



GUATEMALA

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UNITED NATIONS SUMMIT FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

STATEMENT BY

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Statement by the Vicepresident of the Republic of Guatemala
On behalf of the President of the Republic of Guatemala
United Nations Summit for the Adoption of the Post-2015 Development
Agenda
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I come from a latitude of sun and mountains. Guatemala is our home. It is a melting pot of more than two dozen languages. I am the spokesman for the President of the Republic, who represents the unity of this Nation of Nations that, since mid-April of this year and for twenty consecutive weeks, has been an example for the world. In a multitudinal massive and peaceful manner, the people of Guatemala took to the streets to express their outrage that would prove the undoing of an economic, social and political system that has prevented the overcoming of poverty and all kinds of segregation.

The discovery of networks of corruption that exceed the limits of government, while it has caused discomfort in the political culture, did not devolve into violence. Rather, it was transformed into an oceanic feeling of solidarity and unity that forced the resignation and prosecution of the leading authorities of our country. Citizen discontent has not dissipated, but neither did it allow for skepticism. Citizen participation in the elections on Sunday September 6th exceeded historical records to reach 70.38%, the highest figure in a general election since the return to democracy 30 years ago.

More than 7.5 million Guatemalans were called to the polls to elect a president, vice president, members of Congress, mayors and MPs to the Central American Parliament. In this new democratic spring abstention not only lost but also corruption. The citizenry covered their ears in order not to hear the songs of the sirens calling for a disruption of the elections which will culminate in a runoff on 25 October when the new President and Vice President will be elected.

In Guatemala we took a first step to eradicate poverty with a change of focus. To this Summit, convened to adopt a new agenda for sustainable development we bring our experience of the citizens' awakening, clamoring for changes which begin by overcoming the poverty of citizenship. To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger we must begin by recognizing that the poor are not only those who suffer from the maldistribution of income and wealth. The poor are those who do not have sufficient resources, material and immaterial, to meet the demands and social mores required of them as citizens. First, the conditions preventing people's full participation in economic, political and social life must be removed. The poor are the "object" of statements, analyses, compassion, but they are not the "subjects" of their own life and destiny. Poverty cannot be eradicated if it is still considered as an obstacle to the construction of citizenship. The problem, in Latin America – the region with the greatest inequality in terms of wealth and income – is poverty caused by the absence of justice.

The strength, independence and effectiveness of the system of administration of justice is the foundation of economic and political freedoms. In our country, the greatest discrimination is suffered by the majority of the population living in poverty and the neglected, that is, the invisibilized Guatemala that doesn't find justice when it appeals to it. Mario Vargas Llosa warns that the greatness of Great Britain in the nineteenth century was not in its industrialists, adventurers or military but in "those dark judges, heads dressed in ridiculous wigs, that with their actions taught the whole of the people that the law was the same for rich and poor, and that a modest court could punish the powerful neither more nor less than the modest, and could also repair injustices large and small. "

Equality before the law is what has characterized the democratic spring we are now living. The International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), established in 2006 by an agreement between the UN and the government of our country, together with the Public Prosecutor has identified, investigated and dismantled organized crime affecting the fundamental rights of the

population. The mandate of CICIG is unprecedented within the United Nations or other international efforts to promote accountability and strengthen the justice system. The current President of Guatemala, as a constitutional judge, is one of the signatories of the resolution approving this international Commission.

In particular, justice for women, in order to meet one of the Millennium Development Goals of promoting gender equality and empowering women, is required. Very few women are involved in decision-making in government agencies. This inferiority is absurd when we consider that justice is represented by a feminine image. An egalitarian society will be achieved first with a concept of the person, before being considered male or female. Moreover, people must contribute with the best they have to give, regardless of sex. Talents should not be wasted and, therefore, women should be able to develop their skills and knowledge in order to help create a new society. We invite you to address the struggle of women for their rights and interests, in an effort to create a new era, in which men and women share responsibility for leadership and peace.

We express our solidarity with the migrants suffering a humanitarian tragedy at the borders of Europe and with the Central American migration, particularly unaccompanied migrant children. The Guatemalan identity is defined by the volume of migration and the quality of the exiled. Both exile and emigration have their ferment in despair, but do not lead to the same hope. The emigrant does not renounce the possibility of return. The exiled, however, hastily abandoned their homeland to save their lives and could not return until the circumstances leading to the agonizing departure, have changed.

Since the first outlines of "Guatemalaness" were first traced, pilgrimage has marked us. It is the displacement of of being of being outside, and another of remaining inside, silenced. The Popol Vuh, the "Magna Carta of the Guatemalan soul" is the indigenous oral poetry, banished from its original script, set out in Spanish for its survival.

The invisibilized Guatemala, made up of indigenous peoples, peasants and those who have been marginalized by the system, have not been satisfied with the resignation of the leaders. They flooded the streets to warn that the amendment of some laws is not enough. They demand reforms in the State for a profound transformation of the economic, social and political system that allows them to leave behind poverty, exclusion and racism, thereby developing the true concept of national and international solidarity, an essential element of peace and security. The President of the Republic of Guatemala echoes this citizen complaint for which the Council of Ministers will put forward legislative initiatives that encompass the demands for reform and reorganization of the political system, as a first step in the reorganization of the state.

This Summit brings us together to finalize an ambitious program with 17 new sustainable development goals to eradicate poverty, promote prosperity and the well-being of people and the protection of the environment. It has an agenda everywhere, for everyone, without leaving anyone behind, just as the Popol Vuh calls on us with its pure form of the Guatemalan morning call:

“All rise, call on everyone, may no one be left behind, neither one nor two, but all as one”.

Thank you.