



## **Remarks by Vicepresident Marta Lucía Ramírez, before the Emergency Special Session on Ukraine of the United Nations General Assembly.**

**March 1, 2022**

**New York, United States**

Mr President, Mr Secretary General, Honoured delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Colombia has clearly expressed its rejection to the attacks and threats suffered by Ukraine from the Russian Federation, as well as the deliberate promotion of the separation of the Donetsk and Luhansk areas, ignoring the 2014 Minsk Agreements, contrary to international law and the founding principles of the United Nations.

The foregoing is a de facto situation that seriously harms a member country of the organization, since it generates the disruption of its national unity and territorial integrity, while at the same time constituting a serious violation of the human rights of the Ukrainian people.

Colombia reiterates its solidarity with the courage of the people and the government of Ukraine, who are facing this unjustified and unprovoked aggression, which causes human suffering such as we have not seen since the Second World War. No nation can remain indifferent in the face of this drama, which threatens international peace and security.

Russia's unilateral and unjustified action is producing a mass exodus that will lead to a new migration crisis, putting the stability and peace of Europe and the world at serious risk.

There are hundreds of thousands of people, including 293 Colombian nationals, who are today, at this time, suffering the inclemency of winter to flee Ukraine after 6 long nights, abandoning part of their families and loved ones, as well as their savings and their projects, to protect their lives against the merciless attack of the Russian forces.

This situation has caused economic panic throughout the world, which in recent days has suffered from the disproportionate increase in the price of energy and food on the international market.

The events against Ukraine have fueled global inflation and dealt a new blow to the supply and economic recovery that all nations need after the loss of millions of lives, millions of jobs and millions of businesses, as well as the destruction of the property of millions of families in the world, as a result of the pandemic that after two years, is still not over.



As President Iván Duque expressed, our voice joins the call of the international community and the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, to act with a sense of global responsibility.

We must prevent the escalation of this conflict in which all humanity would lose, and for that we are here today, in this extraordinary session convened yesterday afternoon.

Colombia is a main co-sponsor of the resolution submitted for consideration by this plenary, because we are facing a violation of international law that is totally unacceptable and absolutely unjustified.

We are in the multilateral scenario par excellence that today tests, once again, the effectiveness of multilateralism to avert an obvious threat to world peace and stability.

Most of our voices in the international community heed this summon out of genuine commitment to world peace, without opportunism, but truly convinced of the immense seriousness of the violations that are occurring and the disastrous precedent for the very future of humanity, in case they could be consolidated without serious and forceful consequences for the aggressor, whoever that may be.

The legal consequences of the invasion of Ukraine are evident in light of the current regime of state international responsibility, adopted by the International Law Commission 21 years ago.

Russia must respond internationally for the humanitarian, economic, legal and other consequences of the international illicit act in which it has incurred. Its offensive violates mandatory international norms or jus cogens, breaking the principle that no State should be the object of threats or the use of force that threatens its sovereignty, its political independence or its territorial integrity.

Likewise, all the States represented here are obliged to comply with the following obligations: First, the positive obligation to cooperate to put an end, by lawful means, to the serious violation of jus cogens norms committed by Russia. Second, we must address the negative obligation of not recognizing a de facto situation created by said violation, nor providing help or facilitating the maintenance of that situation and all its implications.

Therefore, Mr. President, Colombia sponsors and supports in all its parts the resolution submitted to this extraordinary assembly.

Without prejudice to the responsibility that Russia has already incurred, my country considers that this Assembly should be the genesis of conclusive processes and for this reason, it may recommend to all member states the imposition of forceful, simultaneous and comprehensive economic sanctions whenever there is an aggressor, as a means to pressure the immediate suspension of offenses against International Law. Today we have witnessed the death of dozens of Ukrainian children, how many more?



Timid and gradual sanctions have recently shown their resounding failure in some cases, known to all. In some Latin American countries it has resulted in the growing violation of human rights, the restriction of political freedoms and freedom of expression in totalitarian regimes that lack a government democratically elected by its citizens.

A second measure that we must consider is to activate existing mechanisms to verify the fulfillment of the disarmament commitments of the States that possess nuclear weapons. Colombia is currently presiding over the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, headed by our ambassador Alicia Arango, and this issue must be addressed in that forum with a sense of urgency, given the recent measures announced by Russia.

We applaud the decision of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to launch an investigation into possible war crimes, crimes against humanity or acts of genocide that may have been committed in the territory of Ukraine. The persons responsible for these crimes must be individually prosecuted by the ICC so that they answer for their acts before the international community. This is an issue that all States party to the Rome Statute must follow up on.

Today, as in 1950, it is necessary to be "United for Peace", which is the first responsibility of the United Nations system and the Security Council.

The Russian nation has contributed for decades and in many ways to the evolution of humanity, as well as the construction of the edifice of international law, from the Peace Conferences in The Hague, the elaboration of the United Nations Charter, to the Helsinki General Act, which condemn each and every one of the acts in which Russia is the protagonist today.

It is still time for the Russian Federation, Chair of the Security Council until yesterday, and therefore a guarantor of compliance with the UN Charter and international law, to return to the path of compliance and rule of law, for example through the urgent implementation of confidence-building measures that enable a return to the path of negotiation.

Colombia is convinced that dialogue and negotiation are the only way to resolve conflicts. However, any negotiations between Russia and the Government of Ukraine must be carried out without threat to Ukraine and with the aim of achieving the immediate cessation of Russia's special military operations.

Likewise, this process must have the support of the Secretary-General, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as other international and regional organizations, in order to achieve the immediate de-escalation of this conflict in which all humanity would once again lose to aggression and prevent the threat and massive destruction from breaking the will for freedom, sovereignty and independence that the Ukrainian people have shown at other times in history and most recently in 2014.



It would be unacceptable that in the current circumstances, with an ongoing pandemic, the world should return to an arms race, leaving aside the development agenda. We must continue, for the good of humanity, with the climate change agenda, gender equity, the energy transition, the reduction of hunger in the world, the fight against poverty and all the sustainable development goals.

The Russian Federation cannot turn back time, looking for a regressive agenda in which great empires flourished at the cost of imposing themselves on the rights of peoples. The world does not want and will not accept this return to the past.

Thank you very much!