

CONSEJO PERMANENTE



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ACTA
DE LA SESIÓN PROTOCOLAR
CELEBRADA
EL 15 DE MAYO DE 2012

En honor del excelentísimo señor Donald Rabindranauth Ramotar,
Presidente de la República de Guyana

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CONSEJO PERMANENTE DE LA ORGANIZACIÓN DE LOS ESTADOS AMERICANOS

ACTA DE LA SESIÓN PROTOCOLAR CELEBRADA EL 15 DE MAYO DE 2012

En la ciudad de Washington, a las diez y veintiséis de la mañana del martes 15 de mayo de 2012, celebró sesión protocolar el Consejo Permanente de la Organización de los Estados Americanos en honor del excelentísimo señor Donald Rabindranauth Ramotar, Presidente de Guyana. Presidió la sesión el Embajador Leonidas Rosa Bautista, Representante Permanente de Honduras y Presidente del Consejo Permanente. Asistieron la sesión la excelentísima señora Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, Ministra de Relaciones Exteriores de Guyana y el excelentísimo doctor Ashni Singh, Ministro de Hacienda de Guyana. Asistieron los siguientes miembros:

Embajador Bayney R. Karran, Representante Permanente de Guyana
Embajador Duly Brutus, Representante Permanente de Haití
Embajador Denis Ronaldo Moncada Colindres, Representante Permanente de Nicaragua
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 Guillermo Cochez, Representante Permanente de Panamá
Embajador Darío Paya, Representante Permanente de Chile
Embajadora María Isabel Salvador, Representante Permanente del Ecuador
Embajador Allan Culham, Representante Permanente del Canadá
Embajador Joel Antonio Hernández García, Representante Permanente de México
Embajador Edgar Ugalde Álvarez, Representante Permanente de Costa Rica
Embajadora Niermala Hindori-Badrising, Representante Permanente de Suriname
Embajador Walter Jorge Alban Peralta, Representante Permanente del Perú
Embajador Andrés González Díaz, Representante Permanente de Colombia
Embajador José Rodrigo Vielmann de León, Representante Permanente de Guatemala
Ministro Martín Gómez Bustillo, Representante Interino de la Argentina
Embajador Luis Menéndez-Castro, Representante Interino de El Salvador
Ministro Consejero Jorge Collazo Uboldi, Representante Interino del Uruguay
Ministro Consejero Breno de Souza Brasil Dias da Costa, Representante Interino del Brasil
Consejero Freddie Cleveland Tucker, Representante Interino del Commonwealth de las Bahamas
Judith Anne Rolle, Representante Interina del Commonwealth de Dominica
Consejera Patricia D. M. Clarke, Representante Interina de Grenada
Ministra Consejera Ann-Marie Layne Campbell, Representante Interina de Antigua y Barbuda
Ministra Consejera Mayerlyn Cordero Díaz, Representante Interina de la República Dominicana
Ministra Consejera Nicolla Simone Rudder, Representante Interina de Barbados
Consejera Avianne Conyette Boney, Representante Interina de Trinidad y Tobago
Fernando D. Rojas, Representante Alterno de los Estados Unidos
Kemoy Liburd Chow, Representante Alternativa de Saint Kitts y Nevis
Ministra Cheryl Patricia Gordon, Representante Alternativa de Jamaica
Primera Secretaria Fiorella Caldera Gutiérrez, Representante Alternativa de Bolivia
Embajador Jorge Alberto Milla Reyes, Representante Alternativo de Honduras

El PRESIDENTE: Declaro esta sesión protocolar del Consejo Permanente de la Organización de los Estados Americanos abierta para recibir a Su Excelencia, el señor Donald Rabindranauth Ramotar, Presidente de la República Cooperativa de Guyana.

Para ese efecto, invito al señor Presidente a ingresar a la sala.

[Aplausos.]

Estimado y distinguido doctor Jean Michel Arrighi, Secretario de Asuntos Jurídicos de la Organización de los Estados Americanos y representante de la Secretaría General; Representantes Permanentes; Representantes Alternos; señores Observadores Permanentes; señoras y señores:

Tengo el honor, en nombre del Consejo Permanente, de saludar y ofrecer una muy cálida bienvenida a Su Excelencia, el señor Donald Rabindranauth Ramotar, Presidente de la República Cooperativa de Guyana, y agradecerle su visita a nuestra casa, la Casa de las Américas. Este saludo también es extensivo de una cordial bienvenida a los honorables miembros de la delegación que lo acompañan. Sean todos, señor Presidente y sus distinguidos acompañantes, muy bienvenidos.

Mr. President, the Permanent Council welcomes you most cordially today on this, your first visit to the Organization of American States, with all the respect that the inter-American community feels toward a leader who, through democratic elections, has come to occupy the highest political office in his country in order to lead it along the road to progress and peace.

PALABRAS DEL SECRETARIO DE ASUNTOS JURÍDICOS,
A CARGO DE LA SECRETARÍA GENERAL

El PRESIDENTE: Tengo ahora el gusto de presentar al señor Secretario de Asuntos Jurídicos, el doctor Jean Michel Arrighi, quien a cargo de la Secretaría General se dirigirá a la Sala.

Doctor Arrighi, le ofrezco la palabra.

El SECRETARIO DE ASUNTOS JURÍDICOS, A CARGO DE LA SECRETARÍA GENERAL: His Excellency, President Donald Ramotar of Guyana; Chairman of the Permanent Council; Minister of Foreign Affairs; Minister of Finance; ambassadors, permanent representatives and alternate representatives; friends all:

On behalf of Secretary General José Miguel Insulza and Assistant Secretary General Albert Ramdin, it is my pleasure to extend a very cordial welcome to Your Excellency, President Donald Ramotar of Guyana, on this, your first visit to the House of the Americas. This is your home, Mr. President, and we value your interaction with the representatives of member states.

We are particularly honored that you have chosen to visit the Organization of American States just months after being sworn in as President of Guyana on December 3, 2011. This confirms the high priority that Guyana attaches to hemispheric relations, and to the OAS in particular, as the premier multilateral entity for dialogue and engagement.

Mr. President, your ascent to the highest office in Guyana comes after many years of work as a political activist. We note that you have occupied many positions in the governing party and this, we believe, will augur well for the position you now occupy.

Since joining the OAS in 1991, Guyana has been an important and active partner, contributing meaningfully to many of the debates within the councils of the Organization. The country has held the chairmanship of the Permanent Council of the OAS on three occasions. Only recently, Ambassador Karran guided the work of the Council during a time of heightened interest in important matters affecting the priority areas of the OAS, and for many years, a distinguished lawyer from your country, Dr. Brynmor Pollard, was a member and Chairman of the Inter-American Juridical Committee (CJI).

Mr. President, Guyana's commitment to regional integration is manifested in many ways, but none more so than having been a founding member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and host of its secretariat. Indeed, the membership of CARICOM countries in the OAS has served to strengthen our hemispheric organization, making it more diverse and relevant.

Further, Guyana's leadership on such global matters as environmental and sustainable development is well established, beginning with the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro and encompassing its more recent activism in the preparations for the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development next June.

We therefore look forward to your country's continued engagement with the OAS and wish to assure you that the Organization stands ready to work with you in advancing Guyana's development.

Once again, Mr. President, welcome to the House of the Americas! Thank you.

[Aplausos.]

El PRESIDENTE: Gracias, doctor Jean Michel Arrighi.

PALABRAS DEL PRESIDENTE DEL CONSEJO

El PRESIDENTE: Señoras y señores, es para mí una ocasión especial, un privilegio y un singular regocijo poder contar entre nosotros la presencia del Presidente de Guyana, el señor Donald Rabindranauth Ramotar. Su Excelencia es un digno representante del pueblo de la Tierra de Muchas Aguas y está aquí a solo cinco meses de haber sido elegido Presidente, lo que demuestra las sólidas relaciones que existen entre su pueblo y Gobierno y la Organización de los Estados Americanos, como lo había mencionado el predecesor en el uso de la palabra.

Nuestro ilustre visitante, el señor Donald Rabindranauth Ramotar, es economista, graduado de universidades de su país, así como de la antigua Unión Soviética.

El señor Presidente de Guyana asumió esa alta investidura el 3 de diciembre del 2011, posición en la cual sucede a Bharrat Jagdeo y a los recordados Cheddi y Janet Jagan.

El señor Donald Rabindranauth Ramotar tiene una larga y sólida carrera política al servicio de su país. Dentro del *People's Progressive Party (PPP)*, ocupó varias posiciones hasta ser designado como Secretario Ejecutivo en 1993. También fue miembro de la Asamblea Nacional de su país durante períodos repetidos y actuó como asesor político del Presidente Bharrat Jagdeo.

Al iniciar su administración, el Presidente Donald Rabindranauth Ramotar determinó otorgar prioridad al fortalecimiento de sólidas políticas económicas y sociales enfocadas en vivienda, educación y salud, así como también, políticas referentes a la lucha contra la corrupción y el tráfico de drogas.

Mr. President, you have an enviable history of long and honorable service to your country and its people, and for this, we salute you.

As we welcome you, we are delighted to have among us a representative of Latin American and the Caribbean combined, because your country is the only member state of the Commonwealth of Nations on mainland South America whose official language is English.

Representa usted, señor Presidente, un país en el cual las distintas culturas que lo conforman, constituyen el componente más importante de su potencial humano.

Ciertamente, la condición de una plural y armónica cultura guyanesa, ha enriqueciendo por muchos años el cónclave de Estados Miembros, sus consideraciones, debates y decisiones en esta Organización. La participación del Representante Permanente de Guyana, nuestro estimado amigo, el Embajador Bayney Karran, ha sido siempre un aporte imponderable para el análisis de los temas prioritarios de nuestra agenda. De ello dio muestras reiteradas durante su reciente presidencia de este Consejo, la cual desempeñó con sabiduría diplomática y sagacidad política.

The Caribbean is an important part of the Western Hemisphere and of this Organization. Over the years, it has become more involved and has made many substantial contributions to our activities and initiatives. Guyana, as part of the Caribbean, is an essential part of the OAS's processes.

President Ramotar, your presence here today is a manifestation of the commitment of your country and your government to hemispheric solidarity. Furthermore, it is an indication of the importance that you have attached to fostering and nurturing relations among the countries of the Hemisphere.

Señor Presidente, sea este un saludo a su presencia en esta casa, así como un homenaje a Guyana, la tierra de ríos y planicies; y también a su pueblo, el que como un pueblo y una nación está forjando un único destino.

PALABRAS DEL PRESIDENTE DE GUYANA

El PRESIDENTE: Señor Presidente, puede hacer uso de la palabra. Mr. President, you have the floor.

[Aplausos.]

EL PRESIDENTE DE GUYANA: Mr. Chairman of the Permanent Council, the representative of the Secretary General, permanent and alternate representatives, permanent observers, representatives of international and regional organizations, staff members of the Organization of American States, special guests, ladies and gentlemen all:

At the outset, I wish to state my deep appreciation for the warm welcome that you have accorded me and to express my humble gratitude that you have convened this protocolary meeting in my honor. I greatly value the occasion to meet such a distinguished gathering in this historic mansion, which embodies the spirit of our inter-American community. I am especially pleased to be able to discourse with you again so soon after our meeting of heads of government during the Sixth Summit of the Americas in Cartagena.

We meet again in the context of changing global and regional relationships. Notwithstanding the recent economic downturn, most of our countries have achieved substantial progress in managing our economies and in reducing poverty and inequality, within the framework of general stability and democracy. These factors have contributed to a stronger pursuit of political and economic integration among our nations, along with a growing self-confidence.

But not all current developments are favorable. For instance, the spread of criminal violence, climate change, and persistent poverty continue to cause deep concern. These factors are occurring alongside the emergence of several new regional organizations, and these circumstances are affecting the way our nations relate to one another, as was evident at the Sixth Summit of the Americas.

I wish to point out that much of the crime and violence have been caused by the trade in narcotic drugs. In this area, we need close cooperation and joint activities to defeat the merchants of death.

Let me take this opportunity to commend the Government and people of Colombia for the outstanding organization and hospitality which they displayed in order to facilitate those vital deliberations in Cartagena.

In our estimation, it is essential that there be full implementation of the mandates that were adopted at the Summit regarding the integration of infrastructure, citizen security, poverty, inequality and inequity, disaster risk reduction and management, and information communication technologies.

We particularly welcome the climate of tolerance and respect for differences of opinion which was in evidence during the full and frank discussions that took place at the Summit. The unifying vision of the Americas, which was so positively and eloquently articulated by President Juan Manuel Santos, is one that we in Guyana also hold dear and that we would encourage all others to embrace.

Ladies and gentlemen, when Guyana joined the OAS in 1991, we did so seeking to advance our commitment to achieving peace and justice, solidarity and collaboration, partnership for development, and regional security, and to defend the independence of its member states. With our subsequent return to the fold of democratic nations in 1992, we renewed our commitment to the promotion and protection of democracy and human rights.

The restitution of democracy to our nation and the strengthening of its democratic process were achieved after arduous political struggles spanning four decades. This achievement was preceded by a difficult extrication from the clutches of colonialism in 1966. Consequently, for us, independence and democracy are committed goals and cherished ideals that we constantly strive to preserve, strengthen, protect, and expand, in keeping with both our constitutional obligations as well as our commitments to the Charter of the OAS, the Inter-American Democratic Charter, and other regional and international instruments.

Even your strongest detractors will admit that OAS electoral observation missions (EOMs) have rendered valuable support to member states that wish to improve their electoral systems. Guyana can testify to the important role performed by these missions, as was exemplified by the OAS's observance of our November 2011 regional and national elections.

My presence here today is an acknowledgement of the role that the OAS has played in the re-establishment and strengthening of democracy in Guyana. We invite you to stay engaged with us as we continue to work to strengthen democracy and to make it irreversible.

Mr. Chairman, no discussion about democracy in this hemisphere of ours can be situated outside the context of our intolerable levels of poverty. When 57 million people, or 11 percent of our population, live on less than one dollar a day, and 23 percent, or 132 million people, exist daily on less than two dollars a day, surely we can consider no other option, in this advanced technological age, than to rid our region of poverty, reduce inequalities, and obtain decent standards of living for our people. Let us resolve that poverty eradication will be the historic task of our generation.

Inasmuch as democracy cannot be safeguarded without reducing poverty, neither can poverty be effectively combated without addressing inequality. As long as the richest one-tenth of the population of our region earns 48 percent of the income, and the poorest one-tenth earn 1.6 percent, the war against poverty can only result in a victory for poverty.

Here at the OAS, we can and should do more to reduce poverty and inequality by influencing policies that would promote technological advances, respond more effectively to natural disasters, and orchestrate the transfer of resources to reduce disparities. The OAS can further bolster efforts to combat poverty and inequality by guiding practices aimed at conflict prevention, lifting environmental standards, and promoting sustainable development with social justice.

It is important, too, that in whatever model of socioeconomic development we pursue, job creation must be an essential aspect. This is vital in the fight against poverty and crime in our region.

For Guyana, no priority is greater than to combat poverty, extreme poverty, inequality, and social exclusion. This can be done through policies that promote economic growth, access to education, health care, and housing in order to better achieve sustainable development with social justice.

A critical component in these efforts is initiatives to promote social protection and economic development among vulnerable groups with a gender perspective. An example is our Women of Worth program, which we have started and which is working well. Through it, single mothers are taught skills and provided with finances for them to start businesses. Many countries in our region are making progress from programs such as these, which are designed to propel destitute households

out of the poverty cycle. These successes point to the need to strengthen inter-American cooperation in development and social protection in order to improve human and institutional capacity-building efforts.

The critical importance of development to democracy, as well as to multidimensional security, compels the OAS to maintain and strengthen its role in sustainable development, in accordance with the provisions of its Charter. It bears repetition that since poverty poses the most potent threat to democracy and security in the Hemisphere, it can be effectively addressed only by means of hemispheric cooperation. Such cooperation has been in evidence by our commitments to support Haiti in its reconstruction and development process.

In CARICOM, we have signed a memorandum of understanding as a vehicle for strengthening our support to Haiti, particularly in the area of institutional strengthening and capacity-building. We are continuing to integrate Haiti into our community and to advocate to the international community on her behalf. In this regard, we call on the international community to make good on its pledges to Haiti expeditiously and to provide the resources to strengthen and empower the country's institutional structure and capacity.

The multidimensional threats to security—some new and some old—spawn a multitude of political, economic, social, health, and environmental challenges to our security and stability. For a region with a homicide rate that is twice the global average, it must be acknowledged that certain aspects of insecurity, such as transnational organized crime, are posing ever more serious challenges. The end result is that factors, such as crime and violence, along with natural disasters, economic shocks, and climate change, are having too serious an impact on the development prospects of many of our countries.

This is especially true for the smaller and more vulnerable among us. For the small island states and low-lying coastal states of the region, these threats are multiplied due to the special vulnerabilities of these states. The countries of CARICOM note with satisfaction that the special security concerns of the small island states and low-lying coastal states of our region form a structured part of the OAS's security agenda. These threats should be a matter of serious concern to countries large and small, since the stability of the small island states is integral to the security of the Hemisphere as a whole.

Insecurity arising from climate change is particularly notable. National authorities and the scientific community are agreed that less developed countries and communities in the region are already suffering from the impact of climate change. These impacts are likely to reduce agricultural productivity and water availability; cause coastal erosion, coral bleaching, and damage to biodiversity; increase vulnerability to natural disasters; and destabilize the physical and socioeconomic conditions of entire populations. According to World Bank figures, the loss of tourism expenditure alone to CARICOM countries is projected at \$4 billion, and losses due to climate-change-related disasters, such as floods and hurricanes, at \$5 billion.

Guyana has historically committed to work towards the preservation of the environment and the reduction of the negative impact of climate change. Our country has placed the protection and sustainable management of its forests as an overarching national priority. Two major steps taken by Guyana to address climate change were the launching of the Initiative on Avoided Deforestation in 2008 and the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) in 2009. These strategies set out a new

development path for Guyana based on developing our forests, which constitute 80 percent of our country, to mitigate global climate, in return for receiving payments from the world for the carbon service the forests provide. This will be done without compromising our sovereignty over the forests or affecting the development prospects of our people.

The Low Carbon Development Strategy sets out a pathway to a new economy that builds future prosperity that is low deforestation, low carbon, and climate resilient. Other Caribbean countries, such as Barbados, Jamaica, Suriname, and Saint Kitts and Nevis, are also in the process of adopting green economy strategies.

Guyana's role in the global effort to combat climate change stands as a leading example to other developing nations in demonstrating that the creation of a low-deforestation, low-carbon, climate-resilient economy can be achieved without sacrificing the development aspirations of the inhabitants of the forests.

While Guyana appreciates the continuing relevance of the OAS's work in human rights and democracy, we believe that there is scope for deeper OAS involvement in supporting the efforts of the Caribbean in addressing sustainable development challenges, such as the changing climate, renewable energy, hazard risk management, land and biodiversity degradation, and environmentally sound trade, all of which fall under the remit of the OAS's agenda for sustainable development. We urge the support of the global community for these efforts. The best way to sustain the gains that have been made in the areas of human rights, democracy, and peace is through sustainable development that keeps the human being at the center.

In order to further address these issues, Guyana looks forward to participating in the upcoming General Assembly session in Cochabamba, which turns a spotlight on the vital question of food security. The Government of President Evo Morales should be commended for selecting this timely and important topic, which is a matter of great interest to the countries of the CARICOM subregion.

Even though we may be heartened by the efforts made in the direction of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, in keeping with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), these trends have been accompanied by increases in nutrition-related diseases. Moreover, while many countries in CARICOM are currently in recession, the region's food import bill is between \$3 billion and \$4 billion per year.

Food prices are spiraling upwards, but the beneficiaries are not the families of ordinary farmers, as one would hope. In fact, the windfall is being reaped by speculators who have broken the link between production and demand, or, in some cases, by producers who have shifted production away from human consumption to biofuel production.

In CARICOM, we have endorsed the Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Action Plan, which were inspired by my predecessor in office, President Bharrat Jagdeo. The Policy is geared to address the major food and nutrition security challenges in the community. It aims to achieve food availability; food access; proper utilization for good health, nutrition, and well-being; as well as stable and sustainable food supplies at all times.

While we view the food situation as serious, it is quite possible that it can get worse. The world now has more than seven billion people; in the next three to four decades, another billion will be added. We can therefore see this as an opportunity. Many of us have land and fresh water. We have the possibility of securing our own needs and of becoming the bread basket of the world.

I trust that the negotiations on the Declaration of Cochabamba on "Food Security with Sovereignty in the Americas" will find consensus, bearing in mind that questions remain as to whether we are moving at the required pace to solve the problem of food security. We must avoid, at all costs, the specter of our citizens taking to the streets to protest hunger by providing workable plans to improve food supply and reduce the effects of hunger and poor nutrition.

Mr. Chairman, we are mindful of the challenges being faced by the OAS. This organization remains the principal forum for hemispheric dialogue, for protecting and advancing democracy and human rights, and for promoting regional development and security.

We hope that after the General Assembly session, you would be able to successfully conclude the program of rationalization and streamlining upon which you have embarked in order to fashion a more dynamic organization with a more adequate profile in the region's affairs. This can be helped by resolving the most important issue that has impacted our relations; that is, the participation of Cuba in the next Summit. Cuba's exclusion came at the time of the Cold War; this is now ended. We have no basis upon which to exclude this country any longer. After all, Cuba has made great contributions to developing the human capital in our region, in particular in health and education. It is time to leave the Cold War mentality behind and totally unite our America.

Ladies and gentlemen, it goes without saying that the key to sustaining and expanding the gains that our hemisphere has achieved over the past several years lies in further strengthening and deepening the integration process. Guyana's geographic situation is ideally suited to this purpose. We are host to the headquarters of CARICOM and are also a member of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO). Guyana is the only English-speaking country to have hosted the secretariats of the Rio Group and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

Of the three countries with which we share borders, one is Dutch-speaking, another is Portuguese-speaking, and the third is Spanish-speaking. Our rich multiethnic and multireligious culture fully reflects both our Caribbean identity as well as our strong Native American heritage. Generations of Guyanese have seen themselves as the bridge between Latin America and the Caribbean. Our post-independence generation is translating that ambition into reality.

Guyana stands willing and ready to play its part to invigorate the regional integration process. We are ready to cooperate with you, inside and outside of the OAS, to ensure that the citizens of our hemisphere live prosperous, fulfilled lives, enjoying the rights and freedoms to which they are justly entitled.

I thank you for your attention.

[Aplausos.]

El PRESIDENTE: Mr. President, thank you very much for your remarks. We highly appreciate your visit to the Organization of American States.

Señores Representantes, el excelentísimo señor Presidente de Guyana, Donald Rabindranauth Ramotar, pasará a saludarlos por sus puestos para después retirarse de este histórico Salón de las Américas.

[El Presidente de Guyana saluda a los señores Representantes y, acompañado por su comitiva, abandona el salón.]

Estimados Representantes, la sesión ha concluido. Se levanta la sesión.

