

REPUBLIC OF ECUADOR



**PERMANENT MISSION
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF ECUADOR,
DR. ALFREDO PALACIO,
AT THE HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING OF THE LX SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, 15 SEPTEMBER 2005

*Check against delivery

Mister President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I would like to express the solidarity of the people and the Government of Ecuador with our brothers in the South of the United States, affected by the violence of hurricane Katrina

Today, Ecuador ratifies the commitment assumed by the Presidents and Heads of State at the UN Millennium Assembly, held in New York in the year 2000.

The Millennium Development Goals are a minimal, not a maximal agenda. A starting point, not the end. This basic commitment must be assumed by all the governments of the world.

My Government proposes the need for the New World Order to be built on the tripod formed by Economy, International Law, and Biology.

Internally, I have synthesized this proposal in the profile of the Ecuadorian citizen of the 21st century: a healthy, educated, and productive individual.

As soon as I assumed the Presidency, 4 months ago, I paved the way for reciprocal commitments to insert all our plans and programs in the framework of the UN Millennium Development Goals. This is the guarantee for national transformation, the foundations of which must be firmly established during this Administration.

I have created the National Secretariat for the Millennium Development Goals - SODEM- giving it the rank of a ministry, to ensure the full realization of these dreams and utopias: of an unwavering State policy.

I have asked my people to agree –first of all – on the quality of the Nation we want, and then, on the ways to achieve it.

The homeland we all dream of lies in the reestablishment of the Rule of Law and the inauguration of a State of rights, beginning with the recovery of Civil and Political Rights.

Today, we are working on the political reform of the State, which includes constitutional, party system, and electoral reforms. A referendum is organized based on a process of national consensus with all the political and social forces of the country.

The reactivation of production is also equally urgent. The current growth of the GDP is 2.4% per annum. We need to reach a 3.5% to 4.5% annual growth to revert recession, to reactivate the productive sector, to invest in the social sector, and to increase the purchasing power of the population. But we will have to double these figures in order to reach a sustainable development.

We need to foster growth, based on increased investments. Investments in the oil sector and commercial liberalization, -although significant- will not be enough. It is essential

to join public and private resources in non-oil production, to create jobs in sectors such as tourism, manufacturing, agro industry, and construction.

My Government has organized four areas from which to fulfill the MDGs: health, social security, education, and productivity.

A key point of the Millennium Goals in Ecuador is Universal Health Insurance (AUS in Spanish), which aims to provide full health care coverage to the entire population by the year 2015, covering the entire range of human health issues. Current coverage is 20%, and we expect to finish our Administration in January of 2007 with health coverage levels of 45% of all Ecuadorians.

The 2006 budget *pro forma* sets a trend towards the recovery of social expenditure levels, which represent 7% of the real GDP. The Health budget will increase 46%; Education 24%; Social Welfare 61%; and Labor 22%.

Investment and development of Science and Technology are also included in the MDGs. Latin America's share of investments in this sector is 1.6% of world investment, or 0.58% of the region's GDP. Ecuador has historically invested less than 0.08% of its GDP in this sector, and this is one of the reasons for its underdevelopment and dependency.

We have made a preliminary diagnosis of the advances, delays, of the current situation of the Millennium Goals, of immediate challenges, and we have also conducted an exercise of viability and costs in Ecuador. I have the privilege and the satisfaction to present to you this first national report.

This work has been possible thanks to the coordinated effort of several agencies I have to ~~thank~~ the United Nations System in Ecuador, multilateral as well as bilateral donors from Spain, Holland, and Switzerland, and our National Secretariat for the Millennium Goals.

In this Report, we have put a date to Ecuador's future: the year 2015. We also define the vision for the year 2020 for our nation.

Social investment and human development are possible with permanent policies and a collective will that ensures the progressive distribution of income and an adequate use of the budget.

Thank you.