



**DISCURSO DEL  
EXCELENTISIMO SEÑOR  
RICARDO MARTINELLI BERROCAL  
PRESIDENTE DE LA REPUBLICA DE PANAMA**

**Debate general del sexagésimo octavo período ordinario de sesiones  
de la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas**

**“La Agenda de Desarrollo Post 2015: Preparando el Camino”**

**Nueva York, 25 de septiembre de 2013**

*Mr. President:*

It is a great honor for my country to extend our congratulations on your election to preside the 68th session of the General Assembly. You can count on the unconditional support of the delegation of Panama during your tenure as President of this august chamber.

We cannot think of a more accurate theme for this high-level debate, than to focus on discussing the "development agenda beyond 2015: Setting the stage".

The theme invites us to reaffirm our commitment to continue working together to agree on the new development agenda. An agenda that will be at the service of our people and our planet.

The thirteen years that have elapsed since we identified the way to Development with the Millennium Development Goals, have witnessed the fastest reduction of poverty in the history of mankind.

In this sense, it gives Panamanians great pleasure to study the reports indicating that half a billion fewer people are living below the international poverty line, that infant mortality rates have fallen by more than 30%, malaria deaths have declined by a quarter, among others.

Panama has submitted three national reports on the Millennium Development Goals, which have shown our country's progress in improving the living conditions of our population, the prioritization of the issue of poverty in the social agenda and the Government's participation to achieve clear, concrete and measurable goals to reduce poverty and inequality gaps.

We have achieved progress in different areas, and in others we have made significant progress; it is in these where we must redouble our efforts to provide Panamanian citizens better days, so that a "Better Panama reaches all".

In 2012, Panama received the Americas Award 2012 in the category to reduce the "Extreme Poverty and Hunger" amongst a group of 17 countries, and we recently accepted on behalf of the Panamanian people a recognition from the FAO, for reaching goal 1.C from Objective 1 of the MDG's: to reduce undernourishment by 50% or more, with respect to the levels of 1990/92, to less than 5 %; and we are pleased with the work we have done.

For the first time in history, humanity possesses the technological, economic and socio-political structures to forever eradicate extreme poverty.

With an agenda for development coordinated between the public and private sectors and civil society, we can lead a meaningful process that makes a difference that reaches all.

Due to its capacity and reach, the United Nations has played a facilitating role that no other organization can, in order to coordinate this global conversation about development, and it has a special responsibility to its Member States to provide evidence, analytical thinking and experiences from the field.

In this regard, I wish to thank the Secretary-General on the establishment of the Task Force Unit of the United Nations and in particular the convening of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons, whose extraordinary efforts now give us more insight in order to have a more productive discussion about what is the "path we will follow."

The Post 2015 Agenda should maintain a central focus on eradicating extreme poverty from the face of the earth in a fixed time.

Nations have learned a lot about development. We have realized that Development that is NOT sustainable is simply not Development.

The Millennium Development Goals were silent on issues of conflict and the effect of violence on global development. The impact and importance of institutions that guarantee freedom of expression and the Rule of Law to development were not included, either.

The Government of the Republic of Panama believes that we need to integrate the economic, social and environmental aspects of development to advance with sustainability, and this is why we support the efforts that have resulted from the decisions made at Rio+20 and the resulting work of the meetings convened to create the High Level Political Forum.

Global inequality is still ongoing and very present in this conversation: 1.2 billion people account for the 1% of global consumption.

The Republic of Panama has successfully reformed its trade, its tax policies and transparency. We have also reviewed the regulation of our financial market and productivity, and as a result we have charted a successful path to development to the extent of our possibilities.

Of course, the challenges are becoming ever greater and different than the previous ones. Financing development is not easy but our capacity is great and the patterns of productivity are becoming more sustainable and equitable.

***Mr. President:***

Panama joins the proposal that the post-2015 agenda must place sustainable development at the center and should not leave anyone behind.

The original promise of the Millennium Development Goals must be maintained and this new route to development must be transformed from *reducing* poverty to *ending* extreme poverty. Also, the fight against inequality must be a substantial part of our development agenda and should be measured by the social inclusion generated from economic growth.

The promotion and protection of universal human rights must be an integral part of a post-2015 development agenda.

In the same manner, the institutions and the rule of law must be measured as a contribution to the development of nations.

The sustainability of our planet is equally crucial not only for the development of our peoples, but for its survival.

The solution of the global environmental problems should be a priority in the development agenda. This is why we support the integration of sustainable development objectives in the post-2015 agenda.

***Mr. President:***

Panamanians consider that nothing we speak in this Hall will be effective, if we do not forge a global partnership.

For this purpose, we need a new spirit of mutual accountability that supports the post-2015 agenda and the work done by the United Nations. It is undisputed that the post-2015 agenda will depend on development of new economic partnerships and financing.

It is inconceivable that the post-2015 agenda will be successful without the active support of the G20 and institutions of economic cooperation and governance, such as the International Monetary Fund or the World Trade Organization.

You have had a historic opportunity to promote the platform for global development, having so many leaders present here together with one theme in mind.

Like you, we believe that effective political leadership emanating from the Special Event of the MDGs and the Forum, can give us a decisive momentum to make a legitimate change in our post-2015 agenda.

***Mr. President:***

As we ponder on the Post- 2015 development agenda, we cannot cast aside the purposes for which this organization was created: to ensure the maintenance of world peace, by the undivided respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people on earth, without discrimination.

In this regard, we will not let this moment pass without expressing the deep concern that Panama shares together with many of the members of this Assembly for the grave situation in Syria.

We condemn, in the strongest terms, the use of chemical weapons against the civilian population in Syria, and we share the view that such acts constitute a crime "against humanity" which should be investigated and punished in accordance with the norms of international criminal law currently in force.

We call upon all members of the Security Council of the United Nations to assume their responsibility to enforce international humanitarian law and to protect the international human rights of the Syrian people.

We are concerned about the escalating violence that has occurred in the Middle East, and the veiled and open threats to use nuclear weapons to silence the right of countries and peoples to live in peace in their territories.

This world organization has the supreme duty to speak clearly and forcefully in favor of world peace and the right of mankind to continue living on the planet.

In this supreme hour of life and survival, we cannot get used to the idea that nothing serious is happening and that life will go on, after the atomic mushroom cloud delivers its final verdict of death to all species on the planet.

There are enough interests and with nuclear power in the Middle East with the capacity to introduce and test weapons of mass destruction in a belligerent scenario, for all of us, gathered here, to ignore what is happening in that region.

This is not the time to hide like the ostrich which puts its head in the sand, thinking that by doing so it will stave off the danger that threatens its existence and saves its life.

Rather, this is the hour of collective responsibility and steadiness in the responsible defense of world peace and of life itself.

***Mr. President:***

I inform the General Assembly of the United Nations that my Government is aware of a request made by the Government of the Republic of Nicaragua, to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, to extend its continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles.

Without prejudice to the right of the Republic of Nicaragua to present this request, as set out in paragraph 8 of Article 76 of that Convention, my Government wishes to express its deep concern due to the fact that the coordinates plotted in the Nicaraguan application generate an undisputed superposition to our maritime spaces and to the treaties concerted by the Republic of Panama with its neighboring countries, that results in the detriment of a sea area of approximately 49,892.54 square kilometers.

The deep unease felt by the people and the Government of Panama, does not lie in the request made by Nicaragua to extend its continental shelf, but rather in the fact that despite being countries united by friendship, geographical proximity and political and economic integration, we were not consulted before such a request was made, in order to examine the effects that may arise.

The Republic of Panama, in accordance with its National Constitution, complies with the norms of International Law, and has always recognized the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice as one of the methods of pacific settlement of disputes contemplated in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations.

In the same vein, we must underline that according to Article 59 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice, the decisions of the Court do not benefit nor harm third parties.

Thus, my Government finds itself in the pressing need to categorically reject the Republic of Nicaragua's attempt to delimit its maritime boundaries, because this violates the existing treaties with the Republic of Panama, which we have honored in good faith, as well as our legitimate maritime rights, recognized and accepted by the International Community in the area.

In evidence of this, I will muster all necessary means, in accordance with International Law, in order to rectify the aspiration made in this regard by the Republic of Nicaragua.

***Mr. President:***

Today, I wish to refer to a third matter that has a great deal of importance to Panama: the case of the North Korean-flagged merchant vessel *Chong Chon Gang*, detained in Panama since mid-July.

My country, as a Member State of this global forum, complies with the norms and regulations that emanate from its internal organisms.

Article 4 of our National Constitution establishes that Panama complies with the norms of international law. And we have based all our acts as a Nation in accordance with that Mandate.

The vessel in question transported underdeclared war material from the Republic of Cuba, destined to North Korea.

Intelligence obtained caused the vessel to be detained, prior to its transit through the Canal, on the possibility that the prohibited cargo would consist of drugs.

After the ship was seized, an enormous amount of war material that, by definition and destination clearly violates Security Council Sanctions Committee mandates, were discovered hidden under 200 tons of raw sugar.

In compliance with the mandates in question, my Government notified and invited the Panel of Experts to travel to Panama so as to verify the findings and confirm our initial impression, as presented by the District Attorney for Drugs, who initiated the investigation under the laws of the Republic of Panama.

The Panel traveled and inspected the cargo and later made its preliminary report, as contemplated by Security Council resolutions.

Today, the evidence rests with the Security Council, and my Government wishes to underline the importance of our actions, not only as a Member State, but with respect to the decisions of this Organ and in support of the peaceful coexistence of nations.

This is an unprecedented and perhaps once-in-a-lifetime situation, at least in our Continent; that is why I am stressing its importance today.

Panama complied with its duty, as a Member State, even in the face of possible risks, very high material costs and underlying consequences that are yet to be defined in accordance with Panamanian law, as outlined in Security Council resolutions 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009) and 2094 (2013).

***Mr. President:***

As President of a sovereign country, I do not come before this forum to demand any action against the countries involved in this incident.

Panama simply desires for and thus requests recognition that our conduct was based upon our unequivocal wish to comply with what has been established by this Organization.

We will respect the results of the investigation and we make it clear that Panama has no problem at all with the States involved in this matter, which is why finding a solution is not a bilateral affair.

We Panamanians complied with our duty and now, this Organization must comply with its duty, in a moment where the Rule of Law is the only way to solve the delicate problems that threaten the peaceful and human coexistence of the peoples of the world.

Panama, and the Panamanian people, anxiously anticipates a just recognition, which we offer as an important precedent in our Americas.

We call upon the international community to carry out formulas and solutions oriented towards peace.

Panama reaffirms its historical position that mediation and dialogue should be the tools used to confront all actual conflicts in the region and to find solutions and defend and protect the right of peoples to live and work in peace.

***Mr. President:***

As my mandate approaches its end, and as this is my last intervention before this General Assembly, I wish to state that I feel the satisfaction of a completed task, as I leave Panama in the place it now occupies in the world.

We leave behind a legacy of social and political stability, of sustained high economic growth in all the Latin American region and we have moved forward in searching for and building the common good of the Panamanian nation.

I will enumerate some favorable indices, that demonstrate our growth and social well being, whose sources are wholly credible international organisms:

In the Index of Human Development, Panama is classified as a country of high human development.

- 2012: 0.780 points vs. 0.741 average in Latin America or 0.694 average in the world. (Source: UN).
- We are a country of 3, 63 million people (1.83 million are male, 1.79 million are female) Source: (UN Human Development Report, 2013).

Literacy Index:

- Panama shows a 94.1% literacy index (Sources: UN Human Development Report, 2013).

Public expenditures in culture and health:

- Panama invests 4.6% of its GDP, the greatest in Central America (General Treasury of the Republic, 2009).

Life expectancy:

- My country has an average life expectancy of 76.3 years (UN Human Development Report, 2013).

When it comes to enjoyment of Political Rights:

- 1 (1= free) (According to Freedom House, 2012)

In 2013, the Competitivy Ranking of the World Economic Forum has Panama occupying the 40th place out of 148 countries.

Panama's investment grade according to Fitch's rating is:

- Rose from BB+ (positive perspective) to BBB (stable perspective).

According to Moody's rating:

- Baa2 (stable perspective).

And according to S&P's rating:

- It rose from BB+ to BBB (stable perspective).

According to an UNCTAD report, Panama managed to keep its leading position amongst Latin American States with the best maritime connectivity.



- According to the 2013 index, Panama improved its score from 42, 38 to 44, 88, much like Mexico which improved from 38,81 to 41,80, while Brazil descended from 38,53 to 36,88.

According to ECLAC estimates,

- Paraguay leads economic growth in Latin America in 2013, with an increase of 12,5% in its GDP, followed by Panama (7,5%).

According to the IMF, the GDP for the region in 2013 is as follows:

- Paraguay: 11% and Panama: 9%

To summarize, Panama is well on its way to its full development, and with the support of the international community, we will keep facing, in a responsible manner, the challenges that we still have ahead of us, to arrive at the desired sustainable development for the well-being of all our citizens.

***Mr. President:***

2013 has been a year of great international events for our country.

We will soon have the honor of being, for the second time, the hosts of the Iberoamerican Summit of Heads of State and Government, which will discuss the Iberoamerican Community in the new global context, from political, economic, social and cultural perspectives.

Likewise, this upcoming November we will host of the next Conference of States Parties to the Convention against Corruption, making manifest our country's priority that the fight against corruption is a factor that aids development.

Also, we are moving forward with projects establishing the Regional Logistics Centre for Humanitarian Assistance and the UN Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean.

This Project will be our contribution to the international community, to humanitarian actors and to the United Nations System, in full support of the work that they perform on behalf of the neediest.

***Mr. President:***

I am an optimistic man; I believe in human intelligence, in the capacity of our species to recognize mistakes and dangers, in order to rectify and ensure its continuity on the planet.

In the same way, the nation of men and women that I lead shares its dreams of a world united by respect for life, with a great sense of value and affection for the enormous cultural heritage built by generations upon generations of peoples.

I am convinced that, no matter the size of the challenges and threats ahead of us, we will be able to face them and resolve them with courage and intelligence.

However, I must warn about the great dangers that exist at this moment and must remind that only agreed and responsible actions will allow us to overcome this difficult hour that confronts our human species.

Multilateralism is being tested at this moment. We find ourselves in one of the most serious and decisive times in the history of the planet and of the human race.

It is a moment without precedent: this institution must take important decisions in order to honor the responsibility to its peoples with concrete results.

The governments of the world have to focus on elevating the levels of debate so that this ambitious contract with humanity and with our planet can be achieved in time.

If we do not do so, and permit the unleashing of passions that move interests and lead peoples and nations to conflicts and wars, I can assure that with all the destructive power that exists, there will be very few opportunities for humanity on earth.

**Thank you.**

