed status? Can I ask any of you here this evening: are you a developing state? Are you defined and determined to be that? What are you described as? Developing nation? Am I correct? No one is answering me! [Risas.] I'm really asking; it's not a rhetorical question. Have we not been all the time termed "developing nations"? And as long as I have known myself—I am younger than I look, so that's a long time [risas.]—we have been developing. When will we get to developed status?

So every year we go to meetings and work very hard and push for our countries and our region. Okay, which category are you in? Developing nation. Developing nation.

If we can join together, work together, partner together, there is so much more that we can achieve for ourselves, for our people, for our nations, for our region, and, indeed, for the OAS, because if there is an imbalance, there cannot be stability in the world. If the imbalance continues, one day some will rise up and demand their space and place at the table. Therefore, as leaders, as representatives of the member states of the OAS, we have to work to achieve equity and justice.

I turn now to another issue that confronts us, a very important axis of our collective well-being, particularly in the area of public security. It revolves around our ability to work together to address the pervasive aspects of transnational organized crime, especially narcotrafficking and the illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

The 2010 Report on Citizen Security and Human Rights, presented by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), reveals that the countries of the Americas "have some of the highest rates of crime and violence in the world, and the young population has been the most affected, both as victims and as perpetrators."

The homicide rate in the Americas is 25.6 per 100,000 persons. It is much higher than the figure for Europe, which is 8.9 per 100,000. Southeast Asia is 5.8 per 100,000, and the Western Pacific is as low as 3.4 per 100,000.

The indicators are even more alarming if the homicide rate is broken down by age and economic background. The report shows that middle- and low-income young people are the ones mainly involved in crime. The cost of violent crime is estimated at between 2 and 15 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in OAS member states. For the first time in decades, the population of Latin America lists crime as the main concern, even greater than unemployment.

Consequently, a forum that remains of importance to our region is the Meeting of Ministers Response for Public Security in the Americas (MISPA), which underscores the importance of international cooperation; public security management; police management; and prevention of crime, violence, and insecurity. Citizen and community participation is also important in addressing public security. As Trinidad and Tobago prepares for MISPA III in November 2011, we look forward, friends and colleagues, to continued collaboration with you as our regional partners.

Further, given the adverse impact on our states of small arms, and in light of encouraging efforts to conclude a legally binding agreement to regulate the trade in conventional weapons at the international level, I want to strongly, and respectfully, of course, urge OAS members to support the UN Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), scheduled to take place in 2012.

As I reflect on the enormous potential of our region's youth in the midst of the alarming statistics that confront us, the Declaration of Medellín: Youth and Democratic Values, adopted by the OAS General Assembly in 2008, remains very relevant. I endorse the call at this year's General Assembly session for the OAS to continue to attach a high priority to youth development in the Americas and to take all necessary steps to maintain a youth perspective in the programs and activities of the OAS. Our collective future is certainly in the hands of our youth.

Mr. Chairman, this is an appropriate juncture to commend the Organization on the 50th anniversary of its Scholarship Program, as well as on its capacity-building and training programs, especially those that provide our young people with a brighter horizon. May ask you please to give yourselves and the Chairman a round of applause on the Scholarship Program and on youth training and capacity-building [aplausos.], and a round of applause also to all of your staff who, I know, worked tirelessly to get this program off the ground.

As we look to the future, we must continue to strive to achieve peace and justice, promote solidarity, and strengthen collaboration, as envisaged in the OAS Charter.

On Monday, September 27, 2010, in my address at the general debate at the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), in addition to the call for international attention to address the impact of small arms and light weapons on vulnerable nations, I also called upon that world body to address the following three items, which I felt were critical to our long-term growth and development.

First, in the context of a broader definition of global governance in which leaders must be held accountable, there should be greater dialogue among nation states. There ought to be regular and predictable channels of communication between the G-20 nations and the rest of the members of the United Nations, the G-192. Which is the greater? I know we all did arithmetic at school, so the G-192 is greater than the G-20 in terms of numbers.

Respectfully, I stated that increased dialogue will facilitate a more global perspective on decisions that affect the financial, social, and cultural well-being of mankind. You know, we're in the third millennium of humankind, and policies that impact human life and human suffering are crafted by 20 countries, when in reality there are 192 members of the United Nations.

Second, I called upon UN member states that are states parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to include international drug trafficking as a crime within the jurisdiction of the ICC. How many of our OAS states are adversely impacted by the international drug trade and drug trafficking? And so I made that call in the context of the significant challenges faced in confronting the international drug trade, given our unfortunate location between producers and consumers of illicit drugs.

Third, at the last UNGA, Trinidad and Tobago proposed—and has done so since in the GA's First Committee, which is devoted to disarmament and international and security—a resolution on women, disarmament, arms control, and nonproliferation. We took this position because we felt that there can be no sustainable peace and security without the involvement, contribution, and protection of women.

Exactly one month and a day after my address to the UNGA, the First Committee adopted our draft resolution, which was cosponsored by 52 nations. I respectfully wish to encourage my colleague OAS member states to lend your support to this resolution when it is considered by the Plenary in mid to late November 2010.

This resolution also comes at a time when a number of women have been emerging as leaders in Latin America and the Caribbean. Examples are Argentina, Costa Rica, and, of course, Trinidad and Tobago. Recently, Her Excellency Dilma Roussef was elected as Brazil's first female head of state. Indeed, she will be the most powerful woman in this world because of the size of Brazil and its being one of the emerging BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) states. So we congratulate her as well.

Friends all, I urge you to support this resolution. It is in keeping with Article 2.h of this body's constituent document, which states as one of the purposes of the OAS: "to achieve an effective limitation of conventional weapons that will make it possible to devote the largest amount of resources to the economic and social development of the member states." This year's General Assembly session in Peru highlighted these issues, amongst others, in the Declaration of Lima: Peace, Security, and Cooperation in the Americas.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to return to the issue of democracy. Democracy is sustained when a country is able to provide the basic necessities for human beings to enjoy a reasonable quality of life and to ensure freedom of speech and association that is consistent with the search for peace. Instability ends up as a political matter but begins with people being hungry, shelter not being provided, healthcare that is poor, and freedoms being suppressed. I have already attempted to highlight the challenges facing Latin America and the Caribbean, including natural disasters, debt, or climate change. Ours is a region that is home to several vulnerable SIDS.

Along with the emergence of new BRIC economies comes a perceived change in the importance of Caribbean economies, in particular, to the developed countries. What do I mean? The Caribbean seems to be Saint Kitts, Antigua and Barbuda, Guyana, and Haiti, a region that has been left behind. I see this as most unfortunate.

We are indeed a chain of islands, the archipelago that breaks the Atlantic from battering the shores of North, Central, and South America. On our eastern shores we have the great Atlantic Ocean; on the west, the very beautiful blue waters of the Caribbean Sea. And so it is unfortunate, in my respectful view, that the Caribbean nations are not seen as important in this hemisphere and, indeed, in the House of the Americas.

The developed world needs to be reminded that regional as well as global sustainability and stability depend on individual country stability. The Caribbean needs an inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) that will engage the resources of the islands in value-added production and manufacturing. The Caribbean needs market access and resource support to build banks and to create a greater market share in the developed countries. A partnership based on mutual respect is required.

Allow me also to address the matter of overseas development assistance (ODA) to SIDS. The qualifying or—better yet—disqualifying criteria is GDP per capita, which has caused many Caribbean economies to be excluded from ODA. In my respectful view, the measure needs to be revisited because that is what is used to determine whether ODA will be given, and you can skew per capita. It's like any other average; you can have very high levels and, seemingly, the majority at very low levels, but when you put the two together, what happens? It is skewed upwards, and so per capita to GDP appears to be very high when the majority of the people in those countries are indeed living below the poverty line.

In addition, most Caribbean economies won't be able to move forward unless their debt position improves. The average indebtedness of Caribbean nations reached approximately 50 percent of GDP in 2009. In some cases, it is even higher, such as 83 percent and 93 percent in two CARICOM countries. The needed change will require an equal change of attitude, in my respectful view, by the international financial institutions (IFIs), as well as a spirit of generosity by the developed world. To do otherwise would be inconsistent with the often-held goal of human dignity and freedom from hunger and poverty. Fifty-three million people have no access to sufficient food. Seven percent of children under age 5 suffer from low weight, and 16 percent suffer from low height for their age.

In April 2009, at the Fifth Summit of the Americas, the region's heads of state and government called for the establishment of an inter-American social protection network to facilitate the exchange of information on policies, experiences, programs, and best practices to reduce poverty and social disparities. I could quote from that document for you, but I am sure that you are familiar with it.

And so the needs of the citizens of our region and the improvement of their well-being must remain our collective priority. We must bring to life Article 4.e of the Declaration on Security in the Americas, which underscores that "conditions for human security are improved through . . . the promotion of social and economic development, social inclusion, and education and the fight against poverty, disease, and hunger." The Social Charter of the Americas also promises to place the needs of our citizens center stage, and we look forward to the finalization of the negotiations on this important instrument.

There are many other things I can say, but I know time is of the essence. I do want to assure you—colleagues, friends, neighbors, and family—that my government supports the continued enhancement of our democratic system by strengthening existing institutions and ensuring that there are appropriate systems to support accountability, transparency, consultation, participation, and consensus building. The People's Partnership and my government are strong advocates of the right and responsibility of all citizens to participate in decisions relating to their own development, as

reflected in Article 6 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter. We recognize that the people are suffering and that the government is the servant of the people. We aim, therefore, to continue to engage representatives from all sectors of our society and to encourage them to get involved in decisions that will impact their lives and to work with us in moving our country forward.

Mr. Chairman, the forty-first regular session of the General Assembly will be held in your country, El Salvador. I trust that by June 2011, the differences within our hemisphere will have been largely and satisfactorily resolved and that Central America will have been the avenue and host of a very fruitful General Assembly session.

The road ahead is not without adversities, but history has shown us that this region can rise above obstacles. We need only reflect on its fine example of human resilience, persistence, deep spirituality, and courage that resulted in the successful rescue of 33 miners in Chile, a joy we shared in the region and around the world.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, Trinidad and Tobago stands ready to join with our regional partners in facing adversities and in celebrating triumphs that will lead to the improved well-being and sustained development of our people.

May God continue to bless you all and our nations. I thank you very much.

[Aplausos.]

El PRESIDENTE: Muchas gracias, Su Excelencia, por tan importante mensaje.

En estos momentos se procederá, de acuerdo con nuestro protocolo, a un saludo de la Primera Ministra, acompañada por el señor Secretario General, a las distinguidas delegaciones desde sus respectivos sitios.

La PRIMERA MINISTRA DE TRINIDAD Y TOBAGO: May I thank you all very, very, much. In Trinidad, we say you eat and run. I'm sorry, I have to talk and run. I do have a meeting with Her Excellency Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at 5:00 p.m. Will you please forgive me? Thank you very much.

El PRESIDENTE: Muchas gracias.

La PRIMERA MINISTRA DE TRINIDAD Y TOBAGO: Thank you. Thank you.

[Aplausos.]

El PRESIDENTE: Bueno, muchas gracias a todos por su asistencia y damos por finalizada esta sesión protocolar. Gracias.

