



His Excellency Robert 'Woody' Johnson
Embassy of the United States of America
33 Nine Elms Lane
London
SW11 7US

8th January 2019

Dear Ambassador Johnson

We are writing to express our utmost condemnation of recent attempts by your Government to undermine Nicaragua's democracy and sovereignty through the introduction of the NICA Act, signed off by President Trump on 20 December 2018. This legislation is a violation of international law and Article 1 of the UN and OAS Charters respectively, both of which condemn such actions.

As you will know, President Ortega won the 2016 elections in Nicaragua with 72% of the vote and has overseen a remarkable transformation in the country since he first came back to power in 2007. Prior to April 2018, average growth rate in Nicaragua was around 5 per cent, poverty and extreme poverty were halved, unemployment and social exclusion had been massively reduced, crime rates were among the lowest in the region, illiteracy had been virtually eradicated and it was one of the region's most stable economies and also regarded as the safest country in Central America. Unlike its neighbours in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala, Nicaragua has also kept out the drug cartels and pioneered community policing. The country has won praise from the United Nations and other agencies for, among other things, achieving the Millennium Development Goal of halving malnutrition. Over one million children are provided with free school meals and 95% of families now have access to electricity. Health and education are free. In addition, according to the World Economic Forum global gender gap report 2018, Nicaragua is the highest ranked country in the Americas in terms of gender equality, with fifth position and first position on the criteria of health and survival, a testimony to the success of government health care programmes.

The NICA Act will put at risk the social and economic programmes which have benefitted so many Nicaraguans and is likely to put paid to all of the achievements of the FSLN Government. It is the poorest and most vulnerable in society who will suffer. As Nicaraguan economist Mauricio Peralta points out: "Impoverishing a country will not contribute to democracy". We cannot begin to understand why a country which has made such tremendous progress over the last 11 years is regarded by your Government as *'an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States'*.

We call upon the United States administration to refrain from intervention in the internal affairs of Nicaragua and to respect that country's sovereignty and democracy. The events of 2018 have taken a tremendous toll on Nicaragua and the Nicaraguan people – we believe that Nicaraguans have the right to live in peace and determine their own future.