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OAS calls for holistic approach to major challenges in region
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WASHINGTON, USA: Sustainable development, promoting investment, improving education and confronting crime and the threat of natural disasters are among the major challenges facing the Americas, the Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Ambassador Albert R. Ramdin, told members of the United States Congressional Caribbean Caucus.



**OAS Assistant Secretary
General Albert Ramdin**

In his remarks to the Congressional Caucus Wednesday night, Ramdin said that “the hemisphere faces challenges that we must tackle collectively.” He underscored the firm commitment of the OAS on these issues, but asserted that “a pro-active and holistic approach, with the collaboration among government, civil society and the private sector,” is essential.

“The OAS stands ready to build on the progress attained and to make sure that we continue to work to confront problems that are transnational and borderless — crime, the fight against terrorism, HIV/AIDS, promotion of economic growth and development and a fundamental strengthening of the relationship between the United States of America and the nations of the Caribbean,” he said.

The Assistant Secretary General, who shared the stage with Premier Ewart Brown of Bermuda, stressed the need to broaden and intensify the strategic partnership and cooperation between and among countries, as well as with the international community.

At a separate event -- the Annual Board of Trustees Dinner of the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF) -- Assistant Secretary Ramdin praised the foundation as an important partner. An independent, non-profit organization, the PADF creates public-private partnerships to assist the least advantaged people in Latin America and the Caribbean, serves as the OAS’ disaster relief arm and leverages corporate funds for immediate response for those in need.

Ramdin, who also serves as PADF Vice Chairman, recognized the Organization’s recent humanitarian efforts in the wake of the earthquake in Peru and Hurricanes Dean, Felix and Humberto. The Assistant Secretary General noted that “the OAS partnership with PADF is extremely valuable and allows both organizations to deliver timely and effective relief to affected nations.” Ambassador Ramdin also reiterated the need for

Member States to consider a hemispheric bank for natural disasters mitigation and reconstruction, as the basis for a structural approach to address these types of phenomena.

The Vice President of Guatemala, Eduardo Stein, and the Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United States Agency for International Development, Dr. Paul J. Bonicelli, were also on hand at the Pan American Development Foundation event.