



*Permanent Mission of Guatemala  
to the United Nations*

**STATEMENT BY ALVARO COLOM**

**PRESIDENT OF GUATEMALA FOR THE CLIMATE CHANGE SUMMIT**

Guatemala is a multi-ethnic, multicultural and mega-diverse country; it has 66 natural ecosystems and 26 linguistic groups. Also, it is one of the countries in the Central American isthmus with the greatest climate and topographic variability; it is located over three tectonic plates and in the hurricane route of the Atlantic Ocean, making it a highly vulnerable country to climate change.

Although Guatemala contributes with less than a thousandth to the greenhouse gases, it is one of the most affected countries. It is enough to mention, that in the last decade, the country has suffered droughts and floods that have led to the loss of lives putting at risk entire rural communities, among the most vulnerable are women, children and indigenous populations. Additionally, the total amount of economic loss exceed U.S.D \$1.3 billion dollars. Moreover, this year, Guatemala is experiencing severe rain deficit, affecting the health of millions and is increasing the threat to food security and undernourishment, overall putting at risk the environmental security in rural and also in marginal urban areas.

At the national level, Guatemala needs to undertake forced adaptation and compulsory mitigation measures in order to urgently address the impacts of climate change and requires support of the international community, particularly from countries that have contributed to this global phenomenon and have an ecological debt. The support needed must be accompanied with additional financial resources and appropriate technology transference. At an international level, we call for all countries to take precautionary measures to anticipate, prevent, compensate and/or reduce the adverse impacts and damages caused by climate change, in accordance with the principles of Environmental Justice, Ecological Debt and Natural Rights.

To address the challenges posed by Climate Change, in Guatemala, we have advanced by creating the Presidential Commission for Climate Change; we have also designed policies and national strategies to reduce vulnerability, while improving the unavoidable adaptation and forced mitigation.

Guatemala is the heart of the Mayan world, in peace with Nature, it seeks to harmonize and integrate peace with justice, with environment and with our natural heritage. We hope that these principles guide the global process towards a final agreement in COP 15 in Copenhagen. We thank the Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for this opportunity to share our experience and position to address our common goal to combat the growing threats of climate change.