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**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF PERU,
H.E. OLLANTA HUMALA TASSO
SIXTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS
Cartagena de Indias, April 14, 2012**

I would like to thank the government and people of Colombia for their hospitality and, in particular, President Santos for inviting us to this historic city.

Much has changed since the First Summit of the Americas took place in Miami in 1994. Over those years we have had to face enormous challenges, and we have also availed ourselves of many opportunities to make this hemisphere a region of peace, democracy, economic growth, and social development.

Indeed, the Americas are now very different to what they were 18 years ago. First of all, because democracy and the rule of law have been consolidated as the system whereby our peoples govern their destinies. That is today's new irreversible political reality, which enables us to look to the future with an outlook of stability and, consequently, to guide our actions with an authentic view to the long term. Today we are a region not only of peoples and individuals, but also of citizens.

On the basis of that democratic institutionality the region has been able to consolidate unprecedented sustained economic growth, grounded on the shared conviction that openness toward the world is the best way to attain integration and economic and social development.

Today, through trade, our hemisphere has achieved a sustained economic growth that serves to drive its development and social inclusion. Latin America is one of the regions with the highest levels of economic dynamism and has succeeded in bringing about a substantial increase in its contribution to global output, attaining economic growth, and making significant progress in reducing poverty and increasing social inclusion.

Peru is a clear example of this. Between 2002 and 2010, the Peruvian economy recorded an accumulated growth rate of 73.2 percent. Growth of 5.5 percent is forecast for 2012.

Our hemisphere is also a region of peace which, through dialogue and political consensus-building, has been able to resolve the situations of conflict that affected many of our countries. With that experience we have also reaffirmed our conviction of the need to emphasize prevention, using mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of disputes, and of the supremacy of international law.

I think the outcome is highly positive, but we must be aware that those achievements need additional efforts if we are to maintain them over time. This must therefore be a historic summit that guides our future relations and adds a new dimension to exchanges in the hemisphere, since, in order to further integration and achieve the connections we seek and for which we are gathered here, we cannot restrict ourselves to promoting the free flow of goods and services. We could lose the benefits of growth if our countries do not develop the capacity to create wealth autonomously and in a sustained fashion, and that can only be achieved through knowledge. The free flow of knowledge must be the central point of our efforts.

We must therefore applaud the initiative raised by the President of the United States, at the Fifth Summit in Trinidad and Tobago, to offer students from across the region scholarships through the Scholarships for Education and Development Program and the pilot program for at-risk youth in the countries with the highest levels of inequality.

We can all contribute to this agenda. And so we should strengthen student exchange initiatives, expand joint research, and promote academic exchanges, in different fields, in order to foster mutual understanding. We have a responsibility toward integration through broad exchanges that promote education, professional development, and training, making use of the experiences and progress of all the countries of the hemisphere.

What I am proposing is a new agenda for the hemisphere that starts with exchanges such as those described and is based on mutual respect, generates trust, and allows us to progress, without questions or conditions, in consolidating relations of mutual understanding, peace, cooperation, and solidarity, to build on our differences a new model of integration founded on shared values and objectives, to transform us into fairer and more inclusive societies.

Based on that vision, let us construct a positive hemispheric agenda that goes beyond the security considerations of a bipolar world that no longer exists, where security was the guiding principle of inter-American relations, and that will allow us to put an end to the arms race and to develop exchanges and promote cooperation to ensure the sustainability of the significant progress we have attained in the political, economic, and social arenas.

But that agenda for the future must also address some remnants of the past. To continue along the path of progress we need for this hemispheric process to offer a forum for dialogue without exclusion, in which we can deal with all the topics on the hemispheric agenda and in which all the nations of the hemisphere participate on an equal footing. Our ministers have already taken a first, highly significant step in that direction. Topics previously avoided were addressed with a clarity never before seen in this forum. If the cost of that frankness is that we fail to issue a political declaration, that is preferable to remaining immobile on the topics that have divided us up to this point. To speak about them is not to deepen the division. On the contrary, it is to begin along the path to overcoming them and toward hemispheric unity.

Another of the unresolved topics that deserve our particular attention is the global drugs problem which, through its ties to terrorism, organized crime, and corruption, undermines our institutional structures and prevents our people from fully enjoying the benefits of growth. All the countries here today suffer from that scourge in one way or another.

Bearing in mind the threat that drug trafficking poses to our citizens and societies, I have called for an International Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Heads of Specialized National Agencies against the Global Drugs Problem, to be held in Lima on June 25 and 26. The aim is that, with a comprehensive approach and joint responsibility, we will be able to bring about a significant reduction in the magnitude of this problem by the end of 2019.

I am sure, Mr. President, that if we continue along this road of integration, of democracy, of growth, of exchange, and of peace, we will have, the next time we meet, many more reasons to feel satisfied.

Thank you very much.