

(S, E)



**Misión Permanente de Costa Rica ante las Naciones Unidas  
Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the United Nations**

**DISCURSO DE  
STATEMENT BY**

**Laura Chinchilla Miranda,  
Presidenta de Costa Rica  
President of Costa Rica**

**Debate General  
General Debate**

**Sexagésimo sexta sesión de la Asamblea General  
de las Naciones Unidas  
Sixty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly**

Nueva York, 22 de septiembre de 2011  
New York, September 22<sup>nd</sup>., 2011

**(Por favor, cotejar con la alocución)  
(Please, check against delivery)**

Mister President,  
Distinguished Heads of State, delegates and guests.  
Friends all:

It gives me great pleasure to start this statement warmly congratulating the Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, for his reelection to the position that he has exercised with such efficiency, honesty and transparency. His contributions to the Organization, to the international community and to the multilateral system during these first five years have been notorious. We know they will continue to be so during the years to come.

I would also like to congratulate the President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly, Ambassador Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser. His experience, ability and dedication are guarantees of a good job.

I wish both the best in the exercise of your vital functions. As always, you will have the full support of Costa Rica in your efforts in search of peace, security, democracy, disarmament, human rights, rule of law, sustainable development, mediation and the peaceful solution of conflicts.

It also gives me great pleasure to welcome South Sudan as a new member of the Organization. I wish a prosperous, peaceful, and safe future to its people.

The emergence of this new State testifies to the achievements that can be reached, even in a situation of endemic violence, through negotiations between the parties and international mediation.

The intense, stimulating, but still uncertain, movements of political and social change that have extended through north Africa and the Middle East during this year, testify to the universal force of democracy as an aspiration, of free expression as an incentive, and of respect for human dignity as the most urgent demand.

Our admiration for these peoples is as great as our hope in their capacity to create, in peace, social and political systems full of tolerance, free, dynamic, and open to their neighbors.

Mister President:

From its deepest collective roots, Costa Rica fully identifies with democracy, peace, and human rights. These are values that we share with the immense majority of Central Americans.

Disrespect of those values, together with social exclusion, the outrages of militarism and the deadly echo of the Cold War, plunged much of Central America into intense conflicts for almost four decades. After tens of thousands of deaths, thanks to dialogue and mediation, our region overcame the worst outcome of political violence. In those overwhelming days, Costa Rica contributed decisively to nurture and make a reality the Esquipulas Peace Accords, which opened the door to reconciliation.

Since then, progress has been slow and erratic. Fifteen years ago, Central American countries agreed to the “Framework Treaty on Democratic Security”. But time elapsed since then and has been insufficient in securing a region of peace, liberty, democracy and development”, as promised to our peoples.

Even worse, we are currently victims of a new and terrible aggression. I am referring to the cold and fierce onset of transnational organized crime. It has generated insecurity, debilitated institutions, corrupted officials, driven addiction, truncated the lives of thousands of youth, destroyed families and converted humble single mothers into criminals. This scourge has eroded the basic structure of our social fabric and has put in peril the very existence of the rule of law in some of the countries.

Today I repeat what I said during the Regional Conference on Security in Central America, celebrated in Guatemala on June 22 of this year: our region has become prey to a malevolent geopolitics. As a result of our location between the largest centers of production and demand in the world, we have become victim to the dynamic of death that they both create, and we must bear the burden of extraordinary material, institutional and human costs. What for the main perpetrators of these atrocities are mere “collateral damages”, for Central Americans represent extreme challenges and deep wounds.

From here stems our greatest frustration. Thus we demand that the international community, in particular the greatest consumers of drugs and suppliers of arms that materialize the violence, assume completely and without further delay, the responsibility of their actions.

The conference on Security in Central America, which was attended by all of the Presidents of the region, from Mexico to Colombia, marks a turning point of hope. There we were able to coordinate strategies. There we agreed that there should be a comprehensive approach to violence, which includes strengthening institutions and the rule of law, and comprehensive prevention and direct action against crime. In addition, we were able to get the international community to focus its attention and make certain promises to us.

Nonetheless, it is yet to be seen if the strategies will transform into efficient actions, or if we will have enough cooperation from external partners to drive them forward. These resources should not be mere aid. They constitute a morally inescapable compensation and a pragmatic way for us to assume, partially, the investment necessary to establish peace, stability and security.

The Secretary General of the United Nations has insisted, with reason, on preventive diplomacy. I join this call and, as President of Costa Rica and as a citizen of Central American, I insist before the world that we cannot wait any longer to act in order to avoid a major tragedy in our region. It is already too late. Later may be tragic.

Preventive diplomacy requires political will. We have approached another juncture in which it will be put to the test. I am referring to the next conference to achieve an Arms Trade Treaty, which Costa Rica has actively supported along with other states. We need it to produce a robust, comprehensive and demanding instrument, capable of successfully controlling the flow of the machines of death that provoke all types of conflicts.

Preventive diplomacy also implies, in its deepest essence, fostering democracy and human rights, and respecting the rule of law as a cornerstone for security and international peace.

Costa Rica knows it well. Since we abolished the military, in 1949, our only lines of defense have been the deep conviction of the citizens of our country, our strong institutions and social compact, and the instruments offered by the multilateral system. The security of the 26 other disarmed democracies in the world depend on these defenses as well. We deserve to be heard and attended to.

Mister President:

A little less than a year ago, our faith in international law and the instruments and institutions that give them life was put to the test. Last October, Nicaraguan troops and civilians invaded and occupied part of our national territory, in clear violation of our sovereignty, border treaties, and international law.

After exhausting all possibilities of a worthy bilateral agreement, we appealed to different forums of the regional and international system. Our neighbor's government disowned several of them. Finally, thanks in part to the urgent orders of the International Court of Justice, the Nicaraguan contingents had to leave our ground. Nonetheless, while we waited for the final ruling of the Court, Nicaragua, ignoring its orders, has continued the provocations and violations during the provisional measures; more so, it has threatened with other actions that can infringe on our territory. We hope that this does not occur. But, if it were, we will reactivate our action using the mechanisms of the international system.

The only thing we request from this Organization and from the multilateral system in general, is rapid and timely action to possible aggressions. The international community cannot condition its preventive action to actual armed violence between brothers. It should react, not as a function of the quantity and magnitude of the detonations, but rather to the severity and persistence of the violations.

Otherwise, the message to the world would be disastrous. It would imply that, in order to mobilize diplomacy, the shortest route is that of blood. As a country and as a people, we emphatically reject this idea.

Mister President:

Because of our conviction in the importance of the rule of law, of human rights and humanitarian law, one year ago I communicated to this assembly our aspiration to become a member of the Human Rights Council. Today I am thankful for the generous support that you provided in achieving this goal.

We will remain faithful to the promises formulated then, and to the propositions that we urged during the revision of the Council in Geneva and New York.

I urge you all to support an initiative whose time has arrived: the United Nations Declaration on Education on Human Rights, which Costa Rica pushes forward alongside a group of like minded

countries. After being unanimously approved by the Council, it will soon be presented to the General Assembly, where we are confident that it will have similar support.

When education, persuasion and other preventive mechanisms are unable to deter the worst aggressions against humanity, the international community is faced with additional challenges. Among them is the protection of civilians summarized by the Responsibility to Protect. My country recognizes this as a priority and a guide for action, either preventive or reactive, stemming from legitimate and well founded decisions. We hope that this concept, similarly to human security, will be outlined very clearly within the Organization.

The fight for human rights requires that those responsible for crimes against humanity be held accountable and punished. The International Criminal Court is, today, the main multilateral mechanism to accomplish such goal. I stress our support to the Court's mission, and insist that all member states of the United Nations ratify the Treaty of Rome.

I also insist that all member states be more active and decisive in our efforts to ensure that the United Nations becomes more efficient and pertinent, and relevant. Hence the importance of its reform process.

Costa Rica has accompanied and will continue to accompany the initiatives that support the greatest changes possible. Among other things, we will continue working constructively for the continued improvements of the working methods of the Security Council, by means of the Small Five, and for a more representative composition of the organization, according to the guidelines of United for Consensus.

Mister President:

Costa Rica is a middle-income country. Thanks to its commitment to democracy, peace and good governance, the efficient use of international cooperation and its investments in health and education, Costa Rica has achieved high levels of human development.

Together with other countries of similar characteristics, we exemplify the success of international cooperation as a key factor to reach such results. However, we still have major vulnerabilities in regards to poverty, income distribution, regional differences, the impact of the economic crisis, and natural disasters.

We have been responsible, effective and ethical partners. We have advanced in development, but we have not been able to consolidate it to the point that we are able to achieve our goals without international assistance. We need the help and understanding of donor countries and of the United Nations, in particular UNDP. Our relative success should not be penalized, but rather stimulated.

Costa Rica has focused on sustainable development through robust social and environmental policies. We have taken important steps in order to sustain our growth through clean energy and an economic model low on carbon consumption. Our goal is to become one of the first carbon-neutral countries in the world, and we are working seriously at it.

In this route, in which every local action has global links, we have confidence in the Conference of the Parties on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, also known as COP 17, that will take place in Durban at the end of this year, and in the World Summit on Sustainable Development that will be celebrated in Rio de Janeiro next year. But we are also concerned about the lack of progress during the preparatory negotiations.

Mister President:

I conclude these words by reiterating our deepest commitment to the principles stated in the United Nations Charter. I am delighted that yesterday we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the International Day of Peace, an initiative of my country that was adopted by consensus by the Member States. It gives me great pleasure that the theme for this year is "Peace and Democracy: make your voice heard!"

National and International leaders should always be attentive to the voices of the people. We should hear them, respect them and incorporate them in our initiatives. It is part of our democratic accountability, the basis of good governance, a good seed to induce meaningful change, and the foundation of legitimacy.

As President of Costa Rica, a discrete, generous, fraternal, and free nation, I promise to never relent on our efforts to achieve a better country and a better world.

Thank you very much, Mister President