

Declaration of the San José Conference on Middle East Peace

March 12, 2011

We participants, convinced that:

Arab-Israeli peace, especially between Israel and the Palestinians, is an urgent international imperative and all states and regions have an interest in securing such a peace. Latin America, along with the rest of the international community, has a crucial role to play in enlarging the global constituency for Middle East peace and bringing additional actors into the peacemaking process.

Considering that:

During the last administration of former President and Nobel Peace Laureate Óscar Arias, Costa Rica took the historic decision of recognizing the State of Palestine. President Leonel Fernández of the Dominican Republic, with the same aplomb, subsequently recognized the Palestinian State. In recent months, numerous Latin American countries have also recognized Palestine, reaffirming the international consensus regarding the need to establish this state and end the Israeli occupation.

Negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians should be resumed as soon as possible, so as to deal with core issues such as borders, settlements, refugees, water, and Jerusalem. The result of these negotiations should be the establishment of two States living side by

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side in peace and security. This demonstrates a powerful resolve throughout Latin America to engage more directly in Middle East peacemaking and widen the number of international stakeholders in a two-state peace agreement.

Recognizing that:

In order to contribute to this important mission and to build upon the Global Foundation for Democracy and Development (FUNGLODE) Peace Forum held in July 2010 at Cap Cana, Dominican Republic, the Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress and the Global Foundation for Democracy and Development, under the auspices of the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences and encouraged by their leaders, Dr. Arias and Dr. Fernández, assembled a distinguished group of experts, diplomats, analysts and activists from around the world in San José, Costa Rica to evaluate the state of the Middle East peace process and examine what Latin American states and civil society organizations can do to promote these vital goals.

Declare in the San José Conference:

- 1) Latin American states have a direct and crucial interest in promoting peace in the Middle East, and should work together towards this goal.
- 2) Such a peace must be based on international legitimacy, and should reflect the large body of international law and UN Security Council resolutions on final status issues.

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3) Since peace must be based on international legitimacy, all parties must respect their existing agreements and commitments, as well as other aspects of international law.

4) All parties should refrain from any measures that compromise a viable final status agreement, including violence, threats and intimidation, settlement activity or other actions that serve to prejudice negotiations pursuant to international law, or that undermine trust and confidence. The international community, including Latin American states, should help ensure that there are commensurate consequences for any party violating its fundamental obligations and agreement

5) Peace in the Middle East should be based on an end to the occupation of Palestinian territories that began in 1967, and the creation of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state on those territories, with East Jerusalem as its capital, to live alongside Israel in peace and security. This should be the centerpiece of a broader, comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace that allows for the recognition of Israel by the entire Arab world.

6) The right of Israel to live in peace and security in the Middle East within recognized borders should be upheld.

7) The Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Arab League in 2002 is a crucial basis for a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace agreement. Israel should seriously engage with the Initiative. The Arab states should further define, elaborate and, when appropriate, implement the plan.

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