FIFTY-THIRD REGULAR SESSION OEA/Ser.P

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Item 31 on the agenda

DRAFT RESOLUTION

HEMISPHERIC LEGACY OF FORMER OAS SECRETARY-GENERAL   
JOÃO CLEMENTE BAENA SOARES

(Agreed upon by the Permanent Council at its regular meeting held on June 16, 2023,   
and referred to the Plenary of the General Assembly for consideration)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

BEARING IN MIND the passing of the Brazilian Ambassador João Clemente Baena Soares, at 92 years of age, on June 7, 2023, in the city of Rio de Janeiro;

RECALLING that Ambassador Baena Soares served as Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS) from 1984 to 1994;

BEARING IN MIND that during Baena Soares' first term as Secretary General, the Organization adopted in 1985 the Cartagena Protocol, a package of amendments to the OAS Charter that provided the Organization with more effective tools and mechanisms to combat crises in the Hemisphere and underscored the importance, in its Article 33, of economic and social rights;

CONSIDERING that during Baena Soares' second term at the helm of the OAS, the Organization approved the Declaration of Santiago in 1991, which led to the adoption of resolution 1080 on "Representative Democracy," one of the embryos of the 2001 Inter-American Democratic Charter;

RECOGNIZING the facilitative role then-Secretary General Baena Soares played in the search for peaceful solutions in the context of political crises in Central America in the mid-1980s and in Haiti in the early 1990s, which contributed to the creation of the "International Support and Verification Commission for Central America (CIAV)" and the "Inter-American Fund for Priority Assistance to Haiti";

BEARING IN MIND that the efforts of Ambassador Baena Soares contributed decisively to the signing of the Headquarters Agreement between the OAS and the Government of the United States of America, as well as to the inclusion of three new member states (Belize, Canada, and Guyana) into the Organization, which gave greater scope and legitimacy to OAS initiatives;

RECOGNIZING that during the two terms of office of Secretary General Baena Soares, the Organization of American States strengthened and solidified one of its primary functions in defense of democracy, that of observation of elections in the countries of the Hemisphere;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that in 1994, during Baena Soares' second term as Secretary General of the OAS, the organization approved the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, also known as the "Convention of Belém do Pará," an instrument that formally recognized at the hemispheric level that violence against women constitutes a violation of human rights, warned that such aggression is also reproduced in the public sphere and extends to all interpersonal relationships, thereby contributing to the defense of women's human rights and to confronting challenges in the response of new forms of violence suffered by women in the countries of the region; and

RECOGNIZING that, by the end of his two terms at the helm of the OAS, Secretary General Baena Soares had strengthened the organization's capacities and functions in conflict resolution, in the consolidation of democracy, and in the promotion and protection of the human rights of citizens of the Hemisphere,

RESOLVES:

1. To express sincere gratitude and deep appreciation for the legacy of Ambassador João Clemente Baena Soares as Secretary General of the OAS.

2. To recognize the positive impact of Ambassador Baena Soares' actions in maintaining peace, strengthening representative democracy, and promoting and protecting human rights in the Hemisphere with respect for the sovereignty of member states.

3. To mandate the Permanent Council of the OAS to hold, in the third quarter of 2023, using existing resources, a special meeting with high-level government participation on the hemispheric legacy of former Secretary General Baena Soares, as well as his importance to the Organization and its member states, open to testimonies from family members and civil society.

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