XXXIX GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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

CROATIA

JUNE 1, 2009
Address by H.E. Ambassador Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic from the Republic of Croatia.
San Pedro Sula, Honduras.

Dear Assistant Secretary General Ramdin, Dear Vice Minister Licona Cubero, Excellencies, Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my particular privilege to participate for the first time in this mechanism of communication and cooperation between the Members of the OAS and Permanent Observers. I would like to thank our Honduran hosts for the warm welcome with which they received us here in San Pedro Sula.

The relations between Croatia and the countries of the OAS show gradual and steady increment, both in bilateral and multilateral spheres. Croatia is closely following developments in this hemisphere and is exploring new opportunities and avenues for cooperation to further enhance and strengthen the relations with the Western Hemisphere across the board.

One of the most important aspects of overall relations between Croatia and the OAS countries is the fact that there are over 2 million citizens of Croatian descent, including fourth generation already, living in these countries. This number stands out if you bear in mind the fact that Croatia itself has only 4.5 million inhabitants. Croatian descendants are well established within the societies of several North and Latin American countries, Canada, USA, Chile, Argentina and Brazil in particular. Certainly they serve as a bridge between Croatia, a land of their forefathers, and the countries, whose established citizens they are today.

Croatia has been continuously strengthening its multilateral activities, not only in the European, but increasingly in the global framework as well. In this sense, Croatia will continue to promote cooperation between key regional organizations such as the OAS and the Council of Europe, where we have been encouraging cooperation, particularly in the ever important field of terrorism and cyber security.
We have been successfully applying our experience and expertise in dealing with the consequences of war and destruction which we experienced in the 1990’s in redirecting the country on the path of peace, reconciliation, development and a culture of non-violence. Within a relatively short time, from being a country where peacekeeping missions were deployed, Croatia has become a country that participates in peace keeping missions in different corners of the world. We are participating in a number of UN peacekeeping missions (13 missions on four continents, including the one in Haiti), NATO missions (Afghanistan) and those of the European Union (Kosovo and Chad).

From being a country that received international aid, Croatia has transformed into a country providing such aid, particularly to our own region and Afghanistan. Hopefully, with our economic progress, we will be able to support activities and programs of the OAS, beginning next year.

Croatia firmly believes that regional cooperation and integration facilitate development, stability, prosperity and peace throughout the world. In this spirit, Croatia will continue to follow the activities of the OAS while approaching the fifteenth anniversary of our Permanent Observer Status in 2010.

I am looking forward to following the General Assembly deliberation and its important topic of the culture of non-violence and I wish you a successful Assembly.

Thank you for your kind attention.