

# *Salvadoran President Emphasizes Social Gains in 1st Year Speech*

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San Salvador, June 2 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Salvadoran President Salvador Sanchez Ceren lauded the numerous social and economic achievements during his first year in office, highlighting the progress made by his government with respect to health and inequality.

“The reform of the health system advances forward; we strengthened the integration of the system, as well as the coverage and the quality of services,” said Sanchez Ceren from the halls of the National Assembly, during his first address to the nation on Monday.

The president added that his government was committed to “continue strengthening the Universal Social Protection System,” and noted that \$62 million had been invested in health-related infrastructure and equipment in over 90 public health centers.

Sanchez Ceren spoke about his government's achievements in poverty reduction, stating that poverty dropped from 24.9 percent in 2009 to 20 percent in 2014. Meanwhile extreme poverty dropped from 10.5 percent to 6.2 percent over the same time period.

Ceren also emphasized the economic progress under his watch, as well as the openness of his government. During his first year in office, he successfully negotiated a trade deal with China, which has been an important purchaser of goods from other Latin American countries.

Economic growth in El Salvador reached two percent in 2014 and is expected to reach 2.5 percent in 2015. The state has made important investments in the productive capacity of the country, providing direct and indirect credit to small and medium sized business. The government of also invested \$363 million dollars in 448 infrastructure projects.

The president said that when he took office a year ago, that he would conduct himself with “honor, austerity, efficiency and transparency” as well as a commitment to “work on major agreements that would allow the country to resolve major problems.”

Sanchez Ceren said confidently, “I affirm with satisfaction that the commitment made before you and the people has been honored.” The Salvadoran leader ended his first address to the nation on an optimistic note, saying, “If in one year we were able achieve these important advances, I am positive that at the end of a five-year mandate we will have a better country.”

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