



## Organization of American States

Democracy for peace, security, and development



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### Speeches

#### **ALBERT R. RAMDIN, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES AT THE FIFTH CARIBBEAN ENVIRONMENT FORUM IN MONTEGO BAY, JAMAICA.**

June 23, 2010 - Washington, DC

Thank you Madam Chair, and thank you too for establishing the protocol for this Opening Ceremony which I will happily adopt in the interest of time.

I am very pleased to be back in Jamaica, especially in these beautiful surroundings of Montego Bay.

Prime Minister, the Honorable Bruce Golding, permit me to convey to you and through you to the Government and People of Jamaica that the OAS is in full support of your efforts of maintain and enhance peace and stability. We believe, as adopted in the principal documents of the Organization, that a democratic framework needs to be respected, rule of law complied with and human rights fostered by all in society.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the OAS is pleased to be associated with the Caribbean Environment Health Institute and the other partners in convening the 5th Caribbean Environment Forum.

Taking into account the interest, the high level of speakers and the attendance by leading politicians in the Caribbean, the growth and impact of this important gathering since its inception has been exceptional. We are, again, honored to come aboard as a partner for this year's event and all I can promise is that, resources permitting, we hope to be a partner in future forums.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the principal focus of this conference, to review the outcome of the Copenhagen Summit, is an important one. This high level reflection will hopefully establish mechanisms for monitoring, implementation, evaluation and planning for next steps. I hope that the Caribbean, in partnership with other countries and sub-regions, can lead a discussion on the impact of environmental challenges when hemispheric leaders will meet again in April 2012 at the 6th regular Summit of the Americas in Cartagena, Colombia.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Caribbean is an integral part of the OAS and we stand ready to assist the needs of the Caribbean People and their Governments. I want to reassure you that we will continue our efforts at enhancing sustainable development of the Caribbean region in areas such as: water resources management, climate change adaptation, sustainable energy, land and biodiversity management, disaster risk management, and environmental policy, law and governance.

Mr. Prime Ministers, ladies and gentlemen, we need to be pragmatic and result oriented in our approach and action. The fundamental objective must be to make this place a better world for all of us.

I am concerned that in fifty or a hundred years there will be no civilization, or a very poor and damaged one at best, if we do not start NOW in a sincere way to address as a matter of urgency and with creativity the environmental challenges facing our nations and peoples. We have to ask ourselves if this is the legacy we want to leave behind for future generations.

There is need for pragmatic consensus worldwide on the way forward and we have to build on progress achieved, because as we all are in the same boat on the same sea, we all will be affected if we do not work together to address the causes of these challenges.

A couple of years ago I said at a meeting at the OAS Headquarters that if we do not tackle the environmental problems adequately and timely it would lead to insecurity and economic and political instability. I am pleased to acknowledge the presence of two Heads of Governments and many other key policy makers and implementers, and we need to continue sensitizing politicians and legislators on the severe impact of complacency will have on elections, democracy and democratic governability.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let us do not forget that ultimately whatever we undertake, initiate and implement as politicians, legislators, policy makers, international and regional civil servants, it is always about three P's: to serve the People, to enhance Peace in society and to foster Prosperity for all.

I thank you for your kind attention and I look forward sharing OAS perspectives with you tomorrow.

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