



Speech by
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Article 9 and Article 12: Peace Constitutions for Global Disarmament

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At precisely these moments in time, I believe it is important to reflect upon how "There is no way to peace; peace is the way," as that formidable Indian politician and thinker Mahatma Gandhi declared with great insight nearly 100 years ago. And, indeed, dear friends, peace is the road that your people are travelling, the fraternal nations of Japan and Costa Rica, whose constitutions are the light that illuminate that path, the way of peace.

Thus, Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, whose lighthouse guides, is the eternal premise that asserts that peace is an "everlasting good." And Article 12 of the Costa Rican Constitution goes even further by abolishing the military as a permanent institution.

This is to say that Article 9 and Article 12, two constitutional siblings in countries with different realities and large geographical distance, can become focal points for pacifist mechanisms that today constitute the way of peace. These mechanisms include:

- Military spending reductions;
- Prevention of the development and sale of new arms;
- Promotion of nuclear weapon free zones;
- Promotion of the human right to live in peace;
- Reinforcement of the non-use of force and non-belligerence between states;
- Stimulation of the prevention of conflicts;
- Reassurance of the sustainability of life on this planet, reversing the effects of war on the environment; and
- Creation and development of peace education initiatives in cities and communities.

These are mechanisms that harbor hope for a society in which reason prevails, in which men cease to be wolves toward their fellow men, and in which peaceful coexistence no longer continues to be a utopia but a necessity and a practice within society as a whole for the survival of the human race.

Today, Ecuador incorporates with dignity and firmness these peace constitutions, and for that reason I am here today, dear friends and appreciated authorities, on behalf of he who was originally invited – that great humanist whom we have as the Vice President of the Republic of Ecuador – Mr. Lenin Moreno Garcés, who is a person with a physical disability, unlike most who occupy the second highest positions in the government. Vice President Moreno knows how to exemplify integrity, positive attitude toward life, and solidarity that touches us all.

His unavoidable absence has permitted me, in my capacity as Secretary General of the Vice-Presidency, to express these ideas on behalf of the Ecuadorian Government, which under the framework of humanist ideals sends its “citizens revolution” out to the world. This revolution already has undoubtedly produced in its new constitution, historically approved and adopted in September of 2008 through a referendum, this principle – a Magna Carta that guarantees to be one of the most pacific of the 21st Century. Thus, Article 3 of Title 1, as a constitutional element of the Ecuadorian state, guarantees its inhabitants a **culture of peace**, comprehensive security, and life in a democratic society that is free of corruption.

In this same title, and as an unprecedented theme in our constitutional history, it states that **Ecuador is a territory of peace and will not permit the establishment of foreign military bases, nor of foreign installations for military purposes**, prohibiting thus the transfer of national military bases to armed forces or any other security forces of another country.

In Title 2 of “Rights,” it enshrines liberty and the right of its people to live in a healthy environment that is ecologically balanced, free of contamination, and in harmony with nature. Furthermore, in the “Rights of Nature” section, it consecrates Pachamama – Mother Nature in our indigenous language, and a term that synthesizes both where life is produced and where it is carried out – and constitutionally guarantees the complete respect for her existence, maintenance, regeneration, and vital cycles. At the same time, it establishes as a responsibility of all Ecuadorians the maintenance of peace and security, and, therefore, respect for the rights of nature and our Pachamama – to preserve a healthy environment and utilize natural resources in a rational and sustainable way.

Additionally, compulsory military service was changed to a civil-military service that is completely voluntary, thereby inducing in the young people of Ecuador a spirit of service to native values and avoiding the traditional rejection of forced military recruitment.

The constitution, in Title 8, which deals with international relations, proclaims with clarity a peaceful co-existence, advocates peaceful solutions to controversies, condemns interventions of any form, whether armed incursions, aggression, occupations, or military or economic blockades, promotes peace through universal disarmament, and condemns the development and use of arms of massive destruction and the imposition of bases or installations with military purposes. Lastly, it recognizes international law as a norm of conduct, in harmony with the most important principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

All this leads to define, in Title 6, our *Sumak Kawsay* (the good life): A regimen of comprehensive development that is organized, sustainable, and dynamic, in economic, political, sociocultural and environmental spheres that guarantee the good life. This is part of the inheritance of our indigenous ancestors who were in harmony with nature, practiced solidarity, and developed our culture. We were prestigious gold and silver smiths, a people who cultivated the arts and science, and not bellicose—if anything, we were objects of outrageous war-mongering, as has been amply recorded in history.

Finally, our *National Development Plan*, with all the force of the new constitution, guarantees comprehensive national sovereignty, which already includes concepts such as food sovereignty and peace, and supports Latin American as well as international integration.

I have here, dear friends, the synthetic vision of a constitution that is truly pacific, which today is a source of pride for all Ecuadorians. We should reflect on the words of that great pope of the Catholic church, John Paul II, who expressed that nobody should harbor the illusion that the simple absence of war—though it is highly desirable—is synonymous with true peace, for there can be no true peace unless it is accompanied by equality, truth, justice, and solidarity.

From here, let me reiterate and applaud the words of our Nobel Peace Prize winner of 1987, the current president of our sister country, the Republic of Costa Rica, Mr. Oscar Arias Sanchez, who just yesterday appeared with his ideas in the newspaper *Hoy* of Quito, Ecuador. He indicated, among other things, that Latin America needs a new liberating army, which for the Americas of today is an army of doctors, of teachers, of engineers, of scientists, of a force that recognizes that only through development, education, and liberty can we obtain a new life and stability in the region, which we all so much long for.

Upon ending this short speech, and on behalf of the Ecuadorian government, in particular the Vice-Presidency of the Republic of Ecuador and its Foreign Ministry, I would like to effusively congratulate those outstanding men and women called Hibakushas in Japanese, who are an example of life for all of humanity. Survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, discriminated against and stigmatized for many years, today they courageously call for peace for all of humanity. Who more than they who have felt, who have lived through the horrors of war, can act and speak with legitimacy and shout to the world the necessity of abolishing nuclear weapons? They are here with us

today, making sure that the international conscience never forgets that Hiroshima and Nagasaki were a barbarism that shamed the human race, and that the nuclear potential of today contains much greater capacity for destruction than the bombs of 1945.

For that reason, we believe that it's not enough to speak of Peace; one should firmly believe in it and push to work to achieve it. This is a moral obligation of our current generations. I say this because of parts of my life experience. After a 35-year military career and after being former Commander General of the Ecuadorian Navy, I now, with great pride, work for a democratic and peaceful government like the one of the citizen's revolution in Ecuador.

Thank you, dear friends, for this opportunity.