

Closing Ceremony

Address by the Right Honourable Jean Chrétien Prime Minister of Canada

Now that this Third Summit of the Americas is drawing to a close, I first wish to extend heartfelt thanks to the people of Quebec City on behalf of all our fellow Canadians and all my counterparts in the hemisphere for the warm, and above all patient, reception we have received. Holding a Summit of this size is no mean feat for the host city, and Quebec City has taken up this challenge with all of its customary know-how and graciousness.

My friends, when the curtain descended on our second Summit three years ago in Santiago, Chile, our host heralded the start of a new era in the Americas — an era marked by maturity and confidence. The experience of the past few years, and especially of the past few days, has proven just how accurate he was in his prediction.

We have gathered here as representatives of a community of democratic countries to extend and deepen the dialogue begun nearly seven years ago in Miami. We have had some frank discussions on a host of subjects of importance for the future of our hemisphere. And we have adopted an action plan to give substance to our common priorities.

The declaration we have just signed contains a clear, unequivocal commitment to democracy, making it an essential condition for participation in the Summit of the Americas process. This gesture clearly and eloquently illustrates our intention to ensure the protection of human rights and to move ahead together in freedom and stability.

We also noted that in some countries democracy remains fragile. The case of Haiti drew our particular attention. We acknowledge the problems that continue to limit the democratic, political, economic and social development of this country.

We note the efforts that President Aristide has made to resolve these problems. We are also aware of the efforts of other political parties and other sectors of political life, notably members of civil society.

We call on all parties to redouble their efforts, in a spirit of openness and conciliation, to overcome the difficulties caused by the election of May 21, 2000. And we ask President Aristide to take rapid action on all of the commitments made in December.

To facilitate the achievement of these goals, we have asked the Secretary General of the OAS, César Gaviria, to work with CARICOM, to hold consultations, to visit Port-au-Prince in the near future, to report his findings to the OAS before the next General Assembly, and to ensure adequate follow-up.