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## Pan American Day and Pan American Week, 1988

*By the President of the United States of America*

### **A Proclamation**

For nearly six decades, observance of the annual Pan American Day has told the world that the nations of the Western Hemisphere share a unique harmony of ideals—the love of liberty, independence, and democracy; the willingness to seek these treasures and to preserve them wherever they are found; and firm and profound opposition to totalitarianism. Each year the United States joins with countries throughout the Americas in pledging fidelity to these ideals so vital to our future.

Almost a century ago, in Washington, D.C., the First International Conference of American States made the idea of hemispheric unity a reality by establishing the International Union of American Republics, the predecessor of the Organization of American States (OAS). The common aspirations of the peoples of the Americas for freedom, independence, democracy, peace, security, and prosperity inspire the OAS, which is charged with upholding and defending these critical objectives within the Inter-American System.

The past decade has witnessed several victories for freedom and democracy in the Americas. Ten years ago, the great majority of Latin Americans lived under oppression; today, more than 90 percent of the people of the Americas live under democratic government. We can all be truly grateful for these transformations to democracy.

On April 30, the OAS will celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the signing of its Charter in Bogota in 1948—a Charter that declares, “the solidarity of the American States and the high aims which are sought through it require the political organization of those States on the basis of the effective exercise of representative democracy.” This principle continues to encourage brave men and women in the fight for liberty and democracy.

The OAS Charter establishes the basis for hemispheric cooperation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, economic and social development, education, and the protection of human rights. In recent years, the OAS has added a new dimension to its regional problem-solving by creating the OAS Drug Abuse Control Commission to combat narcotics trafficking and drug abuse. The United States of America accords special priority to the crucial work of the OAS in the fields of human rights and narcotics control.

The foundations of the Inter-American System emerged from the Americas' independence movements, but its consolidation dates from the signing of the OAS Charter; so it is especially fitting that we renew our commitment to the principles of the Organization of American States and its Specialized Agencies on Pan American Day this year as 40th Anniversary celebrations take place.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Thursday, April 14, 1988, as Pan American Day, and the week of April 10 through April 16, 1988, as Pan American Week. I urge the Governors of the fifty States, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and officials of other areas under the flag of the United States of America to honor these observances with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eleventh day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twelfth.

*Ronald Reagan*