

Speech

Organization of American States



**LUIGI R. EINAUDI, ACTING SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
TO BE READ OUT DURING THE PROTOCOLARY MEETING
TO BE HELD ON APRIL 29, 2005 TO WELCOME THE
PRESIDENT OF PANAMA, MARTIN TORRIJOS ESPINO
April 29, 2005 - Washington, DC**

[Print this page](#)

[Email this page](#)

REFERENCE

[Press Releases](#)

[Latest News](#)

[Speeches](#)

[OAS's website](#)

On behalf of the General Secretariat, I should like to extend the most cordial welcome to His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Panama, Martín Torrijos Espino, to the Vice President and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Samuel Lewis, and to the distinguished group of authorities accompanying them today.

Your presence at this Permanent Council, in the same Hall of the Americas in which, almost 28 years ago, the Torrijos-Carter Treaties were signed, is a fitting moment to recall that the culmination of the negotiations between the governments of Panama and the United States, in the presence of the highest authorities of almost all the countries of the region as witnesses of honor, marked the beginning of a new era of solidarity among equal partners in the Americas.

Those Treaties were and remain a symbol of mutual respect and unity for the entire Hemisphere. In 1979, the Secretary General of the Organization of American States at that time said: "[T]he treaties symbolized the start of the era of the inter-American system, a moment at which the nations of the Hemisphere expressed their utter conviction that dedication to the principles of peace, professed for so long, had now materialized."

It was not by chance that the Organization of American States was chosen as the home and venue for signature of the treaties and as the depositary for them. The negotiations had afforded resounding proof of what two countries can achieve when they strive with mutual respect to attain common goals. Yet Panama and the United States were not alone in that endeavor. They were accompanied in difficult times by all our governments and, in a very special way, by the Heads of Government of Colombia, Costa Rica, and Venezuela. Through dialogue and the search for consensus, in a spirit of fairness, the solidarity of neighboring countries and that of the Hemisphere as a whole overcame numerous difficulties and frequent mistrust. And it was precisely solidarity and trust that were confirmed in this Hall at the signing of the treaties.

On that historic day, President Omar Torrijos said "the agreement we have reached is the product of understanding between two leaders who believe in the peaceful coexistence of their peoples and who uphold the courage and leadership of facing their peoples armed only with the truth and their profound conviction of what is right."

In January of this year, 2005, in this same Hall, former President Jimmy Carter recalled the signing of the treaties and said: "I am proud to have witnessed these demonstrations of the courage, persistence and creativity of the people of this Hemisphere."

History has taught us that often it is necessary to make concessions in order to be able to continue building and consolidating achievements aimed at reaching what all of us strive for. The inter-American values of dialogue in the quest for points of consensus and the work of the OAS in support of such participatory and transparent processes whenever they have arisen at a multilateral or bilateral level have strengthened our Hemisphere. All of us should take pride in what we have accomplished and the progress we have made and, at the same time be aware that there are new paths to be opened up with the help of all of our nations.

Mr. President, the presence of Panama that you so warmly evoke and symbolize

for us is ably represented in this Permanent Council by Panama's permanent representative, Ambassador Aristides Royo, a lawyer by training and a man devoted to Pan American affairs whose qualities as a diplomat and negotiator have characterized his entire career and in particular the process that culminated in the signing of the Torrijos-Carter Treaties.

Mr. President, the national objectives designed by you and your Government team in order to build a new Panama, respond to the most noble of aspirations—those of forging a just society and of making the development and welfare of Panamanians a reality--merit our recognition.

I would like to conclude by reiterating our welcome to the President and the distinguished delegation accompanying him.

Thank you.

© Copyright 2005. Organization of American States. All Rights Reserved.
Headquarters: 17th Street & Constitution Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006, USA
Tel. (202)458-3000 / Email: multimedia@oas.org

Designed by the Office of Public Information - Multimedia Unit.