



FIFTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS
April 17 - 19, 2009
Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago

OEA/Ser.E
CA-V/INF.12/09
17 April 2009
Original: English

**CLOSING REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE PAULA GOPEE-SCOON, MINISTER OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AT THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN
MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SOCIAL ACTORS**

(April 17, 2009 - Princess Theatre, Caribbean Princess - Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago)

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Distinguished Colleague Ministers

Distinguished participants

This morning has certainly been a very rich one and, for my own part, I have been encouraged by the breadth and depth of your recommendations and vision, as well as your commitment to being active partners in the development of our respective countries.

I wish to assure you that your concerns and challenges have not fallen on deaf ears. Collectively, our countries support the engagement of our citizens in the design and implementation of development policies and programmes and it is anticipated that Heads of State and Government will acknowledge this position during the Fifth Summit. Additionally, yesterday's Special Parliamentary Dialogue on "Engaging Parliaments in the Summits of the Americas Process" also underscored the intrinsic contribution of social actors in the development paradigm. I am therefore very hopeful that there will be more functional and productive interaction among all sectors which can only redound to our benefit.

Unfortunately, we are now running behind the clock in terms of our schedule but before I conclude this session, I wish to take this opportunity to express appreciation to all those who participated in this week's discussions as part of the pre-Summit fora. First and foremost, the participants who journeyed from every corner of the Hemisphere to share the concerns and aspirations of their neighbours and fellow countrymen, must be commended. Thank you for your commitment to the everyday man/woman/child, and for sharing with us the projects and experiences that have yielded fruit as well as the work being done in support of the implementation of Summit mandates and in making that process more effective. Without you and the perspectives that you bring from being "in the field" so to speak, the efforts of policy makers, in the search for tangible results for our citizens, would indeed ring hollow.

I also want to thank those who made the presentations today on the deliberations of their respective groups over the last two days, and whose recommendations have generated much food for thought and incentive to action.

This Forum would not have been possible were it not for the preparatory meetings of the youth, private sector, civil society, indigenous people and civil society and the support provided by the OAS Secretary General and the pertinent Departments of the General Secretariat. The support of the Government of Canada, through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the United States and host countries El Salvador and Peru for the civil society consultations was also key to the process and therefore much appreciated.

It would be remiss of me if I did not give due recognition to H.E. Luis Alberto Rodriguez and his team for the work that was necessary to ensure that the pre-Summit fora and this Ministerial Dialogue took place.

Last but not least, I wish to thank my colleague Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Secretaries of State and their representatives for participating in today's Dialogue. This will go a long way in strengthening the basis for advancing our collective development blueprint.

In conclusion, may I wish you all a pleasurable and fruitful stay in Trinidad and Tobago and a safe return when you leave our shores. As proposed earlier, I hope that you have an opportunity to enjoy all that Trinidad and Tobago has to offer.

This meeting is adjourned.