

President of the Assembly, Secretary General, Chiefs of State, Prime Ministers, Ministers, Delegates.

It is my honour to address you as President of the Government of Spain. I do so with the emotion that this Hall inspires in me, and with respect for the values that shaped this Organization and which guide its day-to-day work.

I would like to begin by highlighting that this is the first time in history that a Latin American woman, María Fernanda Espinosa, is presiding over this Assembly. This is yet another reflection of the fact that, in the twenty-first century, global governance is inconceivable without the leadership of women. I am a feminist politician. Now is the time for women.

I have always firmly believed that multilateralism allows us to reach levels that would be unattainable through the individual actions of states.

With this idea in mind, I would like to reassert the value of agreement and dialogue as means of addressing the challenges faced by the international community. Challenges that Spain is meeting in a hopeful spirit of collective action, in the face of those who would spread fear and uncertainty.

Spain's commitment to the United Nations is based on shared values and a shared conviction: The pursuit of justice in all its forms, through respect for human dignity, democracy, freedom, equality and human rights, embracing—now, more than ever—the goals of promoting the peace and wellbeing of all peoples.

The United Nations, like the European project in which I so firmly believe, was not born from an idealist utopia, as some disparagingly suggest. It was born from a victory over the forces of hate, racism, and tyranny.

Today, the world is facing enormous global challenges. We have been called upon to act. To produce an agenda for real change.

These times do not need nationalist or non inclusive rhetoric. Now is the time to cultivate a new cooperative leadership, based not only on a willingness to listen to others, but also on a readiness to understand their motivations. It is the time to accept, with heartfelt empathy, that no single person

has a monopoly on the truth. We need leadership that can build consensus and forge agreements; that can find solutions and make the most of synergies.

We cannot simply dismiss everything we have accomplished by working together. Today, the world is better than it was, and much better than it would have been had the United Nations never existed. However, the real strength of this organization does not lie in its past achievements, but rather in everything it can do to shape the future.

The time is now. We are the last generation that will have the chance to halt the consequences of climate change. And we are the first generation to have the wherewithal to eradicate poverty from the world.

It is not a question of seeing obstacles, but of identifying opportunities. It is a question of making change a catalyst for achieving sustainable development. And it is not an ideal. It is a necessity.

Many countries face the dilemma between continuing to be pits societies or transforming themselves into closed societies. As if a return to the false calm of borders, and renouncing collective action, were the only means of addressing the uncertainties of these times.

We already know where such ideas lead.

Now, we must look beyond the seeming dictates of these fast-moving times; times in which everything seems to change from one minute to the next.

Let us move past the lost decade of the economic crisis and growing inequality. Our commitment has a name, a date and goals: *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

It was Kofi Annan—to whom I wish to pay tribute—who taught us that human rights, development, and security are all interdependent.

I would like to call to mind these pillars, accompanied by an additional thought: The dignity of human beings must be at the heart of all political action.

The principles that have brought us to this point in our history are not in retreat, and never will be. In fact, they are more relevant than ever.

And that is where Spain will continue to stand: defending those values. Because without dignity, without equality between women and men, without respect for human rights, there will be no peace and no development.

As a Member State of the United Nations Human Rights Council until 2020, Spain supports initiatives that strengthen the capacity of the Council and of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. We are fortunate to have, in the High Commissioner, a person of the political and personal stature of Michelle Bachelet. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which celebrates its seventieth anniversary, provides the framework to move forward.

Madam President,

There is no greater injustice than that which defines what a human being will or will not be, based on whether they are born a boy or a girl.

How to measure everything that generations of our societies have lost by accepting this discrimination?

Humankind must not tolerate this injustice. We must develop a truly global roadmap to eradicate all forms of discrimination still suffered by women, whether it is gender-based violence, trafficking of women, or female genital mutilation.

In this endeavour, the United Nations can rely on Spain's commitment.

The cabinet of Ministers I lead is made up of 60% women, because we aim to lead by example. Because the battleground is in companies, in education and in society itself. In leadership where glass ceilings remain, simply due to inertia. I would like to congratulate the Secretary General on having reached full parity in his Senior Management Group for the first time in the history of the United Nations.

Spain will continue to promote the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. It is crucial that women participate as peace brokers in all phases of conflicts. We will continue to support the impeccable work of UN Women; Spain was an extremely active contributor to UN Women's creation, and was the first donor to establish a Partnership Framework with the organization. I have also joined the Circle of Leadership promoted by the Secretary-General to combat sexual exploitation and abuse in UN operations. It is essential that we promote a zero-tolerance culture in this area.

Madam President,

There are no shortcuts or quick fixes for today's major challenges, such as the refugee and migration crisis.

Humanity cannot simply accept as inevitable the fact that 68 million people have been forcibly displaced around the world, of whom more than 25 million are refugees, and over 3 million are asylum seekers.

During this session, the General Assembly will adopt the Global Compact on Refugees. This is a great leap forward.

We must work closely with the High Commissioner for Refugees, and we must acknowledge the situation that this turmoil causes in host countries. Above all, in the knowledge that 85% of the world's refugees and asylum seekers are concentrated in developing countries.

These states need our empathy and commitment. And, above all else, justice and an equitable distribution of this responsibility; we all have the obligation to help.

Madam President,

Spain has suffered the calamities of the economic crisis more than almost any other Western European country. Nonetheless, the vast majority of Spanish society has never turned its back on the tragedy resulting from migration.

And of this, I am proud. I am proud of our society, which has not let itself be radicalized by the fever of xenophobic discourse, based on a culture of fear of the other.

Perhaps this is because we remember our own history. So many Spaniards have themselves been emigrants—and refugees. And that is why we will not abandon our international commitments. If we take in a boat that is adrift in the Mediterranean, with 630 people on board, it is not only because international law demands it, but also because it is a moral imperative.

Spain welcomes the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, which is set to be adopted in Marrakech in December.

When migration is safe, orderly and regular, we can benefit from its positive impact. Rather than an image of countries as fortresses, with exclusionary and xenophobic narratives, we champion the concepts of solidarity, humanity and respect.

Spain is well aware of what this challenge entails. We are a country of origin and of transit; a destination country, and a country of return. We defend migration policy whose fundamental goal is to address the root causes of migration, such as poverty, environmental degradation, and lack of opportunities. Ultimately, we must aspire for migration to be a free choice, not a necessity. Such a policy requires dialogue and cooperation with the countries of origin and transit. And especially with African countries, where nine out of ten people are expected to be living in extreme poverty by 2030.

Madam President,

There are many forms of poverty. Please allow me to underscore the abomination of childhood poverty, and poverty that afflicts women. More than 15 million girls will never have the chance to learn to read or write in primary school. And 330 million women are living on less than 2 dollars a day.

To combat this and other forms of poverty, I would like to mention the reason for a global perspective. The reason for a new 21st-century humanism, based on the values that have brought the greatest prosperity ever known to humankind.

The 2030 Agenda, and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, are the current embodiment of that spirit, with humankind and the planet at its heart. We must adopt it as a new Global Social Contract, binding us all and connecting us with future generations.

Spain is going to work with determination to make this change. We have approved an Action Plan for implementing the Agenda 2030, and we will launch our own National Sustainable Development Strategy. Indeed, many of the measures adopted by my government are directly tied to our commitment to meeting the SDGs: combating gender violence, child poverty, and energy poverty; policies promoting universal healthcare; grants and scholarships to advance equal opportunities and improving workers' rights. This is the 2030 Agenda.

Spain is moving forward along the path traced by the United Nations. Spain has done this before, when we championed the Millennium Development Goals, with the largest contribution from any single donor in the UN system, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, Spain

created the Cooperation Fund for Water and Sanitation in Latin America and the Caribbean, in which we have invested more than 800 million euros.

However, despite all these efforts, none of them make any sense unless we tackle the greatest threat of our generation: the impact of climate change.

I come from a country where 40% of our surface area is threatened by desertification.

We must fight this battle at every level. This means addressing its most immediate effects. But it also means addressing underlying structural causes. This is why we are keenly aware of the need to undertake a steady de-carbonization of our economy.

Yesterday, I announced that Spain would join the Towards Carbon Neutrality coalition. With this step, we deepen our commitment to implementing ambitious long-term strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which will enable us to fully comply with the Paris Agreement. Because the fact is, we cannot delay any further in making a just ecological transition, laying the foundations for a new production model. Our future depends on renewable energy and clean technologies. Only from this starting point will we be able to combine material wellbeing with social justice and environmental sustainability.

Spain will participate constructively to ensure that the Cop24 in Katowice (Poland), and the Climate Change Summit that the Secretary General will convene next year are a success. We have to be able to move forward and comply with the Paris Agreement, and these meetings offer the occasion to do so.

Madam President,

It is also up to us to make progress on the security agenda, but a security focused on human beings.

It has taken us a long time to learn that security is much more than a concept tied to defence, in the military sense of the term. Security finds its *raison d'être* not in the absence of conflict, but in guaranteeing human beings' ability to be free.

Terrorism continues to be one of the major threats to freedom. This phenomenon was not born out of a supposed "clash of civilizations", as some have claimed.

There are few areas in which cooperation, multilateralism, and collaborative leadership can bear such abundant and beneficial fruits. The fight against terrorist financing networks is crucial, as are international police and judiciary cooperation, and the exchange of information and intelligence.

However, it is also essential to combat the hatred and violence that is being echoed in so many forums. We must do all that we can to prevent young people from falling prey to fanaticism, and to radical, exclusionary discourse.

Governments and civil society must build social and economic integration, able to keep recruitment networks from taking over this space. It is here, in this space devoid of expectations for personal development, where we must win the battle.

Likewise, we must be able to overcome the slightest hint of division and resentment, also crafting a narrative of solidarity and remembrance that includes the voice of the victims of terrorism, and strengthens the cohesion of our societies.

Other essential efforts are investing in education, in our young people; taking an appropriate and comprehensive view of migratory issues; and providing the media with tools to combat hate speech and to fight stereotypes. These are precisely the areas of action that fall under the remit of the Alliance of Civilizations, an instrument for dialogue between cultures and religions.

The growing tensions regarding nuclear proliferation and weapons of mass destruction are equally troubling. The world cannot afford another arms race. We must make the effort to regain lost consensus, and strengthen the non-proliferation system.

The spread of armed conflicts and their changing nature—increasingly hybrid and complex—also demand our attention. Spain is firmly committed to strengthening the UN's role in maintaining peace and international security.

We support the measures promoted by the United Nations Secretary-General to position prevention and peace-building at the centre of the UN's work. We also support his efforts to reform the architecture and management of UN Peacekeeping Operations, to which Spain has been a very active contributor for decades. More than 160,000 Spanish troops have served, with loyalty and commitment, to United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. Consequently, Spain has supported the Secretary General's Action for Peacekeeping Declaration regarding peacekeeping operations.

But prevention, and maintaining and consolidating peace, are not enough; wherever a conflict breaks out, we must act. Spain supports respect for and enforcement of international humanitarian law, so that no violation enjoys impunity.

I call upon the justice system to pursue and to prosecute those who commit war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. Here, the efforts of the International Criminal Court are irreplaceable.

I call also upon the leaders of states and of the international community to protect their civilian populations. Spain supports the France/Mexico initiative to limit the use of veto powers in cases of mass atrocity. Humanitarian disasters like those in Syria and Iraq remind us of the high price of failing to arrive promptly.

Madam President,

For the multilateral system to be effective, we must renovate and reinforce it. In so doing, we will be defending everything that we believe in.

Spain strongly supports the reform of the United Nations system promoted by the Secretary-General. We have before us the challenge of clearly integrating the pillars of peace, sustainable development, and human rights. And to avoid the duplications and overlapping which are dragging down this institution.

We must win back public opinion, and the favour of a global citizenry that has come of age in an atmosphere of growing scepticism about an organization that can no longer rest on its past achievements, and which must tackle with ambition the task of winning over new generations.

Our sole source of strength lies in the capacity of the United Nations to project this message to the world. Therefore, I ask that all of you serve as role models. To be worthy of the example set by those who represent the very best of the UN: those workers who risk their lives in conflict zones. To all of these men and women, to who face up to problems on the ground every day, my sincerest recognition.

The challenge of the disrepute into which politics has fallen is also at stake in the multilateral arena. We must win this battle against those who would spread the shadow of uncertainty with a single goal: to cast doubt on the role of international organizations.

Spain is a solid ally in this task.

Madam President,

There are two issues I would like to call your attention to.

As regards Gibraltar, Spain's position is well-known, and aligned with UN doctrine. The United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union means that Gibraltar will also leave the Union. I would like for us to take advantage of this historic occasion to establish a new relationship, which inevitably involves Spain, between the European Union and Gibraltar. A relationship bringing prosperity to the benefit of the entire region: to Gibraltarians, and to those in wider area of Campo de Gibraltar.

We are concerned by the persistent crisis, such as that in the Western Sahara, which is so close to us. Spain defends the central role of the United Nations, and would like to contribute to the efforts of the UN Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to achieving just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the context of arrangements consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

Madam President,

Spain is a fully-fledged democracy, ranking high on all of the global indexes that measure the democratic quality of countries' institutions. Moreover, Spain has made defence of and commitment to multilateralism a hallmark of our foreign policy.

Today, the world faces major threats, just as it did eight decades ago. Cooperative leadership, of which Spain is a part, demands a renewed commitment to multilateralism. Solutions for global problems can only be found through cooperation between States.

Let us take on the task of making the coming decade a landmark victory for consensus, and a defeat of those who only seek to hear the echo of their own voice.

I address you today in a city which saw the arrival of millions of human beings fleeing from poverty, and from political, racial, or religious persecution. The immense majority of them were Europeans. Today, on both shores of the North Atlantic, a collective veil of amnesia is being drawn over the memory of what we were, and of what we are: diversity, and nothing but diversity.

As León Felipe, the great poet of Spain's 20th-century exiles, wrote:

"It's not a matter of getting there first on your own, but of arriving in time, with everyone".

Nothing defines better the UN goals than the Agenda 2030's vitality. It represents this decade's horizon of hope, one that must be conquered in order to arrive, in the end, together, at the same time, and leaving no one behind.

Thank you very much.