

**2024 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 8-12, 2024

OPENING STATEMENT: COSTA RICA

Greetings Delegates,

The delegation of Costa Rica prides itself on a set of deeply ingrained values that shape its identity and guide its actions on the world stage. The phrase "Pura Vida" is frequently encountered in Costa Rican life. Beyond its literal translation of "pure life" in English, it embodies the essence of Costa Rican culture. It's not just a phrase; it's a way of life, a sentiment, a worldview that embodies Costa Ricans' appreciation for life's small joys and their ability to find happiness in the simplest of things.

At the heart of this national ethos lies a profound commitment to peace, democracy, and human rights. As we gather in this esteemed forum, it's imperative to recognize the vital role the OAS plays in fostering cooperation, dialogue, and solidarity among the nations of the Americas. Costa Rica is a country known for its commitment to peace, sustainability, and human rights. With a rich history of diplomacy and progressive policies, the delegation of Costa Rica hopes to bring valuable insights and perspectives to the discussions within the OAS.

In these committee sessions, the delegations have the opportunity to address a myriad of pressing issues facing our regions, from political instability and economic challenges to environmental concerns and social inequality. Through constructive dialogue and cooperation, we aim to find innovative solutions that uphold the principles of democracy, respect for human rights, and sustainable development.

As delegates representing Costa Rica, it is our responsibility to advocate for the interests and well-being of our nation while also considering the collective interests of the Americas. By working together with openness, transparency, and mutual respect, we can strive towards a more prosperous, inclusive, and peaceful hemisphere for all.

The delegation of Costa Rica looks forward to fruitful deliberations and productive outcomes in the days ahead. Let us seize this opportunity to make a positive impact and advance the shared goals of the Organization of American States.

Thank you. Pura Vida

OPENING STATEMENT: BRAZIL

The Delegation of Brazil would like to welcome everyone to this unique annual opportunity to engage in a productive dialogue for the betterment of our Member States. The Delegation would like to also welcome the opportunity for beneficial action from the collaborative efforts of the intellectual prowess assembled here today.

This week, we are tasked with tackling various issues that many of the Member States face today. The Delegation of Brazil looks forward to working with other Member States to take these issues on in creative and effective ways. These issues include environmental protections, national and transnational security, and protection for the many internally displaced persons within our borders.

Member States will have the opportunity to invest in the future of both their nations and the Americas as a whole. One of these investments will be in the ground we walk on, the water we drink, and the air we breathe. The protection of the Earth and the prevention of disastrous climate change will ensure that future generations and leaders will be able to enjoy the earth we stand and depend on and lead productive, fulfilling lives.

The Federative Republic of Brazil is proud to call itself a democracy, upholding individual freedoms while embracing the responsibilities of environmental stewardship and tackling organized crime, among other challenges. Indeed, with the rise of Displaced People within the OAS, gang relations, and the fear of harm to the many Democratic Institutions we use today, Brazil urges fellow members to conserve and protect the system that gives many citizens a voice, freedom, and liberty. Brazil firmly supports protecting the institutions we use through innovative efforts intended—always—to serve the needs of our citizens.

Thank you, Madam President, for your time and to our Member States for your kind attention. We yield the rest of our time.

OPENING STATEMENT – COLOMBIA

Greetings honorable chair and esteemed delegates,

The delegation of Colombia is honored to be in attendance at the 2024 Washington Model Organization of American States conference. The wide range of issues we face in the 21st century require innovative thinking and impactful collaboration. The delegation of Colombia is proud to say that it is committed to addressing these problems. Our delegation comes bearing ideas that will strengthen our federation and shape democratic growth throughout the Western Hemisphere.

As one of the longest-standing democracies in the Americas, Colombia is dedicated to improving political participation and safeguarding human rights, two defining characteristics of democracy. Without a doubt, the need for inclusive governments who build policies that fit all around the hemisphere are necessary in our societies.

Colombia is also committed to the fight against climate change. In order to continue to provide our citizens with the most basic supplies needed to live, we must develop long-term sustainable solutions.

Challenges like political inclusion and climate change are difficult to solve; however, through collective work, here in each committee, we can proceed towards a brighter future. The delegation of Colombia looks forward to working with all delegations in the coming days.

Thank you.

OPENING STATEMENT – ARGENTINA

Honorable Chair and Esteemed Delegates,

The Delegation of Argentina stands before this assembly with a profound sense of loyalty to the principles enshrined in the OAS Charter and reaffirms its commitment to safeguarding democratic representation, enumerating human rights, and ensuring equitable resources for all citizens of member states.

The Delegation of Argentina draws inspiration from the collective voice of over 45 million Argentine citizens and a renewed vision that reinforces the OAS's commitment to fostering constructive transformations across the hemisphere. As you know, Argentina is in a bit of a football mood right now. The hope of the Argentine people, and the hope of the hemisphere, can be exemplified by the extraordinary journey of two mighty Ms of the Americas—Messi and Marta—both of whom rose from humble beginnings to reach the top of the football world, inspiring millions along the way. Their stories illustrate the hope of transcending barriers and broadening opportunities for all individuals. The Delegation aims to leverage the momentum embodied by Messi, Marta, and all their counterparts across member states, to channel diplomatic efforts advocating for hemispheric reforms in this OAS assembly.

May this assembly be a catalyst, converting hopes into tangible realities, to forge a future that prioritizes the rights, representation, and pressing needs of all persons from diverse backgrounds.

The Delegation of Argentina calls upon all member states to openly join hands for a future where diplomacy, resilience, and inclusivity pave the way for a hemisphere where all citizens can thrive.

Thank you.

OPENING STATEMENT – BELIZE

Honorable Chair and fellow delegates,

The Delegation of Belize would like to commend the member states of the Organization of American States on their continued efforts to strengthen and support the hemisphere and their respective peoples. Since its admission in 1991, Belize has always been eager to collaborate with its fellow members of the OAS to produce solutions to issues facing the collective community, and believes in the importance of progress for member states through the success of the OAS. The Delegation of Belize is committed to the protection of democratic institutions, the preservation of the environment, and the promoting regional security. Belize recognizes the multifaceted difficulties in realizing its aforementioned commitments, and seeks to coordinate productive efforts to minimize these challenges. Belize encourages other member states to do the same, and looks forward to productive engagement with its fellow member states in order to advance and protect the Western Hemisphere.

Thank you.

OPENING STATEMENT – BOLIVIA

Honorable Chair and fellow delegates,

Above all, the Delegation of Bolivia would like to thank the other Member States for their continued efforts to uphold our commitment to the fundamental principles of the Organization of American States, especially with regard to addressing ongoing threats to human rights, electoral integrity, and the future of the Organization.

Bolivia remains firm in its dedication to achieving peace and prosperity across the Americas and as a nation committed to social solidarity, Bolivia acknowledges the pressing need for collective action to address the multifaceted challenges the region currently faces.

From climate change to poverty alleviation, from human rights to sustainable development, Bolivia believes in collaborating with all other member states to find feasible solutions to these challenges.

Furthermore, the Delegation of Bolivia would like to highlight the need for reform within our esteemed organization. In an ever-changing global landscape, the OAS must adapt to effectively and efficiently meet the evolving challenges the Americas continue to face.

We urge the Member States to consider addressing financial constraints that undermine the effectiveness of the Organization, and to emphasize the importance of upholding democratic principles while ensuring equitable distribution of resources.

It is Bolivia's hope that through collaborative efforts and forward-thinking initiatives, we can ensure the OAS remains a pillar of stability and progress in our region.

Thank you.

OPENING STATEMENT – MEXICO

Esteemed delegates, distinguished guests,

As we convene within the Model Organization of American States, it is incumbent upon us to address pressing issues that resonate deeply within the fabric of our existence. Today, Mexico stands firmly in its unwavering commitment to fortifying democracy and as a beacon of hope amidst tumultuous times.

Mexico's steadfast dedication to fostering democracy and safeguarding freedom of expression serves as an exemplar for nations across the globe. By championing these fundamental principles, Mexico sets a precedent for societal progress and inclusive governance.

Furthermore, Mexico confronts the scourge of arms trafficking with resolute determination, recognizing its deleterious effects on regional stability and security. Through concerted efforts and international cooperation, Mexico stands firm against this transnational threat, striving to create a safer and more secure hemisphere.

Moreover, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Mexico espouses a visionary approach toward educational reform, recognizing the imperative of adapting and innovating in a rapidly evolving landscape. By prioritizing education post-COVID, Mexico lays the groundwork for a brighter, more equitable future for generations to come.

Additionally, Mexico confronts regional water crises with a sense of urgency and purpose, acknowledging the value of this precious resource to sustainable development and human flourishing. Through collaborative initiatives and forward-thinking policies, Mexico endeavors to ensure equitable access to water for all.

In conclusion, let us laud Mexico's unwavering commitment to democracy, freedom, security, education, and environmental stewardship. May our deliberations today pave the path toward a more prosperous and harmonious region.

Thank you.

Opening Statement – Haiti

Honorable Chair people and fellow delegates,

As the delegation of Haiti, we would like to extend a warm welcome to each delegation and participating parties to this year's model as we approach another season of opportunity and justice for the peoples of the Hemisphere. We are honored to invite collaboration, innovation, and creativity in the heart of diplomacy during this year's debates.

Historically, Haiti has been devoted to a long-standing commitment to sovereignty and self-determination. Despite this being infringed upon through foreign intervention, we remain resilient in our efforts to attain autonomy for our country and to have a functioning role in the OAS. To maintain this effort, the delegation of Haiti recognizes that our position is to foster rehabilitation of our country—and as an example for the rest of the Hemisphere--with the resolutions that we will present.

While Haiti is interested in a multitude of relevant matters within the Hemisphere and the OAS, Haiti believes that the protection of the citizens from violence, intimidation, and displacement is of the utmost priority. Haiti also continues to support limiting small arms trafficking, as well as the preservation of the environment in order to provide safety and security in the Hemisphere. With this sentiment, Haiti continues to advocate for the overall betterment for each and every Member State and would like to work towards cultivating a peaceful, sovereign future.

Thank you,

OPENING STATEMENT - VENEZUELA

Honorable Chair and esteemed delegates,

Venezuela is honored and humbled to attend the Organization of the American States. It is our great pleasure as the delegation of Venezuela to be in attendance with delegations of all the other member states of the Organization of American States.

Venezuela is eager to talk about the issues of Threats to Democracy across the world. This year is an election year in Venezuela, so this issue is of specific concern.

Expanding on the threats to democracy, another significant concern for Venezuela is the growing impact of artificial intelligence and how that could impact our country. Precisely how it relates to elections, Venezuela understands that artificial intelligence misuse could have devastating effects on the electoral process.

Finally, Venezuela is concerned over the influence of gangs and organized crime in the countries of Latin America. Venezuela is pleased to discuss how crime and gang reduction plans can be included in development projects with the rest of the member states.

Venezuela is ready, eager, and honored to stand with all the other member states at the Organization of American States to discuss and find solutions to the most pressing uses facing the American continent today. Venezuela strongly believes that as a united body, the Organization of American States will be able to solve these issues.

Thank you.

OPENING STATEMENT – SURINAME

Honorable Chair and Distinguished Delegates,

Today, we are honored to represent Suriname as its delegation. Standing before you we share a collective dedication to addressing the challenges facing our hemisphere through collaboration and cooperation. We are fully committed to tackling these urgent issues together.

Suriname is deeply devoted to harnessing the potential of the OAS to promote democracy across the hemisphere, ensuring the comprehensive implementation of the organization's charters and other relevant documents.

Furthermore, it is imperative to guarantee that AI is not used to undermine the integrity of diverse governmental elections, but instead deployed responsibly and compassionately.

Addressing the role of the OAS in combating crimes against humanity involves maximizing efforts to prevent such atrocities by fostering dialogue among member states and nurturing robust relationships among them.

In addition, we must ensure that our concerns regarding digital disparities in education are thoroughly addressed. It is imperative to tackle the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic effectively, thereby mitigating the obstacles faced by marginalized groups in accessing education.

Moreover, it is essential to scrutinize the impact of climate change on human rights, ensuring that as we confront climate change, we also address its adverse effects on human rights.

As a delegation, our commitment extends beyond our committee discussions; we are devoted to addressing these issues as a paradigm. It is of paramount importance to us that these concerns are tackled not only to enhance the well-being of member states but also to strengthen the OAS as a collective entity.

OPENING STATEMENT – GUYANA

Greetings honorable fellow delegates,

Across the globe and particularly within the region, it appears that cross border partnerships are fraught with conflict. Climate change threatens whole countries and peoples, igniting mass movements for the right to live. Simultaneously, some parts of the region are growing, while the hemisphere sees those who are struggling to meet their needs come at odds with those attempting to progress. There is a pattern of attacking the bastions of democracy and efforts by those taking advantage of people in vulnerable situations for exploitation. Yet while the effects of global climate change impact the region, there is hope among this delegation about paths forward to ensure the dignity and sustainable development for all.

This delegation understands that the solutions presented this session may be imperfect and may need some work. That should not prevent us from moving forward and initiating action on these ideas. Instead, they should be thought of as the first steps to creating lasting and positive change. For that, leaders are needed and an understanding that this body's delegations now represent something greater than their individual positions, and this delegation urges this body to keep that in mind during the work here.

The delegation of Guyana recognizes the current state of international cooperation yet acknowledges the opportunity to transfigure potential defeat into victory. This delegation looks forward to working with this body and its member states to actualize the ideals put forth in the Charter of these American States.

OPENING STATEMENT--JAMAICA

Esteemed fellow delegates,

Jamaica joins the 2024 deliberations of the General Assembly with pride in our history of democracy, but also with concern over the rise in hemispheric violence, crime, and migration.

Like many other member states, Jamaica faces threats to our democratic institutions because of political violence, corruption, and criminal penetration of politics. This multidimensional threat must be met with a multidimensional response. All four pillars of the OAS must work together to ensure that security, development, anti-crime, anti-poverty, and human rights initiatives all work to strengthen democratic institutions.

Rising violence, corruption, and organized crime affects not only democratic institutions but also freedom of speech and citizen freedom from political intimidation and violence. The OAS's Electoral Observation Missions are an ideal vehicle for monitoring free speech during elections. Let's work together to make these Missions an even more powerful tool of democracy.

OAS member states have much to teach the world about overcoming legacies of violence and ensuring justice for perpetrators and victims. So it is natural for the OAS to deepen its cooperation with the International Criminal Court, and we urge our fellow member states to join us in building a stronger partnership with the ICC.

Jamaica advocates an approach to criminality and violence that combines decisive security responses with long-term measures to dissuade youth from choosing the path of violent crime. We want to collaborate with other member states that seek firm justice, but also expanded opportunities for our nations' young people. We also seek to cut off the disastrous flow of illegal weapons into our nations.

Jamaica has been deeply affected by climate change, which has devastated our agriculture and tourism, blighted the lives of our citizens, and forced many into crime or displacement. We must defend the human rights of those displaced by climate change and other disruptions, including their right to shelter, food, income, and mental health care.

Jamaica is committed to upholding its values of democracy, peace, development, and human rights in collaboration with you, our OAS comrades on this journey

OPENING STATEMENT—GUATEMALA.

Honorable Chair, fellow delegates, and distinguished guests, Greetings.

It is an honor to stand before you today representing the Delegation of Guatemala

Today, we meet as one body to represent the Western Hemisphere. With that, we bring to the table our own perspectives, ideas, and experiences as member states. Regardless of each nation's historical trajectory or political persuasion, it has become apparent to every country in the Americas that Democracy is under threat. Authoritative leaders and political movements undermine elections and the electoral process more broadly have been prevalent throughout our Hemisphere, and we can no longer afford to ignore or write-off these threats as isolated incidents.

The Delegation of Guatemala would like to note that the Organization of American States played a vital role in upholding the sanctity of democratic elections in our home country over the past year. It is imperative that the OAS continue this work throughout the Americas to safeguard democracy, and for every delegation present here today to understand that democratic institutions and democratic processes are under imminent attack.

We gather here today in spite of this threat. Each delegation present today is a beacon of hope for democracy.

The Delegation of Guatemala wishes to end this speech with a quote from Nobel Prize winner, human rights activist, and proud Guatemalan, Rigoberta Menchú: "Our history is a living history, that has throbbed, withstood and survived many centuries of sacrifice. Now it comes forward again with strength. The seeds, dormant for such a long time, break out today with some uncertainty, although they germinate in a world that is at present characterized by confusion and uncertainty".

Our cause today is certain. We will uphold the pillars of democracy.

Thank you.

OPENING STATEMENT - ECUADOR

Hello fellow delegates,

The delegation of Ecuador is **excited** to stand before you today at this **historic** event to discuss the **most urgent** issues affecting the Western Hemisphere.

We live in a time in which basic human rights are under attack all over the world. Marginalized communities do not have equal access to education. Journalists fear retaliation for reporting the truth, and those who commit egregious human rights violations are **not** held accountable.

It is **now**, more than ever, that we must take action to address these concerns **for the greater good of humanity**. As such, the delegation of Ecuador has developed **well-researched** resolutions. Each of these proposals strive to improve and preserve internationally recognized human rights, which are necessary to maintain unified, well- functioning democracies and international peace and security.

We look forward to discussing and debating our resolutions with our fellow delegates. We are **confident** that we will reach a compromise that will make the Western Hemisphere a better place for generations to come.

Thank you.

OPENING STATEMENT- HONDURAS

Esteemed Delegates:

The delegation of Honduras first thanks Washington Model Organization of American states for organizing a productive week for all delegations. The delegation of Honduras has decided that in its inaugural year of participation in the model it will work around the theme of good governance.

Starting in 1980, like the OAS, Honduras has made a commitment to democracy and free elections. By addressing obstacles to good governance such as gangs, environmental degradation, the omnipresence of guns/munitions, and corruption, the delegation from Honduras stands ready to engage in open discourse about surmounting these obstacles and fostering good governance in all member states.

The general committee of the delegation has identified three primary threats to democracy which will be addressed as corruption, political instability, and organized crime. The first committee of the delegation will be working to promote the freedom of expression for journalists. The second committee of the delegation will be looking at reducing illegal firearm trading to mitigate homicide rates. The third committee of the delegation will be introducing education reform to address gang involvement. Lastly, the special committee of the delegation works towards solving the water crisis in the agriculture sector.

Through the selected agenda items, the delegation of Honduras as a whole believes constructive dialogue centered on good governance will be thematic and crucial throughout the week in addressing these obstacles and becoming closer to realizing prosperity and stability in Latin America.

OPENING STATEMENT—CANADA

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

The Delegation of Canada arrives to this General Assembly pleased to support the pillars of the Organization of American States. The Organization is a fundamental vehicle for Canada's goals of fostering institutions, strengthening security, increasing mutual economic opportunity, and advancing solid bilateral and regional relationships in the Western Hemisphere.

This meeting of the General Assembly is a fundamental opportunity to address critical challenges for the region. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has consistently reinforced the need for a "resilient, responsive, and effective Inter-American System that makes real contributions to the lives of our citizens every day". Therefore, efforts must be accelerated to tackle the existing challenges in areas such as the protection of democratic institutions, transnational security, the attention to immigrant communities and the fight against climate change.

Canada values and nurtures its relationships with partners in the Americas. And it is committed to ensure that the organization plays a significant role and makes collective achievements. Areas such as human rights and the support to diversity and pluralism, gender issues and indigenous populations, the promotion of democracy and security, and the progress towards sustainability, require decisive action and Canada is open to engage with countries in the region for the development and implementation of projects in these areas that complement its bilateral foreign policy objectives.

The delegation, following these guidelines, looks forward to working with fellow member states in finding innovative solutions for this policy challenges and for responses to the ongoing security and democratic crises that impact the region.

OPENING STATEMENT—CHILE

The delegation of the Republic of Chile is pleased to join esteemed Member States of the Organization of American States (OAS) in continually redefining the pillars of the oldest regional organization in the world.

As a founding member of the OAS, the delegation of Chile is proud of its participation in the creation of the Organization's founding documents, such as the OAS Charter (1948), the Inter-American Democratic Charter (2001), and the Social Charter of the Americas (2012), which to this day are the framework for democracy and diplomacy in the Americas.

President Boric firmly asserts Chile's commitment to firmly face the hemisphere's challenges and participate in multilateral collaboration by stating, "From this place, we will continue to promote regional integration worldwide and the adoption of effective agreements..."

Chile pledges to uphold initiatives to promote democracy, preserve human rights, encourage development, and enhance security in domestic and foreign affairs.

The delegation of Chile resolves to unite with fellow Member States in the General Assembly to establish fruitful conversations promoting the definition of migrant status in the hemisphere, combating technological election corruption, advancing multilateral security, preventing transnational crime and promoting environmental justice. This delegation looks forward to collaboration with fellow Member States to not only ensure more rights for more people but also equal rights for future generations.

OPENING STATEMENT—PANAMA

Secretary General and Fellow Delegates,

The Republic of Panama is thrilled to be involved with the ongoing collaboration in the Organization.

The Delegation of Panama intends to uphold the founding principles of the OAS and working towards the betterment of its Member States.

The Republic of Panama seeks to define forced migration as a result of gang violence to better protect citizens of the Western Hemisphere, to ensure and promote the safety of journalists and media personnel, to increase communication of information concerning criminal acts that threaten transnational security, to implement rehabilitative education and skill training programs for those impacted by gang activity and promote equal access to education by addressing digital disparities, and to create climate resilient housing as reparations for those whose human rights have been violated by climate change.

The Delegation of Panama views each of these as pivotal to the betterment of the OAS and its Member States. We look forward to working with fellow delegates to achieve effective solutions for the issues that matter most.

OPENING STATEMENT - UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Honorable Secretary General, Chair, Vice-Chair, distinguished Delegates and other presents.

The Delegation of the United States of America is honored to participate in this General Assembly of the Washington Model Organization of American States. The Delegation extends its sincere gratitude for the opportunity to engage in these critical discussions on the future of our hemisphere.

The Organization of American States serves as a cornerstone for promoting democracy, Security, Human Rights and Development across the Americas. The Delegation of the United States firmly believes in the OAS's mission and recognizes the importance of fostering a strong democratic foundation for all member states through diplomatic dialogue and cooperation.

Finally, the Delegation of the United States of America emphasizes in looking forward to collaborating with fellow delegates with a common main purpose regarding the 4 pillars of the OAS, finding innovative solutions and strengthening the democratic fabric of the Americas.

Thank you