



***Statement by His Excellency Mr. Juan Orlando Hernández Alvarado
President of the Republic of Honduras
at the Summit for the Adoption of the Post 2015 Development Agenda***

New York, 25 September 2015

Today Honduras appears before this Assembly to commit its political will and its efforts in the route and the Sustainable Development Goals.

One year ago I denounced, in this same forum, the tragic situation of the migration flows—especially of unaccompanied minors—from the northern triangle of Central America toward the United States, expelled by the violence and grinding misery resultant from drug trafficking bound to the North, and the operation of cartels and international organized crime in the region. At the same time I made an appeal for the organization of the "Plan of the Alliance for Prosperity", aimed at improving security and to create opportunities and genuine development in this emigration route. The joint initiative of the governments of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras found echo in President Obama and in many members of Congress and senators. A generous initiative to support this Plan is today under consideration of the United States Congress.

We have made remarkable progress in the areas of public safety and in the creation of opportunities. We can show really notable improvements in the fight against drug trafficking and insecurity, proven by the reduction of homicides and other crimes linked to drugs. We achieved a drastic reduction of drug trafficking through our territory, the destruction of drug-related infrastructures of narco-landing strips and narco-laboratories, the capture and prosecution of a large number of drug traffickers, the extradition of the powerful drug barons, and the seizure of their ill-achieved wealth.

We will not rest until we completely eradicate from our territory such scourge that has harmed our region and all humankind.

Regarding the creation of opportunities and the fight against poverty, we have developed, and we are following, the route set by the **Vida Mejor** program, its capacity and effectiveness in improving the living conditions of the poorer can be evidenced day after day in Honduras. Through **Vida Mejor** and the legal framework of the Social Protection System, recently approved by our Congress, we are undertaking the set of Sustainable Development Goals with regard to income, education, health, quality of life and, enabling families for, especially women, the creation of productive employment. Today we know that this is the most effective means to channel the resources and programs to fight against poverty.

As we had anticipated: fewer drugs, more security, more development, and more opportunities led to a reduction in migration flows. It is not us making this statement, this has been endorsed by the migration authorities of Mexico and of the United States.

Despite these gains, Mr. President, we still face many challenges ahead. In particular, we need to make more progress in reducing poverty, infant mortality, maternal mortality, and disease control, especially HIV AIDS. These challenges **constitute a social, economic, political and especially moral debt that cannot be ignored nor admit delays in their solution.**

But these advances, on which we place high hopes, have not been produced just like that. In addition to drug trafficking and poverty, we also have to deal with the effects of climate change in Honduras, one of the three most vulnerable countries in the world according to the Risk Index prepared by Germanwatch organization.

Our vulnerability, Mr. President, became evident with the onset of El Niño that brought us the second consecutive year of drought, the most severe recorded since the middle of the 20th Century, generating critical risks to food security for the Honduran people, and a true national emergency. This emergency is a serious obstacle in our fight against poverty and **increases the risk of tragically exacerbating, once again, the undesirable migration processes.**

What does the El Niño climatic phenomenon represent for Honduras?

Most of our harvests have been lost, especially food crops. We are losing our livestock and in many communities water is becoming scarce.

250,000 Honduran families have been left in a critical situation. Our government is assisting the affected families with our own resources and with those which we expect will be generously contributed by organizations and friendly governments.

In a major effort, we had defined almost a third of our territory, more than 3 million hectares, as protected areas on behalf of our environmental heritage and in defense of the health of the planet. Today, as a result of climate change, a severe plague of bark weevil has led to the loss of 112,000 hectares of pines forests, almost 7% of the total coniferous forests in the country.

Because of El Niño and climate change in general, today we are faced with the need to radically change our productive matrix and our energy matrix, as we need to INMEDIATELY implement our Master Plan for Water, Soils, and Forests. Not next year, or next decade, but INMEDIATELY, RIGHT NOW.

President, Mister Secretary General. From the podium you look at this audience and you see us all alike. However, from the climate change standpoint we are not all the same. We are not the same in its causes, or in its effects.

We would only have the right to say that the human race has matured if we are capable of accepting that, as there are common and shared responsibilities—although different—in the generation of the climate change phenomenon, there should also be shared responsibilities for the solutions. Those that have contributed the most to generate the crisis should contribute the most to solve it. All together, indeed, because we are all owners and we all inhabit this nation called EARTH, and none of us is moving anywhere.

From Honduras, I call upon all nations, especially the developed countries, to tackle the Sustainable Development Goals and to deal with the challenges and effects of climate change within the framework of co-responsibility that all, without exception and starting today, should recognize as a principle-guide of the actions of the international community. The hour has arrived to assume co-responsibility as a moral and political imperative.

To this end, respectfully but with strong conviction, I call upon the leaders of the world.

Thank you very much.