XXXIX GENERAL ASSEMBLY

REMARKS FROM
THE HEAD OF DELEGATION OF
THE PERMANENT OBSERVER COUNTRY OF

AUSTRIA

JUNE 1, 2009
Intervention by Markus Reiterer, Alternate Observer from the Permanent Observer Mission of Austria to the Organization of American States

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Secretary General,
Distinguished Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Austrian government, I would like to express our appreciation for the invitation to participate in the dialogue between the Member States and the Permanent Observer Countries of the Organization of American States. Mr Chairman, let me also congratulate you for the assumption of this important function. I also would like to express my thanks to the Government of Honduras for hosting the 39th General Assembly of the OAS in San Pedro Sula. I would also like to join previous speakers in expressing my deepest sympathy with the victims of the recent earthquake in Honduras.

This year we are able to look back to more than three decades that Austria has been accepted as Permanent Observer to the OAS. During these 31 years our common endeavors were guided by important universal objectives such as strengthening democracy, human rights, the rule of law and multidimensional security, which naturally includes the culture of non-violence which stands at the centre of this year’s deliberations of the OAS. While these principles and objectives are relevant for the entire international community, we are convinced that particular progress has been made in regard of their operationalization and realization in the OAS region.

In more recent years, additional challenges and priorities have been added to the agenda be it global warming, environmental degradation and – perhaps most urgently at this juncture – the financial and economic crises, which is testing all our countries. Against this backdrop, my country is currently in a process of actively considering how to best foster its cooperation with the OAS and its Member States in concrete terms. I would like to assure you that Austria remains committed to a productive cooperation with the Americas – a cooperation that has been strengthened also through the EU/LAC-summits as well as the multifaceted and multi-layered forms of interaction and cooperation between our two regions.

I thank you for your attention and wish you a fruitful and constructive General Assembly.