

Statement of the President of the Republic of Costa Rica, H.E. Laura Chinchilla-Miranda

## **High level debate of the General Assembly of the United Nations**

Mr. President

Distinguished Heads of State and Government

Esteemed delegates

Ladies and gentlemen:

It is a pleasure to begin this address with a warm congratulation to Ambassador John Ashe for his recent election to the presidency of the General Assembly. We wish him success in his endeavors and assure him of our support.

Mr. President:

This is my third and last address to this General Assembly as President of Costa Rica.

As in previous occasions, my message is based upon my firm conviction of the essential nature of the United Nations to promote peace, security, development, democracy and human rights.

The United Nations conjoins, catalyzes and protects the multilateral system and the international rule of law. The validity, vigor, legitimacy and effectiveness of the Organization are essential to all countries, but most importantly to the smaller and more vulnerable ones, especially if, as Costa Rica, do not have armed forces.

Throughout these past 68 years, during humanity's most challenging occasions, we have turned towards this Organization to seek hope and guidance in our search for solutions to the problems besetting our peoples and nations.

Today we are faced with one of such occasions, in the middle of contradictions.

We have taken great strides and attained many of our goals; however, we are also overwhelmed by acute tragedies, and have been unable to find global responses to major global challenges.

On April 2nd, we conclusively ratified the Arms Trade Treaty, a vital step for our country and a victory for humanity. I am pleased to report its unanimous ratification by our Legislative Assembly and pledge our support towards its implementation.

Next Thursday, for the first time in the history of the Organization, we will engage in a high-level debate on nuclear disarmament. We hope it will allow us to get closer to an ideal prayed for by most of the countries, and to advance in new conceptual frameworks for discussion. The sessions of the Open-Ended Working Group, conducted under the effective chairmanship of our permanent representative in Geneva, Manuel Dengo, have opened a promising path.

We are steadily advancing towards a new universal agenda of development and sustainability, and towards setting up the institutional framework for its advancement. Some important milestones are the

reform of ECOSOC, the new High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, and the general Assembly's intergovernmental Open Working Group on sustainable development.

Increasingly, innovation, technology, education and culture are recognized as promoters of development, and there is a growing consciousness on the need of actively incorporating youth in these endeavours.

Costa Rica is honored to have hosted and organized, along with the International Telecommunications Union, the international conference BYND2015, on youth, development, and information and communication technologies. Today, I symbolically present to you the Final Declaration of the conference, adopted in our capital on the 11th of this month by thousands of young people from every continent. We believe it will be a very relevant input in the discussion of the post 2015 development agenda.

To explore options for the future, Costa Rica also hosted, in March, an international conference of middle-income countries, jointly organized with the UNIDO. Its results will help to put in a better perspective the needs and contributions of nations like ours to the post 2015 development agenda.

While involved in these discussions, we must not overlook our commitment to the Millennium Development Goals and the need to accelerate their fulfillment, particularly in the less-developed countries.

Mr. President,

The aforementioned achievements, and many others, have taken place under the ominous shadow of human tragedy. We are still shocked by the brutal terrorist attack committed a few days ago in Nairobi. Today I express our deepest solidarity with the people of Kenya and our strongest condemnation of this attack, of terrorism and of fanaticism.

During two years, the tragedy of Syria has been a major source of suffering and concern. The incessant count of massacred and displaced persons has been as troublesome as the lack of action of the international community, particularly the Security Council, in containing these outrages against humanity.

After a period of paralysis and confusion, it seems that, at last, we are approaching a solution to this stalemate. I raise our voice to demand that the Security Council act decisively to eliminate chemical weaponry in Syria, restrain violence, seek a negotiated and democratic solution to the conflict, and make accountable those responsible for the horrible crimes committed there.

Costa Rica insists that the Security Council refers the Syrian case to the International Criminal Court. We also call again on the five Permanent Members of the Security Council, to refrain in the future from exercising the veto in cases of crimes against humanity.

The Syrian tragedy reaffirms the necessity to work decisively towards the organic application of the responsibility to protect, and to promote the use of mediation to avoid the emergence or accentuation of conflicts.

As a concrete measure towards such avoidance, we urge all member states to join the initiative of Australia, Costa Rica, Denmark and Ghana, and designate national focal points for the prevention of atrocities and on responsibility to protect.

The preventive approach is also necessary to manage universal public goods and, consequently, exert global governance. The prevention and reversal of global warming is one of the most urgent tasks to pursue in this crucial agenda.

We cannot remain inactive while global warming increases, ocean levels rise, and the survival of several small island states is threatened.

We commend the Secretary General's plan to convene a summit on climate change, and his promotion of the "Oceans for Prosperity" compact. On this subject, the time has come to negotiate an international agreement on the governance of high seas, under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Oceans.

Mr. President

Besides being an instrument for global governance and the protection of universal public goods, international law entails many other obligations. These include respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States, goodwill in addressing borders issues and observance of all the decisions of the International Court of Justice.

Costa Rica is a firm believer and scrupulous observer of international law in all its aspects. But this attitude contrasts with the absolute disrespect of the government of Nicaragua of those elementary norms of conduct and coexistence among nations. This disrespect has led to open and unacceptable aggressions against our country, and to the flagrant disobedience of the orders of the Court of The Hague.

In October of 2010, Nicaraguan forces occupied part of Costa Rica's territory. Following our denunciation, the International Court of Justice took provisional measures which, among other things, prohibit the presence of Nicaraguan personnel in the zone under dispute. But Nicaragua has continued sending contingents of political activists, funded and organized by its Government. In August of this year, the Court reiterated its demand for compliance with the provisional measures, but, again, Nicaragua has ignored them. This scorn demonstrates the urgent need of establishing procedures to guarantee the respect of all decisions emanating from the Court, including precautionary measures. Costa Rica commits itself to work towards this goal.

The Nicaraguan government, moreover, has offered blocks of patrimonial sea of Costa Rica for exploration and exploitation of oil; aims to extend the limits of its continental shelf by ignoring our rights; has broken off negotiations to secure maritime boundaries; has threatened to claim a province of Costa Rica as its own, and has restarted dredging works in the zone subject to provisional measures of the International Court of Justice. Besides, it is pursuing a re-armament policy.

The Nicaraguan and Costa Rican people wish and deserve to live in peace, but the Nicaraguan Government insists on preventing it.

In following such deliberate and reiterated misconduct, the Government of Nicaragua undermines international law and the very purpose of the United Nations.

Mr. President:

Notwithstanding the gravity of this situation, Costa Rica remains peacefully and firmly committed to the well-being and safety of our population.

We promote a model of development based upon harmony with nature; solidarity and social inclusion; economic and trade opening; development of our human resources, and innovation.

We realize that development is futile if it is not founded on a profound respect for human dignity and the rights and well-being of the people, including their day-to-day safety.

We firmly believe that respect and promotion of human rights, in all its dimensions, is a national and international duty. For this reason, among others, we hold an open invitation to all the special procedures on human rights, and we are engaged actively and constructively in the Human Rights Council.

In facing the challenges of public safety, drug trafficking and transnational organized crime, our country has adopted a balanced strategy. Its positive results are evident in many areas, including the continued reduction in the homicide rate over the past three years, the lowest in Central America.

Given the gravity for many nations of the challenges of drug trafficking and transnational organized crime, we join the call from other States from our region, such as Mexico and Guatemala, to re-evaluate agreed international policies and look for more effective responses against drug trafficking, from a perspective of health, respect for human rights, and a perspective of impact reduction. Under the same line, it is necessary to increase international cooperation to reduce the illegal flows of weapons and money that feed the criminal networks.

The new global strategy on this enormous challenge should be product of the open and inclusive debate to be held during the extraordinary session of the General Assembly in 2016. We salute the Declaration of Antigua of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States as a first step to lead us in the right direction towards that special session.

From the actions and convictions outlined before, we respond enthusiastically to the call of the President of the General Assembly to advance in framing the post 2015 development agenda during this period of sessions. We are encouraged by his commitment to a more active incorporation of civil society to this process; the importance granted to human rights and the rule of law as bases for development, and his openness to new ideas and institutional modalities, including strategic alliances among multiple sectors.

Mr. President:

Costa Rica looks to the future with confidence; at the same time, we are aware of the risks and challenges that we face as a country, as a region and as members of humanity. In that future, we see the

United Nations as an indispensable institution, a steadfast companion, a foreseeing guide and co-guardian of our tranquility and well-being.

I render tribute to its contributions and fondly hope that they may multiply in the years to come.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.