

Mr. President:

I congratulate you on your election to preside over the 65th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

We fully share your proposal to analyze the central role of the United Nations Organization in global governability.

The United Nations is the international forum to exchange ideas and adopt measures that strengthen the pillars upon which our governability stands.

Panama's geography has allowed my country to fulfill the functions as a bridge and meeting point of the most diverse cultures and civilizations.

Thanks to the discovery of our privileged position in 1513 and the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914, today we connect Europe, America and the East. That is how our story has been written.

500 years later, we are still working for the benefit of the world's maritime commerce.

Our ethnic diversity is a symbol and example of our national unity.

Panama is committed to promoting economic growth and social justice.

We make possible the peaceful existence of all ethnicities and creeds.

We Panamanians love peace and we manage our Canal with cautious neutrality.

Our foreign policy is defined by the respect, defense and promotion of democracy, human rights, peace and international security.

All of this, within the framework of the doctrine of human security.

Panama has played an active role in favor of the international community at important times for the United Nations.

Among them are included the Security Council, the Human Rights Commission and Committee, as well as the Committee for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Mr. President:

Our pacifism does not imply passiveness before situations that affect peace, international security and the governability of peoples.

Change is in the air all over the globe. People demand more of their public servants.

Our political and diplomatic actions are founded in the principles of international cooperation and the strengthening of global multilateralism.

The trafficking of drugs, weapons, human organs and of persons, associated with illegal migration, money laundering, gangs and terrorism are part of criminal organizations that seek to destabilize our democracies.

The trafficking and possession of illegal weapons has a devastating effect on human security and the governability in our countries.

For Panama and the Central American region, drugs are our weapons of mass destruction.

Drug traffickers filter through our land and sea borders in order to pollute our youth with their poison.

Additionally, our region is being used by webs of human traffickers that steer mixed migratory flows of persons from other continents through our borders.

In the face of these challenges, my country and the members of the Central American Integration System have decided to create a Regional Security Coordination Center.

These regional efforts, based in my country, to fight against transnational organized crime are already yielding encouraging results.

We understand that it is vital to work jointly to improve the function of international institutions, for the benefit of humanity.

In that sense, I find it a very positive sign for the region that President Porfirio Lobo of Honduras is participating fully in this General Assembly.

In order to count on a world that is more stable and secure we must leave aside existing differences.

Stability requires us to work together to strengthen human security, regionally and globally.

Mr. President:

Globalization is the legal, safe and efficient flow of services, goods, capital and persons.

This fact has been the catalyst for a period of convergence of different economies, which will still last for some years to come.

If the previous stage of globalization lasted some 60 years, we estimate that the one that began in 1990 shall conclude its readjustments at the middle of this century.

It is also necessary to note that as a result of this convergence, we have suffered during the past two years the effects of a significant crisis.

This global crisis demands newer and better forms of governing our societies.

This global crisis demands the expansion of our markets and better management of our intergovernmental relations.

In that context, we appreciate the approaches made to develop the exchange of goods, workers, tourists and investments across the Straits of China, which offer a new impulse to meet the development potential of our commercial relations with that region.

For its part, Panama is still expanding its commercial relations through the negotiation of a Free Trade Agreements with Peru and Colombia.

Equally, with active pursuit of Free Trade Agreements with Canada, the United States of America and the Association Agreement between Central America and the European Union.

Consequently, I avail myself of this opportunity to ask for the support of respective Governments, with a view toward the approval and ratification of these.

We are on the threshold of an era of Economic growth and opportunity in Latin America.

Thus, we renew our stake on just and inclusive free trade that permits economic opportunities and prosperity to our people.

With change and reform sweeping the region, we have enough reasons to promote a new age of cooperation and joint work.

Together, we can seize opportunity and successfully face common challenges.

Panama enjoys a very healthy and strong relation with the United States. An engaged partner in Washington is crucial for the region's success.

On both trade and security issues, the United States must be a willing friend.

Additionally, we understand that for the integral development of trade relations and the strengthening of our economies measures to ensure effective tax collection are required.

To this end, Panama has signed Agreements to avoid Double Taxation and prevent Tax Evasion.

This is part of a national strategy that seeks to strengthen transparency and the competitiveness of our international services.

We have already signed agreements with Mexico, Barbados and Portugal.

We have already concluded negotiations with Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, France, Qatar, Luxembourg, the Republic of Korea and Singapore.

We want to portray the Panamanian experience as an example to the world. Our economic story, reform at home, and strengthening trade and business ties across the region and around the world, have been fruitful.

Mr. President:

The Government of Panamá salutes the adoption of the resolution “Keeping the Promise – United to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals” and, simultaneously, reaffirms its commitment to this declaration.

In a little less than a year of government, we have developed structural reforms and programs to attend the needs of our people,

We have focused, especially, on vulnerable groups.

Among these programs, is featured one that consists of a monthly economic transfer to the elderly who do not have retirements or pensions.

Additionally, we have established a system of Universal Scholarships.

These consist of economic support for all students in the country, from the first to the twelfth grade.

Whether they study in public schools or private schools with modest enrollment costs, the state reduces the dropouts and strengthens the relationship between teachers, parents and students.

Moreover, in December 2009, we enacted the most important pay raise in the last 50 years of our country,

We are benefiting laborers in the private and public sectors, who earned very low wages.

Additionally, a solidarity fund was established so that Panamanians of limited means may apply it toward their first home.

Mr. President:

The Panamanian State will invest 13 million dollars in public infrastructure in the next five years.

This effort will include the building of hospitals; the development of roads; the expansion of Tocumen International Airport and the establishment of the MetroBus, an innovative and modern bus system in Panama City.

The latter and the construction of the first Metro line will return time for quality living to Panamanian families, to be together, to share and grow stronger.

These projects, the expansion of the Canal and the exploitation of copper reserves in our country, will reach 20 thousand people in this span of time and will generate thousands of jobs.

All these works will be developed with the highest environmental standards and will contribute to a more dynamic Panamanian and regional economy.

Mr. President:

The theme that you have chosen for this debate could not be more appropriate, as we concur that the United Nations has a calling to play a central role in global governance.

To this end, it is necessary to deepen the process of reforms initiated within this Organization.

Panama is committed to making its contribution to this process, placing its geographical position and its logistics infrastructure at the service of the Organization.

In that sense, my government has two key projects, namely the establishment of the Inter-Regional Center of the United Nations for Latin America and the Caribbean and the creation of a Regional Logistics Center for Humanitarian Assistance.

The first will promote more coherence and synergy between all regional offices, and increased efficiency in the use of resources.

The second will improve the regional response to natural disasters and humanitarian crises, housing deposits for the United Nations, and the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Mr. President; leaders and friends:

We reiterate our conviction that the United Nations is the international forum for the exchange of ideas and to adopt measures that strengthen the pillars upon which rests our governability.

The United Nations provides a forum of good will so nations can work together on shared goals.

In our region that means jobs, opportunity and security for people.

It also means modernizing economies, reforming government, and ensuring social welfare.

Today, my country reaffirms its conviction and solidarity with the United Nations system.

Rest assured of our disposition to offer all the peoples of the planet the best possible service and utility and as a result, develop our citizens.

This is Panama's mission. We will accomplish it.

THANK YOU.