

**Dialogue between Heads of Delegation, the Secretary General, and Heads of Delegation of the  
Permanent Observer Countries to the OAS on the theme of the XLII Regular Session of the General  
Assembly, "Food Security with Sovereignty"  
June 3, 2012  
Cochabamba, Bolivia**

**Permanent Observer Mission of Sweden**

Remarks delivered by:  
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Mr Secretary General,  
Honorable Ministers and Heads of Delegations,  
Ladies and Gentleman,

It is a great honor for me to speak before you here today. Sweden has been a permanent observer to the OAS since 1996 but our involvement in the region goes back much further. Our relations with the Americas are profound and encompass people, trade and shared values.

With Latin America, Sweden has a long history of bilateral relations and development cooperation, mainly in the areas of human rights, democracy and peace building. We have a vibrant Latin American community in Sweden, which makes the region visible in our country and contributes to make us a multi-cultural society.

We value OAS also for the opportunity to interact with the Community of the Caribbean countries.

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The theme for this years' General Assembly is Food Security with Sovereignty. The topic is highly relevant: food security is one of the great challenges the world community is facing.

To be free from hunger is a human right, as recognized by the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights. As with all human rights, the responsibility to ensure that the right of food is respected

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within a country rests with the state in question. Food security is thus a matter of national sovereignty.

At the same time, the international community must cooperate toward the common goal of ensuring a world free of hunger. Free trade and climate change are perhaps the most evident examples of this.

We need open trade regimes in order to improve and ensure food security. An emphasis on national sovereignty should not lead us towards protectionism. And the current high prices represent an opportunity to address the high level of protection that continues to characterize the global agricultural market.

Climate change has direct repercussions on food security. Many countries here represented have direct experiences of this – not least the Caribbean countries that are particularly exposed. Sweden and the EU remain fully committed to the UN Climate Change Conference.

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As custodian of common values and interests, the OAS is well placed to deal with disputes, conflicts and security problems in the Americas. The development over the last years has shown that regional organizations, along with the United Nations, have an important role to play in this respect. The OAS has been a strong force for democracy in the region. The Inter-American system of Human Rights, including its judicial mechanisms and institutions, brings further value-added to the OAS.

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The OAS has our continued trust for the work in the region. Electoral observation, conflict resolution and verification of peace efforts all contribute to a more secure and peaceful region which is better positioned to meet the development challenges ahead. Sweden continues to support the consolidation and the transformation of the OAS into an even more modern, focused and effective organisation, equipped to deal with Americas' challenges in the future.

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Now, I would like to conclude by thanking Bolivia for its hospitality and the secretariat for the excellent meeting arrangements. In the future, we hope to be able to look back and say that in this very decade, the OAS helped addressing human rights problems, extending the rule of law and contributing to address challenges with Food Security for everyone in the Americas.

Thank you!