

Mister President,

I congratulate you on being elected to preside this session of the General Assembly. I respectfully offer the support of the Panamanian delegation during your tenure.

We applaud your proposal to focus this high level debate on the theme “bringing about adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means”.

This proposed topic is based on Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter entitled deals with Pacific Settlement of Disputes.

Since its creation, the United Nations has played an essential role in the prevention and resolution of international conflicts.

The United Nations has had and will maintain the commitment to protect the present and future generations from the scourge of war and to ensure that peace and respect between nations are the permanent conditions for global coexistence.

International conflicts always have been and will always be a challenge for the international community and a grave threat for freedom and the right to enjoy a peaceful coexistence between the nations and the people of the world.

This is why all the countries of the world have the responsibility to ensure the maintenance of peace and international security.

The Panamanian people possess a strong conviction and commitment to use all the existing peaceful means to solve international conflicts, based on the UN Charter and the principles of International Law.

These are simple truths that are easily forgotten but which we all ought to defend: they are the foundation for our existence in full peace, freedom and independence.

Panama advocates that all international conflicts be solved by peaceful means.

We support and defend multilateralism and all multilateral organizations as the ideal places to solve, through dialogue and cooperation, the problems that affect mankind so that we may maintain peace and international security.

The search for mediation and dialogue has been Panama’s historic stance against the conflicts that disturb peace and international political stability.

This search must include legitimate representatives of the parties in conflict, who must make efforts to recognize the rights of their counterparts and comply with their own obligations, with sincerity and a generous spirit, to reach just and permanent solutions.

For that reason, the government of the Republic of Panama considers that the Palestine has the right to be recognized as a national state, but it must solve its differences with its neighbor Israel, recognizing that Israel has the right to a peaceful and safe existence within its national territory that is already recognized historically and legally by the international community.

Mister President,

Panama manifests its concern for the escalating violence that has been developing in the Middle East, and calls upon the international community to propose and meaningfully attempt to enforce plans and solutions guided towards peace, and contribute to ending violent acts that affect the most vulnerable populations.

The government of the Republic of Panama expresses its concern regarding the severe crisis that has been suffered by Syrian Arab Republic for over a year.

Therefore, Panama respectfully calls upon all the concerned parties and reminds them that a peaceful solution is the only acceptable means to achieve a solution that is just and permanent before the community of nations and people of the world.

Panamanians profoundly lament the homicide of His Excellency J. Christopher Stevens, Ambassador of the United States to Libya, and the Foreign Service personnel who were victims of the nefarious attack against the American consulate in Benghazi. Our prayers and thoughts are with their families. Panama energetically condemns these types of actions that cause grief and pain to a friendly nation, and which violate the fundamental principles of international law, particularly the Charter of the United Nations and the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Relations.

The recent attacks against the diplomatic missions of the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Israel and France are absolutely unjustifiable. We reiterate that receiving States have an obligation to ensure the principle of inviolability of the diplomatic and consular missions of the world, to safeguard the wellbeing of international peace and security, as these are sources of communication and understanding.

The Republic of Panama is convinced that all international conflicts ought to be solved by peaceful means, using the instruments and mechanisms that were created for these purposes.

For this reason, Panama formally subscribed to the Group of Friends of Mediation, demonstrating its historic commitment to the peaceful solution of conflicts, central topic of the debate in this General Assembly.

Mister President,

Panama is a multicultural country where people from diverse ethnicities, cultures and religions coexist in peace and harmony, and which has historically maintained friendly relations with States of different political and ideological orientations.

I am speaking of a demilitarized country that adheres by law to the human security doctrine, and that possesses a neutral Canal.

Additionally, Panama has the tradition and experience as a participant in efforts towards the pacific solution of international controversies. These conditions are our guarantee and asset in advocating for world that is peaceful and respectful of international law.

Panama is and continues to be committed to multilateralism, dialogue and negotiation among States as a means to seek and achieve just solutions to global affairs.

As a part of this commitment, in 2013 we will be the host of a series of important international meetings at the global and regional levels.

Panama will host the celebration of the International Congress of the Spanish Language, a universal event and a forum for the reflection over the status and challenges of the Spanish tongue, which shapes our identity as a nation and unites Spanish American peoples.

Panama will host the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption in 2013.

This demonstrates that the fight against corruption and the promotion of transparency are essential elements of the modern rule of law, to which my government is committed.

We will host the Ibero-American Summit, which gathers 22 States from Latin America with the Iberian Peninsula.

With the Ibero-American Summit, through dialogue and cooperation, we are attempting to foster the development of our countries, opening new markets and opportunities for trade and cooperation with the people and countries of Europe.

The international meetings in 2013 will take place within the context of the celebration of a historic event that has marked Panama to this very day; the discovery of the route, through our country, to the Pacific Ocean.

The 25th of September 2013 will mark 500 years since the so-called discovery of the South Sea, subsequently called the Pacific Ocean, a feat that changed known geography, world navigation and the history of humanity.

The discovery of a passage from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean began a process of economic and demographic globalization across the known world.

From that moment, Panama went on to play an important role in world navigation and trade that has lasted until the present.

Since then, Panama became the *Hub of the Americas*. It is one of the most important routes of the world.

We continue advancing at a good pace in the expansion of the Panama Canal and Tocumen International Airport, which will allow us to further enhance the route through Panama, and which will have an important impact on worldwide trade and tourism.

Nuñez de Balboa's feat of 25 September 1513 helped forge Panama's character as a country dedicated to the worldwide transit of merchandise, and with the construction of the Canal, it was consolidated as the hub of worldwide maritime trade routes.

Mister President,

There is no magical formula for the resolution of conflicts. Nor do the global conditions exist for the complete fulfillment of Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter, which deals with the Pacific Settlement of Disputes.

The world still must take important steps so that dialogue is always the way to adjudicate differences. There must be a commitment from the State for the fulfillment of this objective throughout generations.

One of the great steps is education. Education not only sets us free: it makes us free thinkers. It helps us understand and respect different ideas.

Through education we can value cultures which may appear odd to us, and tear down cultural prejudices. Being very different does not make us enemies. But in order to understand this in an all-encompassing way we need a good and objective education.

Access to information through the Internet and social networks is an indispensable condition to elevate the level of knowledge and discernment among all populations.

At the same time, I advocate for the responsible use of these tools, a matter which I will subsequently touch upon. We must also consider equality and self-esteem, which distance us from resentment and violence. Once again, education is the answer.

Intangible wealth leads to honest competition. Exchanging violence for competition can only be achieved through the modernization of man, while conserving his principles.

A good education is one which is built upon a foundation of science, respect for diversity, ethics and values. Money is not the best scholarship we can give our children. The best assistance is an education that is divorced from politics, passions and paradigms. This is the only way to achieve excellence.

We must focus our efforts on educational efforts for children. A good and balanced primary education is the base of a solid pyramid. A well-educated child today ensures a healthy and peaceful coexistence for our nations tomorrow.

Without education there is no possibility of dialogue and vice versa. Those are the reasons for my government's insistence on the wellbeing of Panamanian children, through the improvement of our schools and classrooms, the granting of free computers, the implementation of a universal scholarship and the transformation of curricula.

However, access to information must be in accordance with their developmental stages, respecting their condition as children and demanding that they give it their best, according to their age. Respecting children is reaping peace.

Mister President,

As I expressed during the past Connect Americas Summit, celebrated in our country this past July, we should continue to harness our respective wills to reduce the digital gap and to maximize Internet access to more and more people across the world.

Each step in this direction is key to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

Nevertheless, I am still uneasy about the risks that the misuse of cyberspace can have for boys, girls and adolescents.

Our task will not be complete if we do not assume the responsibility of facing up to one of the most important social and ethical challenges of our time: the protection of children and young people from the threat posed to them by the misuse of cyberspace.

For that reason, we manifest our support to the initiative that the International Telecommunications Union is carrying out in this regard.

I invite all the States here represented to share experiences in order to establish and harmonize, on the basis of international telecommunications criteria, norms that will allow us to guarantee that minors are no longer exposed to the risks and dangers that are disseminated through cyberspace.

This should not in any way be interpreted as limiting or distorting freedom of expression and the universal use of the internet, which we defend with conviction.

Panama is preparing draft legislation in order to establish “minimum regulations” geared towards protecting our children and adolescents from the dangerous content spread through the internet and other electronic media.

We are working to approve this initiative in consensus with approval of all of Panamanian society.

We must become allies and “close ranks” against internet sites that promote pornography in general and child pornography, in particular, obscene and lascivious conduct and physical, sexual and emotional violence.

Let us combine efforts and concerted actions against sites that facilitate the making of weapons or explosives, that incite illegal drug use, against those that stimulate racism, xenophobia or any other type of discrimination that is contrary to human dignity.

Let us apply measures against those who dedicate themselves to showing, using and spreading minors’ personal information and to making all kinds of threats against our boys, girls and adolescents.

Let us harness information and communication technologies (ICT) for the benefit of development and for a better quality of life for our infants, and let us not permit that the benefits that accessing and using the internet offer us put them at risk.

Mister President,

The Government of the Republic of Panama offers a contribution to the international community and the United Nations via two large-scale projects:

1. The United Nations Regional Hub for Latin America and the Caribbean in Panama, which will host the 16 regional and subregional UN offices in our country.

This center will contribute to greater coordination and synergy between the United Nations System, contributing to its operational process as outlined in the “Delivering as One” document.

We invite friendly nations who are committed to these reforms to contribute to this Project, which will soon open to international bidding.

2. The other project is the Regional Humanitarian Assistance Logistics Center for the Americas for the delivery of humanitarian aid in the event of disasters in the region.

Panama is committed to being a responsible humanitarian actor in the region and our advantages as an international logistical platform are at the disposal of the international community.

Mister President,

Panama's economic growth is greatly recognized in our region.

In 2012-2013, Panama moved up 9 places in the Global Competitiveness Index – from 49 to 40 – representing the biggest rise since 2005, when our country began to be monitored by the World Economic Forum, which indicates we are doing things well.

Panama's economic growth is the greatest in Latin America, and is based on free market principles, respectful to the environment and to social standards as well as free enterprise initiatives, and has a strong commitment to social inclusion.

This has allowed us to significantly reduce unemployment and extreme poverty, without compromising the richness of our environment.

At the same time, it allows us to allocate resources to confront the threats of climate change, which is affecting and will affect large and small nations without regard to their level of development, therefore we should all be more responsible.

Panama will keep advocating that the international community work on an institutional multilateral structure that reinforces the right of all people to have a planet with an environment that allows the development of a healthful and peaceful life.

We will insist on a new high level forum of the General Assembly on the protection of the environment.

Finally, Panama reaffirms that it is a country that favors peaceful and respectful coexistence between all the people and governments of the world.

Panamanians believe that humanity will always be capable of fighting, united by the hope that we can build a better tomorrow for all.

There is still time to share as brothers and sisters the feast of our existence in a peaceful planet that truly belongs to us all.

THANK YOU.