

and restrict capital flows, and as the fiscal positions of our economies weaken and debt increases.

While we welcome international commitments to the Global Partnership for Development as outlined in the Millennium Declaration, Monterrey Consensus, and Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, we are discouraged by the limited progress to date. This means that priority projects which form the core of our development agenda such as poverty eradication and improvements in health and education will continue to lag in implementation. We remain hopeful but by no means certain, that the UN General Assembly's Outcome Document of last September will spur renewed action with a greater degree of political will.

If this scenario were not daunting enough, emerging security concerns have brought added uncertainties resulting in new changes in objectives and priorities, causing even further delays in implementing national agendas, as we seek to be "reliable partners" in implementing international security objectives.

Against this backdrop, the current international situation poses a number of challenges to regional integration, notwithstanding the fact that the popularity of regionalism evolved from this very same process in the early 1970s as an effective response to the onset of globalisation.

THE HEMISPHERE'S CHALLENGE

In this present scenario, how do we reduce our vulnerability to external shocks, achieve sustainable development, strengthen governability, promote democracy and at the same time, comply with our international, regional and hemispheric obligations?

Jamaica and indeed CARICOM, has always maintained that there is an urgent need to make this process of global economic governance and integration more inclusive and more beneficial to the interests of developing countries.

By so doing, there would be greater prospects for tangible signs of development and strengthening democracy in our countries and societies around the world.

We are reminded everyday of the sense of unease and restlessness which emerges when the people we lead are not given meaningful opportunities for self-expression and self-actualisation. We regard these as fundamental elements of democracy and civil society. In order to meet the challenges which militate against peace and stability, we must provide a truly enabling environment.

THE HEMISPHERIC AGENDA

It is not surprising, therefore, that we in this hemisphere share a wide range of similar problems and concerns. Our regional and hemispheric agendas are inextricably linked and have therefore become inseparable. This is reflected in both our interdependence and the elements of globalisation that today characterizes international relations and which ultimately leads to a myriad of interlocking issues. Within this context, both the OAS and our respective regional integration movements have a salient role to play.

From its creation in 1948, the OAS was envisaged as the primary political forum in the hemisphere to maintain peace and security, to promote and consolidate democracy and advance cooperation for integral development. The OAS has undoubtedly played a pivotal role in the settlement of disputes and in bringing solutions to various political crises within the hemisphere as we have seen through the important role it has played in dealing with the political situation in Haiti. We welcome and applaud the return of President René Prével as the duly elected Leader of Haiti.

Today, we are confronted by new threats and challenges which our Governments are

simultaneously obliged to address and surmount. The hemispheric agenda has expanded significantly over the years to address issues such as corruption, the fight against drug abuse and drug trafficking, transnational organized crime, terrorism, money laundering, children's issues, women's affairs and the protection of human rights.

The pursuit of these programmes at the level of the OAS, complements the important initiatives on which we have all embarked at the national and multilateral level, as we seek not only to come to grips with, but also to overcome these problems. The multidimensional nature of many of these issues requires a comprehensive, cooperative approach.

Today, the OAS has also assumed additional responsibilities for the implementation of the mandates of the Summit of the Americas, aimed at creating prosperity through economic integration and trade, eradicating poverty and discrimination and protecting the natural environment. Moreover, within this process, we have adopted a shared vision to consolidate democracy and security in the hemisphere, and to create conditions to advance prosperity, a multitude of items for an ever-increasing agenda.

The adoption of other mechanisms and instruments, including the Inter-American Democratic Charter, have served to concretize our adherence to the tenets and principles of the democratic agenda. These commitments have brought tremendous impetus to what we are doing at the regional level. Our citizens at all levels have become involved in every aspect of governance; more women are running for political office and being appointed to high positions and I can certainly attest to that! An increasing number of civic organizations are actively monitoring transparency and accountability; the exercise of the undeniable freedom of expression and of the press is widely enjoyed; and access to information legislation has been passed in many countries, including my own.

While the foregoing is laudable, however, are we satisfied that in this dynamic process of globalization, the OAS is fulfilling the economic development aspect of its mandate?

TRIBUTE TO JUDGE J. WILLIAM BEARD

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, today I acknowledge a great friend of the legal community, Judge J. William Beard, who passed away last month at the age of 85.

Born March 20, 1920 in Chicago, Judge Beard moved with his family to the San Fernando Valley in 1925. He attended the University of Redlands before enlisting in the Army Air Forces during World War II.

Leaving the military as a lieutenant, Judge Beard married Ann Dodgen in October 1945 and returned to his Los Angeles-area roots. As an aspiring lawyer, he opened a legal messenger service and attended Southwestern University School of Law.

In 1951, two years after graduating and passing the State Bar, Judge Beard joined the District Attorney's Office in El Centro, which is located in my district in Imperial County, California. Several months later, he opened a pri-

vate practice. One of his subsequent law partners, Cruz Reynoso, became the first Latino appointed to the California Supreme Court in 1982.

When future U.S. Sen. Alan Cranston and other Democratic leaders formed the California Democratic Council in 1952, Judge Beard became a charter member. He interrupted his legal career to serve as an Imperial County-based state senator from 1957 to 1961 (District 39), and was appointed to the El Cajon Municipal Court bench in 1980.

As a recovering alcoholic, Judge Beard was active in the state Bar Association's committee on Alcohol Abuse. He started a support group for alcoholic legal professionals and doctors in the 1970s. Judge Beard believed that his background with alcoholism provided him with insights into the human psyche that were invaluable in the courtroom.

Later, while serving on the Municipal Court bench in El Cajon, he handled small claims court cases in Ramona. The informal, rural setting provided an intimacy that he found lacking in a larger venue.

By the time he retired a decade later, he had also established an alcohol counseling program for drunken drivers at the El Cajon court—one of the first of its kind in the county. In retirement, Judge Beard served on the state Medical Assurance Board and spoke at 12-step recovery meetings.

Judge Beard's passing will not only be felt in the legal community but society as a whole, as Judge Beard was a humanitarian who truly cared for his fellow human beings.

CONGRATULATING "TEACHER OF THE YEAR" MARTHA PAGE

HON. RON LEWIS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Martha Page, a distinguished citizen from my congressional district who was recently awarded the Excellence in the Classroom and Educational Leadership (ExCEL) "Teacher of the Year" Award for her exceptional service at the Hodgenville Elementary School in Hodgenville, KY.

A kindergarten teacher for more than thirty years, Ms. Page maintains a unique passion for teaching that focuses not only on the academic progress of her students, but also on their emotional, social and cognitive growth. Year after year, her innovative approach to teaching is driven by a genuine care for the happiness and success of young people. Through her own example, Ms. Page consistently demonstrates to her students the importance of character: honesty, goodness, and making life count.

Martha Page's dedication to students often transcends the classroom, leading her to play an active role in after school programs and frequent parent-teacher interface. In addition to her work in the classroom, she serves as a mentor to student teachers and is a valuable resource to her colleagues. Ms. Page is also a longtime member of the LaRue County Board of Education and remains actively involved in numerous state and local professional associations.