Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Secretary General,
Mr. Assistant Secretary General,
Distinguished Colleague Foreign Ministers,
Your Excellencies, Permanent Representatives,
Honourable Alternate Representatives,
Distinguished Permanent Observers,
Special Invitees,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

INTRODUCTION

Please permit me to congratulate you at the outset, Mr. Chairman, upon your election to preside over the proceedings of this 45th Regular General Assembly. My delegation is convinced that your considerable experience and well known acumen will help you guide our deliberations toward a positive and productive outcome.

May I add Mr. Chairman, that it is with much satisfaction that my delegation takes its place at this historic Assembly. That satisfaction is due to the fact that the assembly is being convened following the reaffirmation of our democracy reflected in national elections on May 11th, which resulted in a change in Government after a period of some 23 years. This General Assembly therefore affords me the first opportunity to make the acquaintance and renew friendships with my distinguished fellow Foreign Ministers from throughout the hemisphere. I thank them for their cordial greetings and am honoured to be a participant in our collective enterprise to strengthen the prospects for peace, development, democracy and security for all our peoples.

THE OAS OBSERVATION MISSION AND GUYANA'S ELECTIONS
Mr. Chairman, one example of the tangible worth of this Organization is the role played by the OAS Electoral Observation Mission in our national elections. On behalf of the Government and people of Guyana, I take this opportunity to express sincere appreciation to the OAS, to the entire Observation Mission and to the states who contributed to it, for their valuable contribution to underpinning our electoral and democratic processes. The elections and their outcome have energized our society. The electorate has bestowed on the new administration a mandate for political and social reform and has set the stage for a much-needed national democratic renewal. This process will involve the launch of local government elections following a lapse of over two decades. It will also see the pursuit of inclusionary democracy aimed at overcoming historic divisions.

In addition Mr. Chairman, Colleagues, the new President of Guyana has declared the Government's intention to combat the scourges of corruption and poverty, to improve security, pursue higher standards of public service and of education. We also pledge to offer better guarantees for social protection. The new government will also bring an end to the politics of social and community division and growing income inequality and wealth disparities even in the face of rapid average rates of economic growth.

SUPPORT FOR THE OAS AGENDA

In publically expressing our support for the OAS, the Government of Guyana wishes to congratulate Ambassador Luis Almagro upon his installation as Secretary General of the Organization.

Our national agenda mirrors those very commitments articulated by Secretary General Almagro during his installation ceremony on May 26th last, when he undertook to improve democracy and good governance, create better conditions for development, reduce inequality, advance human rights and fight corruption. Given that the agenda of the OAS so closely parallels that of Guyana, the incoming Secretary General and his administration consequently enjoy Guyana's
full support and solidarity in their leadership of this Organization and in their efforts to better manage and rapidly modernize it.

In this vein, we wish to reiterate the importance of the ongoing processes of management reform, the mandate prioritization process, the need for efficiency, transparency and accountability and the need for a sustainable solution to recurrent budgetary constraints.

PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES

Mr. Chairman, the new Government of Guyana, under the leadership of His Excellency President David Granger, is strongly and unequivocally committed to the goals and ideals of the OAS. We join you colleagues in the efforts aimed at ensuring that the essential purposes and ideals of the Organization remain consistent and undiminished.

The vital function which this Organization must exercise in order to ensure the preservation of regional peace, security and stability is unequivocal. Stability, security and peace in our hemisphere cannot be maintained, nor can integral development be achieved, unless all nations observe International Law and faithfully adhere to their treaty obligations. Guyana strongly rejects all aggressive and illegal actions which affect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, and moreso those measures that involve the threat or use force. We call attention to the principles that underlie the OAS Charter relating to the settlement of differences between States by peaceful means and urge all Member States to honour the provisions of the Charter which uphold these basic principles of International Law and which are in our collective interest.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I wish to recognize and express appreciation to former Secretary General, José Miguel Insulza, for his sterling service to our region. I also wish to thank outgoing Assistant Secretary General Albert Ramdin for the services rendered during his tenure. We warmly welcome the assumption of office next month of our CARICOM Colleague, incoming
Assistant Secretary General, Ambassador Nestor Mendez, with whom we shall work closely and to whom we will render our fullest cooperation and support.

I thank you.