

## REPUBLIC OF ECUADOR

### INTERVENTION OF THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, CECILIA VACA JONES

#### SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT BEYOND 2014

New York, 22 September 2014

Mr President, Honourable Delegates

Twenty years have passed since the Cairo Programme of Action was adopted, and clearly many things have changed. However, inequality and poverty continue to be ongoing issues across the globe. For the Republic of Ecuador, 2008 represented a milestone, with the approval of a new Constitution reflecting the sovereign wishes of the Ecuadorian people to transform and reconstitute the legal, political and economic organization of the country, clearly establishing a system of development based on rights, justice and the Quechua philosophy of Sumak Kawsay or Living Well and consolidating Ecuador as a secular, plurinational, intercultural, unitary, independent, sovereign, democratic, social, constitutional State based on rights and justice.

This social and political pact has enabled us to make significant progress in social development such as, during these two decades, reducing poverty by over 18 percentage points, so that it stood at 8 percent in June 2014, with the firm commitment to eradicate it completely by 2017. We have increased by more than 20 percentage points the population covered by social insurance, and we will make every effort to provide universal social security coverage, including coverage of self-employed and unpaid workers. Basic education is universal, with 91.8 percent of the target population starting secondary education.

During the last 7 years, we have almost tripled the percentage of GDP allocated to health, paving the way for universal access to healthcare, with an emphasis on promotion and prevention.

Ecuador is implementing a National Inter-departmental Strategy for Family Planning and the prevention of Pregnancy in Adolescents involving education, health and inclusion. Access to family planning methods is free, universal and confidential.

Thirty-nine percent of the representatives in the National Assembly are women. The salary gap between men and women has been reduced by 12 percentage points and femicide has been declared a crime. To ensure participation and governance, five national agendas have been established covering equality in the areas of Disability, Human Mobility, Gender, Intergenerational Relations, Nationalities and Peoples.

These achievements are the result of a firm political decision and of the convergence of successful social and economic public policy, but they are above all the result of our ideological principle of valuing human beings over capital and of generating opportunities and capacities from early childhood. Perhaps making a heartfelt commitment to these ideological principles is the greatest challenge we face as a country and as human beings.

But we must also address major problems:

- malnutrition in children and in the population as a whole
- lack of job security for young people
- the need to provide universal, free, high-quality healthcare and education
- the prevalence of adolescent pregnancy
- gender inequality in the distribution and payment of paid work and unpaid work in the home
- racial discrimination
- situations of violence and the lack of access to services faced by vulnerable groups
- and the violation of the rights of migrants.

These points will shape our agenda over the years to come.

We are responsible for taking political decisions to put an end to this intolerable state of affairs. The world order is not just unfair. It is immoral and we must change it.

Good afternoon.