

(Check against delivery)

**STATEMENT OF H.E. MR. HAROLD CABALLEROS
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL**

September 26, 2012

Thank you, Mister President,

We are grateful to your Government for having organized this debate, and express our gratitude to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States Nabil El-araby for their respective interventions.

Mister President,

I am pleased to participate once again in a debate of this Council, especially when addressing such a relevant topic as the one you have proposed. This topic, in essence, has two vectors. The first deals with peace and security in the Middle East, while the second falls under the evolution of the application of Chapter Eight of the Charter; in this case, the relationship between this Council and the League of Arab States.

On the first aspect, our delegation has spoken on multiple occasions on the matter in this Chamber. Therefore, our positions on diverse specific matters, such as the situation in Syria, the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, the situations in Lebanon and Yemen, as well as the so-called "Arab Spring" are well known. We have also expressed our concerns over the inherent risks of the nuclear development in some countries of the region, with the possibility of its use for military purposes. The International Atomic Energy Agency has an essential role to play in the elimination of this risk.

Having said the above, and despite the worrying developments of the past weeks that hold the potential to destabilize even more a situation that is inherently vulnerable, we applaud, in general, the changes going on in the Middle East, since they originate from the grass roots of society, and pursue universal goals that we can all share, such as liberty, justice, dignity, and greater well-being for all.

My own region, Central America, and my own country, Guatemala, underwent important transitions in the 1980s and 1990s of the previous century. The Guatemalan Peace Accords posited a more democratic and tolerant society, respectful of human rights, with greater opportunities for all, and subjected to the rule of law. For over 25 years we have fought to meet these objectives, with very important achievements, but still with some *lacunae* and shortcomings. We know how difficult it is to foster change, but we persist in this endeavour regarding our own country.

Of course, we desire the same for those nations in the Middle East that have launched processes that seek more democratic, participative and inclusive systems of governance. In Latin America we have witnessed that freely elected Governments tend to resolve their differences, if any, with their neighbours, peacefully and through negotiations. That is an important and encouraging lesson for our friends in the Middle East. And another lesson is that the intensity of potential conflicts diminishes

when the economies offer greater opportunities of welfare to the population. Therefore, we believe that democracy, development, justice and peace go hand in hand.

Mister President,

One additional lesson is relevant to our debate of today, and it relates to the second vector I mentioned previously: we value the role played by regional and sub-regional organizations. In our part of the world, we have over sixty years of experience in benefiting from the institutions of Central American integration to forge a regional economic space and create the basis for a political union. That is why we have supported the increasingly broad alliances which the Security Council has built with regional entities, both in Africa and in the Middle East. We applaud the presence of the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States in this meeting, whose partnership role in addressing the challenges of the Middle East is increasingly significant, without diminishing in any way the purview that depends exclusively of the Council. In cementing that partnership, you can count on the support of Guatemala.

Thank you.