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## National Year of the Americas, 1987

*By the President of the United States of America*

### A Proclamation

The countries of the Western Hemisphere enjoy a special relationship, influenced by the accidents of geography and our common heritage as nations of the New World. The vast majority of our lands represent a mix of native groups of ancient lineage and a much larger population of immigrants from other shores. Today virtually every nationality is represented in our Hemisphere. Our diversity is truly astonishing, but there exists in us a common thread of restiveness and exploration, a longing to build lives of freedom and quiet dignity and to share the fruits of our discoveries with one another and the entire world.

As the 20th century nears its close, we have an opportunity to reflect on the direction in which relations among the peoples of the Americas have evolved. In a century marked by sporadic regional conflicts and two world wars, we have nonetheless seen ample evidence for the conclusion that the bonds of friendship and aspiration among us are stronger than ever. The sometimes rugged terrain we have crossed and the horizons we still must reach should not daunt our spirit or dim our optimism—what remains to be achieved for the Americas can be the source of both our hopes and the energy to achieve them.

The National Year of the Americas celebration will focus on the links that bind the nations of the Western Hemisphere into "The Americas." It will emphasize the enhancement of our citizens' understanding of their neighbors to the north and south, and it will underscore just how much there is to celebrate in this era of hemispheric change and opportunity.

The most important cause for joy is the new chapter that our decade is writing in the story of liberty. Since 1979, the process of democratization has strengthened the community of purpose among American peoples. During that period, the people of ten Latin American nations have expressed their determination, through the ballot box, to turn from oligarchy to democracy. The time is right for our countries to defend and work to extend democracy and respect for human rights throughout the hemisphere.

The tenth Pan American Games, which will be held in Indianapolis in 1987, provide an opportunity to bring together the peoples of Latin America, the West Indies, Canada, and the United States. The Games will celebrate our diversity and our unity, our interdependence and our shared future. They will foster mutual respect and understanding.

In recognition of the opportunity afforded by the Pan American Games, the Congress, by joint resolution approved July 3, 1986 (Public Law 99-356), has designated 1987 as "The National Year of the Americas" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation calling upon Federal, State, and local government agencies, private organizations, and the people of the United States to observe the year with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the year of 1987 as The National Year of the Americas, and I urge our citizens to focus their attention on our hemisphere as united in spirit during this year.

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

*Ronald Reagan*