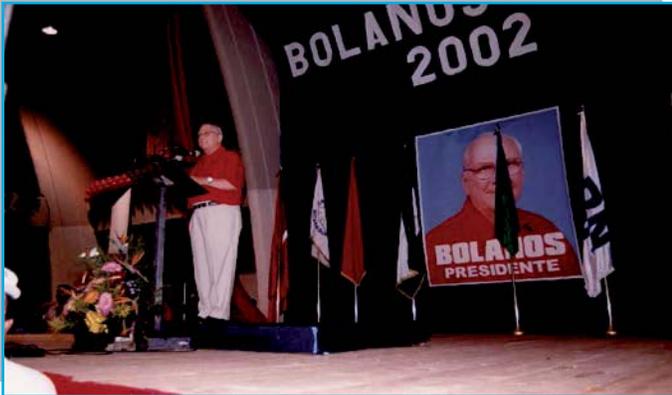


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CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC  
NOMINATION ACCEPTANCE SPEECH  
OLOF PALME CONVENTION CENTER  
MANAGUA, NICARAGUA, JUNE 3, 2001**

In the name of God and of Nicaragua!



Nicaraguans:

A little over 20 years ago, we Nicaraguans once again found ourselves involved in an domestic struggle, and the country was severely damaged. The moral and ethical fiber of our people was undermined.

We still are suffering the consequences, and see that we are lacking education, health, employment and many other things.

Some try each day to convince us that there is almost nothing good left in Nicaraguans. However, most recognize that there is much to be proud of. Every day we make progress, a lot of progress, amidst tears and laughter.

Over the past eleven years we have achieved many things as a country that we had never had before. Despite the problems that still remain, progress in Nicaragua has been overcoming backwardness and, first and foremost, civilization has imposed itself upon barbarism: today we live in peace.

We now enjoy unrestricted freedom of the press; there is respect for the human rights of citizens, including women and children; the police and the army are in the process of becoming professional institutions under civilian leadership; we have chosen free elections as a fundamental institution to settle our differences, we have exchanged bullets for ballots; and despite our poverty, Nicaragua has seen the construction, reconstruction and expansion of roads and highways, schools, health centers, public lighting, drinking water, and so on. But all of this is not enough: our people must eat and live better.

The most important thing is that the protagonist of all these achievements and feats has been the people of Nicaragua, and that you and I and all of us can once again shout proudly: ***“I am Nicaraguan, by the grace of God!”***

We are now approaching the onset of an electoral campaign where the people, for the third consecutive time, will use their right to vote to decide in favor of democracy.

We do not wish a return to totalitarianism. We do not wish to return to a situation of war, Mandatory Military Service, Neighborhood Committees, human right violations, or slogans like ***“National Directorate, give us orders!”*** ...although now they come disguised using masks and subterfuges: a white shirt and a crucifix on their chest.

Once again, Nicaraguans are determined to take a step forward to maintain peace and development, once again with the Constitutionalist Liberal Party and its allies, and with Enrique Bolaños and José Rizo...

## VISION

Many of us, entangled as we are in the problems we face at present, do not consider how important it is to think of the future, though that is where we will spend the rest of our lives. And these are not only fancy words: if we do not know from where we come and where we wish to go, and what we want to do when we get there, we will get nowhere, and will reach nothing in our lives. For those who do not know where they are going, any road is good enough!

I am here today to speak to you about why it is so important – indeed essential – to have a positive vision of the future for Nicaragua, and why I am seeking and will win the Presidency of the Republic.

I would like to share with you what I ardently desire for Nicaragua: my vision of the future is that all Nicaraguans, without exception, may live in decent conditions. This is my vision, this is my yearning: that we may all live decently.

And who does not wish this for Nicaragua? Of course we all do! What we still need is that we wish it so much, dream it so much and want it so much that we become motivated to take the actions necessary to achieve it. A vision is not an action it is simply a dream.

I have come to ask that you choose me to serve my people from the Presidency of the Republic, so we advance more expeditiously toward this vision of decent living conditions for all. And this will be the most important task of my life.



God has given me the strength to live, love and share – values that have been reinforced by the love of my wife Lila T and my family. I am a realist, austere, honest and persevering – some would say tenacious.

Well then, with these qualities, added to my accumulated knowledge and experience, I am prepared to be the best President that Nicaragua can have in the upcoming years.

You may rest assured that I will apply all my qualities and make every effort to serve my people, for I am convinced that ***he who does not govern to serve, is not worthy of governing!***

Yet, I can! I will truly govern to serve the people!

## ACTION

Soon our staggering foreign debt will be forgiven, and while zealously maintaining macroeconomic stability and a healthy currency, I intend to guide Nicaragua to move more forcefully toward the improvement of human welfare.

What I can tell you here today is only a summary of what we can all do together and what inspires my Program of Government. Time restraints at this event force me to leave out some sectors and issues that I will deal with in detail on other occasions.



I intend to improve the human welfare of my people, based on four fundamental pillars:

1 – I will give government policy an aggressively pro-citizen orientation, so that the population may take control of its destiny.

2 – I will preside over an austere and honest administration, built on a platform of fiscal prudence and integrity, so as to use the savings generated in the struggle against poverty.

3 – I will ensure that policy formulation responds to national interests and not individual or party interests.

4 – I will work hard to convince the great majority that together we can make this vision of Nicaraguans living in decent conditions a reality.

### **1 – Pro-citizen policy**

I intend to imbue my government's policies with an aggressively pro-citizen orientation, allowing the population to take control of its own destiny. To this end, I will head an innovative and solidary government, a government that is not merely a facilitator, but one that gives aid and support by providing resources, technology, training and credits, so that people have jobs and produce in order to earn a decent living.

I herewith tell non-governmental organizations that they will receive my support, for Nicaragua needs and is grateful for their activities, which complement the progress made in promoting the welfare of the most vulnerable groups.

I will ensure that youth, women, municipal governments and organized groups share in the exercise of power.

### **Municipal Governments**

The destiny of a municipality cannot be decided from behind a desk in Managua. The population, together with the municipal governments, National Assembly representatives, community-based organizations and local NGOs must decide in periodical consultations what projects they want to prepare and implement, thus deciding among themselves what shape their municipality will take.

I commit myself to the creation of a mechanism whereby the central government contributes a sum that matches municipal tax revenues, thus doubling their budgets. The percentage of this contribution will depend upon the level of poverty and citizen participation.

### **Parents**

I intend to gear my efforts to help fathers and mothers who are concerned about the future of their children and who at present have no possibility of employment.

My government will help the fathers and mothers of children with ages ranging from pre-school to fourth grade, and who live in areas of extreme poverty, so that they can concentrate on raising their children, making sure they are vaccinated, sending them to school, loving them and helping them with their homework, teaching them values and principles of respect, honesty, responsibility and work.

## **Housing**

I propose to families living in rural areas that together we launch a massive housing program, whereby everyone, friends and neighbors, contribute their work for community self-help construction of at least 100,000 homes. You do the work and my government will provide construction materials and technical assistance.

Self-help construction is not easy in urban areas. Therefore, my government will contribute the equivalent of 30 or 40% of the total cost to build at least 80,000 homes.

For the middle class, I will work hard to make home financing under favorable conditions a reality.

## **Small farmers**

For small farmers, who I know are facing financing problems, lack of seeds, low productivity and low prices for their harvests, I offer a financing and technical assistance program, accompanied by seeds and inputs for 50,000 families during my first year in office.

This program will increase annually until we reach 200,000 small farmer families by the end of my term. Nicaragua expects that you, small farmers, will increase your production, diversify your crops and pay your debts in a timely fashion, so that you may also live in decent conditions.

## **Small and medium enterprises**

I am aware that your activities generate more than half of all jobs in Nicaragua. I will establish a Training and Credit Fund, and we will set up massive training programs in management, technology and marketing. So that you may live decently, you must get training and invest sensibly to modernize your business.

This way you will also generate more jobs for your neighbors.

## **For the unemployed**

My government will assign resources for training and job creation, which will be managed by youth, labor, private sector and government representatives. We hope they are used in such a way that the unemployed make their best efforts to educate themselves and opt for employment under the new conditions posed by increasing competition.

At the same time, I will seek an agreement with all entrepreneurs, whether small, medium or large, local or foreign, in which I will propitiate legal security, transparent bidding processes and clear rules of the game, all of which are necessary to stimulate investment and the creation of new enterprises that generate massive increases in employment.

Thus, entrepreneurs can invest to increase production, create new jobs with decent salaries, and pay their taxes and social contributions with transparency.

I do not need to change my shirt, nor show a crucifix upon my chest, nor say that I have changed for investors to trust me.

In Europe, custom duties are not an obstacle that hinders vehicles passing from one country to another. I will support the Central American Customs Union so that we may all travel freely in a region without borders.

## **To our youth**

I know that many of you view the future as a major challenge and that many of you find yourselves forced to migrate.

I promise you that I will work hard so that you have more and better tools with which to face life and take advantage of the opportunities that development offers.

We live in a demanding world of high technology and competition. Together we must transform Nicaragua into a great center for technology and computer science, data processing and telemarketing, ecological and tourist services.

To this end, I will set up technological kiosks in every neighborhood, school and municipality, so that you may have the opportunity to learn about the advances taking place in the world.

Let us together promote sports on a large scale, so that in only a few years Nicaragua may produce many more athletes like Alexis Argüello, Dennis Martínez, Marvin Benard, Vicente Padilla, Adonis Rivas, Rosendo Alvarez and Xochilt Araúz, among others. Together let us achieve excellence and glory in the international sports arena. To this end, I will promote the establishment of numerous sports centers, as well as school competitions in the neighborhoods and departments. Winners will be sent to competitions abroad to improve their skills. Nicaraguans are born to be champions. We only need to give ourselves a chance.

My government will grant scholarships to our youth based on academic, athletic or artistic merits. I will benefit new university graduates so they may continue their studies in local or foreign universities of great prestige and receive master degrees and doctorates in careers that Nicaragua needs to successfully insert itself in the globalization process. To this end, you must gain acceptance to a university by your own efforts and commit to return and serve Nicaragua.

## **To our brothers on the Atlantic Coast**

I hereby reiterate my commitment to continue making strong efforts so that economic and social development reaches everyone in that vast territory. It is not enough to merely recognize your rights as an ethnic minority.

I am willing to take into account the particular problems of the Atlantic Coast. My government will expedite the demarcation process of indigenous lands so that the owners of these lands may live and work there under decent conditions.

I promise to foster selective infrastructure and development programs in the regions, rich as they are in potential. I will especially favor private investment in activities that as yet do not exist.

Together we must zealously look after our natural resources, and above all, create conditions for citizen security in the more outlying areas.

## **2 - Platform of fiscal prudence and austerity**

I will preside an austere and honest administration, building a platform of fiscal prudence and integrity, so as to use the savings generated by this policy in the struggle against poverty.

To this end, on my first day in office, I will sign an austerity agreement with all my ministers, deputy ministers and directors of state institutions, in which we all commit to practice fiscal prudence, to generate savings and avoid waste. Savings will be used in public works of progress, preferably those that help to alleviate poverty.

The salaries of all state employees will be based upon a foundation of fairness, in accordance with the importance of their duties and the reality of the country.

An austere style will be practiced, in accordance with the reality of the country.

Anyone who believes or thinks he can use a public position for his own benefit will never find a place in my government. Our mission is only to serve.

Much as I did from the Vice-presidency of the Republic, my Declaration of Assets will be made public, for I come only to serve and give, not to take from Nicaragua.

I will strive for new ethics in public administration, an ethic of respect for the law. We must all act according to clear rules. No citizen is above the law.

### **3 – Policies that respond to national interests**

I will ensure that the policies formulated reflect national interests and not private or party interests. Therefore, the following must be done:

The Judiciary: It would be unfair not to recognize that this country has made progress in reforming its legal system. However, these advances are blemished by the impunity we unfortunately witness with so much frequency.

Sometimes the law seems like a spider's web that traps the small and weak, not the large and powerful. Murderers, rapists, thieves and corrupt officials often go unpunished. We need a true rule of law.

Let's make a Nicaraguan deal!

Give me your support so that we may obtain a qualified majority in the National Assembly, so that we may reform and modernize our laws, and purge politics from the justice system.

Give me your support so that civil society, the law schools and bar associations participate in the selection of the magistrates.

Give me your support so that judges and magistrates to the Courts of Appeals are nominated on the basis of their judicial career, so that each legal servant becomes a professional and contributes to guarantee the legal security that the Nicaraguan society demands so that we may all live in dignity.

Let us begin to sow a seed, so that over time an impartial and independent system of justice may flourish. Together we can appoint honest women and men, with a proven trajectory and commitment for the establishment of the rule of law and an unequivocal willingness to respect the rule of law and human rights.

### **National Assembly representatives**

Nicaraguans, give me your support so that your Department may have the number of representatives that corresponds to the population, and so you may vote for the candidate of your choice based on his or her personal merits.

### **4 – Convince people to make well-being possible**

I will work hard to convince the great majority that together we can help to make reality the vision of all Nicaraguans living in decent conditions.

I therefore ask that we join our wills, so that in a single effort, we may advance rapidly to achieve this vision of living in dignity, and push Nicaragua forward: strong, far, high.



No one can move along this road but us. Only we are called upon to make our country great, none else. We must advance step-by-step, day-by-day and blow-by-blow. This is a dream that will be concluded by our children and grandchildren, but we must begin to move forward now.

The commitments we are making to the people today are in fact a Great Alliance, a great pact, if you will. But it is an alliance or pact between the people and its government, not among the leaders of political parties.

### **CONCLUSION**

To conclude, I would like to express my renewed confidence and gratitude to the parties which are our allies in this campaign: *Resistencia Nicaragüense* and *Caminos Cristianos*; the Christian Democrats of the UDC, PSC and PAN; the Social Democrats of the PSD and MDN; the Conservatives from ALCON, ANC, APC and the hundreds upon hundreds of conservatives from the Conservative Party that have offered me their support; the Multiethnic Indigenous Party; our liberal brothers in the PLN, PLIUN and PALI; the Friends of Enrique Bolaños, and the entrepreneurs, workers, small farmers, women, youth – in sum, all the democratic sectors that have given me their support and trust. Together, we will demonstrate that under the unified flag of the Constitutionalist Liberal Party, box ONE on the ballot, we can indeed change Nicaragua!

As of this moment we must commit to promote and defend the vote.

May no one be left without a voter registration card.

May no one fail to register at the local polling station. The Voter Registration List should only contain the names of the legitimate voters in your neighborhood. Let us proudly defend the vote on elections day, together with our family.

May no one fail to vote. We must not allow fraud to defeat democracy.

We ask the Supreme Electoral Council to guarantee that all those who wish to vote will be allowed to do so in peace, safety and tranquillity.

### **FAREWELL**

There is enough room in Nicaragua for everyone – majorities and minorities. There are enough strong people to help the weak. There are enough healthy people to cure the ill and care for the wounds of all our people. All we need now is to dream of this better future and do something to achieve it.

We are making history. We are about to begin a phase that will lead Nicaragua to a destiny of greatness where every Nicaraguan will live in dignity. That is my vision and to make it a reality will be the most important task of my life.

We will achieve this shared vision! It can be done! Together, we can do it!

May God bless and enlighten all Nicaraguans!