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**SPEECH BY HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF PARAGUAY,
AMBASSADOR ELADIO LOIZAGA, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
AT THE PLENARY OF THE EIGHTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS**

Your Excellency, President Martín Vizcarra;

Distinguished Heads of State and Government;

Esteemed Prime Ministers;

Excellencies;

Ladies and gentlemen:

Allow me to convey cordial greetings from the President of the Republic of Paraguay, His Excellency Horacio Cartes, to the distinguished Heads of State and Government who have honored us with their presence. And, at the same time, to relay his best wishes for the success of this Eighth Summit of the Americas, in keeping with our countries' wishes to live in democracies with sustained and comprehensive development.

Likewise, I renew the commitment of the Republic of Paraguay to share all the commonalities and policies that can consolidate the unity of our Hemisphere in pursuit of the common challenge of effectively contributing to the full currency of the rule of law and to the prosperity and general well-being of our peoples.

To achieve this, we must bring together all the relevant strategies and the specific, necessary practices, based on an objective analysis of the urgent problems and situations that, with focus and structure, we must overcome.

Your Excellencies:

Perhaps today more than ever we must understand that corruption destroys democracy and the rule of law, erodes the stability of governments, and, above all, weakens public trust in their institutions. It also negatively affects the currency of human rights, particularly as regards economic, social, and cultural rights. Accordingly, the theme of this Summit—Democratic Governance against Corruption—is a matter of crucial importance for the countries of the Hemisphere, provided that we truly want to escape our age-old problems.

Corruption denies us confidence in our states and in our societies and hampers the electoral processes and security that we are required to put in place.

And, worse still, it prevents us from helping to improve the living conditions of our most vulnerable inhabitants, in that it impacts the poorest sectors and basic sanitation, health, and education services, etc. And I would like to emphasize, in particular, education as a public good and a universal right, given that the future and the realization of our peoples depend on its quality and equity. Therefore, eliminating corruption is the greatest challenge we face and would be one of the century's most important achievements.

Over the past five years, under the administration of President Horacio Cartes, whose mandate concludes this August 15, we have continued to make progress away from a culture that was traditionally infested with clientelism, prebendalism, and patrimonialism, and to evolve toward a model centered on transparency and formality that seeks to ensure public access to information and offer greater equality of opportunities.

Access to public information in recent times has led to unprecedented actions, and the political decision was made to crystallize the public desire for "what is public to be made public" and for everything to be done "in the light of day."

One of the central issues in the fight against corruption is the need to establish greater transparency. To that end, the Paraguayan State has set about enforcing two flagship laws that are available to all Paraguayans: the Law on Free Access to Public Information and Government Transparency, and the Law Establishing the Obligation of Providing Information on the Use of Public Resources for Wages and Salaries and Other Remunerations Assigned to the Public Servants of the Republic of Paraguay.

In the country, everybody—without exception, regardless of their social or political standing—is bound by those laws, for which reason as public officials, we are permanently under the people's oversight and subject to public opinion. To that end, mechanisms and plans of action have been created, through the establishment of anticorruption and transparency offices in state agencies, in order to follow up on the legal provisions governing transparency.

Your Excellencies:

For all the reasons I have set out, Paraguay supports the Lima Commitment. This is because it aims at securing concrete, practical, action-oriented results to strengthen the fight against corruption in the Americas, conveying a clear message about the Hemisphere's responsibility and commitment in that regard.

In particular, we highlight our countries' commitment to strengthening democratic governance, transparency, and access to information, and to preventing corruption in the funding of political organizations and electoral campaigns, in public works, and in state contracting and procurement. This is an absolutely historic issue: eradicating impunity, which paves the road to corruption.

The Republic of Paraguay has historically identified with the international principles of sovereignty and the right of peoples to self-determination. But also, and most particularly since democracy was established in 1989, it has a vocation for promoting and defending the currency of freedoms and

human rights. Rights that are, in addition, universal. As such, it aligns its voice and its position in favor of a peaceful and democratic solution to the grave situation facing our sister Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and it calls for recognition of the serious humanitarian crisis underway and for the return of the rule of law. An election based solely on an electoral process cannot be considered legitimate if it is conducted in a context with political prisoners, with the denial of free of expression, and with restrictions on the full participation of all the country's political sectors.

Distinguished Presidents and Heads of State and Government, esteemed colleagues:

With the certainty demanded by the complex times in which we live, Paraguay trusts that the mandates of this Summit will receive appropriate institutional follow-up, in that through reasonable order based on justice, liberty, and our nations' prosperity, not only will we overcome the existing inequalities, but we will also be players in a world where peace, law, and civilized culture triumph as a way of life that is finally reconciled with individual dignity.

Once again, we condemn the abominable use of chemical weapons, wherever and by whomever, and, in particular, as we have just witnessed, against the population of Syria, and we call for the perpetrators to be brought to justice for crimes against humanity.

In concluding, on behalf of the government and people of the Republic of Paraguay, we express our solidarity with the sister Republic of Ecuador and, at the same time, vigorously condemn the cowardly murder of three journalists from the newspaper *El Comercio*. Freedom of the press and of expression are basic pillars of democracy and of a civilized society.

In concluding, I would like to extend our most sincere gratitude to the Government of Peru, to President Vizcarra, to the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, and to all those who worked so hard to ensure the success of this Eighth Summit.

Thank you very much.