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**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF URUGUAY,
H.E. JOSÉ ALBERTO MUJICA
SIXTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS
April 14, 2012 – Cartagena, Colombia**

Thank you, thank you, Colombia. Thank you for your sea, your jungle, your air, and above all for your open arms: your open arms of solidarity, and your refuge. As an Uruguayan, I come from cattle grasslands and, at the end of the day, an Uruguayan is a patch of transformed grass and there, sometimes within a single square meter, a hundred and fifty different species exist. Plants struggle for the light, which is freedom for plants. And we have learned a very old lesson, an eternal, permanent lesson: life is coexistence, life is not being isolated and it is living in a peaceful and eternal struggle for the light and for freedom: consequently, life means coexistence and that means tolerance.

Tolerance for others, for what is different. There can be no peace if we do not realize that we must learn to respect that which we do not share, and that that is the essence of peace and of love for what is possible in humanity.

That is the ultimate dream, because nature makes things that are similar, never equal. That is the poem of diversity, and we believe in democracy as an ideal, as a philosophy of life, that no person is more than any other; but there is not only one democracy, there are a thousand forms of democracy.

How can we deny that there is democracy in an Aymara village, when once a year they gather in a circle and elect, directly, their government? Modern man is arrogant believing that he invented democracy. Democracy lies in the essence of human beings. Democracy is an old flame that man has pursued throughout history and no doubt the future, with its technological revolution, will bring other forms of democracy. Perhaps digital democracy is already waiting out there.

So that is the first value: tolerance of differences, because only that can create the minimum basic conditions for democracy to bear fruit, because democracy cannot be exported and cannot be imposed by violence. It is a form of self-conviction that arises like a seed from within us.

For that reason, republicans: this hemisphere, this new world is republican, deeply republican! Because we arrived late, because we have learned from the pain of humanity, because our genesis is none other than the struggle for republicanism and, therefore, we are a diverse family with a handful of shared dreams. One that dreams, more or less, in the same language. With subtleties, with differences. That more or less moves to the same music.

One that has deep roots and a common history. There is no other continent in the world with such deep roots of identity. For whatever reason. However, diversity blossoms because it has no choice: each corner of the world is the offspring of its history, of its sufferings, and we must understand that fact, because today's struggle is one for peace, in the deepest sense of the word. The only war that can be justified here is a war on poverty, on ignorance, on injustice, on limitations, and, above all, on the dangerous wastefulness that means that in order eat, a person needs six or seven thousand liters of water a day to produce his food. We are facing a challenge of civilization. But because of that, for all those reasons, we want that flag with the single star here with us. It is a part of us. Of our pain. My small country took shape, among other things by exporting dried beef, when the hunted Africans were laboring in Cuba to produce sugar for the global market.

Our entire history is a cry of pain, but it is also a cry of self-dependence. Each of us with the others. That's why we need these things to be understood. It is a part of what is emerging, because we, the people of Latin America, are becoming increasingly aware that we belong to a disconnected but common homeland.

I would also like to say that we republicans do not want to attack anyone, that we do not want the world of aggression; and that's coming from a man who, when he was younger, wanted to change the world with a 45 on his hip. We have some right to speak. We can build slowly on the road of peace. The small steps with which we begin to exercise growing solidarity with our people. We are brothers to all the world's afflicted, and we have an account to settle for all those across the world who hunger, have no work, and receive no health care.

Why is that a part of the Latin American struggle? Because our world is not only a new world: it is a different world. We have to learn from the mistakes of the old world and, in any event, make our own, but we have to contribute a crescendo to the history of humankind. The commonplaces of free trade, of exchanges. We know we face problems on all sides and we know that in the world in which we have to live there is no place for the weak. Consequently, the weak have the historical need to come together, or they will grow increasingly weaker.

For that reason we want sovereignty for our territories, because there can be no freedom without sovereignty. The freedom of nations is the exercise of their sovereignty and the exercise of their tolerance toward what is different. In claiming the Malvinas we do not do so to offend the history of Great Britain or to offend anyone. We claim them because we have a feeling of belonging. My small country's capital is called Montevideo, and it was the base for the Spanish fleet in the South Atlantic. From colonial Montevideo went soil for planting and Charrua natives to the Malvinas. There is a long history there.

We recognize the reality; all we want is to live on an equal footing with that people that has emerged, that is a part of our America, and which we do not wish to give away to any country's navy. We say so with humility, with simplicity, with respect. That is our part.

We know we are in a situation in which we cannot ask for what will not be given us; but we must at least express it. What we do not have the courage to say, we will not have the opportunity to cultivate. Even as a lesson, many decades could go by, a long time: we have all the time of the generations that are to come, but these are nonnegotiable causes, they are causes of our very essence.

Finally, this is the hemisphere of democracy and of freedom. There are no monarchs; there is nothing other than merit. Do our democracies have shortcomings? Yes, many of them, any number. We are short of universities, we are short of teaching, we are short of the courage to believe much more in our people. We are short of commitments, but we have an excess of resources, hope, and causes; and, clearly, together we will build the future. For that reason, I am not sure whether this is a Summit, a hillock, or a well. I don't know what the Declaration is: the one that is spoken, or the one that is not. What the manifesto is: what we write, or what we do not. But this is what is important: we are together. We are together. The time will come – I shall no longer be here, but the time will come when we must be much more united, the North and the South, because the world is changing, it has another center, and we are beginning to have a historic importance: if we have been in the backyard, we are inevitably going to occupy the space of what this increasingly globalized world means.

I do not know when the next summit will be, I don't know what... summits should not be held too close to the most dramatically important electoral processes in the countries, and that is something we must begin to acknowledge, because of the enormous weight that conflicting internal opinions have on all of us. We appreciate, appreciate enormously, the presence and courage of the President of the United States who is seated there; we thank him for that, we acknowledge it with respect and with dignity: it is necessary to come and support the position of thirty-odd and we congratulate him for his courage, and we dream of the day when that country is a true brother in the fight against destitution and against poverty, against discrimination, to raise all the enormous weight of our hemisphere. Unfortunately, I cannot be a believer, but I close my address with the wish that it be so.

Thank you.