

embraced is one of opportunity. It is an opportunity to share in the values of the OAS community and to work with our hemispheric partners in preparing for the future.

In joining the OAS we share a commitment to strengthening and consolidating democracy and human rights. We seek a more secure and peaceful hemisphere without the threat of conflict.

We are working toward a hemisphere that is at home with its environment and freed from the scourge of drugs. And we are part of a hemisphere preparing for an era of increased globalization and competition.

The role of the OAS is more important today than ever before.

The world has found the pace of change over the past two years breathtaking. Much attention has been rivetted on the revolutions that have swept Eastern Europe and are still unfolding in the Soviet Union.

The resurgence of democracy has been startling and profound. The Gulf War signalled a radical shift in the Middle East and in the way the international community reacts to crises.

Changes in this hemisphere may have attracted less global attention, but are equally profound. In Latin America, democratic government has replaced dictatorship, and open economies are rapidly displacing the closed economies of the past.

These fundamental changes in the world order now present a challenge to our role in the hemisphere. The changing world landscape, both political and economic, means that our hemisphere and the OAS must be prepared to play a new role.

Today in the OAS we are defining that role. We have much more to do if we are going to have an Organization that will lead us into the next 100 years. By reaffirming the fundamental values of the OAS we are strengthening our hemispheric community.

Mr. President and fellow delegates, the Preamble of the Charter of our Organization states that "representative democracy is an indispensable condition for the stability, peace and development of the region." This concept is of fundamental importance to our Organization and to all of our member countries.

It is important that we remind ourselves of these facts and it is fitting that we do so here in Chile where the long tradition of democracy has, by the free vote of the people, been restored.

Mr. President, the fact that all hemispheric countries present in these meetings now enjoy the benefits of democratic government is