

*Speech delivered by Cuban
President Miguel-Diaz Canel
before the VII Summit of Heads
of State and Government of the
Community of Latin American
and Caribbean States (CELAC),
January 24, 2023*

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Returning to Buenos Aires for this meeting of nations is a reason to rejoice, especially after days of massive euphoria that overflowed its enormous avenues over a triumph that we feel is our own in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Speech delivered by Cuban President Miguel-Díaz Canel before the VII Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), January 24, 2023, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Dear President Alberto Fernández:

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government and other heads of delegation:

Dear Latin American and Caribbean friends:

Returning to Buenos Aires for this meeting of nations is a reason to rejoice, especially after days of massive euphoria that overflowed its enormous avenues over a triumph that we feel is our own in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The joy is completed and honored with the full reinstatement of Brazil by decision of our beloved Lula, to whom we express our full support and solidarity in the face of the violent and anti-democratic acts that attempted to create chaos and disrespect the majority will of the Brazilian people, who elected him as president.

We are united and summoned by the necessary Latin American and Caribbean integration, in this diverse and inclusive mechanism; based on a deep calling for independence.

In Washington, the determination to divide us, stigmatize us and subordinate us to their own interests persists, almost 200 years after the enactment of the Monroe Doctrine. This became evident at the exclusive meeting held in Los Angeles, where, abusing its power as host and closing its eyes and ears to the demands of the majority, it excluded, fractured and ignored us. The political failure of that meeting demonstrated the isolation of the hegemonism and domination strategies, against the feeling of unity and sovereignty shared by our nations.

Cuba continues to reiterate in all international forums the dangerous actions that seek to prolong imperialist hegemonism by undermining multilateralism and peace.

The stubborn reality will always be stronger than any attempt to divide us, because we share challenges brought about by an unjust, plundering and anti-democratic international order, which prevents us from overcoming alarming levels of poverty, unemployment, food insecurity and exclusion that define the economic and social panorama of the region, still the most unequal on the planet.

It is therefore urgent to join forces and set out a strategic vision for economic, social and cultural integration, which will enable us to move towards sustainable development.

What is preventing us from complementing each other, promoting inter-regional trade and boosting investment in areas of common interest?

It is urgent to find fair solutions to the foreign debt problem; and it is essential to demand the end of unilateral coercive measures and illegal blockades.

In the face of a hegemonic cultural model, it is necessary to defend our extensive and rich culture, the genuine result of centuries of tradition and miscegenation, and the cornerstone of the

emancipation and integration process of our peoples.

In a complex and challenging post-pandemic world, which suffers from the serious economic, political and social repercussions of military conflicts and the unstoppable impacts of climate change, the only possibility for those of us who come from a common colonial and neocolonial past is unity.

In this sense, Cuba supports as an interesting and useful project the idea of establishing the Latin American Pharmaceutical Agency.

Dear colleagues:

The government of the United States insists on destroying the development model that we Cubans decided sovereignly to build, through a cruel, illegitimate, illegal and immoral policy of economic asphyxiation.

It uses its technological hegemony and control of the media and digital platforms to carry out destabilization operations, an unprecedented media war, to promote the so-called "regime change", with the support of tens of millions of dollars from the federal budget.

Its unfounded and unilateral decision to include Cuba in the bogus list of States that allegedly sponsor terrorism severely impacts our development goals.

I thank once again this Community and its member states for their forceful call to remove Cuba from the list and lift the blockade.

Cuba will not be intimidated by such aggressions. We will not betray the history of resistance, dignity and defense of social justice that made the Cuban Revolution an emancipating force for human beings.

We do not limit ourselves to resist. Cuba has not stopped creating, in the hard years of dealing with the pandemic and the blockade worsened by 243 measures applied by the Trump administration. Vaccines, dozens of new medicines and disease care protocols, as well as new equipment and treatments, confirm the value of that creative resistance.

Distinguished colleagues:

We are encouraged by the changes in the regional political landscape, guided by social justice and the search for peace and sovereignty.

At this time, the Peruvian people deserve our attention and solidarity. It is up to our Peruvian brothers and sisters to find solutions to their challenges on their own.

With plenty of arguments that history gives us, I also say that we do not recognize, nor will we recognize any authority whatsoever in the OAS, which is the organization that, at the service of the U.S., supported and supports military interventions, coups d'état and interference in Latin America and the Caribbean against popular and legitimate governments. The OAS is the organization that did nothing against the murders, torture, forced disappearances and persecution of social, progressive and leftist leaders of the region, which will remain forever in our memory.

Cuba reiterates, but it goes without saying today, its support for and firm solidarity with the legitimate governments of Venezuela, Nicaragua and Bolivia, which are subject to persistent destabilization attempts.

Likewise, we support the just demands for reparations concerning the damages caused by slavery and colonialism of our Caribbean brothers, who need and deserve a fair, special and differentiated treatment.

We will always support the noble causes: the independence of Puerto Rico; stability and peace in Haiti, based on full respect for its sovereignty; the peace process in Colombia; and Argentina's right over the Malvinas, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, and the surrounding maritime areas.

We condemn the actions and threats against the delegation of President Nicolas Maduro, denounced by the Venezuelan government.

And from the beloved Argentina, whose women gave outstanding heroism to the history of the region, I convey all our solidarity and support to Vice President Cristina Fernandez.

Latin American and Caribbean friends:

Under the leadership of Argentina and its President, Alberto Fernandez, CELAC achieved remarkable progress in 2022, which we must continue to consolidate. We extend our full support to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and to Brother Ralph Gonsalves during his Presidency of CELAC in 2023, always guided by principles of unity in diversity, solidarity and cooperation, in full compliance with the goals set forth in the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace.

You can also count on Cuba as Chairman of the Group of 77 plus China during this year, in which we will work tirelessly to worthily represent the interests of the nations of the South.

We are inspired by the ideals of integration of the Latin American and Caribbean heroes. CELAC is the work of all of us. Strengthening it is an urgent necessity and a shared duty to achieve the integration of Our America.

Thank you very much.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/index.php/en/especiales/exclusivas/311576-speech-delivered-by-cuban-president-miguel-diaz-canel-before-the-vii-summit-of-heads-of-state-and-government-of-the-community-of-latin-american-and-caribbean-states-celac-january-24-2023>



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