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XVI Summit Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Movement of Non Aligned Countries, 30-31 August 2012, Tehran

Honourable Heads of State and Government  
Ministers  
Ambassador  
Delegates

First I would like to express our gratitude to the Islamic Republic of Iran for its welcome to this beautiful, dynamic and hospitable City of Tehran. The friendship of the Islamic Republic of Iran with the cause of Puerto Rico has been manifest in the United Nations Committee on Decolonisation, and for this we also express our gratitude as we also express our gratitude to Cuba, to the rest of the member countries of the Committee, and other countries that have befriended our cause. Once again the Movement of Non Aligned Countries has reaffirmed the inalienable right of the Puerto Rican people to self determination and independence in conformity with United Nations General Assembly resolution 1514(XV). It has also called for the immediate implementation of United Nations resolutions on Puerto Rico. August 18 of the current year was the 40th anniversary since adoption in 1972 of the first United Nations Decolonization Committee resolution on Puerto Rico. It has now adopted 31 resolutions on the case.

We come before you once again as a force working for the independence of Puerto Rico because a real and just solution to the colonial problem of Puerto Rico can only take place under International Law and in the framework of the International Community. The power relationship between the colonizers and those who suffer colonialism cannot and has not been the framework of the solution to a problem that is contrary to International Law and human rights. For this reason Puerto Rico is an agenda item for the International Community and the

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Latin American and Caribbean region where the recent founding of the Latin American and Caribbean Community (CELAC) must include on its agenda the case of Puerto Rico and the total eradication of colonialism in our region, as it includes the case of the Islas Malvinas.

Since its election in 2008, the present colonial and annexationist government of Puerto Rico has abused its majority in the colonial legislature to undermine civil, cultural, social and civic rights and institutions of the Puerto Rican people. The recent referendum was an abuse as the colonial government used a fear campaign and manipulation to attempt to get the Puerto Rican people to chose to limit their already meagre rights and to numerically reduce the legislative bodies. But in response the people said Enough! They voted NO and dealt a clear defeat to the colonial government. In November a colonial plebiscite will take place which could have political consequences internally in Puerto Rico, but which will not initiate a decolonization process – nor will any plebiscite or mechanism which is not carried out under the application of International Law to our case.

Despite the abuses of power, an anti-colonial consensus and call for change has been forged in Puerto Rico. This achievement is one of many of the Puerto Rican people's achievements historically gained, especially our victory in maintaining our undoubtedly Latin American and Caribbean identity and culture which is broadly recognized in our regional and internationally. At present the agenda of our struggle continues to be intense. We continue our struggle for the release of Oscar López Rivera who has been imprisoned for more than 31 years for his actions in favour of the independence of Puerto Rico. Thirty-one years is a cruel and inhuman punishment. We passionately call on you to take up the call for the release of Oscar López Rivera and the other Puerto Rican political prisoners.

Puerto Rican support of the struggles for independence in our region during the XIX century, in particular of Cuba, is being reciprocated. Today we reaffirm our support for the struggles for sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, non interference in the internal affairs of states and war waged from outside as in Syria, that right to energy sovereignty as in Iran and the struggle for peace being waged in the world. We also support the struggles of the Palestinian and Saharui people.

In conclusion international solidarity with the self-determination, the achievements of the Puerto Rican people will continue to grow and we win our independence!

Thank you.

## **Puerto Rico: Message at the XVI Summit Conference Movement of Non Aligned Countries**

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\*Message by Olga I. Sanabria Dávila, Member of the Leadership of the National Hostos Movement for Independence; Executive Secretary, Cttee for Puerto Rico at the UN