



**68th SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

**THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA:  
SETTING THE STAGE!**

**STATEMENT BY  
H.E. MR. OTTO FERNANDO PEREZ MOLINA  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUATEMALA**

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THE REPUBLIC OF GUATEMALA DURING THE 68<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
(September 26, 2013)**

Mr. President of the General Assembly, John William Ashe  
Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon,  
Fellow Heads of State and Government,  
Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to begin my remarks saluting Mr. John Ashe, our President of this 68<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly. We are pleased that such a distinguished representative of our region, Latin America and the Caribbean, is once again presiding over the main Organ of the United Nations. At the same time, I wish to express my gratitude to Mr. Vuk Jeremic for his outstanding leadership and stewardship of the previous session; a session during which he honored us with his visit to our country.

Mr. President,

The year 2013 has been a challenging one for my country. Since last year we undertook reducing undernourishment in children that affects 4 out of every 10 boys and girls in my country. In addition, we have decided that we cannot continue accepting with our arms crossed the death induced by hunger of those children.

I am here with some optimism to inform you that our efforts are beginning to bear fruit. Since we started this struggle against hunger, we have managed to reduce infant mortality due to undernourishment by 50%. Similarly, we have created a system of monitoring which allows us to measure the nutritional state of hundreds of thousands of boys and girls, both to assess their growth and development and to prevent mortality in children under 5 years of age. The challenge is enormous and we know that our goals are ambitious. That is why we are not satisfied with the progress achieved, but we can state without vacillation that we are winning the battle against hunger and child malnutrition.

The battle against hunger is closely linked to education. We want our boys and girls to study as many years as they desire, and not less than 9 years of basic education. But for this to happen we have to guarantee them an adequate nutrition so that their brain and body grow in a healthy manner. We have to nourish our boys and girls so that they can study. And we must provide the opportunity to study to them so that they can achieve progress in their adult lives, both in the labor markets and in their responsibilities as citizens required by our democracy.

The above is clearly linked with our second goal aimed at promoting dignified employment and the competitiveness of the economy. I can again report with some humility to this General Assembly that we have achieved an increase in the number of workers affiliated to the social security system of Guatemala by 27% between the first semester of 2012 and the same period of 2013. This means that more formal employment opportunities are being created, at the same time as we are making progress

in establishing our country as one of the leaders in improving the business climate to stimulate investments.

It is with some pleasure that I can say that we have developed a growing dialogue in diverse areas with my friend, the President of Mexico, Enrique Peña Nieto. We see the future of Guatemala clearly related with the economy of this brotherly neighboring State, which has led us to seek strengthening our relations in areas such as energy, transport and logistics, the modernization of customs and the improvement of security in border crossings, as well as the common goal against hunger and in favor of peace in our countries. Common prosperity is our flagship, and justice our emblem.

In the same vein, we have expressed to the Government of the United State of America our clear interest in aligning our policies with those that promote progress between Mexicans and Americans. Guatemala wishes a tripartite alliance of progress with Mexico and the United States that serves as a pivot for a solid link with the countries of the Central American Integration System, and that at the same time can become a platform for progress in the whole Caribbean area.

We know that these are ambitious goals, and reaching them will require a strong and constant effort. But the common future of prosperity is a demand of our peoples; a demand we cannot and should not turn our backs on. Millions of Guatemalans and Central Americans live and work today in the United States, and more than 50% of our population depends on business transactions and family remittances from Mexico and the United States for their livelihood. This integration is a reality, and the Governments must establish the rules that allow for capitalizing on the achievements of our children and business community.

The search for prosperity is also related to our goals for fomenting peace and combating impunity. Security has been a challenge inherited by my Government, and we have decided to address it by preventing violence and insisting on complying with the Law, in a clear framework of respect for human rights. We are far from having achieved our goals, but the progress achieved shows that our State has the capacity to dismantle large criminal networks and make them accountable to justice for their actions. In this regard, I can inform this Assembly that in urban areas of Guatemala City where homicides, extorsions and insecurity were prevalent, we have managed to reinstate peace and social coexistence. At the same time, our Prosecutor's Office reports that we have lowered the levels of general impunity between 2009 and 2013 by almost 25%, particularly in the decrease of impunity in crimes against life, both homicides and feminicides, as well as sexual crimes against women and children.

In relation to the strengthening of the rule of law, I would like to thank this General Assembly and particularly the donor community for their support of the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG). Its mandate has been renewed until September of 2015, and we hope that this period will be taken advantage of to continue strengthening the capacity of criminal prosecution of the Attorney General as well as the Ministry of the Interior, the National Civil Police and the Courts of Law.

Constructing a country without hunger, with education, prosperous and integrated with our neighbors, and where justice and peace prevail will continue to be the guiding lights of my Government. Those are the standards that will guide us, and those are the goals that will move us forward, and it is for this that we ask all of the international community to support us in moving in this direction.

Mr. President:

Since the start of my Government, we have clearly affirmed that the war against drugs has not borne the desired results, and that we cannot continue doing the same, waiting for different results.

That is why I add my voice at this time to the brotherly countries of Mexico, Colombia and Costa Rica to declare the following:

“In facing the global drug problem, we must assess the internationally agreed policies, in search of more effective results from the perspective of health, a framework of respect of human rights, and a perspective of lessening damages. The objective must be the society of welfare in all its aspects.

Prevention must be prioritized, seeking to lower the impact on health and especially reducing the level of social violence associated with the drug problem. In the same vein, international cooperation should be strengthened to reduce the flow of illegal arms and funds that finance criminal networks.

The new global strategy must surge from an open and inclusive debate leading up to the Special Session of the General Assembly of 2016. We salute the Declaration of Antigua of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) as a first step which leads us in the desired direction towards the Special Session of 2016.”

I would like to add to this agreed text with the aforementioned countries a few words on the part of my own Government. In the first place, Guatemala commends the visionary decision of the citizens of the States of Colorado and Washington that have led the way to an approach addressing drugs centered on public health, the prevention of addiction and violence, and full respect of human rights. We acknowledge President Obama for his wise decision of respecting the voice of the citizens of Colorado and Washington, to allow these innovative experiences to provide results.

In the same manner, we respect and are proud of the example provided by President José Mujica of Uruguay in proposing legislation that regulates the market of cannabis instead of following the failed route of prohibition. I also must acknowledge the valiant and visionary leadership of the Secretary-General of the OAS, Jose Miguel Insulza, who has firmly promoted a climate of dialogue and reflection on drug policies among the Governments of the Western Hemisphere.

Without abandoning the path of international cooperation against transnational crime, each country must experiment with new models to address the drug problem. In that

respect, my Government has decided to create a National Commission which will help us explore more effective means of dealing with the consumption, trafficking and production of drugs. We hope that the Special Session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, to be held in 2016 will draw on these innovative experiences, and pronounce itself decisively for public policies that are subject to objective evaluation.

Mr. President,

We had the privilege of being elected to the Security Council for the period 2012-2013. Now that we are a few months away from concluding our mandate, I would like to say that we take the content of Article 24 of the Charter very seriously, in acting not only based on our own values and principles, but also taking into account that we act on behalf of this General Assembly. We have strived to comply with our mandate with objectivity, responsibility and professionalism, placing our emphasis on security and justice, as well as on the protection of human rights. We trust that we have made tangible contributions to the Council, and acknowledge that being members also has involved an important learning experience which will enable us to make constructive contributions to the United Nations in the future.

As non-permanent member of the Security Council we have taken a position towards the recent crisis in Syria. In this regards, we have condemned the massacre against more than one thousand persons murdered with the use of chemical weapons and have demanded that a crime of this magnitude cannot remain with impunity. We have also called for a categorical response of the international community to avoid that these deplorable acts be repeated. Consistent with this position, we have supported the leadership of President Obama, who has clearly expressed that peace in Syria and in the whole Middle East must be built in the framework of a political and diplomatic dialogue, but without abandoning our international responsibility to protect the citizens of those countries and of the world posed by the threat of nuclear and chemical arms

We also believe that the United Nations has made a singular contribution to humanity in launching, in the year 2000, the Millennium Development Goals. That is why we will actively participate in the design of the content and scope of the Post-2015 Development Agenda as a catalytic instrument of development. We wish especially that the international community define as a global priority the reduction of violence against women and children, as well as the universal access to justice. Only in a world without violence against women, providing justice for all, can a path be opened towards development based on full respect for human rights.

Mr. President,

I conclude my intervention congratulating once more the United Nations System for its permanent effort to search for peace and justice world-wide. 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.

Thank you.