



S T A T E M E N T

BY

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IN THE PLENARY DEBATE ON

AGENDA ITEM 40:

THE SITUATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA:
PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FIRM AND
LASTING PEACE AND PROGRESS IN FASHIONING A
REGION OF PEACE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY
AND DEVELOPMENT

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It is with a deep sense of satisfaction that I take the opportunity to speak on Agenda Item 40, The Situation in Central America: Procedures for the Establishment of a Firm and Lasting Peace and Progress in Fashioning a Region of Peace, Freedom, Democracy and Development. I say this because it was but one short year ago that we in Guyana, after a period of four rigged elections, experienced the return of participatory democracy, through the free expression of the will of the electorate. The result of this was a change of government after twenty-eight years. Democracy Mr. Chairman, has been an ideal which the people of Guyana, and no doubt most people the world over, cherish dearly. It is therefore our sincere hope that the opportunity afforded to the Guyana electorate for free and fair elections, could be facilitated in other locations, where people are still clamouring for the right to self-determination and the right of a free expression of choice in regular, transparent polls. Peace, freedom, democracy and development are ideals which are cherished by all right-thinking men and women ^(of the world) ~~of this globe.~~

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Mr. Chairman, the quest for democracy in Central America is qualitatively no different from that in other ^{regions} ~~regional groupings~~ ~~around the globe.~~ We have in recent years, witnessed the organization and conduct of elections in countries such as Nicaragua and El Salvador. The outcome of these elections have been preceded by an elaborate plan of voter education, voter registration and other measures taken for the institutional strengthening of the whole democratic process. The role of the United Nations in this preparatory process must be highly commended; its Observer Missions to monitor the actual conduct of balloting, and counting of the ballot, have provided the ^{element} additional quality of international supervision, thereby further strengthening the expression of the will of the people.

It remains the case however, that the institutional strengthening of the election process, and the holding of democratic elections, are not ends in and of themselves, but rather the underpinnings of a climate of confidence in which the electorate could exist. We have seen therefore, that there is still work to be done, both domestically, and through international and regional organizations.

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On such methodology for promoting peace, freedom, democracy and development in Central America is ONUSAL, the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador. This Mission has impacted positively on the creation of the objective conditions for the improvement of the prospects of economic and social development in that country. The Observer Mission has played a pivotal role in organizing and reinvigorating institutional mechanisms for orderly conduct of the internal affairs of the state. Thus the civil administrative structure - the police, the judiciary, the court system - have all been addressed in the interest of the preservation of democracy. The Government of Guyana was pleased to be in a position to offer a small contingent of members of its Police Force, to perform the role of Civilian Police Monitors in El Salvador's transition process.

The international community must be vigilant against any attempt, as evidenced by recent events in that country, to frustrate the process of the association of democracy.

Mr. Chairman, I hasten to add however, that it would be unfortunate if we were to discuss the concepts of peace, freedom, democracy and development in Central America, while confining our comments to a single state. Peace and stability have a regional connotation to it, as well as on international one. Indeed, in the past, situations of internal political unrest and violence have not dissuaded the international community from taking note of them, because of their potential threat to international tranquility. We should therefore applaud, not only the efforts to return El Salvador to the fold of democratic

Central American States, but also recognise that, in as much as more ~~may~~ needs to be done internally, the precedents in countries like Nicaragua are exemplary.

The Guyana delegation believes that ~~an inherent indicia~~^{essential} in the quest for a return to peace and stability in Central America, is the return to acceptable minimum standards of protection of human rights. Access to the courts, the right to a fair trial, recourse to the remedies of Habeas corpus and amparo are paramount. Moreover, the institutionalisation of measures for the promotion and protection of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, is sine qua non for the establishment of a Region of peace, freedom, democracy and development.

Mr. ~~Chairman~~^{President}, the international community, and developing countries in particular, have agonised for years over the determination of whether democracy should of necessity ~~precede~~^{precede} development, or whether development could be sustained while the democratic traditions of a state are either held in abeyance, or otherwise lag behind comparative global norms. This debate was in a sense circular, since the institution of democracy is a political concern, while development is more economic-related. But the reality is that the two concepts are inextricably intertwined; an improvement in statistical indicators such as GDP, in the absence of political and social conditions which allow the populace to improve the quality of their life in a holistic sense, are short-lived, if not counter productive. The overwhelming body of opinion now tends in the direction that democracy and development enjoy a symbiotic relationship, and that in fact quality of life indicators can no longer solely be economic statistics, but must also reflect the fundamental rights and freedoms of the electorate.

Mr. Chairman, while taking note of the qualitative improvement of democratic traditions not only in El Salvador, through the work inter alia of ONUSAL, but also in Central America as a whole, we must ensure that respect for human rights is complimentary to economic and social development, in order to achieve lasting and stable peace within the Region. We in Guyana cherish these ideals, and we therefore pledge our support for their promotion, towards the overall condition of the maintenance of international peace and security

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