

**2023 Washington Model Organization of
American States General Assembly**

**OPENING
STATEMENTS**



Washington Model
Organization of American States
Institute for Diplomatic Dialogue in the Americas



OAS

More rights for more people

April 3 - 7, 2023

Opening Statement - Colombia

Honorable Chair and esteemed delegates,

It is an honor to stand before you today as the Delegation of Colombia. This delegation comes in the spirit of collaboration and cooperation, with a shared commitment to addressing some of the most pressing challenges facing our hemisphere.

As we gather here today, the delegation of Colombia looks forward to engaging in a regional dialogue that collectively seeks specific measures to address social issues in the OAS and strengthen our democratic governments. We believe that by working together, we can make progress on some of the most critical issues facing our hemisphere, including the rise of corruption and the protection of our natural world.

The delegation of Colombia recognizes that corruption and the erosion of democratic institutions pose a threat to our collective prosperity, and we must work together to identify concrete actions and solutions that will advance our shared goals. Earth is our home, and we must protect it. We believe that a renewed focus on environmental programs and protections is essential to humanity's continued survival. We must work together to protect our natural world, which is so integral to our collective well-being.

The delegation of Colombia also recognizes the devastating impact that Covid-19 has had on education systems throughout the hemisphere. Addressing the education crisis is critical to ensuring that our young people have the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the years ahead. The delegation of Colombia believes that by sharing best practices, we can develop a course of action to aid the education crises caused by Covid-19.

In the light of this, the delegation of Colombia stands ready to work with fellow Member States to make progress on the critical issues facing our region. This delegation believes that by working together, a more prosperous, sustainable, and equitable world, for all citizens in our Member States, will be created.

Thank you!

Opening Statement - Mexico

Honorable Chair people and fellow delegates,

Mexico would like to welcome each delegation to this year's model assembly and hopes that creativity and diplomacy will be at the forefront of debate in the following days. It is clear to Mexico that as the Americas begin to recuperate after the COVID-19 pandemic, many changes need to not only be proposed, but implemented to better allow for the peace in which the OAS so heavily advocates. Furthermore, Mexico believes that this goal of peace and prosperity outlined prominently in the OAS charter should be at the heart of each resolution.

While Mexico takes interest in a variety of matters relevant to the OAS and the hemisphere, the country's primary concerns lie in measures to reduce corruption and violence as well as entertaining opportunities to promote nationalism. Mexico aspires to accomplish this throughout the assembly through resolutions addressing femicide, adopting anti-corruption networks, implementing educational programs to combat violence and recognizing the rights of nature. As it stands, Mexico sees each of the resolutions the delegation intends to present as bettering both Mexico and the hemisphere while also abiding by the principles of democracy and nationalism.

With this in mind, Mexico would like to reaffirm its commitment to cooperation and hope that member states present here today will share in Mexico's dedication to improving the hemisphere in which we all reside.

Thank you,

Opening Statement - Belize

Head Delegate: Camilla Perez

Greetings, Honorable chairs, fellow delegates, faculty, and everyone present in the Washington Model of the Organization of American States this year. Since 1991, Belize has been a member of the Organization of American States. It has since then worked with the OAS on agendas such as cooperating on regional security and furthering cooperation efforts and initiatives towards development and participation in the Summits of the Americas. The Delegation of Belize welcomes the opportunity to engage with other member states and enact impactful change. We support the OAS's mission to strengthen democratic institutions and promote the economic, social, and cultural rights of individuals. We believe in making progress as a nation and the success of the OAS. The Delegation of Belize acknowledges the importance of addressing the issue of violence against women in the Americas and encourages other member states present to do the same.

Thank you.

Opening Statement - Bolivia

The delegation of Bolivia is invested in furthering diplomatic relations between all other members of the Organization of American States, and would thus like to acknowledge present Member States in their collaboration in future development.

Bolivia stands to ensure a fair and just democratic state, in which all individuals have an opportunity to strive economically and socially throughout their lifetime, which includes the implementation of new strategies to strengthen the rights, liberties, and inclusion of all people.

To achieve our goals, we believe in the establishment and protection of a transparent government with free and fair elections.

We also acknowledge the significant damage to agriculture and water sectors in all nations due to climate change. Therefore, we are committed to working towards member states' food and water security by promoting renewable energy resources in farming and rural areas. We must act now to protect our planet and ensure the well-being of future generations.

Bolivia has also been a vocal advocate for the recognition of the rights of nature on the international stage. We urge all member nations to join in our conservation efforts to protect the biodiversity and livelihoods of our region.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic has created numerous challenges, including educational setbacks for individuals throughout the Americas. Bolivia aims to mitigate the widening education gap by strengthening the education sector, allowing for a more advanced and well-rounded workforce, and assisting the region with both educational and economic growth.

Opening Statement - Honduras

Thank you Mr./Mrs. President and Greetings to the fellow Chairs and Delegates,

The Republic of Honduras continues to be a proud founding member of the OAS while maintaining the four pillars of its foundation: Democracy, Human Rights, Integral Development, and Hemisphere Security. And while these ideals were challenged under the prior regime, our Republic ensures all fellow delegations of our commitment to these ideals.

President Xiomara Castro has provided assurances under her Presidency, that these pillars will be upheld by Honduran citizens and the region as a whole. The President has committed herself to rid Honduras of large criminal stigma within the state, by cracking down on gang violence in lower income areas and against marginalized peoples. This will then allow state funding to come into these areas and provide strong education systems, accessible basic services, and promotion of leadership roles, giving all Hondurans the possibility for a better way of life.

The Republic of Honduras hopes to become a model for fellow member states struggling with the issues of justice, inclusion, and equity which we encourage all delegations to put on display during this meeting.

Thank you for giving the delegation from the Republic of Honduras your time.

Opening Statement - Haiti

Honorable chair, fellow delegates, and distinguished guests.

It is with pleasure that, the Delegation of Haiti, greets you on this monumental occasion. Our delegation congratulates all other Member States on their commitment and presence at the Washington Model Organization of American States 2023. We also express our gratitude to the IDDA and OAS for affording us this opportunity to meet and dialogue with OAS Member States and their elite representatives on matters concerning the hemisphere in an effort to initiate change through international cooperation.

The Republic of Haiti remains a land of scenic natural beauty and culture. However, for decades, she has faced significant challenges that have stagnated her prosperity. These challenges surround the context of natural disasters, disease, political instability, and violence. Hence, during this assembly, the delegation of the Republic of Haiti wishes to engage the OAS Member States in solution-oriented discussions concerning hemispheric issues relating to sexual violence, government and the electoral process, water security, the implications of COVID-19 on the educational system, and, climate change.

We agree that international support is necessary within the hemisphere to combat many issues that member states face. It is our position that Haitians also hold the vital role of uniting in order to adequately address their nation's challenges. As the motto of the Republic of Haiti mandates, "L'Union fait la force" which translates to "Union makes strength." Through combined efforts, may Haiti, and all other member states develop unity and prosperity to provide a brighter future for themselves.

Opening Statement - Guyana

Greetings,

President, Committee Chair, Rapporteur and esteemed colleagues, the delegation of Guyana is honored to be present at this assembly and would like to thank the OAS and IDDA staff for affording the delegates present at this gathering the opportunity to reach a consensus via dialogue.

As we gather here today, we acknowledge that gender-based violence is a global problem that affects millions of people, and Guyana is no exception. The World Health Organization has estimated that one in three women worldwide experiences some form of gender-based violence in their lifetime, which is an alarming statistic that demands our attention and action.

Gender-based violence has far-reaching consequences that affect not only individuals, but also families, communities, and the broader society. It hinders progress toward gender equality, social justice, and human rights and undermines the well-being and dignity of all people. It is, therefore, critical that we work together to address this issue in the hemisphere.

The Washington Model Organization of American States General Assembly (WMOAS) and its partners are committed to promoting gender equality and preventing gender-based violence in all its forms. Through our programs and initiatives, we aim to raise awareness, strengthen national capacities, support evidence-based interventions that empower women and girls, and promote gender-sensitive policies and practices.

Today's discussion is an opportunity to learn from each other and share experiences, ideas, and best practices to address gender-based violence in the hemisphere. Together, we can make a difference and create a safer and more equitable future for all. We have the power to create a world where everyone is safe from violence and inequality, and we can start by making a difference in our communities.

Thank you.

OPENING STATEMENT - JAMAICA

Honorable Chair, Honorable Vice-Chair, Secretary General, Fellow Delegates:

The Delegation of Jamaica arrives to this General Assembly pleased to support the pillars of the Organization of American States, and to address critical challenges that persist after the global shocks of the past three years.

The Honorable Leslie Campbell, Jamaica's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade has reinforced the goal to continue working on the strengthening of the OAS to better assist member states in attaining hemispheric objectives. Efforts must be accelerated to close existing gaps, particularly in the areas of technology, sustainability, and the establishment of a global partnership for development. The COVID-19 pandemic has called for the adoption of new measures that ensure greater inclusiveness, opportunity for all, and transparency, while the region also needs to enhance its cultural diversity and mutual respect.

Jamaica has worked decisively and staged a remarkable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there is still work to do in areas from which resources were diverted because of the global health crisis. New policy actions are needed to offer opportunities for all citizens through the development of human capital, the fight against corruption, organized crime, and domestic violence, and the promotion of a sustainable, inclusive and non-discriminatory future.

The delegation, following these guidelines, looks forward to working with fellow member states in finding innovative solutions for the promotion of democracy, human rights, development, health, well-being and the reignition of our nations' greatness for the betterment of our peoples.

Opening Statement - Paraguay

Secretary General, esteemed faculty, and fellow delegates, the delegation of Paraguay extends warm greetings to you at the commencement of this year's Washington Model of the Organization of American States.

We have crafted resolutions inspired by current challenges in the hemisphere that also reflect our perspective in the Southern Cone of South America.

Education is the key conduit to economic, social, cultural, and political development, not only for our youth, but for those for whom these students will care in the future. We hope to provide a blueprint for technological advances in the face of modernization and the return of any pandemics that might harm education throughout the hemisphere.

The environment also plays a prominent role in the resolutions that we have crafted. We hope to stem the tide of deforestation throughout the hemisphere due to the environmental consequences of over-harvesting and the necessity to ameliorate carbon reduction.

Likewise, we are mindful of the dangers posed to marginal communities by inadequate water supplies, both in terms of quantity and quality and hope to improve educational efforts to safeguard these vital populations throughout the hemisphere.

Politically, we are mindful of the developmental dangers posed by ongoing corrupt practices in hemispheric governance. If corruption can be reduced, there will be greater opportunity to bring larger numbers of Americans into the middle classes.

Finally, we are mindful of the grave threat that femicide continues to pose throughout the hemisphere and encourage all member states to join with us in efforts to curtail its proliferation in the Americas.

Opening Statement - Panama

Thank you honorable chair and fellow delegates,

Firstly, the Republic of Panama would like to applaud its fellow Member States for their continued dedication to international collaboration.

As a founding member, The Republic of Panama is proud of its devotion to the Organization of American States and its enduring mission to promote democracy, development, and peace throughout the hemisphere.

The Republic of Panama

1. Will persist in its effort to make food security a reality for every citizen by re-examining supply chains and putting the hardworking farmers first.
2. Is deeply passionate about protecting the rights of nature through the regulation of pesticides.
3. Emphasizes the importance of protecting its whistleblowers, the most important agency in combating corruption, by granting them comprehensive knowledge of their rights.
4. Continues to advocate for the mental health of children who were adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic through bettering the accessibility of appropriate resources and the educational curriculum.
5. Ceaselessly strives for better inclusion and expansion of rights of its Afro-descendant citizens by improving their standard of living.

The Panamanian delegation views every single one of these objectives as crucial to the advancement and lasting success of the OAS and its Member States. We look forward to joining forces with our fellow delegates and finding effective and proactive solutions to these issues alongside them.

Thank you Honorable Chair.

Opening Statement - Costa Rica

Honorable Officers, distinguished delegates, Faculty Advisors, Directors, staff and observers: the Delegation of the Republic of Costa Rica has the honor to extend a fraternal greeting to all.

Today, Costa Rica would like to invite all the delegations to use this political forum to express their concerns in the framework of diplomacy, respect and solidarity.

In this opportunity, Costa Rica wishes to draw attention to the migration crisis in our region. As one of the main receptor states, Costa Rica invites all member States to consider our proposal of seeking international finance and technical assistance in order to mitigate the costs generated by the migration process.

Costa Rica recognizes the important role that education plays in democracy; therefore, we propose to strengthen the member states' democratic systems through digital transformation and through the OAS scholarship program.

Security is a fundamental pillar for our communities; hence, improving our cooperation mechanisms is a priority in our urban security challenges.

The protection of our water resources will allow the preservation of our spaces; we must then plan and propose faster and lasting public policies.

The Delegation of Costa Rica, with due respect, invites all other Delegations to support the aforementioned proposals.

Opening Statement - Uruguay

Honorable Chair, Secretary General, and esteemed delegates,

The delegation of Uruguay is honored to join this year's collaboration of OAS Member States. The goal of this delegation's work is to discuss, collaborate, and present diplomatic resolutions with each of the member states. Enabling an equitable and democratic state is the foundational work of the OAS and should be kept at the forefront of this organization's decision making. Uruguay is deeply invested in upholding the principles of human rights, justice, and equality. This delegation intends to uphold and encourage the values set by the OAS with the expectation that they will shine throughout the proceedings. The challenges facing the hemisphere are complex and multi-faceted, this delegation believes the discussion on these issues will necessitate a commitment to open and respectful dialogue, as well as a willingness to listen and learn from the diverse perspectives and experiences of all Member States.

Through this spirit of collaboration, the delegation of Uruguay intends to advocate on behalf of women who have long suffered from gender-based violence, children and the younger generations who have struggled longer than most in a post COVID-19 era, and the constituents of the OAS who have been hurt by the hands of arms traffickers and may continue to suffer despite the regions commitment to non-proliferation. These issues are critical to the long-term stability and prosperity of our hemisphere. The delegation of Uruguay is dedicated to working alongside its fellow Member States to find innovative and effective solutions for these issues.

The delegation of Uruguay would like to offer the most sincere gratitude to all Member States for their advocacy and time on this crucial work. The delegation of Uruguay looks forward to engaging in fruitful discussions with all of the Member States as this organization commits further efforts to improve the livelihood of our people.

Thank you.

Opening Statement - Argentina

The Republic of Argentina is proud to be a founding member of the Organization of American (OAS) States and is a signatory to all the organization's most important documents including: the Charter (1948), the Inter-American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man (1948), the American Convention on Human Rights (1969), the Inter-American Democratic Charter (2001), the Social Charter of the Americas (2012) and the American Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2016), to name a few. As the OAS shifted its focus after 1990, the Republic of Argentina approved the addition of new concerns including initiatives for the promotion of democracy; protection of human rights; defense of the hemisphere, including environmental concerns; and advancement of hemispheric development. President Alberto Fernández's administration has emphasized these pillars in both his domestic and foreign policies and has directed the Delegation to work in union and with respect for freedom for all at the OAS.

The Delegation of Argentina is proud to participate in this General Assembly. It looks forward to collaborating with fellow Member States to advocate for equity of marginalized peoples, environmental justice, respect for rule of law, freedom from violence for all peoples, and making hemispheric responses to pandemics more effective. Article 30 of the OAS Charter, which reads, "... [Member States] inspired by the principles of Inter-American solidarity and cooperation, pledge themselves to a unified effort to ensure international social justice in their relations . . . ," guides the delegation's approach to this General Assembly. In short, this delegation will work tirelessly to provide more rights for more people in the Americas.

Opening Statement - Ecuador

“It is natural to man to indulge in the illusions of hope.”

These words were spoken by Patrick Henry on March 23, 1775, in his speech, “Give me liberty or Give me death” and as I present this speech I would like us all to reflect on the hope and promise we have worked towards thus far.

Fellow Delegates, Organizers, Faculty, and everyone present please receive a warm greeting from the Delegation of Ecuador. We are more than excited to start this year's model and experience it with all of you. Our delegation is proud to be able to stand amongst you all today. We hope to be able to further increase our bonds and strengthen our communication between all nations.

We look forward to being able to interact with each and every single one of you in the hopes of presenting varying solutions to a world that is ever growing in terms of conflicts and despair. Our delegation will propose hopefully successful resolutions to the following topics, education, gender-based violence, voting corruption, and the environment.

This “illusion of hope” that I opened with is not an impossible task. Rather it is one that is just within our reach. It is our hope that the work we do today will combat these issues and hopefully, only if we work together, inspire solutions that will change the world.

Our delegation concludes with our excitement to get to work and are looking forward to inspiring more hope in this world!

Thank you.

Opening Statement - El Salvador

El Salvador is honored to join fellow member states to address the hemisphere's most pressing issues. In our deliberations, the Delegation of El Salvador will be guided by a belief in security as a basic human right; a commitment to protect our nation's sovereignty while respecting that of others; and a faith in the power of private enterprise.

El Salvador rejects all forms of discrimination. The delegation will work to uphold the rights of every citizen, as well as the responsibilities of every citizen to contribute to their societies.

In upholding the rights of citizens, El Salvador affirms that security and safety are foundational to all other rights. Those who violate the security of others--whether through gang crimes, drug trafficking, or violence against women--must be stopped.

In fighting problems like crime and corruption, El Salvador emphasizes the importance of peer mentoring, regional cooperation, and South-South collaboration. Such horizontal cooperation is more effective than top-down dictation that violates national sovereignty.

Security and progress should be pursued with compassion and justice. The Delegation of El Salvador calls for reintegrating former criminals into society as productive workers. It also supports the rights of indigenous and marginalized communities to participate in decisions about national development.

Private sector companies, with their dynamism and innovation, must be our partners as we strive for progress. They create jobs, introduce cutting-edge technologies, and promote environmentally-sustainable growth.

Esteemed delegates, the Delegation of El Salvador looks forward to working with you, on a basis of equality and mutual respect, as we pursue our goals for the future.

Opening Statement - Suriname

General Assembly,

Honorable Officers, distinguished delegates, Faculty Advisors, OAS and IDDA Directors and staff, observers, ladies, and gentlemen: the Delegation of the Republic of Suriname, represented by the University of the District of Columbia, is honored to warmly greet all delegations, and take this opportunity to address the challenges faced by the descendants of enslaved Africans and indigenous Surinamese in such a critical time.

The Republic of Suriname is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the Americas, with its cultural, social, and environmental richness, and it is blessed with natural resources. The Republic of Suriname has continuously demonstrated a willingness to fight injustice and collaborate with other states to ensure the quality of life and education standards for all its citizens.

The delegation of the Republic of Suriname believes in equal rights and the integral development of our societies; we are focused on promoting social equality among Member States' urban and rural populations through access to education by eliminating disparities and providing quality education to all students from kindergarten through senior secondary school. This dream could be achieved by working together with all the countries of the Hemisphere.

The Republic of Suriname once again highlights the importance of working together with each one of the member states of the OAS to ensure a prosperous and diverse continent where all the people have access to the primary needs of life, such as education, food, and health, and enjoy their freedom and life.

Thank you, honorable chair.

Opening Statement - Barbados

Honorable Chair, vice chair, rapporteur and fellow delegates, for the delegation of Barbados, is a pleasure to be part of such an important committee as the General.

The delegation of Barbados would like to congratulate all Member States for all of the commitment and efforts made to achieve equal political participation between men and women, and the strategies implemented to promote the leadership of Afro-descendant women in each of your territories.

Despite the fact that the hemisphere is home to more than 200 million people who identify themselves as people of African descent, the inequality and injustice that these people experience every day due to acts of discrimination and intolerance within society is still evident, with the fact that only 6 out of 35 countries in the hemisphere have women as Head of States.

Deeply concern with this situation and conscious that it has been even more difficult for women of African descent to have a voice and political participation in the governments of Member States. As a result, according to the Global Development Goals, it would take another 40 years for women to be presented equally in national political leadership, even longer for women of African descent.

Taking it into consideration, the delegation of Barbados proposed the implementation of a series of mechanisms to promote international cooperation in terms of achieving equity and promoting the political participation of Afro-descendant women, that is why, this delegation requests that the committee maintain a full disposition on this situation, given that it is of overriding importance for the hemisphere to guarantee fair democracy and recognize the great cultural and political contribution of these people.

Thank you.

The Delegation of Barbados yields its remaining time back to the Chair

Opening Statement - Dominican Republic

The Delegation of the Dominican Republic is grateful to collaborate with its honored peers at the 2023 Model Organization of the American States. In these uncertain times, the OAS remains a crucial forum to discuss the problems facing the Western Hemisphere. The Delegation of the Dominican Republic is eager to work in conjunction with its fellow member states.

During this assembly, the Delegation of the Dominican Republic hopes to facilitate discussion and action pertaining to women's rights across the hemisphere, issues combating corruption, strategies to reduce youth involvement in violence, support for children and adolescents affected by Covid-19, conservation of natural protected areas, and other pressing issues across the Western Hemisphere and the World.

The Delegation of the Dominican Republic is proud to be a part of these discussions and the discussion of other hemispheric issues to strengthen our continued commitment to democracy through diplomacy. If its goals are met, the 2023 general assembly will propose, address, and pass resolutions that will ensure that our hemisphere is a better place to live, work, and prosper. The Delegation of the Dominican Republic looks forward to working with other delegations in this assembly.