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## JOHN F. KENNEDY (/PEOPLE/PRESIDENT/JOHN-F-KENNEDY)

### **Address on the first Anniversary of the Alliance for Progress.**

March 13, 1962

Mr. Vice President, Ambassadors from our sister Republics, members of the OAS, the nine wise men upon whom so much depends, Members of the Congress, whom I am very glad to see here today--on whom we depend so much in guiding and supporting and stimulating and directing our policies in this Hemisphere--Ambassador Moscoso, the Coordinator of the Alliance for Progress, gentlemen:

One year ago, on a similar occasion, I proposed the Alliance for Progress. That was the conception, but the birth did not take place until some months later, at Punta del Este. That was a suggestion for a continent-wide cooperative effort to satisfy the basic needs of the American people for homes, work, land, health and schools, for political liberty and the dignity of the spirit.

Our mission, I said, was "to complete the revolution of the Americas--to build a Hemisphere where all men can hope for a suitable standard of living--and all can live out their lives in dignity and freedom."

I then requested a meeting of the Inter-American Economic and Social Council to consider the proposal. And, seven months ago, at Punta del Este, that Council met and adopted the Charter which established the Alianza para el Progreso and declared, and I quote, "We, the American Republics, hereby proclaim our decision to unite in a common effort to bring our people accelerated economic progress and broader social justice within the framework of personal dignity and individual liberty."

Together, the free nations of the Hemisphere pledged their resources and their energies to the Alliance for Progress. Together they pledged to accelerate economic and social development and to make the basic reforms that are necessary to ensure that all would participate in the fruits of this development. Together they pledged to modernize tax structures and land tenure--to wipe out illiteracy and ignorance--to promote health and provide decent housing--to solve the problems of commodity stabilization--to maintain sound fiscal and monetary policies--to secure the contributions of private enterprise to development--to speed the economic integration of Latin America. And together they established the basic institutional framework for this immense, decade-long development.

This historic Charter marks a new step forward in the history of our Hemisphere. It is a reaffirmation of the continued vitality of our Inter-American system, a renewed proof of our ability to meet the challenges and perils of our time, as our predecessors met these challenges in their own days.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century we struggled to provide political independence in this Hemisphere.

In the early twentieth century we worked to bring about a fundamental equality between all the nations of this Hemisphere one with another--to strengthen the machinery of regional cooperation within a framework of mutual respect, and under the leadership of Franklin Roosevelt and the Good Neighbor Policy that goal was achieved a generation ago.

Today we seek to move beyond the accomplishments of the past--to establish the principle that all the people of this Hemisphere are entitled to a decent way of life-- and to transform that principle into the reality of economic advance and social justice on which political equality must be based.

This is the most demanding goal of all. For we seek not merely the welfare and equality of nations one with another--but the welfare and the equality of the people within our nations. In so doing we are fulfilling the most ancient dreams of the founders of this Hemisphere, Washington, Jefferson, Bolivar, Marti, San Martin, and all the rest.

And I believe that the first seven months of this Alliance have strengthened our confidence that this goal is within our grasp.

Perhaps our most impressive accomplishment in working together has been the dramatic shift in the thinking and the attitudes which has occurred in our Hemisphere in these seven months. The Charter of Punta del Este posed the challenge of development in a manner that could not be ignored. It redefined the historic relationships between the American nations in terms of the fundamental needs and hopes of the twentieth century. It set forth the conditions and the attitudes on which development depends. It initiated the process of education without which development is impossible. It laid down a new principle of our relationship--the principle of collective responsibility for the welfare of the people of the Americas.

Already elections are being fought in terms of the Alliance for Progress. Already governments are pledging themselves to carry out the Charter of Punta del Este. Already people throughout the Hemisphere--in schools and in trade unions, in chambers of commerce, in military establishments, in government, on the farms--have accepted the goals of the Charter as their own personal and political commitments.

For the first time in the history of Inter-American relations our energies are concentrated on the central task of democratic development.

This dramatic change in thought is essential to the realization of our goals. For only by placing the task of development in the arena of daily thought and action among all the people can we hope to summon up the will and the courage which that task demands. This first accomplishment, therefore, is essential to all the others.

Our second achievement has been the establishment of the institutional framework within which our decade of development will take place. We honor here today the OAS Panel of Experts--a new adventure in Inter-American cooperation--drawn from all parts of the continent--charged with the high responsibility--almost unprecedented in any international cooperative effort--of evaluating long-range development plans, reviewing the progress of these plans, and helping to obtain the financing necessary to carry them out. This group has already begun its work. And here, today, I reaffirm our government's commitment to look to this Panel for advice and guidance in the conduct of our joint effort.

In addition, the OAS, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Inter-American Bank have offered planning assistance to Latin American nations--the OAS has begun a series of studies in critical development fields--and a new ECLA Planning Institute is being established to train the young men who will lead the future development of their countries. And we have completely reorganized in our own country our assistance program, with central responsibility now placed in the hands of a single coordinator.

Thus, within seven months, we have built the essential structure of the institutions, thought and policy on which our long-term effort will rest. But we have not waited for this structure to be completed in order to begin our work.

Last year I said that the United States would commit one billion dollars to the first year of that Alliance. That pledge has now been fulfilled. The Alliance for Progress has already meant better food for the children of Puno in Peru, new schools for people in Colombia, new homes for campesinos in Venezuela--which I saw myself during my recent visit. And in the year to come millions more will take new hope from the Alliance for Progress as it touches their daily life--as it must.

In the vital field of commodity stabilization I pledged the efforts of this country to try to work with you to end the frequent, violent price changes which damage the economies of so many Latin American countries. Immediately after that pledge was made, we began work on the task of formulating stabilization agreements. In December 1961 a new coffee agreement, drafted by a committee under a United States chairman, was completed. Today that agreement is in process of negotiation. I can think of no single measure which can make a

greater contribution to the cause of development than effective stabilization of the price of coffee. In addition the United States has participated in the drafting of a cocoa agreement; and we have held discussion about the terms of possible accession to the tin agreement.

We have also been working with our European allies--and I regard this as most important--in a determined effort to ensure that Latin American products will have equal access to the Common Market. Much of the economic future of this Hemisphere depends upon ready availability of the markets of the Atlantic Community, and we will continue these efforts to keep these markets open in the months ahead.

The countries of Latin America have also been working to fulfill the commitments of the Charter. The report of the Inter-American Bank contains an impressive list of measures being taken in each of the eighteen countries--measures ranging from the mobilization of domestic resources to new education and housing programs--measures within the context of the Act of Bogota, passed under the administration of my predecessor, President Eisenhower, and the Alliance for Progress Charter.

Nearly all the governments of the Hemisphere have begun to organize national development programs--and in some cases completed plans have been presented for review. Tax and land reform laws are on the books, and the national legislature of nearly every country is considering new measures in these critical fields. New programs of development, of housing, of agriculture and power are underway.

These are all heartening accomplishments--the fruits of the first seven months of work in a program which is designed to span a decade. But all who know the magnitude and urgency of the problems realize that we have just begun--that we must act much more rapidly and on a much larger scale if we are to meet our development goals in the months and years to come.

I pledge this country's effort to such an intensified effort. And I am confident that having emerged from the shaping period of our Alliance, all the nations of this Hemisphere will accelerate their own work.

For we all know that no matter what contribution the United States may make, the ultimate responsibility for success lies within the developing nation itself. For only you can mobilize the resources, make the reforms, set the goals and provide the energies which will transform our external assistance into an effective contribution to the progress of our continent. Only you can create the economic confidence which will encourage the free flow of capital, both domestic and foreign--the capital which, under conditions of responsible investment and together with public funds, will produce permanent economic advance. Only you can eliminate the evils of destructive inflation, chronic trade imbalances and widespread unemployment. Without determined efforts on your part to establish these conditions for reform and development, no amount of outside help can do the job.

I know the difficulties of such a task. It is unprecedented. Our own history shows how fierce the resistance can be to changes which later generations regard as part of the normal framework of life. And the course of rational social change is even more hazardous for those

progressive governments who often face entrenched privilege of the right and subversive conspiracies on the left.

For too long my country, the wealthiest nation in a continent which is not wealthy, failed to carry out its full responsibilities to its sister Republics. We have now accepted that responsibility. In the same way those who possess wealth and power in poor nations must accept their own responsibilities. They must lead the fight for those basic reforms which alone can preserve the fabric of their societies. Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable.

These social reforms are at the heart of the Alliance for Progress. They are the precondition to economic modernization. And they are the instrument by which we assure the .poor and hungry--the worker and the campesino--his full participation in the benefits of our development and in the human dignity which is the purpose of all free societies. At the same time we sympathize with the difficulties of remaking deeply rooted and traditional social structures. We ask that substantial and steady progress toward reform accompany the effort to develop the economies of the American nations.

A year ago I also expressed our special friendship to the people of Cuba and the Dominican Republic and the hope that they would soon rejoin the society of free men, uniting with us in this common effort. Today I am glad to welcome among us the representatives of a free Dominican Republic; and to reaffirm the hope that, in the not too distant future, our society of free nations will once again be complete.

But we must not forget that our Alliance for Progress is more than a doctrine of development--a blueprint of economic advance. Rather it is an expression of the noblest goals of our society. It says that want and despair need not be the lot of free men. And those who may occasionally get discouraged with the magnitude of the task, have only to look to Europe fifteen years ago, and today, and realize the great potential which is in every free society when the people join and work together. It says in our Hemisphere that no society is free until all its people have an equal opportunity to share the fruits of their own land and their own labor. And it says that material progress is meaningless without individual freedom and political liberty. It is a doctrine of the freedom of man in the most spacious sense of that freedom.

Nearly a century ago Jose Hernandez, the Argentine poet, wrote, "America has a great destiny to achieve in the fate of mankind ... One day . . . the American Alliance will undoubtedly be achieved, and the American Alliance will bring world peace... America must be the cradle of the great principles which are to bring a complete change in the political and social organization of other nations."

We have made a good start on our journey; but we have still a long way to go. The conquest of poverty is as difficult if not more difficult than the conquest of outer space. And we can expect moments of frustration and disappointment in the months and years to come. But we have no doubt about the outcome. For all history shows that the effort to win progress within freedom represents the most determined and steadfast aspiration of man.

We are joined together in this Alliance as nations united by a common history and common values. And I look forward--as do all the people of this country--to the day when the people of Latin America will take their rightful place beside the United States and Western Europe as citizens of industrialized and growing and increasingly abundant societies. The United States--Europe--and Latin America--almost a billion people--a bulwark of freedom and the values of Western civilization--invulnerable to the forces of despotism--lighting the path to liberty for all the peoples of the world. This is our vision--and, with faith and courage, we will realize that vision in our own time.

Thank you.

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*Note: The President spoke in the State Dining Room at the White House at a reception for the diplomatic corps of the Latin American Republics. In his opening remarks he referred to Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson; to the "nine wise men" (the original members of the Committee of Nine of the Alliance for Progress): Hernando Agudelo Villa, Colombia, Ernesto Malaccorto, Argentina, Manuel Noriega Morales, Guatemala, Phillippe Pasos, Cuba, Harvey Perloft, United States, Paul Rosenstein-Rodan, United Kingdom, Paul Saez, Chile, Ary Torres, Brazil, Gonzalo Robles, Mexico; and to Ambassador Teodoro Moscoso, Coordinator of the Alliance for Progress.*

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