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Nicolás Maduro Moros
President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

Special session to request the Enabling Law
National Assembly, October 8th, 2013



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AGAINST CORRUPTION
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FOREWORD

On October 8th, 2013, the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro Moros, requested the National Assembly (AN) to pass an Enabling Law that gives him powers to legislate in the economic field and fight corruption. These enabling powers will make it possible for the Bolivarian Government to take actions in order to develop a new ethics in politics, fight corruption and the economic war by the bourgeoisie against the Venezuelan people and boost the Venezuelan economy.

The Enabling Law bestows powers on the president to pass Decree Laws in fields established by the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The following is the speech delivered by President Nicolás Maduro within the framework of this new challenge faced by the Bolivarian Revolution.



Special session

NICOLÁS MADURO MOROS
PRESIDENT OF THE BOLIVARIAN
REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, CARACAS, OCTOBER 8TH, 2013



Good evening, Venezuela. You have been looking forward to this democratic day. We are starting it here today on a national TV and radio broadcast, which allows all Venezuela to know the great events of the country's republican and democratic life.

[National Assembly] representatives of the patriotic, revolutionary, socialist, *chavista* bloc; representatives of the Democratic Unity Roundtable, the Venezuelan opposition, we cannot ask for more democracy in a country which enjoys full public, civic and political liberties. This is how Venezuela has to be, a country with

democratic debate, respect for the Constitution, ideas, and true tolerance.

The Bolivarian Government is here. I'd like to greet Executive Vicepresident Jorge Arreaza, Planning Vicepresident Jorge Gordani, Social Issues Vicepresident and Youth Minister Héctor Rodríguez, Economy and Finance Vicepresident Rafael Ramírez, Territory Vicepresident Major General García Plaza, ministers, youth and women movement representatives, the Bolivarian National Armed Force (FANB), the Military High Command, dear comrade Carmen Teresa Meléndez Rivas, Admiral-in-Chief and Minister of People's Power for Defense.

Dear friend General in Chief Padrino López, commander-generals of the FANB four service branches, commander-general of the National Militia, thank you very much for being here. Venezuelan Ambassadors to Latin America, the Caribbean, and Europe who are here attending their annual workshop to defend the truth of Venezuela. You are to defend such a beautiful truth! Dear presidents of the Public Powers: the Supreme Court, the Citizen Power, the Moral Power, the National Electoral Council.

This place brings back many memories. We have experienced here intense days of democratic life for a country which has found the path towards a true democracy for the last 14 years. We first sat here in the extinct Congress of the Republic when we were just boys and girls; it was the last bicameral Congress of our Republic. The Senate and the House of Representatives used to hold their sessions here.

We sat here after an electoral process represented by a majority force in Venezuela, and though we were already a majority in this country, we were reduced by 25% by different electoral, institutional, political and media events.

We came here with a clear motto: Constituent now! We came here to guarantee the call for a transparent Constituent National Assembly which could result in the reorganization of the Republic through a constituent process. Then we became constituent representatives for a long time, so we know what a democratic debate is. We lived in this debate and we learned from it in those years of our Bolivarian Revolution. We always supported with love and loyalty the leadership of our eternal and beloved president and extraordinary human being, Hugo Chávez.

And here we are again ready for the debate you are going to call, dear friend President of the National Assembly, Diosdado Cabello; First Deputy President, Blanca Eekhout; Second Deputy Vicepresident, Darío Vivas; Secretary, Víctor Clark; Deputy Secretary, Fidel Vásquez.

We are here ready to activate this constitutional mechanism [the enabling law]. Venezuela has more than enough democratic mechanisms to handle the issues of vital interest to our Republic. As I will explain, today I have come to activate one of those mechanisms. I have come to ask for enabling powers to deepen, accelerate and to fight to the end for a new ethics in politics, for a new republican life, for a new society.

I pray to God, our Lord, for his blessing and protection to Venezuela in the first place, and all of us, for Venezuela to keep opening the gates of a 21st century full of prosperity, peace, stability, life, independence, sovereignty, and construction of a new real national union.

We brought a figurine of José Gregorio Hernández. This is a gift we are going to send today to Argentinean President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner on behalf of the Venezuelan people. We send her our love; we pray for her in this moment and for the Argentinean people.

And I want to pray to our saint, José Gregorio Hernández, the saint of the people, for his protection to Argentinean president, who is struggling for her health.

What unite us are deep bonds, sensible bonds of true humanity, of life. That is what moves us revolutionaries: love. And when we form those bonds, as we learned from our Commander Chávez, with presidents [and] prime ministers of the world, we form them on behalf of our people and the greatest traditions of kindness, solidarity, of the good sentiments our people have. Our people have a tradition, an extraordinary legacy of values, of good sentiments. Our people foster neither maliciousness, nor hate, nor selfishness.

On behalf of those good sentiments, on behalf of our people that are in a never-ending struggle, well, I will humbly present to you a set of thoughts, of proposals, to create a new national dynamic; a dynamic that merges debate and action with a central objective: the transformation of the republican ethical model and the transformation of Venezuela's economic model. These are two key elements which we believe are necessary to combine in a national offensive. I call on the consciences of our country to join us, so that together we can build a national strategy to bring forth a new political ethics that is sovereign, home-grown, [and] nationalist. We have [a history] to inspire us, to emulate and draw strength from.

Dear friend Diosdado Cabello, today is the Day of the Heroic Guerrilla Fighter. On October 8th, 1967, after three hours of combat in Quebrada de Yuro, Bolivia, Commander Ernesto Che Guevara was injured and taken prisoner.

On October 9th, he was killed on the CIA's orders. He later resurrected in the love and fights of the people.

Che embodies demanding and strict ethics. He was capable of demanding the utmost spirit of sacrifice as he was capable of

demanding it from himself. There are countless photos as testimony of this man carrying sacks, cutting cane, laying bricks... His austerity was known; his concept was that the leaders were the ones who had to set the example.

When he left for Bolivia, he demanded the Cuban state to grant no other privileges to his wife and children but to take care of them as it takes care of the rest of its citizens.

Che is a living, lasting lesson about the behavior revolutionaries must display in all fields.

Mr. President [of the National Assembly], dear friend Diosdado Cabello ... I want to begin my speech tonight by invoking the inspiring words of the Liberator Simón Bolívar, the words used in all their constructive, creative and liberating strength by our beloved commander. The genius of our Americas said: "My resolve and my wishes for the good of the nation will lead me to carry everything out and I will work incessantly, with no regard for the difficulties [that arise]..."

He did keep his word. Those of us who want the country's well-being are going to overcome all the difficulties we are facing today with the same Bolivarian determination. We are made of thoughts and actions; we are the people of difficulties, as Commander Chávez used to describe us.

From this starting point, these thoughts we consider, I will lay out a set of ideas, of proposals, about corruption. This is not a whim. It is not a whim that today we have come to the independent National Assembly to ask, on behalf of the people, for an enabling law that will give us a solid legal foundation to act quickly and with conviction against this evil, this disease, in order to preserve the life of the Republic and to guarantee public well-being.

From the ideological position that those of us who fight every day find ourselves

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in, as Commander Chávez said, to make Venezuela's path to socialism irreversible, this is a crucial, transcendent issue of life or death for the Bolivarian Republic. If corruption continues to grow and to perpetuate its capitalist logic of destruction, there will be no socialism here. Socialism will never be fully guaranteed among us in its deeply human dynamism in the midst of the anti-values of corruption.

Corruption is also a disease that affects public well-being, which breaks the social sector in its entirety.

The great political theorist Niccolò Machiavelli said: "a gangrened extremity that cannot be cured must be cut." A bit radical, right?

In similar fashion, the Liberator Simón Bolívar said, on April 11—a date that resonates with us—1828, when he wrote to Doctor José María del Castillo, said: "History teaches us that political gangrenes cannot be cured with palliatives..." It is clear that both Machiavelli and Bolívar referred to situations in which rot had set in that required political action, radical, unequivocal action, to find the cure that will lead to the full recovery of the public well-being.

Without public well-being, a Republic will inevitably march towards its dissolution. Preserving public well-being is a matter of life or death for a republic. There are no half measures.

We must eliminate the objective conditions that enable the continued development of diverse forms of corruption. And we will only achieve that, as our commander wrote in the Plan for the Nation, by passing the point of no return, by making Venezuela's path towards socialism irreversible.

One of the best ways of reaffirming our eternal loyalty to our Commander Chávez is to fight corruption every day without rest.

In this sense, we have begun an offensive in this battle that is truly decisive, and we will not abandon it. Therefore, I call on the people to neither allow corruption nor the corrupt, to not tolerate corruption from those [members of political parties] dressed in yellow nor those dressed in red.¹ It is the same crime, no matter how they are dressed. It is the same unpatriotic and anti-popular behavior.

Clearly, since human beings began to think of different forms of government, in the trajectory of societies based on class that has marked humanity for the past 7,000 years, I believe democracy to be the most elevated, and given that it is based on collective happiness, without the privilege of the few being imposed on the legitimate aspirations of the many. From the start, politics implied achieving a common good. That is how Aristotle characterized it. Aristotle wrote: "The good is certainly desirable when it is an individual's interest, but it takes on a more beautiful and more divine character when it is in the interest of the people and the State."

It has therefore been the common good that has given sense and reason to politics throughout history, as an aspiration of humanity for understanding in society based on dignity and respect. It is the ideal of collective happiness that has guided the eternal struggle of the people; the dream and project of a life in which the sovereign people can be recognized and they can make their own destinies.

Our people's struggle to fully attain democracy, the splendor of republican life, has been long, complex and bloody. A democracy, a republican life, it must be said, that were always threatened by the representatives of capital, be it domestic or foreign, by the ruthless colonial domination marked by the most barbaric pillaging. After our independence and the many struggles for freedom in the

1. Yellow is a signifier for opposition parties and supporters, while red is a signifier for pro-government parties and supporters.

19th century, we were witness to the surge of a caste of large landholders that reserved the media and power for themselves to set up fences and private haciendas that were limitless in scope.² Later, with the appearance of oil, we saw the emergence of the bourgeoisie and businessmen, and to top it off, they not only appropriated the riches but every so often they managed to become the government, whose fundamental reason for being was to safeguard the privileges of those sectors that used the country as they saw fit.

We can conclude that every type of governance we have known up to 1999 resulted in full and cowardly obedience to transnational corporations and an unproductive and parasitic domestic bourgeoisie.

Seen from a distance, through time, we can understand our political history to fulfill the ideal of democracy as a prolonged, a sustained and criminal theft by the dominant classes of the nation of its riches, and above all, of its people, thanks to corruption. With the passing of time it grew worse, becoming a sort of parallel institution legitimized by the impunity that was piercing the country's morality.

It is not necessary to study this in depth to know that among the factors that have contributed to this deterioration we find ourselves with a state and institutions that arise and develop through the influence of dominant capital, as the writer Orlando Araujo would say.

Dear compatriots, we should always be aware that we are one of the few places in the world that is undertaking the fight against capitalism.

2. Latifundistas are owners or supporters of latifundios, which are large estates or plantations.

It is important to note the words of one of the great contemporary thinkers, the Italian Giorgio Agamben, who sharply criticized modern capitalism. These words were written in an article entitled "Credit, Faith and Future" in the year 2012. They give us a sense of the heroic nature of this battle, of our battle. Giorgio Agamben writes:

"Walter Benjamin's hypothesis, according to which capitalism is actually a religion, the most ferocious and implacable one that has ever existed since it knows neither redemption nor truce, must be accepted completely. Banking, with its grey experts, has occupied the place left by the church and priests; in ruling over credit, what it manipulates and manages is faith, the scarce and uncertain confidence that our time still has in itself, and it does so in the most irresponsible and unscrupulous way, trying to make money out of confidence and the hopes of human beings, establishing credit that anyone can enjoy and the price they must pay for it. In that way, ruling over credit not only rules the world, but also the future of humanity, a future that the crisis shortens and puts in decline. And if to-day politics no longer seems

possible, it is due to the fact that financial power has completely kidnapped faith and the future, time and hope."

Noteworthy, the Venezuelan economy is going through a special period. National production is being sharply impacted by a set of distortions: speculation, hoarding, smuggling, the illegal foreign exchange market, a set of difficulties that we could call "cadvismo" as one of the most vulgar expressions of the parasitic bourgeoisie in the history of Venezuela over the past 100 years.³

3. Cadvismo is to take advantage of Cadivi, Venezuela's mechanism for exchanging foreign currency.

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That is “cadivismo,” the obstinate way in which certain economic factors attempt to gain profit and produce for it. It is of utmost importance to establish who has taken advantage of these currency flows, who are the groups in charge and their relationship to the financial system, to insurance agencies and to the stock market. That is where we are headed, no one should doubt this.

Dear compatriots, on January 12th, 1824, the Liberator Simón Bolívar issued a new Decree of War to Death against corruption. Those who want to be convinced that Simón Bolívar was a bitter enemy of administrative corruption and a champion of probity and transparency in the use of public funds and Republican ethics should read that Decree. Bolívar zealously practiced republican virtue and thought and acted by adhering to the principle that nothing takes precedence over common well-being.

We should focus on this document written by Bolívar in order to radically propel the war to death against corruption in all fields. Certainly, corruption as a crime is profoundly and historically rooted in us, but it does not mean that we should resign ourselves as if it were a misfortune which we will never be able to get rid of. On the contrary, we have to reach the national soul and

the people’s spirit in order to fight together without rest until we root out this evil.

Bolívar’s decree clearly and directly examines this problem in all its extent. Likewise, it presents the need of radical corrective measures:

“Considering:

First, that one of the principal causes of the disasters in which the Republic has become embroiled was the scandalous waste of its funds caused by certain officials who have had access to them;

Second, that the only way to eradicate this disorder completely is to dictate harsh and extreme measures, I have decided to issue this decree at once;

Decree:

Article 1. Any public official convicted in summary court of having misapplied or stolen more than ten pesos from the public funds shall be subject to capital punishment.

Article 2. The judges assigned jurisdiction in such a case, according to law, but who fail to adhere to this decree shall be condemned to the same penalty.

Article 3. Any citizen can charge public officials with the crime specified in Article 1.” - He bestowed power on citizens.

Article 4. This decree shall be posted in all the offices of the Republic and taken in account in all commissions issued to officials who are in any way involved in the handling of public funds.

It shall be printed, publicized and circulated.”

Dear master Prieto Figueroa commented this decree in his book titled *The Liberator and the administrative probity of 1984*. I met him when I was a kid here in Caracas. Yes, I met master Prieto here [in Caracas] when I was a kid.

Master Prieto wrote with a Bolivarian spirit: “Promoting the ideas of Bolívar is not enough; we should follow them and put them into practice. It is not about implementing a physical death, but rather a civic death, and the public condemnation by a people with a higher civic spirit and a moral impeccable behavior, which is the only inexorable judge capable of burying a dishonest official in shame.”

Prieto thought that we were far from that aspiration. Today, on the contrary, the Venezuelan people can take on this responsibility. We believe in their level of mature conscience; our people will not be the same people before this Revolution anymore. Our people are now worthy of this challenge proposed by Bolívar and explained by Prieto.

Bolívar, in Article 3 of this Decree, states that “any citizen can charge public officials with...” He democratizes it. Among other things, this implies the permanent encouragement of social audit, which should not have restrictions or obstacles of any kind. Let’s liberate and activate the forces of the people’s social audit to experience new citizen, republican and socialist ethics.

The geometry of the puntofijista⁴ state is the reproduction of the gomecista⁵ state with some changes; it is the same dominant class that emerged in the time of Gómez. The parasitic bourgeoisie which is harming the country and we are denouncing today. Its main goal is to seize oil incomes from the Venezuelan people.

This reproduction of the gomecista state still remains in the Bolivarian state we are building; and it is trying to spread like a metastatic cancer. This old geometry responds to the logics of perverted corruption.

New institutions are threatened on a daily basis by a high degree of entropy which we have not been able to revert. It is necessary that corruption is no longer seen as something normal in the politics of our country.

We are obligated to definitely fight back against the logic that makes corruption happen every day

Commander Hugo Chávez spoke about [corruption] many times, and we must fight it in every sector, take down those who are entwined in it and eliminate the conditions which lead to it. We are obligated to definitely fight back against the logic that makes corruption happen every day, and we will only find the right path in severely punishing this white collar, yellow collar, red collar crime.⁶

We must look back to our historical roots. In establishing a chronological history of corruption as a phenomenon inherent to the state and classes, whether it is colonial, latifundista or bourgeois, we must necessarily reference and begin with the brutal fact of the Spanish conquest and colonization.

4. The period of government between 1958 and 1999 is known as puntofijista, named for the Pact of Punto Fijo.

5. Gomecista refers to Juan Vicente Gómez, a tyrant who ruled Venezuela from 1908 until his death in 1935 and who was the instrument of foreign control of the Venezuelan economy, the ally and servant of powerful outside interests.

6. Referring again to yellow for the opposition and red for government supporters.

The genocide committed against our Indigenous grandparents was accompanied by widespread pillaging in Venezuela and our Americas starting in 1492. In addition to being tyrannical and despotic, the colonial Spanish regime was extremely corrupt. How could we forget, for example, the capitulation through which Charles V

modern day Yaracuy, and Juan Francisco de León's between 1749 and 1751, in Barlovia.

Before and after the appearance of oil, the history of the Fourth Republic was characterized by systematic and widespread corruption at every level, this long Fourth Republic that lasted from 1830 to 1988, and in each of its stages. The exercise of power and corruption coexisted in an unscrupulous marriage, from José Antonio Páez, Antonio Guzmán Blanco, Juan Vicente Gómez, Carlos Andres Pérez—they are examples of the most extreme improbity, of the most fearsome unscrupulousness. They used the nation's funds as if they belonged to them. They filled their hands with theft, they committed all sorts of crimes as though corruption was normal and not an anomaly.

That is the legacy that marked the path of the bourgeois state which we must definitively overcome.

Socialist revolution! A people's revolution!

The handbook of corruption and crimes against the public used by many presidents is large and extensive. From the perverse game of power they enriched themselves and allowed economic groups to enrich themselves without the slightest bit of modesty.

Venezuela at the time was a lot like Rome as described by Bertolt Brecht in his work Julius Caesar. Brecht wrote: "The governor's clothes—referring to Julius Caesar—were full of pockets." Many of those responsible for the state were conscious of what they were doing and were shameless.

To be able to transform corruption into a long term business, they had to progressively weaken and dismantle the state and its institutions, especially those in charge of administering justice. There is no better formula for generating corruption than ineffective institutions. It is worth asking ourselves about how oil money fueled and multiplied crime and venality in Venezuela. We do

not want to fall into fatalist positions, but it cannot be denied that the historic reality of a rentier state, along with the deformities created by easy profits, threw the nation's morality off a cliff, ruined it. A state that was not built through production was an extremely weak and extremely vulnerable state, which made it easy for the bourgeoisie and their methods to capture rents and put them at the service of systematically robbing money that should have been public.

Today the bourgeoisie continues to find different ways of maintaining control of oil rents. That is the center of the debate, of the national and international battle, when there is an empire that declares war on us in order to come for our country's riches, essentially oil. And when the parasitic bourgeoisie that automatically joins in on coups, counter-coups and sabotage, it is because they have their eyes set on the oil rent and on the strict controls put in place by Commander Chávez which set it aside for social spending, social investment.

That is the focus of the battle. Let us not be under any illusion, it is the center of the national battle. Today the bourgeoisie keeps trying to find different ways of maintaining control over oil rents. If our parasitic and import-oriented domestic bourgeoisie still controls about 70% of the gross domestic product, then the economy is still far from socialism, very far from it, my friends, comrades, compatriots; all those listening today. It is not in vain that the bourgeoisie is fundamentally dedicated to business. That gives it the fastest, most fluid capture of oil rents and that is what bleeds our country. Cadivismo.

The strong Venezuela that our commander dreams of, works for and proposes is radically antagonistic with the expansion of consumption as a function of the parasitic bourgeoisie's interests. We must deal with the core points of revolutionary action that correspond to us in this decade and in the decades to come to complete the cycle of

strengthening of independence via the construction of a true socialism that achieves economic development, dear comrades.

It is clear, therefore, that there will be no socialism here if the bourgeoisie keep enjoying privilege, privilege that is flagrantly incompatible with a socialist dynamic [and] that imports on a great scale, if we do not put a stop to it. Let us be honest and have the highest degree of self-criticism: the national Bolivarian State has not been able to impede imports from being concentrated in the [hands of the] very few, it has not reached the efficiency necessary to shut down the manner for those who live from the appropriation of cheap dollars, of those who have a wide margin to maneuver to engage in commercial speculation and re-sell currency on a daily basis. That is another way in which Venezuela bleeds.

It is immoral, for example, that the profit margin of official dealers of certain brands of automobiles is an offensive and abusive 300%. Obviously that demonstrates that Cadivi leaves much to be desired.

We have to undertake a deep process of transformation in all the institutions and move towards the creation of new dynamics. It is enough, time is going by. We have to manage to use our oil income for the country's economic development, not for speculation, blackmailing, robbery, or the enrichment of particular groups that want to control the political power by dressing in red or yellow.

A revolution making the parasitic bourgeoisie much richer would be a flagrant contradiction. The parasitic bourgeoisie does not produce anything and continues to take with impunity part of the oil incomes to speculate. The parasitic bourgeoisie does whatever it takes to take the wealth that belongs to all Venezuelans.

In a public statement, Minister Giordani underscored that "96% of exports come

Today the bourgeoisie continues to find different ways of maintaining control of oil rents



conceded, in 1528, the conquered population and governance of the population of Venezuela, the then-Province of Venezuela, to those German bankers named Belzares, authentic looters of a terrible history. How could we forget our history, of the large economic hegemony of the Guipuzcoana Company, which practiced systematic corruption on an immense scale, literally harvesting Venezuela between 1728 and 1778, impeding any form of commercial development, of agriculture? Its abuses and irregularities led to two great autonomous rebellions, Andresote's between 1732 and 1736, in what is

from oil. The private sector exports barely 1.2% of total exports but they need between US 35,000 and 40,000 million; and it increases its requests [for foreign currency] when oil revenues are taken away from it. Thus the use of robbery and media weapons by this sector to become legitimate and make the public believe that the predator bourgeoisie owns all currencies to the extent that it creates mechanisms to seize the amounts of foreign currency that belong to individuals from other sectors of society.”

The last mechanism is the one called “raspatarjetas”⁷ and another mechanism is the identity usurpation of thousands Venezuelans to speculate in the stock market by the Banco Federal and Econoinvest mafias that were discovered and dismantled.

Francisco Mieres was right when he said that “the beneficiaries of oil export revenues are minority groups that monopolize the state, thus causing an anomaly.” While it is true that these minority groups do not monopolize today’s state as they did in the IV Republic, they use all their corrupting power to seize these oil revenues, which they used to control, by infiltrating our institutions, and buying or twisting consciences.

A consequence of this is the spiral of importing cheaply and selling as expensively as possible to drain our people in order to feed and strengthen the parasitic bourgeoisie.

Let us open our eyes, compatriots, where are those who loot the people every day? Where are they? Where do they come from? ... The imbalances and serious difficulties we currently endure, the negative effects the Venezuelan economy is currently experiencing, they are not the result of the

7. Raspatarjetas refers to people who travel abroad carrying credit cards in other people’s name in order to use these people’s allowed dollar quota to obtain cash they bring back and sell for a profit on the black market for up to 50 Bs to the dollar when the official exchange rate is at 6.3 Bs to the dollar.

structural effects of capital nor the consequences of real crises—they are due to unpatriotic, greedy businesspeople that, in a reprehensible alliance with corrupt officials, perverts everything, [through] speculation, hoarding, induced shortages. These are just the most visible means of introducing the belief among the people that the model proposed by the revolution that is at odds with the so-called strength of the parasitic bourgeoisie does not work, and that is how they sabotage the real economy.

Fortunately, a new productive area has been growing in bit by bit that shows that Venezuela is beginning to achieve a diverse and productive economy. That is where we should focus our efforts, towards accelerating the transition to a productive economy, one that is diversified and is based on worked, to the creation of riches based on the collective efforts of the country, based on a powerful socialist economy and on a powerful, national and productive business sector.

Dear compatriots and new economic actors who deserve our respect and company, you can count on all our support.

Dear [National Assembly] representatives, influence peddling was the order of the day, and clientelism crossed the limits and destroyed the foundations of republican ethics during the 40 years of puntofijismo.

All that is solid - paraphrasing Karl Marx - melted into air. We should never forget that the leadership of puntofijismo degraded Venezuela with the creation of a perverted figure such as the egalitarian corruption. Let’s recall that despicable saying: “The adecos⁸ rob, but they let people rob as well.” This is the recognition of looting, of shamelessness, the transformation of Bolívar’s homeland into miserable garbage.

Actually, crime defined the country’s politics during the IV Republic; the vicious cycle of corruption was repeated over and over

8. Members and followers of the Acción Democrática (AD) party, who ruled the country several times in the Fourth Republic (1958-1998).

until it became uncontrollable. Undoubtedly, the adoption of neoliberal policies in the 70’s made the situation reach unprecedented levels such as the ones studied by the most sensible economists, including the Nobel Prize recipient Joseph Stiglitz. Not only did the false belief that free market would benefit the people start to make sense, but also - and this was shamelessly real - corruption was democratized and instilled in the entire society.

With the proliferation of illegal practices in the search for easy money in every strata of the puntofijista regime, crime became a habit, a natural way of understanding each other in society. This is antithetical to nature; it is a culture of theft. This diminishing of ethical values came to be established with even greater insolence as our economy was handed over to the “free flow” of foreign and domestic capital without any sort of control. It is a truth that corruption goes hand in hand with the logic of the market and capital; that “the necessary conditions are there for the perpetuation of looting and the illusion of limitless consumption. We find this in the writings of one of the intellectual founders of liberalism, Adam Smith, when he warned that “the vulgarly named statist or politician is a subject whose decisions are guided by personal interests.”

In history there is an abundance of those who have considered corruption as necessary for democracy, whether it is Cecil Ross, one of the notable looters of Africa, who said that everybody has a price, or more clearly, and without any sort of reserve, when Winston Churchill declared that “a minimum of corruption serves as a beneficial lubricant to the machinery of democracy,” ... more current theorists such as political scientist Samuel Huntington, the same one who proposed the theory of the “clash of civilizations,” who shamelessly said that corruption can be considered a factor in modernization and economic progress...

One of the historical anomalies we have endured since 1958 is the nefarious consolidation of a society of accomplices made in

the image of and similar to the puntofijista two-party-ocracy and its derivatives, a society of accomplices that lamentably still persists in diverse sectors of political life and that should be rooted out. We have to recognize that it has not been easy, regardless of the revolution’s political, social and economic accomplishments, to dismantle a culture of easy riches that we inherited from that era when oil rents were subject to a class that appropriated them and let the crumbs fall to the people. Some of them got accustomed to living not from honest work but from mischievousness and taking advantage of the squandering of those who were in power that democratized cheating and dirty dealings as a way of staying in government. This is what we must root out; a society that still has powerful economic groups that refuse to understand that the interests of the country are above [the interests] of their bank accounts, diverse privileged sectors that oppose the rights of the majority, financial associations that in their desire to return to the past are willing to break the country and prevent the development of the National Project, which has with great efficiency distributed its resources to the neediest as had never happened before in our history.

And since 1999, Commander Chávez, leading the democratizing revolution, put forward social investments that so far are worth the equivalent of \$550 billion in income from oil rents, captured by the new state and distributed to the people.

That explains why we consistently have more families who have reached a level of income that gives them access to consuming essential goods, food and services. This is about over a half trillion dollars that the Bolivarian Revolution has managed to pull from the parasitic bourgeoisie—national and transnational. In contrast, according to the UN’s Economic Commission for Latin America, ECLAC, between 2004 and 2012, there has been over \$215 billion in capital flight from Venezuela. That is an average of \$23 billion a year.

(...) speculation, hoarding, induced shortages. These are just the most visible means of introducing the belief among the people that the model proposed by the revolution (...) does not work

That is why they want, need, it is indispensable for them, to have a society of accomplices and impunity to continue growing stronger as bourgeoisie. Historically our country has kept itself afloat through theft and ill gotten money, through the shameless buying of politicians, through institutionalized bribery, through acquiring media that protects them, through perks and extortion.

In sum, everything that implies the free exercise of maximizing dividends with the minimum effort, without accepting responsibility for the social consequences. In pursuit of this corrupt and destructive strategy, the soulless, parasitic bourgeoisie buys politicians, buys their prestige and leadership, and these [politicians] sell themselves to the highest bidder, demonstrating their lack of moral and ethical constancy.

A new society is the only thing that can give birth to a new man and a new woman from the depth of the country's soul and history. A society that can be truly deemed as human is a national challenge

Moreover, they buy media, when they do not already own them, to use them in the battle for posturing against the Bolivarian Revolution. Media power is put at the service of lies and a devaluing of the truth. We can only understand this perverse phenomenon, this monstrous hydra that is the parasitic bourgeoisie, through its unethical behavior.

The political bourgeoisie, the politics of those the ancient Greeks called oligoi, has attempted to give a sense of normality to its anti-values. It is about attempting to install decadence within a new society.

For the parasitic bourgeoisie's crimes, power is something that is bought. It is bought to put it at the service of their groups, and always for their masters in the North. If we do not take measures in time, as severe as this issue is, the perverse ethics and anti-values the bourgeoisie defend will slowly distort our own democratic and republican ethic, until finally converting, regardless of the means, in their servants and the servants of their masters. If that occurs, the many struggles and sacrifices of these 14 years of

Revolution and national awakening would not have been worth it.

Dear compatriots, let us clearly see the challenges ahead of us. They are not challenges for just one person, for Nicolás Maduro as Head of State and Government of this nation. They are not the challenges of those of us who are leading the Republic right now. They are the challenges of the people. And the only way to take them on is by being conscious of what we face, with the deep, ethical and moral change the nation needs to strengthen its historic project and make it a reality.

A new society is the only thing that can give birth to a new man and a new woman from the depth of the country's soul and history. A society that can be truly deemed as human is a national challenge.

[National Assembly] representatives, dear compatriots, to strengthen a new institutionalism it is absolutely necessary to continue building a new ethic in the day to day revolutionary process. And a new ethic goes way beyond what is established in a set of concepts and principles. A new ethic implies a new subjectivity; a new subjectivity, indissolubly united with collective interests that becomes and creates in every compatriot an ethical agent capable of thinking and acting towards the common goods and its conscious and active defense.

Chávez was the architect and the champion of this new ethic. His example is indisputable. In matters of equality he always led by example.

On one occasion our beloved and eternal commander, with his typical down to earth quality and profoundness, said: "There is a medicine to prevent one from becoming corrupt: to let go of personal and material ambitions." That is the best medicine, Commander Chávez said to us.

Those of us who feel and call ourselves Bolivarians of the 21st century, authentic patriots, that is to say, chavistas, must heed



these words and turn them into a vow in the most genuinely religious sense. Let's get rid of the personal and material ambitions that were instilled by societies which have a class complex!

We ask ourselves what the fundamentals are for a new ethic and how to go about building it. A fundamental basis lies in a deep change of the relations of power. Who has power? Political, economic [power]? Who exercises it? National, international [power]? A fundamental basis lies in changing the relations of power. We must deepen, continue and accelerate... the revolutionary and radical change that began in 1999, when the Revolution became the government. The change in relations of power is a condition that makes possible a new ethic. It is clear then, that this is about fully extending participatory, agent-based democracy. The true power in a democracy is People's Power.

Another fundamental basis lies in the example set by those of us working for the state, government or in public service. True leadership is legitimized every day if the people clearly perceive that it embodies a new ethic, if the people know how a leader lives. If, on the other hand, the people perceive that the life of a leader changes once a certain rank is reached, then the example will be deeply negative.

Here I am referring to the Revolution; I could never refer to capitalist conceptions that rest on privileges or the shameless accumulation of riches, of wealth, of power, that view the use of political power to enrich economic groups or enrich themselves as something normal.

In any case, this part of my speech is directed at all the people who believe in a new ethic, in a new life, who deeply believe in the Revolution of the 21st century.

This is the reason why, my dear decent compatriots, austerity is and must be a golden rule; we have to break this historical pattern of assuming that taking on certain responsibilities immediately means enjoying privileges and taking precedence over the people. There is only room for strictness here, he/she who does not understand it should break ranks with the Revolution. We are forbidden, out of loyalty to our Commander, from enjoying and taking advantage of power.

Chávez is undoubtedly the fundamental model of new ethics, and it will get stronger as time goes by. Compatriots, in the enlightening words of our Supreme Commander, let's turn words into life if we can: "We need an education - Chávez said - away from individualism and selfishness to instill new human social values in the Venezuelan youth, to enlighten our people's path and to finish moral and material corruption, as well as the corruption of values." These words addressed to the Venezuelan youth by Commander Chávez express his heartfelt urgency to create new values, which could only be possible as the direct result of an education strongly based on the republican moral structure. This is one of the great challenges we need to take on to honor his legacy and to follow the Bolivarian vocation of our historical project.

Let us remember that according to Simón Rodríguez, authority can only be public because it is created and formed by education, which also creates a collective will and not a simple and useless selfish will.⁹ That is how true structural changes are possible, [such as] the effective and radical realization of our own revolutionary democracy; the true cultural change that has been developing and must be deepened in our country.

9. Simón Rodríguez was a Venezuelan philosopher who was Simón Bolívar's tutor and mentor.

As José Martí said: A change of form is not enough. What is necessary is a real and true change of spirit! Our ethical and moral commitment is stronger than ever. Spirit should never be separated from politics, nor politics from the spirit or spirituality, so that corruption, negligence and inequality do not come back to gravely sicken our society. When this happens, and going beyond the damages and harms to a nation's economy that result from crime, what becomes manifest is a state of perversion that creates room for the worst of all crimes: mocking the faith or confidence that others have in a politician or official after having delegated to them their community's political power. Let us remember what the new giant of this century said:

"Never — said commander Chávez — will I tire of asking everyone that we rid ourselves, as one rids oneself of a sticky spider web, of the old vices of corruption, bureaucratization, inefficiency, incompetence, lack of planning, lack of teamwork. We must leave all of that behind. I plead, as I would plead for my own life and I believe that it matters more to me than my own life, that the Bolivarian Revolution be authentic. That it not be a lie as others have been, that it not be another failure. That matters a million more times to me than my own life." [Words spoken in] Tucupita, in the state of Delta Amacuro, on May 26th, 2006.

Let's get rid of sticky spider webs!

Moreover, we can not forget him and we can not forget these words: "There won't be a true Revolution if we do not touch the moral fiber of the nation and enhance it to the most sublime level of humanity." Cumaná, in the state of Sucre, Aló Presidente program, 2006.

And in essence, as the great Argentinean intellectual Enrique Dussel writes, "Chávez expresses his anguish at the fetishization of power as a consequence of the capitalist wickedness and its innate tendency to corrupt everything because perverted customs

ruled by impunity take over both government and state. Hence his sermon on an education away from extreme individualism and selfishness, and his call on the youth to become the light of the world and the salt of the soil. Of course this call will not be received if it is based on anachronic virtues or the abstract values of a society in decline."

Commander Chávez used to quote and study Dussel's Twenty Thesis on Politics in his last three years and the political thesis of the National Project is partly based on it. You [representatives] will soon pass this Project, which will guide us until 2019.

In 2019 I will be here as President to present the review of activities and progress of this great crusade of revolutionary transformation, which I will spearhead by showing no sign of weakness.

You know that neither extortion, nor threats, regardless of whether they are external, imperial, or domestic, will lead us to waver even just one bit. On the contrary, it permanently motivates us, moves us, awakens us.

Get ready for the coming offensive, comrades. The real offensive of the Revolution is coming in a new phase where we have to take on all major national objectives of the new economy, the new ethics, and the new policy.

Zero Poverty. Get ready! We'll give it all we've got! I'll give it all I've got, dear compatriots! And I hope your support in this sovereign Assembly of our Republic.

Philosopher Dussel said... This is the new world. The intellectuals of our America hold a tremendous inspiration of the new spirituality, which will be possible in the new world we'll be consolidating, paving the way for it to be. Dussel said:

"Young people-bombarded by the mediaocracy, by fashion, and by the totality of an everyday world immersed within the horizon of capitalist society, which imposes its superficial and ostentatious ideals through the market-will have a difficult time overcoming the demands to increase their wealth in order to be able to buy and show off these (monetarily) expensive signs of difference (as Baudrillard would say). It is not impossible, then, to imagine that those who choose the profession of politics might quickly accept the Faustian bargain, and "sell their soul to the devil" of fetishization by using the exercise of power for their own individual or group purposes. This is the birth of politics as a "profession" and political parties as "electoral machines" that impose their bureaucratized candidates to benefit their own party. This is the

fetishization of power through the corruption of the subjectivity of the political actor and political parties as "electoral machines" that impose their bureaucratized candidates to benefit their own party. This is the fetishization of power through the corruption of the subjectivity of the political actor.

Hence, the historical necessity compelling new generations arise by recovering and saving what they can from the previous generation, considering a generation not as a handful of egregious men or simply a mass, but as a new integral social body."

As Ortega Y Gasset used to say: It is emerging and growing, and we cannot avoid it. This is a new generation of young patriots who are called to reinvent politics. The beloved youth of the homeland that owns the future.

Let's reinvent politics, other politics.

The other politics such as that of Spartacus, Bolívar, Martí, Sandino, Che, Fidel, Chávez, Evo, and Rafael Correa, among others who were never professional politicians

Spirit should never be separated from politics, nor politics from the spirit or spirituality, so that corruption, negligence and inequality do not come back to gravely sicken our society

In 2019 I will be here as President to present the review of activities and progress of this great crusade of revolutionary transformation



but, given their ethical responsibility, became what we must be: public servants for our communities and peoples.

As a good Christian, Chávez had the necessary clarity and deaconry to integrate the spirit back to politics, and politics to the spirit. Let us remember the word of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel according to St Mark (Mark 10, 42-45), which our Commander used to remember so much:

“You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many”. St Mark.

That is the Christian essence of the ethical call we issue. Whoever wants to be an authority must become public servant for everyone.

Jesus Christ seeks to root out the conditions that would transform his disciples into

corrupts, otherwise power becomes self-referential, degenerate. When it moves away from its origin, the representative takes over the government only for his/her benefit, for his/her group, tribe, political party, the one belonging to the bourgeois class and the system of capitalist domination.

As Enrique Dussel says again in his book “Twenty Thesis on Politics” (2006): “The representative would be a corrupt bureaucrat who turns his back and crushes the political community and the people.”

[National Assembly] representatives, dear compatriots, the crisis the Venezuelan economy is going through is a strange one. There is no significant reduction in incomes; there is no reduction in incomes, but rather an exponential increase in consumption. According to the ECLAC, consumption in Venezuela went from \$65 billion in 1998 to \$272 billion in 2012. From 65 billion to 272 billion in 14 years...

This upward trend only went down twice. I’m sorry but I have to say it. Once in 2000, then in 2002, and you know why. It went from \$84 billion to \$60 billion and then it went up again to \$84 billion in 2003.

In 2010-2011, under the second shock of the global crisis of capitalism, it went from \$252 billion in 2009 to an average of \$89 billion in a two-year period. Then there was an upturn in 2012 to the incredible amount of \$272 billion dollars.

Therefore it cannot be explained that in a situation where consumption has trended upwards for over a decade, that productive forces have not been capable of accompanying this growth with a significant increase in national production. In fact, gross domestic product in 1998 was just over \$90 billion. And this indicator has continuously grown, beyond the reversals mentioned above, reaching \$382 billion in 2012 according to ECLAC.

An economy that grows in consumption, in income, but that does not have a corresponding growth in what could truly unleash the productive forces of a country that has everything; that has everything and could achieve everything sooner rather than later. We will achieve it with a great revolution in the diversified, productive, local economy. We will achieve it, a great revolution of the economy, of technology in labor, of the value of labor which is a fundamental value.

I would say that all this information is for debate, for reflection, as many people say: a top, depth and historical discussion that breaks false patterns, false retaining walls that some political sectors of the country self-impose not to think beyond the small confrontation of a group against another one. This debate goes far beyond, it is a Republican, deep and necessary transformation, don’t be left behind, I’m talking to the opposition sectors with due respect, many of you were left behind by this Constitution and you were able to reach it only 5, 6 or 7 years later. Don’t be left behind by this National Project, don’t be left behind, catch it up early and hopefully with sincerity.

I call on the country and the political leaders who are here, those who are lead-

ers of the Venezuelan opposition whom we recognize despite the differences we have, or, let me rephrase that and say it in a more exact manner: we recognize them along with the differences we have. This is a democratic country. Everyone is guaranteed of their right to politics, to campaign, win or lose, and they will keep having these [guarantees].

It is difficult to explain the increase of profits of Venezuelan companies to levels that even allow them make significant investments abroad. It has been proven that their performance does not match with the growth obtained by the domestic production. Thus, it is all about corporate profits mainly achieved by speculating and permanently pushing prices up, as well as obtaining foreign exchange gains. It is a perverse system that, more than a threat, is a tumor that must be deeply and quickly removed with a scalpel.

It is a corrupt, rentier and parasitic bourgeoisie that does not produce anything and import everything. Given its endless thirst for foreign currencies, it extorts society and hoards products to encourage price increase as well as the maximization of their profits and then it comes back again to demand foreign currencies to start the speculation cycle of *cadivismo*, the perverse cycle of *cadivismo*.

Dear compatriots, since I took on the responsibility given to me by the Supreme Commander Hugo Chávez, you know I’m not an arriviste or vain, I do not belong to any group of economic power, I’m just a common man, a social activist, a worker, with strengths and weaknesses, like everyone. History led us take this path of learning and struggle. I never thought I was going to be here wearing this sacred sash that our President recovered for our people and which I will keep and care for until I pass it on to another Bolivarian, another revolutionary; there can’t be the slightest doubt about it.

This is a democratic country. Everyone is guaranteed of their right to politics, to campaign, win or lose, and they will keep having these [guarantees]

That's why this 30 year-old guy came here as constituent representative. I know many people here, well we know each other. There you have David Nieves, I met him when I was 14, and he was a Venezuelan and revolutionary representative with great dignity. Look at him, he is still quite young, David Nieves, a great deputy, we took him out of jail in 1978 thanks to the votes of the people of San Carlos.

David Nieves is one of the most tortured men by the puntofijismo. He survived torture because of his physical strength. When we were 15-16 years old, David and Fernando Soto Rojas were also like parents in this life. David used to tell us about the methods of torture to which he was subjected and survived in July 1976. Jorge Rodriguez died in the shanty next door in Carayaca; his death allowed David to live so many years with dignity. They all know me very well. I'm sorry to talk about me, but it is necessary when you've faced so many things, so many attacks, so much war, so much dirt; I'm a man just like you, with strengths and weaknesses. But, once my Commander Hugo Chávez gave me this task, I have fully assumed my responsibility and I will not let the Venezuelan people down, I will not let you down, I have given my life to make the dream of Commander Hugo Chávez come true, even when facing difficulties, obstacles, lies and war.

This is the reason why I wrote it here in this part of the speech, it took me over a month to write down what I think at this historic moment. Since I assumed such responsibility given to me by the Supreme Commander Hugo Chávez and ratified by the people on April 14th, I have been clear that the merciless struggle against corruption entered a new stage. His mandate was clear, direct, open, public, after appointing me Vice-president. Delcy [Rodriguez], the meeting we talked about in the council of

ministers must be organized. At that moment he clearly gave me these orders and I thought he was giving them to me as Vice-president, and finally I have to follow these orders this way. It's a new phase in which we all have to strike corruption on all its fronts; the homeland's shame must get rid of it in all public spaces. We enjoy the confidence and support of our people; we expect the people's active participation to radicalize the fight against corruption, no matter who is involved. We have to chase corruption wherever it is. Tolerance and permissiveness are prohibited. If we left aside our ethical and moral principles, we would be killing the Republic. May the words of

I have given my life to make the dream of Commander Hugo Chávez come true, even when facing difficulties, obstacles, lies and war

Chávez set our course of action: "Whoever wants to make money cannot be even in the rearguard. No, he/she must be out, away; I do not know where, but they must be out, away or in enemy ranks."

The revolution must be at the forefront of new ethics. Either we are at the forefront or we are nowhere. We are facing more than a struggle against corruption; it is a real war on all fronts and we can not offer truce. Therefore, we are obliged to increasingly make effective strikes against capitalism, even if it dresses in red. As philosopher Rigoberto Lanz said: "The struggle against the infinite forms of corruption, embedded in the marrows of all the institutional tissue of society, is even more challenging and demands a new impulse from the vanguard."

Rigoberto Lanz seems to have written it for this speech, because of the notorious failure of what has been done so far and the active awareness that should responsibly recognize in this problem a serious inconsistency in relation to any idea of revolution. There are many strategies and short and long term struggles, and a sort of corruption subculture in the country that is not defeated through spasmodic sermons or a mere rhetoric mention of this problem. Whether it is a gangster robbery that does not hesitate to

empty a safe with great self-confidence or refined "favor" practices, the "tricks" and many other fakes very well maintained by legions of officials of every stripe, the first rule is a radical intolerance of these practices. The least ambiguity ultimately results in accomplice; hesitation in the face of corruption results in complicity. Only a relentless attitude towards corruption can have a re-education effect on communities that work honestly in many areas of public administration. There are honest groups that, with ideas and effort, give the country everything without expecting anything in return. It is not about an elective position or a personal style of some functionaries, the crucial issue, says Rigoberto Lanz, is to inject the whole nation with a brutal behavior against all forms of corruption at all levels. There is no space for fragility or understandings. Rigoberto Lanz said "The practical result of this ethical and vertical behavior is the only antidote that can start re-socializing the taste of each person involved in public service."

Only with a radical intolerance and a brutal course of action, as Rigoberto says, we will be able to remove the cancer of corruption in Venezuelan public life.

If the Bolivarian government doesn't act, as Bolívar said, under the dominion of inexorable laws so that the republican ethic can shine, zealously preserving the common good, we would be betraying the people's wishes.

In that very sense the Enabling Law we are soliciting from this independent National Assembly is an absolutely necessary instrument in which I will not hesitate in calling a true quagmire. In order to emphasize the historical and urgent need of this Enabling Law, Luis Britto García said in one of these debates:

For great evils strong remedies. If corruption goes beyond the institutional mechanisms, it is imperative to strengthen it. Since the middle of the last century all Venezuelan presidents have had enabling

powers, in accordance with paragraph 8 of Article 236 of the Constitution, an enabling law should give the President-elect powers to legislate by decree on corruption, among other matters. Shame on anyone who opposes the enabling Law."

Dear [National Assembly] representatives, we need revolutionary solidarity that allows us to act now to prevent corrupt of all stripes from continuing bleeding the country white. If we want to honor this commitment, we need to recover "Chávez's whip" in order to punish corruption and inefficiency by reducing impunity until we defeat them and disappear them. As Bolívar thought, it is all about defeating them on the path of revolution by making war to the death against these ballasts which represent a tremendous threat to the Republic and to the survival of the Bolivarian Revolution.

We have to be absolutely clear on one point: We have to face corruption radically in order to face bureaucracy radically.

I am here to lead a revolution within the revolution, to fulfill the dream of Commander Hugo Chávez, to change what is wrong, what's being done wrong, to rectify the errors of bureaucracy, and to shake the indolence of some officials.

Only by fighting bureaucracy until we defeat it, we will be able to instill the efficiency our revolution needs to address the problems of the people. Either we do it today or corruption will swallow the homeland. This is why we created the Mission Efficiency or Nothing; we are fulfilling a direct command of Commander Chávez. There is now a group of young presidential inspectors undertaking a fruitful task for the homeland. Today we are using a thousand eyes to identify the faults and the problems around the institutional framework, and to establish timely and relevant diagnostics to correct everything. This is a strength we did not have before.

In that very sense the Enabling Law we are soliciting from this independent National Assembly is an absolutely necessary instrument in which I will not hesitate in calling a true quagmire



In the memorable Council of Ministers held on October 20th, 2012, called *Golpe de Timón* (Change of Course), Commander Chavez ordered me to use an iron fist, and that's what I'm going to use against corruption, bureaucracy and inefficiency.

With our Commander Chávez at the vanguard, we have fought hard to return the political spirit and dignity to Venezuela, for a few unscrupulous ones to come and with their actions stain the probity the exercise of politics demands. It is time, in this fight for dignity, to become aware of those who are corrupt and aware of the mechanisms and reasons that lead them to act.

We have seen with alarm how the debate is distorted in certain public spaces. In this National Assembly, for example, when irrefutable proof was presented, the society of accomplices—I must be say this regardless of how harsh it sounds—how the society of accomplices reacted when facing direct complaints of different types of corruption. As is the case with Representative Richard Mardo. As is the unfortunate case with Representative Juan José

Caldera, whom I personally appreciate and respect... Excuse me, Juan Carlos Caldera. Two explicit cases where the society of accomplices did its work. There was no investigation, there was only automatic solidarity, [after] direct proof was established.

And in other cases they have made the unfortunate decision not only of not investigating, not only of forbidding an investigation, but of hiding, without shame, the misdeeds of those who find it impossible to show how they obtained such great sums of money...

These are cases and I ask that we hear them calmly. It is up to the National Assembly and its different investigative procedures to take on these cases that have been brought up with irrefutable proof. And it is up to the political sectors involved to participate in these investigations in their due time. It is that simple.

Nevertheless, the media behave completely differently when the Bolivarian government lives up to its responsibility of taking on officials, from the public administration and state institutions, who com-

mit crimes. Simply put, the media silences our actions in failing to broadcast what we have been doing to rid ourselves of corruption, no matter where it comes from. Their strategy is clear: they try to blame the government for political persecution; twisting reality and facts, making people believe that we only go after our political adversaries. It would do the media good to tell the truth regarding the cases mentioned, regardless of which political sector is being denounced. They should tell the truth regarding the cases I have mentioned, and those people who have been arrested thanks to investigations into the fraudulent management of the Chinese-Venezuelan Fund.

The Chinese-Venezuelan Fund, and other cases that have been investigated, denounced and punished like the SENIAT case, the INDEPABIS case, the Ferrominera del Orinoco case, which no political leader nor any party of the Revolution have come out to protect the bandits who have been denounced and sent to jail by the Revolution itself. We must reflect on the impeccable behavior that has been displayed to investigate and punish. This is only the beginning of a strong offensive which we have started.

Dear compatriots, I have to say this even if it can be polemic, but I am going to say it in the most elegant way: No one can forget that for the first time in the history of this country, a march was called to support an unveiled and confirmed corruption case committed by a representative of the National Assembly who wanted to become a hero. We will not forget that ever.

Representative Diosdado Cabello, when you consider it necessary, I am ready to come to the National Assembly to discuss, with evidence, some things that I did not want to

bring here today because I am ashamed of showing them. I am ready whenever you call me to show the evidences of Oscar Lopez Colinas's bacchanals, a vulgar scene, what a shame for those who have children...

I am ready, president Diosdado.

I must continue. Dear compatriots, I say it with humility, I did not want to bring so many things that I have because I respect the dignity of this National Assembly beyond the differences with the right wing representatives. I am willing to come here if you want, we could organize a private session to show you some things that you must already know; you will be ashamed.

With our Commander Chávez at the vanguard, we have fought hard to return the political spirit and dignity to Venezuela, and a few unscrupulous ones come to stain with their actions the probity demanded by the exercise of politics

Beyond the political differences among us, I am sure that you are ashamed. Many of your relatives should have asked you how far the borderline for an accomplice society extends. Some things have their limits; we have to overcome this accomplice society.

See what the “philosopher” Al Capone said when a journalist interviewed him: “People respect nothing nowadays. Once we put virtue, honor, truth, and the

law on a pedestal... Graft - he continued - is a byword in American life today. It is law where no other law is obeyed. It is undermining this country.... Virtue, honor, truth, and the law have all vanished from our life...” These are the wise words of Al Capone to journalist Cornelius Vanderbilt, on September 17th 1931, and then rescued and quoted by Eduardo Galeano, a great brother and friend of our homeland, in his book *Upside Down. A Primer for the Looking-Glass World*. As it can be said, it is the hypocritical double standard speech of all times economic and political mob. It depicts the US society of that time, its double standards, its false ethics, which could be

extrapolated to our latitudes if we consider the inversion of values or the adoption anti values, and then we would verify that the man who delivered such a statement was Al Capone, and some days later he was imprisoned and became the most famous gangster of all times.

Analyzing it from a different context, in this scenario it is worth asking when the Venezuelan right wing sectors are going to overcome the schemes of an accomplice society, and dare to face a real debate in order to investigate all the denounced corruption cases.

Galeano says: “The upside down world rewards upside down, despises honesty, punishes work, rewards the lack of scruples, and feeds cannibalism.”

Let us reveal the actions of that soap opera we know as the corrupt and corrupting right-wing. We will continue denouncing them and facing their perverse immoral actions. We will impede at all costs their continuing looting of the country with impunity, buying politics, buying politicians, buying power. And furthermore, we must exorcise the grave threat that is among us. We speak of a new emerging class, or in harsher terms, a new oligarchy. This terrible and offensive phenomenon, let us call it that, has already been studied by the tradition of Marxist self-criticism in other lands. It is about a deviation that we must fight without hesitation.

It is an abject contradiction that a revolution ends up leading to the rise of a new privileged class, a new economic elite. Revolutions are made to abolish privileges and to end any type of elitism.

The era of institutionalized corruption must end in Venezuela. Corruption from those in yellow and corruption from those in red is the very same thing. It answers

to the same criminal logic. What type of revolution would this be if we were headstrong against the first type and tolerant of the second?

There have been surprising and painful cases in this first part of the offense. The case of the governor of Guárico, Luis Gallardo, for whom we had great affection and we still do so on a personal level. An investigation that uncovered a group, one of those groups that are called regional bolibourgeoisie, the case of the Chinese fund, these show that the administration of this first Chavista president, Nicolás Maduro, has the utmost willingness to go to the root of the problem of corruption. And I declare zero tolerance for corruption, wherever it may occur, in whatever form, from whatever color.

Galeano says: “The upside down world rewards upside down, despises honesty, punishes work, rewards the lack of scruples, and feeds cannibalism”

I am thankful for the support of Venezuela’s state institutions, of the National Assembly, and we need to reach a level of more perfect coordination, of stricter, harsher laws, of punishment for every level of old corruption that we have widely and sufficiently denounced today, of the new mechanisms we will employ: the legitimization of capital, of undue financing of capital.

In this precise sense we ask for an Enabling Law that will allow us to deploy, as Bolívar said, all the significant effects and well-directed efforts to strengthen the impregnable Bolivarian legality that strengthens us against corruption and the corrupt. I call on the people to employ the most rigorous vigilance over the behavior of our institutions, and to fully exercise their constitutive and institutional power in making timely, responsible denunciations. If the people inhibit themselves when it is time to make a complaint, it will be very difficult to apply the necessary measures. We cannot lose sight of the fact that what

is public belongs to everyone. Only with agent-based, decisive participation by the people can we stop this fifth column that wants to live off the revolution and tries to perpetuate corruption.

Effectively eradicating corruption demands, above all, making transparent that which is trying to hide. From there stems the value of the people’s control, of the people’s denunciations, of the system of communication and information that must attend to the people who make complaints, the people who denounce.

Moreover, I wish to call on the private media to cover this ongoing struggle against corruption that we have taken on with renewed energy with the people and subordinate to their mandate.

Media outlets trying to ignore this new phase in the struggle against speculation are not showing the actual national reality. Javier Biarreau in his essay “Los raspa ollas” says:

“It would be deeply undermining for the Bolivarian revolution that all this debate on corruption be reached by an environment of impunity when it comes to certain cases of misappropriation or corruption committed by any political wing. It could result in complicity, because what it is at stake is the moral, ethical and cultural root of the process, which started like an ideological movement against corruption since its origins on that February 4th, 1992.”

This ethical and cultural root must be carefully preserved; we could spend our whole life doing so but we are going to preserve it no matter what. The shining legacy of Commander Hugo Chavez demands sense, coherence and correspondence from us more than ever. Chavez left us an ethical Republican and revolutionary patrimony that

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obliges those who have public responsibilities like us to exercise virtues.

Chavez lives on every time we strike a major blow to corruption. Chavez lives and will live as long as we move forward towards new institutions free of vices, double standards and corruption. It is not enough having a clear, legal and moral definition of the corruption issue because we are facing a systematic anomaly. Good intentions merely declarative are really insufficient.

History teaches us that using rhetoric against corruption does not lead us to fight it efficiently. If we want to achieve a decent democracy, a deep transformation within the system of justice is essential; it’s the only way we could deepen democracy, make it invulnerable, and defend it from those who want to destroy

it with their criminal acts. Such a transformation shall entail inexorable and inflexible laws that punish the culprits without any kind of consideration.

Likewise, the creation of specialized professional teams in the Public Ministry to investigate economic crimes of any nature, as well as the creation of special instances to investigate and judge corruption felonies, is required. Furthermore, we require a legal framework that allows us to watch over the management of public resources and financial functioning of the political exercise. There are so many examples showing us the urgent need to make corrections on time to eradicate the economic and financial mobs that use politics and politicians to undermine the wellbeing of the homeland. As our Commander said, there is enough moral integrity and boundless courage here in the Venezuela that arose from its ashes to win this war against those who think to earn illegal money by mocking our people.

The nation's democracy, its institutions and constitutive powers, officials and public servants, politicians and parties, business and finance cannot protect corruption. Being permissive and tolerant of the practice of the criminal accumulation of capital is being an accomplice to immorality. Here is the source of the pressing need to eradicate impunity and complacency for those responsible in order to continue having a nation. It is about putting a stop to the abuses by those who think justice will never catch up to them. It is time for maximum judicial efficiency, maximum efficiency in investigation, efficiency in the implementation and application of laws that respond to the gravity of corruption, maximum celerity in judicial processes, maximum transparency in public work, efficiency in the quickness of processes. We cannot al-

low corruption to empty our participatory and agent-based democracy, which our people are building and creating each day, of meaning and significance.

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As our Commander said, those of us who feel the homeland in our veins have to face the challenge of building its history and future by building a new society that overcomes capitalism, and eradicating all those mechanisms or elements that allow its daily reproduction. Let us remember our Commander when in 2006 he paraphrased the great Victor Hugo:

“The masterpiece was not completed, I agree on that, we have demolished the former regime, but we haven't been able to completely suppress its ideas. It is not enough at all to destroy the former regime's abuses, it's rather necessary to change its customs. The windmill is no longer there, but the wind that used to move it is still blowing. It is not enough that the Venezuelan map is painted in red. It's not enough, even if we have won 21 out of 23 governorships and most of the mayorships of the country, anyone could say we have won glory, but no, not at all, we are just an army deployed in battle, that's all. The new deep battle is just beginning; the enemy is intact taking its positions beyond governorships and mayorships, beyond what's immediately apparent, beyond what's national.”

We need a firm hand against corruption, an exemplary punishment, a rise in prison sentences, and improvement of the association among powers if we want to make possible the transforming desire and the conquest of a fair society that we long for.

If one of them stops playing its role regarding society, the notion of homeland itself gets weak. Therefore, having a strong

homeland means having a strong justice. Justice must rule among us; if it does not, we will leave everything to desires and interests that do not represent the majority. In this regard, a request for a severe law against corruption is also a request by the Judicial, Electoral and, especially, Moral Powers in which the Comptroller General of the Republic, according to me, must have a reinforced authority.

The great French philosopher Jacques Derrida was correct when he warned in his 1997 book, *Force of Law*, that “law is not justice; it is about breaking with a terrible mechanism that has placed, historically speaking, law above justice, the fetishization of law, which is typically bourgeois, has worked in the service of the bourgeoisie and has occluded or closed the question of justice. Corruption is, without a doubt, a powerful protector of the fetishization of law.” Applying justice correctly and fully is a great challenge that we face ahead of us in defeating this scourge. We have to definitively throw merchants out of the temple, whatever color they wear. The whip used by our Master of Nazareth is the same whip used by our commander Hugo Chávez. We have to employ it collectively. The nation of Bolívar and Chávez is not a cave of thieves. That is why... we must undertake a true Admirable Campaign against corruption in a permanent offensive against the corrupt, against their privileges, against their politicians.

Compatriots and representatives of this democratic National Assembly of “this opprobrious dictatorship regime that oppresses us...”

What a weird dictatorship - says Eduardo Galeano -, a dictatorship with institutions, with free elections, with the most perfect electoral system in the world.

Auditable, audited. Are you [the opposition] going to denounce us all around the world? Is fraud possible in Venezuela? Even though you registered candidates,



didn't you? And you are calling on people to vote, aren't you?

Because they say abroad that the system is fraudulent, but they are calling their people to vote. That is a mystery, some people would say.

Compatriots and representatives of this democratic National Assembly, of this Republic that has been refounded by a popular constituent process which is still going on:

Currently, in this crucial stage of the Bolivarian Revolution, I dare say that there exists a great consensus among our people, in which two issues of the utmost importance in this new historic stage are developing. The first: the rescue of ethics and the construction of a new citizens' ethics. The second; the reinvigoration of a new economy.

The rescue of ethics through the promotion of a new political ethics, a new citizens' ethics, that is coherent with the new society we are building. Only a citizen with a new ethics, only political leaders with a

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new ethics, public servants with a new ethics, can make a new nation.

And the other great goal is the economic revolution of diversification and productivity, of liberation of the country's productive forces. Throughout this revolutionary process there have been many opportunities in which the Bolivarian government has appeared before the National Assembly to solicit special powers to legislate on issues that have a special urgency and national importance. The Venezuelan people know that on each of these occasions, and this will be no exception, the laws put forward under the framework of special enabling powers have been for their benefit, to advance in the loving construction of an egalitarian nation for all.

That is why I have come, my compatriot, [National Assembly] President Diosdado Cabello, to ask for fast track powers for one year beginning in 2013 and to push

forward in 2014 with the great issues of fighting corruption, fixing the country and making a productive, economic revolution to support the happiness of the people. These are the great tasks I have come to achieve. Effectively this is about you. I have a mandate of 5 years and 19 days, and it is public and infamous that the North has declared war on us, has declared the end of the Bolivarian Revolution. We will see who finishes first...

From the North come declarations of the end of the Bolivarian Revolution. They have also declared that 21st century Socialism is up in the air.

Going along with these declarations, the national right-wing, very submissive, too subordinate to the imperial elite of the United States, have declared war on me. Not one day in these five months have they ceased fire nor shown respite so the Bolivarian government could succeed and govern in the country.

Not one day! Not a single day! They have not even allowed the minimum, reasonably speaking, to allow a President that assumed office in extraordinary conditions of national tragedy—on losing the leader of the Revolution to an illness that afflicted him, even a single day. By the measure they employ, so shall they be measured.

But nevertheless, we have passed every test, we have defeated every challenge.

I have not come to ask for a truce or respite from a right-wing that has no national conscience. But I want the honest and decent people of our nation to know that this anti-national right-wing constantly bets on my failure, on our failure, so that later, according to their plans, they can definitely put their hands on the nation's oil rent riches, to integrate them with transnational interests. They have created obstacles everywhere.

They are not capable, using a minimum of rationality, to open a dialogue to listen, to listen to even the slightest bit of the national clamor urging them to let Nicolás Maduro govern according to the Constitution, without more sabotage, without more war. Enough of the war and sabotage against the democratic government I preside over! Enough of slander campaigns, dirty war, psychological war, lies and manipulation!

What we want is to give our life to the happiness of our people who have chosen us democratically and have the right to the work we undertake for them.

Thus, this enabling power is necessary to defeat the economic war.

Before I finish my speech, I want to greet a brave man from this country in a very special way; he is a son of the Syrian Arab people who has just come back and fought terrorism, interventionism and war against the Syrian Arab people.

I want to hug my comrade Abdel El Zabayar. He returned two days ago from

the Syrian Arab Republic. With his rifle in hand, he went there to defend the Syrian territory.

When we started to discuss the request for enabling powers to fight corruption and build a new ethics in politics, we were informed that one of the representatives of the patriotic and revolutionary bloc in the National Assembly was abroad, and he was there right in the biggest threat of an air raid, and someone made a proposal: "Well, we should call him." I said: No, I would prefer that the Enabling Law is not passed so that this man stayed there fighting for the land and the dignity of the Arab people from Syria, as we would fight here in our land if some day terrorism attacked our people.

Let's follow this example of honor, of fight. And now Abdel El Zabayar himself decided to come, as the U.S. war plan against Syria was defeated; it was totally defeated. Great things are happening in history.

Fortunately, we are a step ahead in the humankind history, and we are connected to the great movements of peace and world anti-imperialist changes. We are a step ahead. Thanks to our Commander Chavez we have an anti-imperialist international policy, which is also humanist and peaceful.

Therefore, we send from here our greetings to the whole Arab people that live in our country, Lebanese, Palestinians, Syrians, and Egyptians. They have fought so hard for their right to exist in peace.

Thank you very much, dear representatives. Abdel El Zabayar, we will carry this olive bouquet of peace with dignity and commitment. I greet the Syrian fighters.

Here it is, I have come to democratically request this enabling power before this Assembly to defeat the economic war against our people, speed up the creation of the foundations for new ethics that our homeland demands, and place our country at the vanguard, spearheading the 21st century.

Dear compatriots, this enabling power that I am requesting is a need in this historic moment in order to put together the institutional, political, legal and social forces of the new phase that our homeland demands.

I therefore present, President of the National Assembly, the formal request that includes a set of topics that will establish the fight to install a new political ethics in the country, a new Bolivarian, Chavista, political ethic of the 21st century, and an economic and productive revolution in the interests of the people.

Here it is, dear Representative Diosdado Cabello. Today, October 8th, 2012, in accordance with the democratic instruments of the Constitution of the Bolivarian

Republic of Venezuela, I ask, on behalf of the Venezuelan people, for enabling legislation for 12 months, and to launch an early fight in 2013, to fight corruption strongly, with integrity and decisively, and to jar the corrupt and their accomplices.

I want to thank you for your attention, and say good bye with our call of love and life.

Chávez lives on!

Independence and socialist Homeland!

Forever towards victory!



*Today, I have come to request
enabling powers to deepen,
speed up and fight
to the end for a new ethics
in politics, for a new
republican life,
for a new society.*

Nicolás Maduro Moros

