



## **OAS RESOLUTION REAFFIRMS SUPPORT FOR VENEZUELA**

December 17, 2002

In a resolution issued Monday night, the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States (OAS) announced it “fully support(s) the democratic and constitutional order of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, whose government is headed by Hugo Chávez Frías, and (that it) reject(s) categorically any attempt at a coup d’état or unconstitutional alteration of the Venezuelan constitutional regime that seriously impairs the democratic order.”

Articulating “resolute and unequivocal support” for the OAS Secretary General’s efforts to facilitate dialogue, the Permanent Council urged the Venezuelan government and the democratic opposition to use good-faith negotiations to bring about a constitutional, democratic, peaceful, and electoral solution within the framework of the Forum for Negotiation and Agreement being facilitated by the OAS Secretary General.

The Permanent Council resolution calls on all sectors of society in Venezuela to respect the principles enshrined in the Inter-American Democratic Charter, including respect for human rights, the rule of law, and transparency and good governance.

The OAS resolution reiterated as well the member states’ determination to continue applying, without distinction and in strict accordance with the letter and spirit of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, the mechanisms it provides for preserving and defending representative democracy, and rejected the use of violence to replace any democratic government in the Hemisphere.

The resolution also asked the Secretary General to report to the Permanent Council on his mediation efforts in Venezuela, bearing in mind there are other inter-American mechanisms such as the Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

When the resolution was approved, Venezuela’s Ambassador Jorge Valero told the Permanent Council that “this solid consensus we achieved tonight is a reaffirmation by the OAS of its commitment to democracy. It could also be said that it sent a clear signal to the entire Hemisphere that this Organization, created specifically to defend democracies, is absolutely shouldering its responsibility in a transparent way.”

Ambassador Valero thanked the member state delegations for reaching consensus. He also thanked Chile’s Ambassador, Esteban Tomic, who chaired the working group, and commended the Secretary General for “his extraordinary effort” facilitating the Forum for Negotiation and Agreement in Venezuela.

Meanwhile, United States Ambassador Roger Noriega urged “the two sides—the government and the democratic opposition—to negotiate in good faith to reach a peaceful, democratic, constitutional and electoral solution.”

Noriega declared, “This is a time for all Venezuelans to act to defuse tension and seek a constructive solution to the ongoing unrest and violence.” He added: “All of Venezuela’s civilian, democratic institutions—the National Assembly, the Supreme Court, the Attorney



General, the Defender of the People and the Executive—must act to overcome Venezuela’s current crisis.”

