



Intervención en nombre de la República del Paraguay

***Debate General del Septuagésimo Segundo Período de Sesiones
de la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas***

Excelentísimo Señor Presidente de la República del Paraguay

Don Horacio Cartes

Nueva York, 20 de septiembre de 2017

(Por favor verificar contra lectura)

Statement on behalf of the Republic of Paraguay

***General Debate of the Seventy Second Period of Session
of the United Nations General Assembly***

His Most Excellent, the President of the Republic of Paraguay

Mr. Horacio Cartes

New York, 20 September 2017

(Please check against delivery)

Mister President,

On behalf of the people and the Government of Paraguay, I present our endeavors for the contribution of your distinguished Presidency to the success of this General Assembly and to the realization of the purposes of the United Nations.

After turning four years leading the Government of the Republic of Paraguay, I have the honor to address this august Assembly, with a reinvigorated spirit to contribute to the making of a world order where justice, peace and solidarity among nations are the guiding principles, and where human rights, institutions and the Rule of Law are effective.

We must persist in our efforts to find a reasonable balance among the interests of all States. And build an equitable and democratic world order, by developing relations among sovereign, independent States, based on respect, trust and peaceful coexistence, in which the same opportunities can be given and encouraged amongst all nations.

In order for this to happen, we need the Organs of the United Nations to work properly; in special, the General Assembly and the Security Council. We aim for a more democratic, transparent, inclusive and representative Security Council, that corresponds to the diversity of the Members of the United Nations as well as to current geopolitical realities in the world.

This Organization remains the most important universal forum to address global challenges. Problems such as poverty and inequality, climate change, transnational organized crime, drug trafficking corroding democratic institutions, terrorism, among others, require to be collectively tackled. We urge all actors involved to converge our efforts and resources to address these common and pressing challenges confronting humanity.

The Republic of Paraguay reaffirms its firm commitment with the implementation of the provisions of the Paris Agreement and encourages other States, and in particular those States with greater responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions, to take all necessary measures to preserve our planet from the consequences of global warming.

In Paraguay we have a social responsibility perspective, by fostering greater production of clean and renewable energy. We have two magnificent hydroelectric dams, *Itaipú*, shared with Brazil, and *Yacyretá*, shared with Argentina. This year, *Itaipú Binacional* joined UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves, with the inclusion of the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest in the list of biosphere reserves.

Mister President,

I conclude my term as President of the Republic in August 2018. This is my last speech before this plenary. I would like to single out some aspects that have improved ever since I took office in 2013. There is a fully representative democracy in Paraguay today, where division of powers is genuine, where electoral processes are unquestionable and the Rule of Law is fully into force. We have sent clear signals to the international community of our improvement as a foreign direct investment destination country, as well as for cooperation and for agreements, both, at the State and private levels.

In terms of foreign relations and the role of Paraguay at the global level, we have exponentially grown our interactions through visits and invitations and through our participation in International Organizations. In the last four years, our country received the official visits of His Holiness, Pope Francis, of the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, of His Holiness, the Patriarch Kirill of the Orthodox Church of Moscow and All Russia, as well as of a number of Heads of State, high authorities of multilateral organizations and international personalities, who have honored us with their visits.

Paraguay was unanimously admitted into the Development Center of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). We welcome this admission in the understanding that it is an acknowledgement, granted by this globally prestigious Organization, to the efforts and achievements of our Government in its policies of good practices and institutional strengthening. Paraguay, within a selected group of countries that have joined the Organization, is a proud OECD member, which reaffirms the confidence of the international community in our Government's implementation of important reforms.

A current member of the Advisory Committee on Enforcement of the World Intellectual Property Organization, and despite years of concern for lack intellectual property rights protection in the country in the past, we have decided to hold more positions at the international level and get more involved in debates and decision making processes that could lead to a wider global influence. Paraguay's global insertion today transcends borders and continents.

Our priorities, in the United Nations framework, are established in the Vienna Program of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries 2014 – 2024, an integral part of the Agenda 2030; for this reason, we call upon States, and in particular, our trading partners and transit countries, to take them appropriately into account.

Regional integration has undeniable benefits, and even more when it unfolds seeking to reconcile the interests of all the parties. This is how we work in Mercosur in order to revitalize economic and trade integration, while moving forward the social, labor, scientific and cultural dimensions of the bloc, which represents the positive agenda of this process.

Mister President,

The Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development constitutes the most ambitious intergovernmental work in the field of development ever achieved at the multilateral level. We are building an innovative and inclusive institutional architecture, participative and committed to those goals and their targets, for the accurate implementation of our National Development Plan 2030.

I am proud to mention that I have signed in a public ceremony, together with the President of Congress and the President of the Supreme Court of Justice an Inter-Branch Joint Declaration, that recognized the commitment of the Paraguayan Government, in its entirety, with the terms proposed in the Agenda 2030, as well as with every one of its Goals and Targets. The Paraguayan Government has endorsed the Agenda 2030 by its three branches of Government, in what it is considered an unprecedented initiative in the region.

Over the last four years, the administration that I lead has answered to the demands of all sectors of society, following the criteria of justice and efficiency. At the beginning of my Government in August 2013, we established three national policies to promote: poverty reduction with social development; inclusive economic growth and positioning Paraguay in the world.

In the implementation of these three core policies, we turned a backward looking culture of political patronage and ill practices, into a model governed by transparency and formality, where public access to information is guaranteed and where greater opportunities are made available to our people.

Access to public information has rendered unprecedented progress and the political will of making what is public available to the public is now materialized in recent instruments.

We can affirm our country is undergoing a transformational process never seen before. And even though it generates concerns, reactions and resistance from those who were more comfortable with the previous model, I am sure that this transformation is closing the doors for ill policies, like corruption for instance, that has long time delayed our country's economic and social development.

Mister President,

Regardless of regional economic problems, we have managed to achieve sustainable economic growth, and we would like to continue forging new partnerships with the world, on the basis of our reliability and predictability.

In the last years, economic growth has been steady in Paraguay, with a 5.2 per cent annual average; one of the highest in South America. In the same way, we are reducing poverty rates; yet, due to long years of negligence, we continue facing important challenges to fully eradicate it.

Our priorities had been focused on strongly promoting social investment, in particular on education, in order to enable people in situation of poverty to benefit from economic growth and to achieve inequality reduction. We are implementing social protection programs that are emblematic, such as *Tekoporã*, with a conditional cash transfers component; the School feeding program; Grants for elderly people in situation of poverty; and the Poverty reduction program, "*Sembrando Oportunidades*" (Spreading Opportunities).

We have also increased scholarships and financial aid to young people in situation of poverty, in our conviction that educating and preparing young people academically and professionally is the best investment for the future of our country.

After 175 years, the Paraguayan Government resumed its postgraduate scholarship program to study abroad, at the best universities in the world, and with a record investment of 42 million American dollars. Over a thousand Paraguayans from the 17 departments of the country and the Capital are pursuing postgraduate studies in 50 of the 200 most prestigious universities in the world, under the "Carlos Antonio Lopez" scholarship program. Hundreds of them are teachers and 60 per cent are women under 30 years old. The first 60 awardees have successfully completed their studies and returned home, where they are contributing their knowledge to the development and well-being of our country.

Another National Strategic goal for poverty reduction consists on housing programs, aimed at providing decent housing for our citizens, while reactivating the economy and creating jobs.

During these four years, we worked hard, with transparency and responsibility, and we have achieved unparalleled results in our country. For the first time in the history of Paraguay, a single administration, at the end of its mandate, would deliver over 30 thousands social households in the country, which represents about ten times more than what any other administration have ever granted. This achievement is even more valuable because it benefits thousands of families for years ignored by previous governments and that have now a decent roof and access to better conditions to move forward.

We are building hope and opportunities for those Paraguayan families from the poorest communities in our country, from the poverty belts of our big cities, to indigenous communities and rural settlements, to be able to move forward. We are transforming our country with transparency and efficiency in our work, in order to take the highest advantage of our resources, reducing expenditures, eliminating project-related corruption and improving construction quality through strict controls.

Our Government encourages productive development through responsible investments. We assign priority to infrastructure projects to improve connectivity, not only nationally, but also with our neighboring countries. Investment in infrastructure projects is notably the highest in decades and road works outstands for their length and modernity.

We demand responsibility and commitment from our authorities and we have worked hard to achieve further welfare in the country. Thanks to this new model of Government works, we are achieving a more efficient, progressive and decent country.

Mister President,

The Republic of Paraguay reaffirms its commitment with international peace and security; with the use of peaceful means for dispute settlement and with reciprocal cooperation among States.

In Paraguay, a constitutional provision bans mass destruction weapons. Consequently, our country commends the recent adoption of the Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons; reaffirms its conviction that nuclear disarmament ought to be a transparent and irreversible process, with efficient verification mechanisms within a universal and legally binding framework.

Paraguay reiterates its condemnation to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear test, clearly defying and contravening its international obligations, which constitutes a new provocation to the International Community. We expect from this General Assembly a firm rejection to this irrational attitude that threatens peace and security at a global level.

The Republic of Paraguay expresses its deep concern for the scourge of terrorism; which we condemn in all its forms and manifestations. We reaffirm that the counter terrorism efforts must be carried out within unwavering respect for international law provisions and a strong cooperation framework among States.

We will continue to cooperate with peacekeeping operations, under the auspices of the United Nations, in the conviction that they constitute one of the means to attain the principles and purposes established in the Charter. My country currently contributes military personnel, women and men, to six peacekeeping operations and invests in the training of its contingents at the Training Center for Peacekeeping Operations, Cecopaz – Paraguay.

The Republic of Paraguay, Member of the Human Rights Council, reaffirms also its commitment with the effective promotion and protection of human rights in any place of the world. We firmly believe that all persons, without discrimination, ought to be protected in their dignity and in their rights. We advocate for the Human Rights Council to continue fulfilling its obligations with objectivity, impartiality and universality.

In this context, I cannot avoid referring to a matter of concern in my region: the situation of Venezuela requires our urgent attention. I reiterate my message of solidarity to the people of Venezuela, to the victims of political persecution and human rights violations, in the hope that this fraternal people will be able to find, sovereignly and as soon as possible, a peaceful solution for the democratic breakdown and the acute crisis that is currently facing.

Mister President,

Through international cooperation, the Republic of China (Taiwan) has for long-time been committed with the cooperation programs related to the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals; lending support to a number of countries, including Paraguay. Taiwan has relevant experiences and knowledge and has contributed to the International Community efficiently. The Government of the Republic of Paraguay, once again, calls upon Member States of this organization to identify appropriate ways to facilitate Taiwan's participation in mechanisms, meetings and activities of the United Nations System, in order to allow its 23 million inhabitants to normally exercise their responsibilities as global citizens and to make efforts to for the establishment of sustainable partnerships with all countries.

Mister President,

We are firmly convinced that the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, has begun a transcendent and very auspicious work leading the United Nations Organization, backed up by his extensive experience as a notable statesman.

It will depend on the distinguished Heads of State of Member countries that this period of sessions becomes the starting point for a new era of real universalization of the principles that regulate the works of this Organization. And, in special, for its programs and actions to be able to reduce the large inequalities that still remain among countries and regions. We must get the Organization closer to the people, to whom we owe ourselves.

I reaffirm that my country will continue to grant high priority to its participation in the debates of the United Nations, convinced that its work is essential for the construction of a more peaceful, inclusive and just world. On our end, we will continue working decisively towards development with genuine social inclusion, enabling conditions for prosperity and always putting people in the first place.

I will conclude with an appeal of His Holiness, Pope Francis, "We shall never forget that true power is service".

Thank you very much.