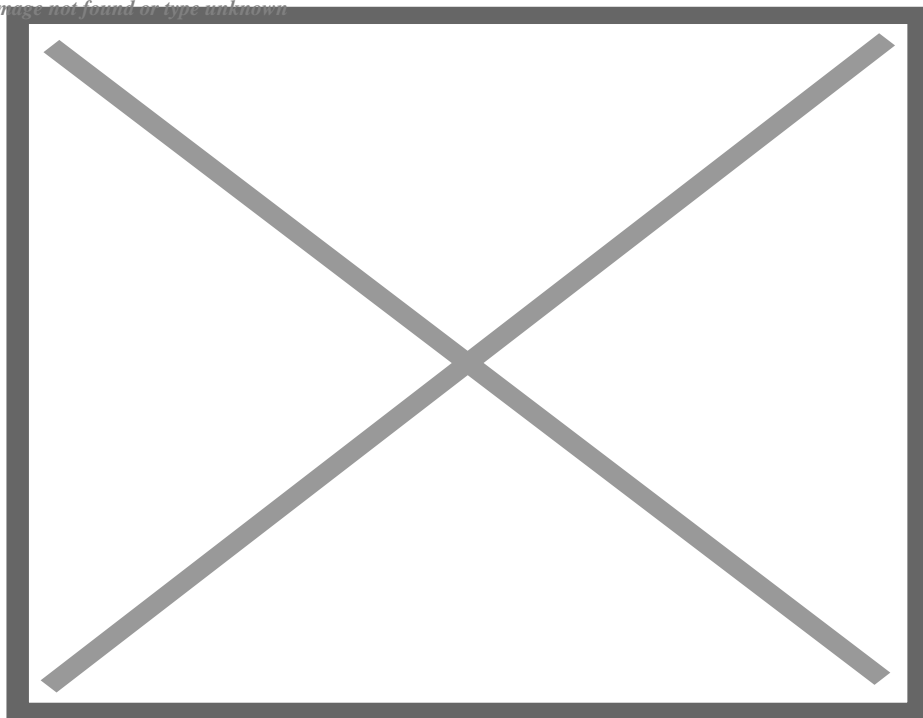


Speech by Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel at VIII Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)

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Speech by the President of the Republic of Cuba, Miguel Díaz-Canel at the ceremony to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace.

VIII Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). St. Vincent and the Grenadines *** March 1, 2024.

Dear Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves,

Dear President Xiomara Castro,

Dear President Gustavo Petro,

Dear Secretary General António Guterres,

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government and other Heads of Delegations. Latin American and Caribbean friends:

I thank and congratulate Brother Ralph for the initiative of bringing us together in this official ceremony to commemorate together the tenth anniversary of the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace. Our proclamation is very young, but it is undoubtedly an historic milestone in the equally young history of CELAC. Cuba is particularly honored that the signing of this emblematic document by the Heads of State and Government of the 33 countries of the region took place at the Havana Summit.

But the merit belongs to everyone, because only the will of all made it not only possible, but also effective. The proclamation means hope for millions of people whose main concern is survival in a world convulsed by violence and wars. The region and the world need peace in order to concentrate all its capacity, intelligence and resources on confronting the true enemies of our species: hunger, poverty, climate change, illiteracy, disease, the depletion of natural resources and the growing marginalization to which the vast majority of the world's population is subjected today.

José Martí called the land where the battles for peace are fought blessed. Defending peace also implies the firmest rejection of unilateral coercive measures and blockades imposed by powerful countries that seek to act as universal judges to isolate and subjugate sovereign states. To support peace is to defend the right of each people to freely choose its political model and its own path to economic and social development.

To advance the integration of Latin America and the Caribbean, it is essential to preserve peace. It allows us to listen to each other in order to understand each other, to come closer to what unites us and to discuss our differences in a civilized and respectful manner. I remember with great emotion that moment, ten years ago, when the leader of the Cuban Revolution, Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, in his capacity as president pro tempore of CELAC, invited his colleagues in the region to sign the proclamation. Unity in diversity was necessary and is still present. I

Today we know that history was being made. We made it because the proclamation did not remain in that room and with those signatures. It is a living, transcendental and paradigmatic document that commits us before our peoples and the world. It is a valuable legacy to present and future generations who will benefit from the wise decision to banish forever from the region the use and threat of the use of force.

Let us honor the giant heroes of our America. In the face of differences, dialogue. In the face of challenges, cooperation. In the face of diversity, more unity. In the face of war and violence, let us defend peace.

Thank you very much.



Radio Habana Cuba