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Statement of the Republic of Paraguay

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H.E. Mr. HORACIO CARTES

President of the Republic of Paraguay

New York, 24, September 2013

(check against delivery)

Intervención en nombre de la República del Paraguay

68° Sesión de la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas

S.E. Sr. Presidente de la República del Paraguay

Don HORACIO CARTES

Nueva York, 24 de Septiembre de 2013

(cotejar contra Jectura)

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, ladies and gentlemen,

As President of the Republic of Paraguay, I have the honor to speak in this distinguished forum of global debate to address current issues, relevant to my country and to the world as a whole.

I wish to extend a special greeting to the President of this Assembly, Ambassador JOHN ASHE, as well as to the Secretary-General, BAN KI-MOON, in appreciation of their work towards attaining the noble objectives that unite us. Through their efforts, they contribute to the legitimacy of the United Nations and guarantee multilateral cooperation and the validity of the international Rule of Law.

Mr. President,

It has been less than a month since I took office as President of the Republic of Paraguay, after an exemplary electoral process that culminated on April 21 of this year, when the Paraguayan people freely exercised their guaranteed constitutional rights to elect their authorities, with irrefutable results. Observer Missions from the United Nations and from a number of regional and hemispheric organizations were present and certified the legality, legitimacy and transparency of the elections and the electoral process, in which the will of the people honored me with the highest national distinction.

These events also represent the conclusion of a long transition towards democracy in Paraguay. For the second consecutive time in our history, Executive authority alternated from one political party to another, thoroughly respecting the constitutional framework. This is no small achievement in our 202 years of independence, signaling the true beginnings of new and auspicious times for my Nation.

Republican institutionalism, consensus building, strengthening democracy, unconditional respect for Human Rights and freedom of speech and of the press are the cornerstones of my Government, that aims at becoming an example of patriotism, honesty, inclusion and efficiency, with the necessary ability to definitively steer Paraguay towards its grand destiny.

Mr. President,

The Paraguayan people have hoped for a truly great government for a long time. I expect to fulfill these expectations and to improve my country's position in the global stage, where we long to excel in assuring A LAND OF OPORTUNITY for Paraguayans and foreigners alike.

As was once said: PARAGUAY IS ONE OF THE BEST HIDDEN TREASURES OF LATIN AMERICA.

Paraguay has well founded reasons to hope for a promising future.

I have set POVERTY ALLEVIATION as a priority in my Government. It is incomprehensible that a nation so rich in resources has so many poor. No quarter will be given in the fight to reduce our poverty indicators as much as possible and in the shortest timeframe. Things are going to improve, and not merely through assistance, but also by ensuring human dignity.

Social investment is at the forefront of my Administration's agenda. This is the path in the new direction that we seek to travel in my country. This investment will be for the people, so that they may live in a dignified fashion and become the engines of our development; and so that the general welfare of the people may become the firm basis of our democracy.

Another commitment undertaken by my Government is ZERO TOLERANCE FOR CORRUPTION AND THE END OF IMPUNITY. This is a challenge that we hope to face with the firm support of the Judiciary and the Attorney General's Office.

Mr. President,

Paraguay's economy presents privileged statistics. We are the only country in the region that has not changed its currency, the GUARANI, issued in 1943. Paraguay's macroeconomic indicators are more than encouraging.

Paraguay is clearly a suitable country for investments. Nature has endowed my country with an enviable climate, with more than 90 rivers, with abundant and fertile soil, with clean and renewable energy generated by three hydroelectric power plants. The first, ACARAY, entirely Paraguayan, as well as ITAIPU and YACYRETA co-owned respectively with Brazil and Argentina. These last two are among the largest hydroelectric power plants in the world.

We have one of the largest freshwater reserves in the world, the GUARANI AQUIFER, a great part of which lies beneath Paraguayan territory.

Apart from the advantages of nature and of abundant, clean and renewable energy, the majority of Paraguay's population is young, with over 75 per cent under age 30. Paraguay's tax system is favorable to investment and the country's economic growth indicators are clearly above the regional median.

My Government is committed to ensuring LEGAL SECURITY, with clear and transparent rules to safeguard the people and their property.

Today we present a country with substantial economic improvement, focused on efficiency, transparency and a reliable public administration.

Only a few weeks ago I signed an AGREEMENT FOR PARAGUAY in our Congress, by which the Political Parties with legislative representation, as well as other institutions in our society made a framework commitment to work together and oversee the strengthening of governance and the fulfillment of material and spiritual goals for the people's welfare. In this manner we seek to advance the general good over that of the individual, through dialogue, the main instrument of democracy. Together we assume the responsibility of ensuring A COUNTRY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL.

After recently visiting countries in Europe and the Americas, I reflect on the great challenge posed by the perception of my country beyond its borders. I have witnessed with satisfaction how Paraguay, and its potential, are respected and admired. Just as it is our responsibility as Paraguayans to build foreseeability and reliability, it is the obligation of all branches of Government to foster legal security, indispensable to Paraguay's overdue advancement.

I would like to underline my Government's commitment to the defense and promotion of Human Rights, fully recognized in the Constitution of the Republic of Paraguay. We assume this posture out of genuine conviction, although my country is also a respectful signatory of recognized international instruments in this field.

Mr. President,

The special needs of landlocked developing countries, like Paraguay, must be adequately addressed. My Government is also determined to

overcome the disadvantages posed by our geographic condition, instead, making our location a tool to enhance communications, logistics and infrastructure to connect global regions *through* Paraguay. In a similar manner that an old border dispute between Paraguay and Brazil finally gave way to what today is ITAIPU, transforming a problem into a majestic work of integration and development; we hope that our landlocked condition in the heart of South America will serve as a development hub for Paraguay and its neighbors.

Mr. President,

I cannot avoid mentioning the global upheavals that mark our times. Economic and financial crises, civil strife and the use of weapons of mass destruction cloud the horizon all over the planet. The events in Syria are a concern to all of us and our Organization must play a preeminent role towards the definitive solution to this conflict. In this regard, my country calls for supporting the implementation of the Framework Agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation.

My Government has observed with satisfaction that the Republic of China (Taiwan) has increased its presence in Specialized Agencies and bodies within the United Nations Organization thanks to strong international support and rapprochement between the parties on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. My Administration will continue to encourage this positive interaction.

Mr. President,

Serenity and determination among nations as well as the organizations entrusted to foster conflict resolution are more necessary than ever.

Paraguay encourages peace, dialogue and harmonious global development, along with integration that is respectful of the Rule of Law, national dignity and asymmetries.

Integration is a global phenomenon that cannot be detained. Paraguay understands and promotes integration on an equal basis, as a means for supranational insertion, under fair conditions, towards a common objective. Integration should take place not by courting regional Powers, nor as a silent guest in global fora that discuss the future of our peoples.

Paraguay's contribution is essential in today's integrated reality and is intrinsically linked to our dignity as a free Nation, sovereign and independent, under the premise of the right to self-determination and the principles of nonintervention and the sovereign equality of States.

The true destiny of Paraguay is to become a prosperous Nation, living in peace, with liberty, justice and equality. My Administration is geared toward creating and strengthening an environment suited to the unlimited OPPORTUNITIES that my country offers for Paraguayans and foreigners alike.

My country asks for OPPORTUNITIES to achieve progress in a dignified manner, not for hand-outs; to work and study and truly become a LAND OF OPPORTUNITY, of investment and prosperity, with security, formality, reliability and foreseeability.

I cannot fail to mention a key issue: EDUCATION.

Traditional political discourse has significantly undermined certain core ideas that my Administration intends to definitively turn into

reality. Much has been said about the need for education, security and health, but little has actually been done in this regard. Improving EDUCATION in Paraguay, in terms of quantity and quality, is a fundamental premise of my Government.

Today more than ever before, the great change that must take place in Paraguay and the opening of windows of OPPORTUNITY depend on an efficient and inclusive educational system. Public learning institutions should rethink their role in society and assume an unprecedented role as a breeding ground for leaders of a New Paraguay, with a skilled workforce adapted to this millennium, in an interconnected world where those who possess more knowledge and have more abilities are more likely to find better work opportunities for their wellbeing and personal advancement.

Those countries that at the outset emphasized EDUCATION are proud of their results. There is a clear and direct relationship between education and development.

EDUCATION is the key. The central issue is the quality of learning as a means of overcoming the geopolitical constraint of backwardness and a lack of opportunity. The new rules that govern the world therefore represent an access to the ocean of development for my country.

Mr. President,

Here, speaking before you and the world for the first time as President of the Republic of Paraguay, I present to you the NEW DIRECTION that the Paraguayan people have freely and sovereignly chosen this past April 21.

I belong to a Nation whose children have contributed to history with their prowess and boundless sacrifice, such as the supreme decision

taken by our Greatest Hero, Francisco Solano Lopez, Field Marshal and President of the Republic, to give his life, sword in hand, fighting on the frontlines with his last soldiers, rather than seeing his Nation humiliated.

I have decided to devote myself to the service of Paraguay and to bring about the real change that my country demands; to return to the true path of our destiny; to live in peace, progress and modernity; and to coexist in harmony with all nations, particularly with our neighbors.

I assure you that my country is generous and appealing. I invite you to learn more about Paraguay, to discover the treasure that pulses in the heart of South America and that intends to rewrite the most glorious page in its history, in peace, with social and economic development, directly connected to a globalized world, with dignity, eager to welcome all those who wish to share our grand destiny.

We Heads of State and Government are momentary. History will judge us for what we did for our peoples and will sternly hold us accountable for what we failed to do. In order to honor the trust and hope of my people, I have decided to commit myself wholly to the service of my country and to do all that is necessary for its greatness and prosperity.

Thank you very much.