

**REMARKS OF DR. ANTONIO BERMÚDEZ-MILLA,  
AMBASSADOR OF HONDURAS AND PRESIDENT OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL OF THE O.A.S.,  
AT THE LUNCHEON GIVEN BY LIC. RAFAEL ANGEL CALDERÓN-FOURNIER,  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND MISS ELIZABETH ODIO-BENITO,  
MINISTER OF JUSTICE, IN HONOR OF THE JUDGES OF THE COURT AND SPECIAL GUESTS  
INVITED TO THE CEREMONY OF INSTALLATION, ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1979.**

It is a great privilege for me to participate in this historic ceremony of the official installation of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in our sister Republic of Central America, traditional bastion of representative democracy not only within our region but throughout the Continent.

A convinced and fervent admirer of respect for the dignity of the human being, I have throughout my life fought on its behalf at every opportunity I have had in various international forums. When I took office as Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Honduras to the Organization of American States, I expressed the satisfaction felt by the Government and people of Honduras when the American Convention on Human Rights entered into force; this Convention gave an ecumenical projection to our inter-American system as a bulwark for the strengthening and exaltation of the primary rights of man, which attributes are inherent to his own dignity. The American people have dignified the human being and their national Constitutions acknowledge that the chief aims of their juridical and political institutions, the governing bodies of society, are the protection of the essential rights of man and the creation of an environment which will allow him to progress both spiritually and materially. In Bogotá, thirty years ago, it was not said that America had reached a stage of perfection, nor indeed that such a stage could be reached. A just evaluation was made of prevailing conditions and, with a hopeful and prophetic voice, it was declared that America left its doors open to the future, and that that future was none other than an ever-growing strengthening of the protection of human rights within the inter-American region. As has so often been repeated, it should not be maintained that the welfare of the individuals is contrary to that of the community to which he belongs, for his real interests can only conflict with the latter when the individual is granted rights which do not take into account his duties towards his fellow-men, or when specific aims which differ from human demands are attributed to the community.

It is a great pleasure for me to find the Siamese twins the Court and the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights- here in San José, for this was the battle-cry we adopted within our regional Organization during our attempts to obtain the prompt election of the members of both bodies. Together with the Costa Rican delegation and with the support of the other member states, we were able to see our hopes become a reality at the last General Assembly. We are now able to savor the ripe fruit of our efforts, for we firmly believe that the defense and promotion of human rights are fundamental to the attainment of peace, co-existence and progress for mankind.

In thanking the Foreign Minister, Lic. Rafael Angel Calderón Fournier- and the Minister of Justice, Miss Elizabeth Odio Benito, and -through their good offices- the President of Costa Rica, Dr. Rodrigo Carazo, and the President of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Dr. Rodolfo E. Piza Escalante, for their inestimable courtesy in inviting us to participate in these important events, we would like to raise our voice of encouragement and wish every success to this new organ of the Organization of American States. We are aware that the task facing it is not an easy one, but we are conscious that the good will, good faith and determination which are the basis of the ideological conviction and the hope for the future of America will be decisive factors in the fulfilment of its assignment.

In closing, I would like to extend a cordial invitation to those member states that have not yet ratified the Pact of San José, to take an interest in accelerating the necessary process so that in the near future all the members states of this regional organization will give their support to the difficult and delicate functions of the Court and cooperate with the decision-making bodies, in order that the objectives pursued for more than thirty years may be attained.

On behalf of the special guests invited to these events, I wish to thank the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Justice for this honor, and would like to propose a toast for the successful culmination of human rights in our Continent.