



SIXTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS
April 14 to 15, 2012
Cartagena de Indias, Colombia



OEA/Ser.E
CA-VI/INF.7/12
26 April 2012
Original: Spanish

SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF PARAGUAY, H.E. FERNANDO LUGO
SIXTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS
April 15, 2012 – Cartagena, Colombia

(VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT)

I would like to add Paraguay's thanks to those already expressed toward Colombia, Cartagena, and, most particularly, President Santos for the magnificent preparation of this Sixth Summit of Heads of State of the Americas.

I'm sure that more than one of us have corrected or changed their speeches after all we said yesterday. I am extremely grateful for the contributions that the heads of state have made, for their substantive contributions to a great project for unity in this hemisphere.

This hemisphere is going through a period of far-reaching transformations that are impacting the lives of its citizens. The immediate reaction and the challenge of undertaking the construction of regional answers: more than ever we have to continue working on that as an obligation which, as heads of state and government, we have toward our peoples.

The exercise of solidarity-based ethics, partnership for development, and strategic alliances are essential in fostering the wellbeing to which we aspire.

In that context, I would like once again to use this opportunity to congratulate His Excellency the President of the sister Republic of Colombia, my esteemed friend Juan Manuel Santos, for his insight and good judgment in assigning this Summit the theme 'Connecting the Americas: Partners for Prosperity,' focusing on the important role of physical integration and regional cooperation as a means to overcome our hemisphere's challenges and to build new roads toward integral development for all our citizens.

The Americas is one of the richest regions in strategic natural resources: we have vast reserves of water, of minerals, of oil, of lithium, of gas, of forests.

However, in spite of all that natural wealth and all our historical, cultural, social, and human riches, we are one of the planet's most unequal regions. How long will we continue to put up with that contradiction?

The unaddressed needs and rights of the women, men, and children who inhabit our hemisphere require us to reclaim our strategic resources and uphold their sovereign stewardship,

within a framework of integration based on solidarity. Why, if we are so rich, cannot we use our wealth fairly to the benefit of all?

Both Paraguay and other countries in the region are major producers of energy for the world. My country has no deposits of natural gas or oil that are being exploited; it does, however, generate nine times more energy than it uses, and the demand for greater integration is based on nothing other than its capacity to produce clean, renewable energy, with surpluses to export to markets that today need sustainable energy.

I would like to join my voice to and endorse the many speeches we have heard. I have congratulated Ms. Alicia from ECLAC, and President Santos, and what Piñera was saying a short while ago. I believe that this crisis we are facing calls out, cries out to us for unity, and that there is no alternative other than the unity of this hemisphere. I take strength from our desire to build that unity within diversity. We must not be scared by the differences, and they must not isolate us. What an opportunity – I heard one journalist say today – to be able to hear Obama, Evo, Piñera, with their different outlooks. The Americas are defined by plurality; that's how the hemisphere was born. The unity we have to build lies within that healthy pluralism.

The drugs problem – to take one of the region's main causes of concern, and one from which Paraguay is not exempt – in talking about drugs and drug trafficking, we are clearly dealing with a complex and multidimensional problem, one that must be addressed comprehensively, from the citizen security, social, political, economic, financial, and public health perspectives.

Paraguay is open to debate, with a comprehensive approach that involves all the agencies and stakeholders concerned, so in that way we can assume our shared but differentiated responsibilities in combating both consumption and the production, trafficking, and sale of narcotics.

Clearly, many of our countries are today suffering the consequences of climate change. I am currently receiving information from my country indicating that in almost half the Gran Chaco, people are being rescued by land, water, and air. We therefore have a joint responsibility and it is vitally necessary that we establish, working in concert, measures to resolve, at least, situations of this kind.

Many of our countries have celebrated their two hundredth anniversaries this year, or last year. Our founding fathers, our peoples have struggled against colonialism. As a result of that struggle, today, as free and sovereign states, we can sit down to share reflections, projects, and actions for the development of our countries.

Without those struggles for independence and against colonialism, we would not be here today.

In Paraguay, we want neither the old chains of 19th-century colonialism nor the new chains of the colonialism and neocolonialism of the 21st century, regardless of the country from which they come. We therefore reiterate that negotiations should recommence as soon as possible regarding the sister territory of the Malvinas, the Argentine Malvinas.

I would like to end this address by recalling that Paraguay defends and reasserts the constitutional principles that govern its international relations: national independence, the right of peoples to self-determination, the juridical equality of states, solidarity and international cooperation, international protection of human rights, free navigation on international waterways, and the condemnation of all forms of dictatorship, colonialism, and imperialism.

Paraguay therefore does not recognize in its legislation the extraterritorial enforcement of international laws that affront the sovereignty of other states. It believes that such practices undermine the principles of international law, which we defend and seek to uphold from within all our multilateral and regional agencies.

Consequently, during this 50-year blockade of the Cuban people, Paraguay has on several occasions expressed its opposition to the economic, commercial, and financial blockade still in place against Cuba and, in particular, it has deplored the impact of that unjust blockade on the Cuban people, as a consequence of positive laws that affect free exchanges and the transparent pursuit of international trade.

We hold that Cuba's absence from this meeting of the democratic countries of the Americas is unacceptable and, as we have stated on other occasions, we hope that this will be the last summit without the participation of all the countries and, in this case, without the participation of Cuba.

Dear friends:

Faced with this reality of which we are only too aware, and which is directly experienced by thousands of women, men and children, we must continue building together, from a position of unity and integration, the roads of the present and the future that will lead to the integral development and wellbeing of our peoples.

Thank you very much.
Cartagena (Colombia)