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**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, MICHEL TEMER, AT THE
PLENARY SESSION OF THE EIGHTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS,
LIMA, PERU, APRIL 14, 2018**

President Vizcarra, ladies and gentlemen:

This Eighth Summit of the Americas reaffirms our region's calling to dialogue and cooperation and our determination to act collectively to build more prosperous and equitable societies. The name "Americas" has not aged; it continues to evoke an image of hope, freedom, and the opportunities that stem from opening ourselves to the other as we foster trade, investment, and innovation.

In Brazil, it was in opening to the other, to the world, that we overcame the greatest economic crisis in our history--in opening up and restoring responsibility, both fiscal and social, the twin sides of the same coin. With openness and responsibility translated into an ambitious agenda of modernizing reforms, we returned to growth in a sustainable fashion, to generating jobs and income. We are returning to Brazilians, especially the most impoverished, the opportunities that had been taken from them; and these opportunities are still the greatest symbol of the Americas.

Mr. President, the theme of this gathering mobilizes all our societies, and Brazil is no exception. Corruption cannot be tolerated. Corruption erodes the social fabric, compromises public administration and private management, and diverts valuable resources from education, health, and security. Fighting corruption, therefore, is an imperative of democracy; and democracy is the best weapon we have to confront this problem; it is what illustrates the Brazilian experience. Only democracy produces autonomous institutions and effective instruments for fighting misconduct and the distortion of government functions.

As stated earlier, democracy is where we find transparency. Democracy is where we find the free press and vigilant public opinion that can monitor the actions of government as tirelessly as is necessary. Democracy is where the rule of law resides.

Ladies and gentlemen, that unwavering commitment to democracy has moved us to fight corruption outside of Brazil as well, in cooperation with numerous countries and in many forums. Brazil is party to the main international treaties and initiatives in this area. All the forums, such as the UN, EAU, and CNE, must persist in that effort, which is why we are here.

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. President, another matter that requires ever-closer cooperation among our countries is the fight against transnational crime, which was mentioned earlier. Since the pioneering initiative of convening a Southern Cone ministerial meeting on security in 2006, we have intensified cooperation among security agencies in our region to strengthen the coordinated effort against such crime. We know that transnational organized crime is not some faraway problem. It keenly affects our families, our schools, our cities. We have a collective duty to fight tirelessly to end this scourge; I say so to resensitize all countries participating in the Summit of the Americas to this issue.

This week, we witnessed yet another unacceptable act of violence in our region, caused not only by gang activity but by repression of the free press. It resulted in the murder of a team of journalists kidnapped in Ecuador. We condemn in the strongest terms this assault on life and freedom of expression. Our deepest solidarity is with the families of the victims, the Ecuadorean people, and President Lenín Moreno and his Government.

Mr. President, I cannot speak of democracy as one of the pillars of our integration without also touching on the oft-mentioned political, economic, and humanitarian crisis in our neighboring sister nation. Like Colombia, Panama, and other countries, we have welcomed tens of thousands of Venezuelans who seek in Brazil the conditions for a decent life. As I discussed also with the President of Colombia a short while ago, the most shocking aspect is that, when we tried to send medications and food to Venezuela, they were refused by the Venezuelan Government.

So, I repeat, there is no longer any place in our region for alternatives to democracy. That is why we work in forums such as the Lima Group to deal with this issue. We want an increasingly active OAS, an OAS that, with its collection of human rights protection instruments, will be able to help our sister nation Venezuela find its way back to the path of democracy.

Our region has already overcome many challenges. We have reason to trust in the future, especially in the outcome of this Summit of the Americas. You may rely on Brazil to work so that the next Summit of the Americas will find our family of nations ever more united, harmonious, prosperous, and democratic.

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, before concluding my remarks on behalf of Brazil, I want to express my country's profound concern over the escalating military conflict in Syria. We believe that lasting solutions based on international law are already overdue. Not only is a resolution being prevented by government action; this is a state matter, since the constitution provides that nuclear weapons or experiments can be for peaceful purposes only.

Our thoughts turn to all the victims of the Syrian conflict and, naturally, to the safety of many Brazilians living in that region, which we will watch closely. All parties involved must urgently engage in a comprehensive and concerted approach to ending this immense suffering.

Once again, my congratulations to President Vizcarra and the Peruvian people on the extraordinary organization of this Summit, and my regards to all colleagues participating in this conference.

Thank you very much.

