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REMARKS BY THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF EL SALVADOR, ALEXANDRA HILL

Distinguished Chair of the Ninth Summit of the Americas,

Distinguished Heads of State and Government,

Distinguished Heads of Delegation,

Ladies and gentlemen:

El Salvador is attending this ninth Summit of the Americas in the conviction that the search for real solutions to the historic challenges faced by the Americas demands a respectful and constructive dialogue.

The Summit of the Americas was conceived as a venue for building consensus, forging synergies, and adopting strategic decisions to contribute to our Hemisphere's progress toward the development and well-being of our people. After 28 years of Summits, our peoples are still waiting for real solutions to transnational challenges that affect their daily lives.

On this occasion, our hosts have called us together to consider the topic "Building a sustainable, resilient, and equitable future."

But how can we aspire to a sustainable future? Before that, we must begin by building true solidarity now.

The Hemisphere's multilateral organizations must be remade or they will be doomed to disappear completely.

Ladies and gentlemen:

The El Salvador of today is a country that puts its sovereignty and the freedom and dignity of its people first. On June 1, the Government of President Nayib Bukele completed three years in office, during which time we have fought head-on against the old practices of the vested powers that for decades accumulated wealth and power for a few, keeping the entire population anchored in cycles of violence, poverty, exclusion, and inequality.

The strengthening, effective exercise, and consolidation of democracy are the fundamental pillars around which my country's transformative process is centered.

Many sectors, both national and international, and even at the government level, have questioned Salvadoran democracy, without recognizing the context or understanding our country's reality, and without historical or academic rigor. But they have remained silent in the face of atrocities in other parts of the world. This pattern of behavior does not contribute to a constructive relationship among states or between states and institutions.

The exercise of democracy and the rule of law in my country is geared toward providing solutions and answers to the population's political, social, economic, and cultural demands. The state's historical debt is being paid off. We are still not where we want to be, but in three years we have made more progress than in the previous three decades.

Our priority has been, is, and will always be to meet the needs of our people, of all Salvadorans. We are promoting a process of transformation in the approach to governance, based on a state geared toward well-being that places people and the common good at the forefront.

My government's actions amply prove that the rule of law is an essential component of democracy. The political opposition and its local and external partners are trying, without grounds or success, to make people believe otherwise.

In my country, we inherited centuries-old challenges: a democracy that was not really a democracy and that was responsible for so many lost generations. For that reason, our government promotes an effective democracy, in which all the state's work is geared to serving the masses, in order to generate opportunities, prosperity, and development.

In June 2019 we embarked on a crucial stage in our history: we are tackling and overcoming historical debts in the areas of underdevelopment, corruption, insecurity, and impunity.

The pandemic exposed the precariousness of my country's health system and, moreover, brought us up against an intransigent political opposition that, through unconstitutional decrees and resolutions, took away the government's power to decide on the health of our people.

Despite that, we were able to structure an attention and response mechanism that translated into health security for the population. The results are there for all to see, and for that reason they earned international recognition.

El Salvador has set out on a path of no return. We will not rest until we achieve the political, economic, and social transformation that will allow the construction of a just, democratic, and prosperous society for all Salvadorans. We will not back down, even though that requires overcoming monumental challenges and being the target of biased and tendentious accusations.

Three years into my government's term of office, its successes and achievements are evident. The determined popular support and approval it enjoys—the strongest in the country's republican history—is the best indicator of this.

Not by happenstance does President Nayib Bukele, with the outcomes of his leadership, enjoy a positive appraisal that goes beyond our borders; and this inspires us, as Salvadorans, to continue working for the country's development and social justice.

Ladies and gentlemen:

The pandemic marked a “before” and an “after” for the world; health and resilience continue to be a challenge for the Americas.

El Salvador is a regional reference point in the management of the pandemic by reason of its preventive actions, health sector administration, inoculation campaigns, and hospital infrastructure, as was recognized by representatives of the World Health Organization in 2021.

At the same time, the pandemic accelerated digital changes. And out of a problem came a transformation: a historic step for our society, where we have closed the digital divide. Now, all our students in the public education system have tablets and laptops with free internet connections to assist them in their academic activities. Under the vision of the First Lady, Gabriela de Bukele, we have also placed the needs of our children with disabilities at the forefront, providing them with technological tools adapted to each individual.

Thanks to her leadership, we have become a country of reference in various areas that work for the well-being of Salvadorans even before they are born. Now, we have an innovative legal framework, which allows us to provide unprecedented levels of specialized care for pregnant women and newborn babies: the Born with Love Law for Respectful Childbirth and Loving and Sensitive Newborn Care. In addition, a few days ago, our First Lady’s office presented the Legislative Assembly with a draft bill for the Growing Together Law, which will guarantee attention—in early childhood, later childhood, and adolescence—as a strategy to ensure protection and comprehensive care from the first years of life.

Climate change is another key issue, which is why it is essential for the existence of humankind that we commit ourselves to addressing it with determination as a region. However, those commitments will remain on paper if the will and resources for dealing realistically with this serious threat are not made available.

El Salvador’s approach to migration is based on a reality: we are a country of origin, transit, destination, and return. Second, we are committed to addressing the real root causes of migration, as a result of which we have been, since 2019, the country with the lowest number of arrivals at the U.S. and Mexican borders.

Our ultimate goal is for migration to be considered an option and not the only alternative for resolving the population’s development and security needs.

Mr. Chair:

My country is willing to work with each and every one of the countries of the Americas, as long as there is respect for our dignity as a state. Transforming a country that was received in deplorable conditions of political, economic, and social decay has required leadership, tenacity, and drastic measures. That is the model of success that defines President Nayib Bukele.

The achievements we have attained in three years of government are significant. For the first time since we became a republic, El Salvador breathes hope, peace, and a desire for progress. We still have a long way to go and many obstacles to overcome, but we will not turn back.

El Salvador is open to working alongside those partners, friends, and allies who respect us as a sovereign country.

Thank you very much.