STATEMENT OF GUATEMALA, AS PRO-TEMPORE CHAIR OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN INTEGRATION SYSTEM (SICA)

HIGH-LEVEL THEMATIC DEBATE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON STRENGTHENING COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
(New York, 4 May, 2015)

Mr. President,

It is an honour to address you today, on behalf of the members of the Central American Integration System (SICA): Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, the Dominican Republic, and my country Guatemala.

Our gratitude goes to you and your Office for organizing this important debate.

We also value the presence of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and that of the representatives of regional and sub-regional organizations and distinguished key note speakers from all parts of the globe that have joined the debate today.

Mr. President,

We come from the Central American region, which has accumulated more than sixty years of successful experiences in the construction of intraregional cooperation, promoted thought common multilateral organizations. The degree of economic interdependence between the countries that belong to the Central American Common Market and to the Central American Integration System (SICA) is high, measured in terms of trade and reciprocal investment, and the ever greater integration of our markets and our societies. Added to the above, we have assimilated a culture of intraregional cooperation situated at the center of the culture of our people, aimed at resolving common problems through joint actions, supported by a web of institutions and inter-governmental mechanisms. A reflection of the previously stated is found in the continuous communications between our Heads of State, Ministers and other senior officials, within the framework of our integration system.

In addition, having overcome foreign military intervention and the internal conflicts which affected our Central American region so adversely in the seventies and eighties of the past century, the present accent in that culture of cooperation is found in spurring our economic and social development. Not only we overcome armed conflict and dictatorship in our region as an irreversible achievement, but also the level of affinities and common interest that exist between the countries of our region have contributed to strengthening respect of the principle of resolving all conflicts or misunderstandings
between us through peaceful means and diplomatic-political dialogue. The integration process has a fundamental objective of bringing Central America and the Dominican Republic as a region of peace, freedom, justice, democracy, social inclusiveness and development.

At the same time it is important to reflect on the historical challenges and the fact that we are the only region in the world that had succeeded in resolving on its own account the conflicts faced and on December 13, 1991 with the adoption of the Tegucigalpa Protocol to the Charter of the Organization of Central American States constitutes a new paradigm in the field of security: “the Democratic Security”. Article 3b) of the “Tegucigalpa Protocol” establishes that “To define a new regional security model based on a reasonable balance of forces, the strengthening of civilian government, the elimination of extreme poverty, the promotion of sustained development, protection of the environment, and the eradication of violence, corruption, terrorism, and trafficking in drugs and arms.”

I would further add that our culture of intra-regional cooperation has been made extensive to our entire region of Latin America and the Caribbean. It should be recalled that the so-called Contadora Group, which in time became the Rio Group, and today inspires the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), was born from the interest of all our countries in finding a political solution to the situation in Central America.

Latin America contributed significantly with the United Nations in the establishment and maintenance of observer missions that supported El Salvador and my country to implement our Peace Accords and to take the institutional and democratic path.

Mr. President,

The fact that the region is not anymore affected by armed conflict, does not mean that we are absent from the indispensable activities of the United Nations in the global arena.

We coincide that cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations has remained a cornerstone of the work of the United Nations as recognized in Chapter VIII of the UN Charter and various resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. The long and fruitful collaboration between the UN and SICA has provided tangible and valuable benefits.

Since 2010, our regional integration process has focused in five priority areas: 1) Economic Integration; 2) Democratic Security; 3) Prevention and Mitigation of Natural Disasters and the effects of Climate Change; 4) Social Integration; and 5) Institutional Capacity Building. The United Nations has long worked with the countries of Central America to promote those priorities.

In that respect, we encourage the United Nations Secretariat to continue to promote and expand cooperation with the SICA General Secretariat, in order to increase the capacity of the two organizations to attain their objectives and to seek answers to global challenges of climate change, disaster risk reduction, the achievement of sustainable development challenges, including the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the eradication of poverty, reducing inequality and the strengthening
of public health, among other. Just as important and of particular relevance to the region is the fight against the challenge of public security, drug trafficking, transnational organized crime and the protection of the human rights of migrants, including unaccompanied children and adolescents separated from their families.

As we continue the course of the post 2015 development agenda, the financing for development architecture and the new climate change agreements, SICA reaffirms its readiness and commitment to work with the United Nations to ensure that the Organization remains the universal forum to advance global responses to our challenges. We cannot ignore that for the future of peace and stability the structural causes of our problems, such as lack of education, health and social justice must be treated, and the Agenda post 2015 offers us a unique opportunity to address these topics from nearby.

Central America is among the most vulnerable disasters-risk regions in the world. Practically all studies places us among the first positions and lots of work need to be done in this regard. Natural disasters like Hurricane Mitch that killed more than 9000 people and directly affected more than 3 million in 1998, was a clear example of how poverty and exclusion increase damage. Given this inescapable reality and other major disasters in recent years, Central American countries have recognized the need to work towards strategies that integrate the economic, social and environmental causes of risks and that predispose such disasters and their impacts.

Other effects may be associated with food security, due to the effects of climate change; the safety of millions of people could be at risk and even danger. In that sense, international cooperation need to be enhanced in order to support the Strategic Framework for the Reduction of Vulnerability and Disasters in Central America "Regional Plan for Disaster Reduction -PRRD“.

We emphasize the Regional Program for Food Security and Nutrition for Central America (PRESANCAII), which aims to contribute to the reduction of the food and nutrition insecurity in the most vulnerable populations in Central America, strengthening the integration system as part of a process that aims to build integrated policies on social, environmental, and economic issues. AND reach within your application, a human rights-based approach to legislation, policies, programs and regional plans, directly relevant to food safety and nutrition. It also seeks to achieve within its application, a human rights-based approach to legislation, policies, programs and regional plans, relevant to food safety and nutrition.

We believe that the United Nations has a central role in our region and encourage the Organization to continue working closely with SICA and with other sister organizations such as CARICOM, because we share the same vulnerabilities and valuable expertise that could support both, small island developing states (SIDS) and middle-income countries (MICS).

Mr. President,

What is clear in light of historical experience is that both regional and global efforts must acknowledge that overcoming of conflicts and the route to a sustainable peace, depend on a joint endeavor which intertwines the agendas of security, justice, the respect for human rights and sustainable development. In each of those areas there appear to be diverse strengths and complementarities between the United
Nations and regional organizations, and the acknowledgment of those strengths and its complementarities permit a distinct and fruitful space for institutional cooperation at the multilateral level between regional and global entities.

The Twenty First Century is giving rise to a period of ever stronger and responsible regional institutions. The United Nations should be pleased at this trend. It reflects a slow but firm path of transition from the post-war world towards a multipolar world where dialogue and peace are increasingly urgent and basic to preserve our planet and life, human development and defeating poverty. The regional organizations are destined to be active partners in this multipolar world, by assuming their responsibilities towards the international community to assure peace and sustainable development, complementing the efforts made though the United Nations.

Mr. President,

I wish to conclude my statement by thanking you for the lucid concept note circulated by your Office, which helped give guidance to today’s discussions in the interactive panels and also express our satisfaction for the Political Declaration, to be adopted tomorrow, which reflects the content of our deliberations.

Thank you.