

And you need look only as far as Vancouver harbour to remind yourselves that we are a Pacific Rim nation. Some of you also come from Pacific countries.

All of us come from the Americas, all of us have a vital and vested interest in the advancement of hemispheric relations.

We are the inheritors of the new world. From Amerigo Vespucci, the Americas have taken a name. From it, a world takes hope. For the very word is synonymous with liberty and opportunity.

This country has by the nature of our people always stood for tolerance, pluralism, and negotiated solutions. With us, honourable compromise is more than political brokerage, it is an indicator of strength, a way of life. Democracy is also a way of life with us.

From our perspective, democracy and development go hand in hand and we are greatly heartened by its resurgence in our hemisphere. There is a new aura of optimism in the Americas.

Consider the economic progress in Brazil and Argentina since the restoration of democracy in those two great nations -- the kind of progress which can enable these and other countries of the hemisphere to honour their obligations without forsaking growth.