

CONSEJO PERMANENTE



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ACTA
DE LA SESIÓN PROTOCOLAR
CELEBRADA
EL 11 DE OCTUBRE DE 2013

En honor del excelentísimo doctor Keith Claudius Mitchell,
Primer Ministro de Grenada

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CONSEJO PERMANENTE DE LA ORGANIZACIÓN DE LOS ESTADOS AMERICANOS

ACTA DE LA SESIÓN PROTOCOLAR CELEBRADA EL 11 DE OCTUBRE DE 2013

En la ciudad de Washington, a las diez y cincuenta de la mañana del viernes 11 de octubre de 2013, celebró sesión protocolar el Consejo Permanente de la Organización de los Estados Americanos para recibir al excelentísimo doctor Keith Claudius Mitchell, Primer Ministro de Grenada. Presidió la sesión el Embajador Walter Jorge Alban Peralta, Representante Permanente del Perú y Presidente del Consejo Permanente. Asistieron los siguientes miembros:

Embajadora Deborah-Mae Lovell, Representante Permanente de Antigua y Barbuda
y Vicepresidenta del Consejo Permanente
Embajador Bayney R. Karran, Representante Permanente de Guyana
Embajador Duly Brutus, Representante Permanente de Haití
Embajador Nestor Mendez, Representante Permanente de Belize
Embajador Darío Paya, Representante Permanente de Chile
Embajador Hubert J. Charles, Representante Permanente del Commonwealth de Dominica
Embajador Allan Culham, Representante Permanente del Canadá
Embajador Neil Parsan, Representante Permanente de Trinidad y Tobago
Embajador Diego Pary, Representante Permanente de Bolivia
Embajadora Niermala Badrising, Representante Permanente de Suriname
Embajador Andrés González Díaz, Representante Permanente de Colombia
Embajador Milton Romani Gerner, Representante Permanente del Uruguay
Embajadora Sonia Johnny, Representante Permanente de Santa Lucía
Embajador Joaquín Maza, Representante Permanente de El Salvador
Embajador Arturo Ulises Vallarino Bartuano, Representante Permanente de Panamá
Embajador Angus Friday, Representante Permanente de Grenada
Ministro Consejero Breno de Souza Brasil Dias da Costa, Representante Interino del Brasil
Embajador Jiovanny Felipe Ramírez Martínez, Representante Interino de la
República Dominicana
Embajador Fernando Augusto Suárez Moreno, Representante Interino del Ecuador
Ministra Consejera Cynthia Solis Lizano, Representante Interina de Costa Rica
Segunda Secretaria Agnés María Alvarado Guevara, Representante Alterna de Nicaragua
Ministro Martín Gómez Bustillo, Representante Alterno de la Argentina
Ministro Consejero Omari Seitu Williams, Representante Alterno de San Vicente y las Granadinas
Ministro Raúl Salazar Cosio, Representante Alterno del Perú
Kemoy Liburd Chow, Representante Alterna de Saint Kitts y Nevis
Ministra Consejera Nicolla Simone Rudder, Representante Alterna de Barbados
Embajador Ramses Radhames Lagos Valle, Representante Alterno de Honduras
Ministra Dolores Jiménez, Representante Alterna de México
Consejera Marlene da Vargem Da Silva, Representante Alterna de Venezuela
Lawrence E. Gumbiner, Representante Alterno de los Estados Unidos
Ministra Concepción Martínez Valinotti, Representante Alterna del Paraguay
Ministra Julia Elizabeth Hyatt, Representante Alterna de Jamaica
Tercera Secretaria Ana Verónica Juárez Menéndez, Representante Alterna de Guatemala

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: Señores Embajadores Representantes Permanentes, señores Representantes Alternos y señores Observadores Permanentes, declaro abierta esta sesión protocolar del Consejo Permanente de la Organización de los Estados Americanos, convocada para recibir al señor Keith Mitchell, Primer Ministro de Grenada.

Señoras y señores, permítanme extender en nombre del Consejo Permanente y en el mío propio una muy cálida bienvenida a Su Excelencia, el Primer Ministro de Grenada, el Honorable señor Keith Mitchell, y agradecerle su visita a esta histórica Casa de las Américas.

Me complace también ofrecer una cordial bienvenida a los honorables miembros de la comitiva que lo acompaña. Sean ustedes muy bienvenidos y bienvenidas.

PALABRAS DEL SECRETARIO GENERAL

El PRESIDENTE: Tengo el gusto ahora de invitar al señor Secretario General, don José Miguel Insulza, quien pronunciará las palabras iniciales de esta sesión. Adelante, señor Secretario General.

El SECRETARIO GENERAL: Thank you very much.

Dr. the Right Honorable Keith Mitchell, Prime Minister of Grenada; members of the Grenadian Delegation; Ambassador Walter Alban, Presidente del Consejo Permanente; Ambassador Albert Ramdin, Assistant Secretary General; ambassadors, permanent and alternate representatives; permanent observers; ladies and gentlemen:

It is an honor and pleasure to welcome once again the Prime Minister of Grenada, Dr. Keith Mitchell, to the House of the Americas. He is no stranger to this august body, having visited us on other occasions, especially during his previous term of office as head of the Government of Grenada.

Mr. Prime Minister, your presence at the Organization of American States today is confirmation of your commitment to the inter-American system and Grenada's strong support for regional and hemispheric integration. This support goes beyond the OAS and is reflected in your country's activism and leadership in the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the United Nations, and the OAS itself.

Indeed, your new Permanent Representative, Ambassador Angus Friday, whom I would once again like to welcome to the OAS, brings to our family a wealth of leadership experience from his role in the UN Small Island Developing States (SIDS) process which, we hope, will especially benefit the smaller islands of the region.

Within CARICOM's quasi-Cabinet system, Prime Minister Mitchell has had lead responsibility for the promotion of science, technology, and innovation. You played a leadership role in the formulation and development of the Caribbean Knowledge and Learning Network (CKLN), a regional organization established by CARICOM heads of government.

Grenada is therefore a valued member of the OAS and a country with which we have had a long and close partnership. Your country was the first OECS member state to join the OAS in 1975, less than two years after gaining your independence. Grenada was also the first CARICOM country to host, in 1977, a regular session of the General Assembly. Our partnership has grown and now successfully embraces activities and initiatives within the four main pillars of the OAS: democracy, development, security, and human rights.

We have accompanied the Government and people of Grenada in several political areas, such as strengthening their electoral institutions and processes and sending out electoral observation missions (EOMs), and we stand ready to continue our work. Our efforts to modernize the country's civil registry system have been successful, with 100 percent of birth records now digitalized. We hope that we will also be allowed to be of assistance to the Government and people of Grenada in your new endeavors.

We recognize the many challenges that your country has had to face. Just over nine years ago—when we first met, Mr. Prime Minister—Hurricane Ivan devastated the country, with loss of life and damages that were assessed at 200 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) for the year 2003. Two thirds of that damage was to the housing stock. During this very difficult period, Prime Minister Mitchell provided leadership in the recovery effort and, even more importantly, was a figure of hope for the people of Grenada. When I visited your country some years later, it was evident how much progress had been made between my first visit and the second, and this was due to the will and determination of the Government and people of Grenada.

Today, you are facing the challenge of the impact of the global economic recession, which has had a particularly chilling effect on employment and on Grenada's debt management capabilities. I want to assure you that the OAS will continue to accompany Grenada as it seeks to find solutions to these and other problems.

I am very happy to announce that the OAS, together with the Government of Grenada and the Bertelsmann Foundation, will be organizing a regional conference on debt management in the Caribbean on November 7 and 8 in Grenada.

Once again, sir, I bid you a very warm welcome to your home, the House of the Americas, and thank you very much for your visit to us today.

Thank you very much.

PALABRAS DEL PRESIDENTE DEL CONSEJO PERMANENTE

El PRESIDENTE: Distinguidos Representantes Permanentes; señores Representantes Alternos; Observadores Permanentes; señor Secretario General, José Miguel Insulza; señor Secretario General Adjunto, Embajador Albert Ramdin; señoras y señores:

Permítanme extenderle, en nombre del Consejo Permanente y en el mío propio, una muy cálida bienvenida a Su Excelencia, el Primer Ministro de Grenada, el honorable señor Keith Mitchell y agradecerle su visita a esta histórica Casa de las Américas.

Me complace también ofrecer una cordial bienvenida a los honorables miembros de la comitiva que lo acompaña. Sean ustedes muy bienvenidos y bienvenidas.

Nuestro ilustre visitante, el señor Primer Ministro de Grenada, es graduado de la Universidad de las Indias Occidentales, Campus Cave Hill, en donde obtuvo la licenciatura en matemáticas y química en 1971, seguida de una maestría en la Universidad de Howard en 1975 y un doctorado en matemáticas y estadística en la *American University* en el año 1979.

El doctor Mitchell fue docente en el Presentation Brothers College, profesor de matemáticas en Howard University entre 1977 y 1983 y ha actuado como consultor en diferentes oficinas de gobierno y empresas privadas en los Estados Unidos.

En 1984 fue elegido Miembro del Parlamento de su país representando al distrito de Saint George North West y desde entonces ha conservado su escaño en cada una de las elecciones subsiguientes. Se ha desempeñado como Ministro de Comunicaciones, Obras y Servicios Públicos, Cooperativas, Desarrollo Comunitario, Asuntos de la Mujer y Aviación Civil, entre 1988 y 1989. Entre los cargos que ocupó en el Gobierno de su país, cabe mencionar los de Ministro de Seguridad Nacional, Finanzas, Comercio, Industria, Planificación e Información, y posteriormente Seguridad Nacional e Información así como los de Ministro de Seguridad Nacional, Desarrollo de Recursos Humanos, Información, Comunicación y Tecnología, Desarrollo de Negocios del Sector Privado y Desarrollo de la Juventud.

El Primer Ministro Mitchell ha sido Presidente de la Comunidad del Caribe (CARICOM); Presidente de la Junta de Gobernadores del Banco de Desarrollo del Caribe; Presidente del Consejo de Ministros de la Asociación de Estados del Caribe; Presidente de la Organización de Estados del Caribe Oriental (OECS) y Presidente del Sistema de Seguridad Regional (SSR).

Nuestro ilustre visitante, cuyo mandato actual es el cuarto como Primer Ministro de su país, es también Ministro de Información, de Implementación, de Seguridad Nacional y de Gestión de Desastres y Asuntos Internos.

Señor Primer Ministro, tiene usted una envidiable y larga trayectoria al servicio de su país y de su pueblo. Es por ello que lo saludamos. Representa usted a un país en el cual las distintas culturas que lo conforman constituyen el más importante componente del potencial humano de su pueblo.

La condición de una plural y armónica cultura de su país ha venido enriqueciendo ciertamente el cónclave de los Estados Miembros así como las consideraciones y decisiones de esta Organización. La participación de los Representantes Permanentes de Grenada ante esta Organización ha sido siempre un aporte imponderable para el análisis de los temas prioritarios de nuestra agenda. De ello han quedado muestras durante la presidencia de este Consejo desempeñada de abril a junio de 2011.

Al reiterarle nuestra más cordial bienvenida, expresamos el grato placer de contar entre nosotros a un representante del Caribe, un representante del pueblo de Grenada, del país con el que compartimos el más sólido compromiso con la democracia y con la protección de los derechos humanos. Además de la riqueza de su gente, nos deleitan sus playas, las más envidiables del mundo así como sus muy exquisitas especias.

Sea este, pues, señor Primer Ministro, un saludo a su presencia en esta Casa y un homenaje al pueblo de Grenada. Reconocemos su presencia como una manifestación del compromiso de su país y de su Gobierno en pro del continuo fortalecimiento de las relaciones entre las naciones del Hemisferio.

PALABRAS DEL PRIMER MINISTRO DE GRENADA

El PRESIDENTE: Señor Primer Ministro, tiene usted el uso de la palabra para dirigirse a los miembros del Consejo Permanente de la Organización de los Estados Americanos. Lo invito, por tanto, a pasar al pódium.

[Aplausos.]

El PRIMER MINISTRO DE GRENADA: Thank you.

Your Excellency Ambassador Walter Alban, Chairman of the Permanent Council and Permanent Representative of Peru to the Organization of American States; Your Excellency José Miguel Insulza, Secretary General of this distinguished Organization and, of course, my good friend and a good friend of Grenada, Carriacou, and Petit Martinique; Your Excellency Albert Ramdin, OAS Assistant Secretary General, my good friend; distinguished permanent representatives of this august body; excellencies; ladies and gentlemen; sisters and brothers all:

I want to thank you, first of all, for this warm welcome to the House of the Americas. I am in a city where I spent 13 special years of my life, so I always feel at home every time I'm in Washington.

I'm also honored to be here at the Organization of American States, the world's oldest regional organization. It has stood as a forum for political dialogue and has been a central point for fostering cooperation and development in our hemisphere.

The OAS has worked alongside the Government and people of Grenada, Carriacou, and Petit Martinique as an integral partner. The OAS, therefore, remains a vital and visible part of the consolidation of our development and our democratic processes.

Indeed, the people of Grenada welcomed the recent deployment of the OAS's Electoral Observation Mission (EOM) in February of this year. At that time, my party, the New National Party (NNP), was returned to power with a clear mandate to build a new spirit of national unity across all parties and all sectors of our society, and to seek consensus with a constellation of domestic social partners.

My friends, although we won all the seats in Parliament, we want to assure you that since the election, we have attempted to govern with a spirit of cooperation and consultation with all the people of our country. Every single major issue has been ventilated across all political and social lines in Grenada.

We also received a clear mandate to deliver on the agenda for recovery, growth, and transformation. Recovery is critical. Like much of the region, our country has been impacted by a number of global factors, such as climate change, the global financial crisis, and the volatility of oil prices. Of course, for small island states like Grenada, as proud and resilient as we are, the impacts have been much worse for us.

To give an example, as devastating as hurricanes Sandy and Katrina were to the U.S. economy and to the people in the affected areas, they cost between 0.5 and 2 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). In Grenada's case, Hurricane Ivan cost us, as our distinguished Secretary General has already indicated, 200 percent of GDP. Our CARICOM family can attest to these and similar impacts. Grenada therefore restructured its debts at the time, but it certainly could not have anticipated the global economic downturn of 2008. Again, for small economies, the impact has been much worse.

And so, my dear sisters and brothers, my team and I are here in Washington on the occasion of the World Bank's annual meetings to engage our international partners on the themes of recovery, growth, and transformation. We are here at a time of great challenge for our region, and it is also a time of soul-searching for this special august body, the Organization of American States.

My dear sisters and brothers, Grenada has endured much over the last 40 years since becoming an independent nation. For what it is worth, it will be an honor to share with you at least one of the important lessons that we have learned.

During our darkest hour, it was not enough for us to focus only on our challenges. We believed that while we confronted the challenges, we had to focus on the opportunities. It is in that context that we see hope as an immeasurable source of energy that can help convene people, forge consensus, and deal with challenges of the day, while seizing the opportunities for a better tomorrow. We believe that is absolutely crucial. We can moan about the problems, but to seize the opportunities is the way to go.

Following Hurricane Ivan's devastation of Grenada, spurred by the indomitable spirit of the Grenadian people and buoyed by the help and support of our partners in the Caribbean, in this hemisphere, and further afield, I had the privilege of leading an economic revival around the theme "Building Back Better." That allowed Grenada, within less than three years, as the Secretary General already indicated, to join its CARICOM neighbors in hosting the ICC Cricket World Cup 2007 and in welcoming visitors.

As we look ahead to the opportunities, as we face the challenges, as we mature as a nation, and as we reach our fortieth year of independence, we believe that we have to look at reform of our Constitution, which guides the way of life within our democratic system. Constitutional reform is a critical factor, as well as public integrity in governance, for which we seek assistance from our regional and international friends, and, in particular, the Organization of American States.

Today, Grenada has a similar opportunity in the aftermath of the global economic downturn. Grenada's focus is not only on recovery but also on growth and transformation for a smart and new economy in the context of the information and communication age.

We are delivering Grenada as a center of excellence for clean and green economy, which will see the dismantling of the electricity monopoly in our country and the high fossil fuel import bill. It is a bill lightened through the help of our regional and international friends. Even with this help, Grenada has one of the highest prices of electricity in the region, and our people have said that they can't take it any more. We are engaging with partners in solar, wind, and geothermal energy to make Grenada an example for a sustainable planet.

We are delivering a new health and wellness industry that builds on the success of Saint George's University, which is providing premier medical education. With the development of a new teaching hospital, we envisage the creation of a knowledge park for international health care services, for medical and pharmaceutical companies, for information technology, and for creative industries for youth.

We also must deliver a world-class tourism sector, with biodiversity protection for 20 percent of our coastal waters and with a vibrant marine and yachting sector, a trained workforce, and new boutique hotels, three of which we have announced in the last two weeks. This sector would be tightly coupled with growth in our agricultural sector, which we are diversifying.

We are placing greater emphasis on trade with our regional partners in CARICOM and Latin America. We see the region as a great source of natural wealth, including the vibrancy of our cultures.

So, while we are here to engage our partners in recovery, we are just as engaged in the seeds of hope for growth and transformation.

The OAS is also contemplating recovery and renewal as it seeks to develop an agenda that is relevant to its 900 million people and their future. These are 900 million people who are seeking hope, seeking growth, and, obviously, seeking transformation. Other regional blocks—the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the European Union (EU), and the African Union (AU)—are doing the same.

Mr. Chairman, friends, brothers and sisters all: As we seek to transform this institution, it is the firm view of Grenada that we cannot only address the future that we fear; we must address the future that we have to embrace.

With the advent of information and communications technology (ICT), mobile communications and social media, we find that security, democracy, and human rights are open for business 24/7, as we have seen around the world, including in our own hemisphere. We cannot close our eyes.

Our youth are seeking hope and innovative opportunities by using the new media revolution. Young enterprises want more financing and more trade. Municipal and national governments want more jobs and competitiveness.

We do not believe, therefore, that it is enough for this august body to focus only on our fears. In defining a new OAS, we must also give hope to our young people, hope to the private sector, and

hope to governments like mine that are seeking a deeper engagement with the region and new sources of competitiveness and growth.

If we do not embrace, Mr. Chairman and my dear brothers and sisters, an agenda built around hope and development, we could find ourselves in a futile battle with transnational crime and an organized narcotics industry, as well as more challenges to democracy, peace, and security.

Sixty-five years after its creation, the OAS is called upon to face the bold new challenges and opportunities before our entire hemisphere. In order to adequately respond, the modality by which the Organization operates must adapt to these new realities. We therefore ask that in your deliberations on the future of the OAS, my dear sisters and brothers, equal weighting be given to the development agenda—an agenda of hope, growth, and transformation. In doing so, we can fulfill the inherent promise for the Americas and for the 900 million people that we serve. Please be assured of Grenada's active engagement as a stakeholder in this dialogue for forging a renewed and revitalized OAS.

Mr. Chairman, Secretary General, my dear sisters and brothers all, it has been a pleasure for me to address you today. I am convinced that the OAS has a fundamental role as a focal point in the inter-American dialogue on facilitating innovative approaches to promoting the well-being of our citizenry.

Today, therefore, I reaffirm the bonds of friendship and cooperation between our country and this important organization. I reaffirm our commitment to work towards a renewed hemispheric agenda for development in which peace, prosperity, and social justice will prevail.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Secretary General, my dear sisters and brothers all, in closing, let me take this opportunity to wish you all well in your deliberations. I look forward to seeing many of you later this evening to continue our dialogue and to strengthen our friendship. In wishing you well, I have given you a distinguished son of the soil, the new Ambassador of Grenada to the Organization of American States, and I know he will play an equal part in this new agenda.

Thank you all.

[Aplausos.]

El PRESIDENTE: Su Excelencia, muchas gracias por este sustantivo, constructivo y alentador mensaje.

Ahora solicito a los distinguidos Representantes que permanezcan en sus asientos mientras Su Excelencia el Primer Ministro de Grenada se retira del salón.

[El Primer Ministro de Grenada, acompañado por su comitiva, retira del salón.]

Señores Representantes, señores invitados especiales, esta sesión protocolar del Consejo Permanente ha concluido. Les ruego que pasen al salón Libertador Simón Bolívar donde en breves minutos se dará inicio a la sesión conjunta del Consejo Permanente y el Consejo Interamericano para el Desarrollo Integral.

Muchísimas gracias.

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