

Formal Salutations

Dr. Patricia Solís, President of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History.

MA. Rocsanda Pahola Méndez Mata, Vice-President, who is with us by remote media.

MSc. César Rodríguez Tomeo, Outgoing Secretary General.

Presidents of the Cartography, Geography, History and Geophysics Commissions who are with us by remote media.

Representatives of the National Section of Mexico.

Representatives of the National Sections, also committee and working group chairs, who are with us by remote media.

Ambassadors of the Member States accredited in Mexico.

Representatives of the Secretariat of Foreign Relations and of National Defense of Mexico.

Delegates from observer States who are with us by remote media.

Former authorities of the PAIGH.

Distinguished invited guests.

Friends, and

My family

America is a continent that has always been a symbol of **hope and liberty**. Our land is a place of free and independent nations, with consolidated national states, where we can aspire to live a better life. Nevertheless, nowadays in the third decade of the 21st century, our generation **faces complex challenges** such as the current pandemic, migrations, violence, lack of security, poverty, hunger, climate change, natural disasters, etc., which put the stability of our continent at risk.

Among all of these problems, we can become more aware of the need and importance of having available institutions that contribute to the healthy development of the American Continent in all spheres of action. Among these institutions, the **Pan American Institute of Geography and History**, which today is celebrating its 94th anniversary, stands out from the rest.

For this reason, it is significant to recall that, on a day with the same date, February 7th, but in 1928, at the 6th Inter-American conference of Ministers of the American States, it was decided to **found this Institute**. From the two plans that were submitted about setting it up, the proposal of the Mexican Engineer Pedro Sánchez was chosen. The offer of Mexico to host the central office was accepted; this meant a major international responsibility.

As proof of its trust in the international community, the Mexican Government decided to provide a **building** constructed especially for this new institution; this was inaugurated on May the 5th, 1930 to become from that date onwards the diplomatic headquarters of the Institute. This magenta-colored building, for more than nine decades has witnessed the presence and passing of major figures who, with their intelligence and impact, have encouraged scientific studies throughout the length and breadth of the American continent.

Today, the PAIGH is an institution almost at its centenary, and is a specialized **Inter-American organization** of a scientific nature of the Organization of American States. It enjoys technical and financial autonomy and its fundamental mission is to encourage, coordinate and disseminate the results of scientific studies in Cartography, Geography, History, Geophysics and related sciences.

To the **General Assembly**, I thank you for the trust given to me and I confirm the public promise made a few minutes ago to work with loyalty and in the spirit of service towards the nations of the Pan-American community, and I guarantee that, from today onwards, **this will be** my only commitment.

My having been named to the post of Secretary General by the **Member States** is fully a commitment and a privilege. It is a commitment because the responsibility that the position brings is wide-ranging at international level; but there is also the great honor and privilege of serving the greater nation, that is, the Pan-American community.

I want to express my appreciation to the **Mexican Government**, representing the country hosting the central office, for having nominated me for this duty. I know that I have its support for the PAIGH, in the fulfillment of such an honorable task and mission.

For those leading the **four commissions, the General Secretariat** offers you all of its support and cooperation; you may be certain of and trust that we shall work together in a fair and harmonized manner as a team, always in a space for respect and healthy balance, while keeping strictly to the new statutes and the current regulations, staying within the principles of the PAIGH and without campaigning for political nor religious ends.

The General Secretariat, in order to be successful in the high responsibility which it takes on from this date onwards, will follow the points of its **Strategic Development Plan** presented for the period 2022 – 2025, all based on the outlines set by the statute and the current regulations, and with absolute respect for the decisions that the General Assembly and the meetings of Authorities take.

In this important mission, **the participation, support and cooperation of all the Organs and Authorities** that make up the PAIGH are needed. For this reason, the General Secretariat requests that all and each one of you, the General Assembly, the President, Vice-President, the Commissions, the National Sections, the Committees, Working Groups and Cooperating Partners, contribute and support with your efforts towards achieving this goal.

For the General Secretariat it will be a privilege to have as **the President**, Doctor Patricia Solís, for whose presence here we are grateful and who we publicly congratulate for being the first woman to hold and work in this position of high responsibility, with her leadership and vision, supported by our vice-president, MA Rocsanda Pahola Méndez Mata. This will be an essential factor for achieving the goals that we have set for the next four years.

I want to say that the **Outgoing Secretary General**, today hands over a renewed, strong and solid institution, adequate for facing the current challenges that we are living through.

MSc César Fernando Rodríguez Tomeo; during the outbreak of the pandemic, while far from his country and family, you knew how to run our institution in the right direction and now, you have guided it to a safe destination. You may be sure that you are leaving it in safe hands. On behalf of everyone making up the Pan-American community, we give you thanks and a well-deserved recognition.

I want to give thanks, publicly, to **my wife** and to **my daughter** who are here with us, as they have approved and supported my accepting and starting to undertake the important commitment involved in being the Secretary General. Without their help, I would not be here, so we have come here together. Many thanks for accompanying me at this time and over the next four years.

To conclude, I remind all of you that our nations, which make up the Pan – American community, have a territory that is on the same ground, that is on one continent that we should learn to share and care for, with the same rivers, seas, lakes, coasts, valleys, woods, mountains, hills, volcanoes, skies, and, most importantly, the same people.

That which happens in Alaska has repercussions in Tierra del Fuego; if something occurs on the coasts of the Pacific, it affects the Atlantic or the Caribbean; what happens in the Andes involves the Amazon. Today more than ever, we should be aware that, if something happens to an individual or a nation, it happens to all people and to all the nations. It does not matter where we are, however remote that place in which we are located may be, **we are all united and connected.**

With these thoughts, today I call on you to continue the legacy that our predecessors began as a dream... **to serve together and united** to our greater realm and domain... America **Thank you very much.**