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*STATEMENT OF HIS EXCELLENCY*

*CARLOS D. MESA GISBERT*

*PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOLIVIA*

Mr. President of the General Assembly, Presidents, Heads of Government, delegates:

On behalf of Bolivia I want to express a concern, a concern which is global. The question of terrorism. A world which is haunted by terrorism is an insecure world, a world whose prospects are threatened. Bolivia believes that the fight against terrorism is one of the most important tasks that we need to confront together.

The occurrences in Beslan in the Russian Federation show how far it is possible to go in brutal actions that do not have the slightest sense of humanism.

The fight against terrorism must also be related to the fight against other scourges that are of concern to us all. In this context, Bolivia expresses its firmest commitment to the fight against drug trafficking, which is being conducted in Bolivia through the eradication of coca and also, through what has been a tradition of consumption in the country that needs to be dealt with.

This work could not be done without the presence and the support of the international community and in the context of shared responsibility.

Shared responsibility presupposes that action needs to be taken at both sides of the point- both sides of production. Shared responsibility means that the social issues and the economic issues need to be considered when the problem is tackled.

Bolivia has developed the idea of alternative development and that is something that we want to turn into comprehensive development today. In other words the participation of the community of the villages where coca is produced in Bolivia, should be part of the decision-making process and of the design of strategies so that there are reasonable economic options to farmers for their products and to reduce expenditures in the eradication of coca and in particular in the process of finding alternative ways that are viable for the Bolivian economy.

We believe that the fight against scourges that have been afflicting humankind recently, could not be fought without multilateralism.

We firmly believe in multilateralism and we strongly support the United Nations.



One of the crucial issues in the country was the definition of an energy policy, after we saw that our nation had enormous reserves of natural gas in the South American Continent.

We chose a path which was attractive though difficult and which showed our wish for participatory democracy in the framework of our society. What we chose was a binding referendum in which the people of Bolivia could themselves decide what they wanted to do with their most important natural resources.

The referendum showed the will to participate, the will to define our own destiny. It took place on the 18th of July and it was successful. It took place in a framework of peace, of democratic participation, and of giving clear responses,

I also want to say that we have achieved something very important following the crisis, and it relates to the recovery of peace. With action of transparency, honesty and austerity that Bolivia needed urgently, and that does not mean that the task is done.

The fight against corruption will always be a challenge in our country as it is elsewhere in the world. But I believe that we have displayed a clear commitment which has made it possible for us to gain credibility and legitimacy in the framework of our society.

Transparency, honesty, austerity, these are all vital elements in a poor nation which needs to administer appropriately and efficiently the meager resources that it has and it is in this context that I want here, in the United Nations to thank the international community which has constantly been in support of Bolivia in its crisis and in these months which has helped us to conduct consistent macroeconomic policy to resolve issues such as a large fiscal deficit.

I would like to mention that because of our geographical location in the center of the Subcontinent, Bolivia must be part of a process of integration which is moving forward quickly, a process of integration that has two major protagonists, the Andean Community of Nations, of which we are a part, and MERCOSUR of which we are also Associated Members.

At the beginning we were a "Hinge Country" but now we are in the process of integration moving toward a large South American block of nations which we welcome and for which we are working.

In that context of articulation and integration, Bolivia has a key place in any process of infrastructure development. In energy, Bolivia is a country that can be a key point for energy distribution in South America. In fiber optics, in telecommunications, in highways. We are vital and must help and not obstruct.

There is a thought that I would like to express to the multilateral organizations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other organizations that are cooperating with Bolivia and with other developing countries.

Bolivia because of its revenues, because of its high debt has been considered a HIPC country and in theory, that fact has given it a series of advantages for debt servicing and above all, for directing that debt servicing toward social services, but paradoxically, this has limited the country's capacity to obtain non-concessional loans to make it possible for us to carry forward infrastructure projects that are not only of interest to Bolivia but also of interest to all the countries of the region.

We must begin to work differently in our view. In international organizations and how these loans are interpreted to make them more flexible and not to produce the paradox in which an advantage becomes a "dogal" that makes