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STATEMENT BY
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(Check against delivery)
Mister President, Heads of State and Government, Delegates and Guests:

Ten years ago, this Assembly produced a document which awoke hope for many people. At that time, the Millennium Declaration ratified six fundamental values: liberty, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect towards nature and the sense of joint responsibility.

Based upon them, world leaders assumed eight clear compromises: the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which elevated human beings as the center piece of our national and global responsibilities.

Today, I address you and my people to report on what Costa Rica has carried out through this process. My balance is optimistic. We have a clear conviction that we will comply with these Goals despite the difficult international juncture, and even though we are not part of international cooperation flows, due to our country's medium income condition. Nevertheless, we are conscious of our local challenges, and that any achievement must be a new step for the future.

Mister President:

The first Goal summoned us to eliminate extreme poverty and hunger by 2015. In 1990, 9% of the Costa Rican homes suffered from it. But in 2007 we had reduced extreme poverty to just 3%. The world economic crisis impacted this indicator, but the reducing tendency is maintained, and we wish to improve it. Our ethical imperative is that no Costa Rican should lack the essentials to feed herself or himself.

The second Goal, universal elementary education, has been fully accomplished. All our school age children assist to educational centers. However, we are worried that only 90% of them complete the cycle. Therefore, we are working so that all of them can achieve it in 2015.

The challenge is bigger on high school education. High school attracts 83.6% of our youngsters, but only 40% of them complete it. This drop-out problem has been reduced thanks to monetary transfer programs aimed at families with limited resources. Additionally, the program Ethics, Esthetics and Citizenship makes the learning process more attractive and relevant through sports, artistic and service activities.

We hope that in five years high school coverage will reach 89%, and that the graduation rate will be much higher than today.

We are also working towards total coverage in preschool education; a large stimulus to technical education and labor training; the systematic use of information and communication technologies in the classrooms, homes and communities, and universal quality access to digital networks.

To advance in all these challenges, we have substantially increased investments in several items. As a result, resources destined to education have been raised from 3.8% of the Gross Domestic Income in 1990 to close to 7% in 2009.
Mister President:

As the first woman President in the history of Costa Rica, I am particularly proud of our advance in the third Goal: participation of women in public life, which year to year increases in our country. Today, nearly 40% of the members of Congress, and almost 30% of the members of the Supreme Court of Justice, are women. Besides, our participation in the work market has increased from 30% in 1990 to 42% in 2009.

Nevertheless, women still suffer from unemployment, work precariousness and labor informality. In a great measure this is due to our difficulties in combining productive and reproductive roles. To overcome this obstacle, Costa Rica is developing a care and early stimulation network for boys and girls, jointly with an integral care network for senior citizens.

In regard to the fourth, fifth and sixth Goals, all related to health, we are steadily advancing as part of a deep national commitment and lasting public policies, which were developed several decades ago.

We are proud of having one of the lowest children’s mortality rates of the American continent. However, we are not satisfied, and are working to decrease by 2015 the mortality rate of boys and girls younger than 5 years to just 2 per thousand, and for those younger than 1 year, to 9 per thousand born alive. We also have a major commitment of reducing maternal mortality to 20 for every 100,000 pregnant women in 2015.

The impact of HIV/AIDS in the country is low, but we continue to strengthen prevention measures. We have especially increased the control of pregnant women. Since 1998, through Social Security, we have provided an antiretroviral treatment to those who suffer this sickness.

Our dedication to the environment and sustainable development preceded the seventh Millennium Development Goal. Thanks to clever measures taken four decades ago, 25.9% of the national territory is under some type of environmental management or conservation scheme. We have recovered forest coverage; we invest to increase the proportion of electrical generation from renewable sources and the proportion of clean energies within the total consumption. My government is promoting several initiatives so that Costa Rica can generate 100% of electricity from renewable sources within the next ten years.

We are also working in the reduction of greenhouse effect gases, and we have committed Costa Rica to be a carbon-neutral country.

Today, practically 100% of the population has access to water that comes from improved sources, and the goal is that, in 2015, 88% receives drinking quality water. We want this water, in all cases, to reach decent homes, so we are implementing housing credits and benefit schemes for families of low and medium income.

Mister President:

Costa Rica recognizes and has demonstrated to the world that sustainable human development must be supported with democratic governance, the Rule of Law, transparency, respect towards human rights, peace and security. We fully believe that
freedom must be part of development. But in order to achieve development we also need an intelligent link between production growth, education, health, innovation, environmental respect and the reduction of poverty. We have seriously assumed these responsibilities and we do not blame others for our problems.

Nevertheless, sustainable human development also demands a true world association. Such is the purpose of the eighth Goal, which implies adequate and efficient international cooperation. It worries us that still very few developed countries comply in destining 0.7% of their Gross Domestic Product to assistance for development. At the same time, even though we understand that this assistance must be centered on the most vulnerable countries, it should not exclude countries of medium income, which, thanks to their efforts, have advanced towards higher development levels, but still confront vulnerable situations.

As President of Costa Rica, I am concerned by another serious challenge: organized crime, particularly drug cartels. If we are not able to bring to an end their aggression, our development advances will be worthless. From this podium of commitments and hope, I urge all developed countries, especially big drug consumers, to efficiently collaborate with the countries that suffer a problem which was not created by us.

Mister President:

Due to our historic commitment to collective welfare and our determination of reaching the Millennium Development Goals, Costa Rica is on the right track to achieve and even exceed them by 2015.

But this is not enough. Our efforts are also directed to the constant expansion of opportunities, to the reduction of social and regional disparities, to transparency, accountability, solidarity and freedom as a component of human dignity and a generator of opportunities. For us, rhetoric is useless; results are imperative.

I thank the United Nations System for its generous accompaniment in this process, and I urge all the countries to jointly advance in this bright path.
Costa Rica: Some key indicators related to the MDGs

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Chart 1.1
Households in extreme poverty conditions between 1990-2009, and Expected progress to 2015 (in percentage)

Source: National Institute of Statistics and Census of Costa Rica

Chart 1.2
Households in poverty conditions between 1990-2009, and Expected progress to 2015 (in percentage)

Source: National Institute of Statistics and Census of Costa Rica
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

Chart 2.1
Net primary education schooling between 1990-2009 (in percentage)

Source: Ministry of Public Education of Costa Rica

Chart 2.2
Students graduating from primary school between 1990-2008, and Projection to 2015 (in percentage)

Source: Ministry of Public Education of Costa Rica, based on cohort study
**Goal 3: Promote gender equality**

**Chart 3.1**

Women appointed to elected offices (in percentage by government term)

- National Parliament
- Permanent Aldermen
- Deputy Aldermen

Source: Supreme Elections Court of Costa Rica

**Goal 4: Reduce child mortality**

**Chart 4.1**

Under-five mortality rate between 1990-2009, and Projection to 2015 (per one thousand 5 year old children)

Source: Ministry of Health of Costa Rica
Goal 5: Improve maternal health

Chart 4.2
Mortality rate of children under one year between 1990-2009, and Projection to 2015 (per one thousand live births)

Source: Ministry of Planning and Economic Policy with information provided by the Ministry of Health and the National Institute of Statistics and Census of Costa Rica

Chart 5.1
Maternal mortality rate between 1990-2009, and Projection to 2015 (per 100,000 pregnant women)

Source: Ministry of Health and the National Institute of Statistics and Census of Costa Rica
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Chart 6.1
HIV/AIDS Mortality Rate between 1990-2008 (per 100,000 inhabitants)

Source: Ministry of Health of Costa Rica

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Chart 7.1
Forest cover in Costa Rica (in percentage)

Source: Ministry of Environment, Energy and Telecommunications of Costa Rica
Chart 7.2
Renewable energy generation between 1990-2009 (in percentage)

Source: Ministry of Environment, Energy and Telecommunications of Costa Rica

Chart 7.3
Drinking water coverage between 1991-2009, and Projection to 2015 (in percentage)

Source: Costa Rican Institute of Aqueducts and Sewers
Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

Chart 8.1
Public debt with regard to the GDP between 1990-2009 (in percentage)

Source: Treasury Department, Public Register Department and the Central Bank of Costa Rica, 2010