



**STATEMENT OF H.E. CARLOS RAUL MORALES, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF GUATEMALA AT THE 69TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS**

**(September 26, 2014)**

Mr. President of the General Assembly, Sam Kutesa,

Mr. Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Friends, all.

I would like to begin my remarks by saluting Mr. Sam Kutesa, our President of this 69<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly. At the same time, I wish to express our gratitude to Mr. John Ashe for his proven leadership and exceptional performance during the previous session. I also take the opportunity to congratulate the Secretary General for his stewardship and especially for the success of the recent Climate Summit.

Mr. President,

Since September of 2013, when President Otto Pérez Molina addressed this General Assembly, twelve months of important progress for Guatemala have transpired in three priority areas of our domestic policies, in spite of having to face some new challenges, including a prolonged drought.

In the first place, I can report that we have begun to prevail in the battle against chronic malnourishment in children. According to an independent investigation, in one year our program *Zero Hunger* has managed to reduce chronic malnourishment in the same scale as that achieved during the last decade: by almost two percentage points. This means that, should this trend be maintained, at the end of our Administration we will have been able to reduce the index of chronic malnutrition beyond that achieved since 1985, proving that Democracy and appropriate policies are good for boys and girls.

In the second place, I would like to share that the Administration of President Otto Pérez Molina has also advanced in complying with the *Pact for Peace, Security and Justice*, in spite of the complex security situation we face. For example, for the third consecutive year we have reduced the number of homicides in Guatemala with a cumulative contraction of 25% between 2011 and 2014. With this, we come closer to the achievement of returning to the levels of security experienced after the peace accords were signed in 1996. This advancement shows that the measures put in place are producing the expected results and that the Guatemalan democracy is slowly winning its battle against crime and impunity, in the framework of respect for the law and compliance with human rights. Guatemala will now have the responsibility of strengthening a system of security and justice capable of reducing impunity and assuring the total separation between criminal networks and our public institutions.

Regarding this second achievement, we once more express our appreciation for the support received from the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), an entity that has strengthened criminal prosecution against mafia networks, some of which are even infiltrated in the security and justice establishment. As the final year of the mandate of CICIG approaches, after nearly 8 years of cooperation with three democratically elected Governments, we can assess that this program of international cooperation, supported by the United Nations, was fully justified, since the Guatemalan institutions of

today are better prepared to carry out their constitutional role. Moreover, this last year will be critical to insure the institutional sustainability of the on-going investigations and procedures before the courts. We thank the United Nations and the international community for joining us and leaving us this important legacy.

A third advancement that I would like to share with this Assembly refers to competitiveness and the business climate. In the past two years we have advanced eight steps in the competitiveness index established by the World Economic Forum. In fact, the World Bank has highlighted us for the second consecutive year as one of the countries of the world that has undertaken most reforms, jumping seventeen positions in the respective Report. This, due to direct actions brought about by the present Administration under the framework of the *Pact for Oversight and Competitiveness*.

This improvement in the business climate is a result above all of administrative steps that have reduced bureaucratic procedures, supported additionally by a progressive improvement in the country's infrastructure. In addition, as we informed the Summit on Climate Change, our commitment with economic progress is taken within the context of increasing sustainability. The change in the energy matrix towards more sustainable and environmentally friendly energy sources and away from fossil fuels which produce green-house gasses is being achieved by bringing into the system more plants that depend for their energy on water, geothermal, solar or even natural gas.

In this context, we have advanced with various strategic agreements with our neighboring countries. For example, with Mexico we can inform about the reconstruction and modernization of border crossings and the signing of a historic agreement to launch a project which would transport gas from the Gulf of Mexico to Guatemala and Central America. With Belize, we are advancing and have negotiated 15 important bilateral agreements in all areas which we will sign in December and which will strengthen not only the relations between our Governments but also between our peoples. And with our neighbors, members of the Central American Integration System, we are advancing in consolidating our integration process, where the next goal is to realize a Customs Union. In addition, the encounters between Central America and the Caribbean are increasingly intense, guaranteeing greater markets and improved economic and political relations between our countries.

Mr. President,

In this framework of advances in the social, economic and security and justice areas, we cannot forget some challenges that have gained a higher profile during this year. In this respect, it is pertinent to refer to the crisis of the Central American child migrants which occurred on the border between the United States and Mexico. This crisis, provoked by diverse factors both in Central America and the United States, has warned us about the need of accelerating the path towards greater prosperity, in particular for children and adolescents. We trust that the peoples and Government of the United States understand that the migrant crisis requires a strategic response which attacks the structural roots of this phenomenon and offers sustained actions. This implies working together to promote greater shared prosperity in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala, and a lucid management of temporal work for migrants that satisfies the demands of the labor market in the United States and the supply of workers from Central America. It is important to undertake the necessary efforts to solve the situation of undocumented persons in the United States and above all, we must avoid criminalizing migrants, because migration is neither a sin nor a crime; it is the networks of human traffickers that are criminals, promoting in their path corruption, extortion, kidnapping and sexual abuse.

In the same vein, I cannot omit mentioning the challenge posed by the shortfall of rain this year in the Central American region. The drought has led to the loss of crops of basic foods for hundreds of thousands of families, and addressing the food crisis will have only for Guatemala a cost close to 50 million dollars during the next 8 months. It is clear that this drought is a result of climate change, and it is equally clear that without the solidarity of the international community and the decided response on the part of our Government, many families will find themselves in a very vulnerable situation due to hunger. The speeches during the Summit on Climate Change must translate into direct humanitarian assistance which reaches the most needy communities in Central America and the Caribbean. It is time to transform rhetoric in actions. .

Mr. President,

I would like to address three important processes being launched in the United Nations which Guatemala strongly supports.

In the first place, the shaping of a Post-2015 Development Agenda which must clearly embrace inclusive and sustainable development goals with those related to promoting Justice for All. In this context, we must also incorporate specific goals to avoid man-made climate change.

Secondly, Guatemala is committed to support the special session of the General Assembly of 2016 aimed at discussing the world drug problem. President Otto Pérez Molina, together with other Presidents of the Western Hemisphere is determined to promote with leadership a frank and sincere debate on this issue, utilizing as a main reference the two declarations emanating from the General Assembly of the Organization of American States of the past 18 months. During the last Extraordinary Session, held in my country, I was charged with transmitting to the President of this General Assembly and to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs of the United Nations the text of the resolution, which I will do in due time. Our focus must be integral, objective and based on evidence. And our goals must be realistic and measurable. No more war against drugs, and no more false promises.

In the third place, Guatemala will follow-up on the resolution and recommendations that emanated from the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, and will be working so that the world recognizes the rights of the indigenous peoples as a basic platform of the international architecture of human rights.

Mr. President,

As many of the Heads of Delegation that have preceded me in their remarks, Guatemala views with growing concern the deteriorated security landscape which is being faced in various parts of the globe. The exceptional cruelty of militant jihadist groups leaves us astonished, and we of course condemn this reprehensible conduct in the strongest terms. We support all measures to combat it, including especially the elimination of the root causes that lead many persons to such extremes of fanaticism.

We also are profoundly troubled by the instability in the Middle East, and especially by the prolonged conflict in Syria, which has already had an immense toll in lives and human suffering. We are concerned that in Central Europe core principles of the United Nations Charter are being put to the test, as is the case with respect for territorial integrity. We also continue to be concerned about tensions in various countries on the African Continent as well as the Korean Peninsula.

We believe that the United Nations offers the ideal venue to address these conflicts and tensions, and we reiterate our hope that dialogue, agreements and preventive diplomacy take precedence over the use of force. In this respect, we still pin our hopes on that the long-standing conflict between Israel and Palestine will find a negotiated outcome based on two States, living side by side, in peace and behind secure borders.

Mr. President,

I end these remarks by repeating what President Otto Pérez Molina said last year to this Assembly, when he congratulated "...the United Nations System for its permanent efforts to seek peace and justice worldwide. Guatemala aligns itself with these same goals, and can affirm with pride that we are and will always be a country that is guided by the principles that flow from the Charter of this noble Organization." This sentiment is reflected in our commitment with peacekeeping operations.

Thank you.