



Discurso del Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores de la República de Costa Rica, Dr. Arnoldo André-Tinoco, durante el debate de alto nivel de la septuagésima séptima Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas. 21 de setiembre, 2022, Nueva York

Revisar contra alocución/Check against delivery

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

Costa Rica congratulates you on your election as President of the seventy-seventh General Assembly. We are confident that your extensive political experience will be crucial to the success of the work ahead.

A maelstrom of challenges shakes the foundations of this building.

The pandemic has been raging for three years now and 30.3% of humanity has yet to receive "a single" vaccine.

The climate crisis and biodiversity loss are hitting us mercilessly and without distinction. In Pakistan, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Costa Rica, we are experiencing it first-hand today. Yet it is the most vulnerable countries who are stepping up our efforts, creating large areas of protection and conservation and increasing our adaptation and mitigation, while the biggest carbon emitters and those responsible for climate catastrophes remain unaccountable.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine not only violated the principles of the Charter, but has triggered a humanitarian, fuel and financial crisis that will drive millions of people into food insecurity and poverty.

The invasion also put our collective security system in check and provoked a renewed division and polarization in geopolitical and economic blocs between East and West, North and South.

All this, at the very moment when we needed to build more bridges and fewer walls. When we could not lose sight of the situation in Yemen and Mali, in Myanmar and Syria, in Libya and Haiti, in Tigray and the Sahel; and between Israel and Palestine.

The attacks on democracy and human rights, especially against women and girls, know no borders either. The decline of democracy is evident in Central Asia, Eastern Europe, Asia Pacific and in my own region, where the situation in Nicaragua demands urgent attention of the international community.

In terms of rights, the cruelest example can be found in Afghanistan, where for the past year girls above the sixth grade have been banned from attending school, leaving them even more exposed to violence, poverty and exploitation.

We have come to this Assembly to identify comprehensive solutions to the multiple crises we face because it is impossible to end poverty without empowering women and girls, to ensure respect for human rights without addressing climate change, or to address the reform of the international financial system without new parameters for the allocation of aid.

First, for Costa Rica, the response to the multiple crises we face must have a rights-based approach. Human rights, and the unvarnished respect or justification for human dignity and worth, are not just words; they are obligations undertaken by States, enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and all human rights treaties and instruments.

They are also the expression of the legitimate and universal aspirations of each person, of all peoples, who are, after all, the ones who allow us to be in this solemn hall and speak on their behalf.

Costa Rica is not exempt from challenges and gaps for the full fulfillment of human rights, the construction of a culture of peace and non-discrimination, and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. We are aware that the fight

against poverty, inequality and exclusion requires human rights. These are not and should not be a stumbling block. *They are nothing less than the only way.*

Costa Rica has never closed its doors to migrants who see in our country a route of passage or a destination to integrate into our society. In the last five years, we have become the fourth country in the world in receiving more refugee applications per capita. But our economic situation and fiscal tightness, coupled with this phenomenon of massive migratory flows, limit our capacity for action and put at risk the adequate coverage that we have ensured in the past to these hundreds of thousands of people who have sought refuge on our soil.

It is with a real sense of urgency that we require the support of the international community to address this challenge, which has been exacerbated not only by conflict and poverty, but also by the impact of climate change.

In a context of multiple and accumulated crises, human rights must tread new paths. Costa Rica welcomes the recognition by the General Assembly on July 28 of the universal right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. For my country, this is a beacon of hope, comparable to the proclamation of the right to water, to development, or to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the correct response to the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity.

This resolution is not a point of arrival, but a point of departure. Costa Rica will continue to work with Member States, the United Nations and all stakeholders to break down the silo mentality and provide effective solutions to human problems, particularly those who suffer the most, the most vulnerable, the most marginalized and excluded.

True to our commitment to this rights agenda, Costa Rica has decided to nominate its name to the Human Rights Council for the period 2023-2025. Costa Rica respectfully requests the support of this General Assembly for its candidacy.

In our country, you will find an ambitious actor who will watch over the rights of all people everywhere in the world, as well as a country that will unhesitatingly commit to dialogue, mutual understanding, cooperation and solidarity in favor of human beings.

Secondly, human security is key to global security. For my country, it is inconceivable that while millions of people are waiting for vaccines, medicines or food to save their lives, the richest countries continue to prioritize their resources in armaments at the expense of people's well-being, climate health and equitable recovery.

In 2021, global military spending continued to increase for the seventh consecutive year to reach the highest figure we have ever seen in history.

Costa Rica today reiterates its call for a gradual and sustained reduction in military spending, for the more weapons we produce, the more will escape even our best efforts at management and control. It is about prioritizing the lives and well-being of people and the planet over the profits to be made from weapons and war. It is about investing in and actively building alternative approaches to security, approaches that facilitate cooperation and care rather than competition and violence.

We are convinced that it is also possible to achieve peace and security without resorting to nuclear weapons. Because only the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against their use or threat of use, Costa Rica urges more States to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, as well as to adhere to the Vienna Declaration and Action Plan. We also urge the Russian Federation to cease attacking Ukraine, its civilian population and critical infrastructure, to demilitarize the Zaporizhzhia plant and not to resort to nuclear coercion, which we condemn in the strongest terms.

Costa Rica calls on both parties to ensure respect, at all times and in all circumstances, for international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

The third transformative solution must be financial. Middle-income countries face significant inequalities and challenges, such as increased fiscal stringency, which limit our capacity for action and investment and put the social fabric at risk.

And although we are home to the highest percentage of poor people and migrants in the world, our categorization does not

allow us to access official development assistance or obtain concessional financing on favorable and fair terms.

It is therefore urgent to "go beyond GDP per capita" with new parameters for the allocation of aid, investment and international cooperation that take into account other aspects such as structural deficiencies, climate risks, market fluctuations and fiscal stability.

The fourth action requires a higher level of ambition and urgency to address the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. And, for this, a healthy ocean and a blue economy approach are critical. At the forefront of the natural disasters that hit our countries, droughts and heat waves, forest fires, floods never seen before, are the people.

With them in mind, Costa Rica is leading, together with France and the United Kingdom, the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, which seeks the global conservation of 30% of the Earth and the ocean.

We also support the Global Ocean Alliance, which reaffirms the commitment to the conservation and protection of 30% of the ocean by 2030, and we adhere to the Ocean Conservation Pledge, promoted by the United States of America, to promote the conservation of 30% of the waters under national jurisdiction, which Costa Rica has achieved nine years ahead of schedule.

In addition, we announced with President Macron our interest in co-hosting the Third United Nations Conference on the Ocean in 2025, and in holding a meeting in mid-2024 in Costa Rica that will bring together the scientific community and civil society in the formulation of innovative solutions to improve ocean governance.

The ocean is an immeasurable and critical resource for the continuity of life on Earth. Therefore, on the International Day of Peace, Costa Rica vehemently calls for the adoption of a Declaration of Peace for the Ocean. We cannot survive as a species without our ocean. We will not be able to fulfill our various obligations to the Sustainable Development Goals without a healthy ocean.

We have much multilateral work ahead of us to safeguard marine resources and ocean health for this and future generations: reaching a global agreement on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, concluding a successful and transformative BBNJ treaty, and discussion regarding the governance of sub-seabed mining.

Mr. President,

On the International Day of Peace, let us declare peace with Nature and with our Ocean.

Let us promote a new Agenda for Peace that strengthens our collective capacity to prevent conflicts and resolve existing ones with sustainable, locally driven solutions.

Let us renew the social contract between our governments and peoples, anchoring governance arrangements in human rights, trust, inclusion, protection and participation.

Let us ensure gender parity and empower women and, in particular, girls in all spheres of life.

Let us seek new methods to measure development that adequately reflect essential aspects such as environmental sustainability, inequalities and structural gaps, the quality of institutions and the prevalence of the rule of law.

Let us build a more resilient, transparent and inclusive multilateral system and United Nations that better embraces the needs and perspectives of all, especially within the Security Council.

Let us do more to pave the way for the United Nations to fully rise to the occasion, to do all that it has the skills and determination to do, to help the UN and our own countries shift the course of our common destiny while there is still a destiny to shift.

Let us act with conviction and courage, with determination and with a true sense of urgency.

The time is now! I thank you.