

Alliance of Civilizations

A Future Yet to Be Determined

From conflict to dialogue. From dialogue to interaction and alliance. It is now essential to establish contacts, to build bridges to span our differences and to reaffirm what unites us, to be able to transcend a culture of imposition and force toward a culture of conciliation, understanding and peace. A culture that provides the serenity and courage to respect all opinions, to exclude no one except the unyielding and the fanatics, who are not convinced by words and whose only argument is violence.

Violence is never justifiable, but we must attempt to explain it to be able to avoid it. It is essential to understand the roots of violence, because it is frequently born from frustration, humiliation, constantly unfulfilled promises, and the trivialization of the support systems of ethics and beliefs.

Infinite diversity, our wealth. Each person's capacity for creativity, our hope. Being united in universal principles, our strength. For that reason we must mobilize, and in a great popular movement start building that other possible world that we yearn for. The world that is so appropriately defined in the first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: all people being free and equal in dignity, all united in our common brotherhood.

Bonds of water that unite both shores of the Mediterranean, the cradle of so many cultures and civilizations! Bonds that will enable the peoples to determine, as an expression of their free will, a less somber future, to set forth on the road to full human dignity. A future that has yet to be

determined, which we, as our supreme commitment, owe to the next generations.

And, from this moment forward, mobilization in favor of union and alliance, reflected in our daily activities.

An alliance within the framework of the United Nations, to be able to deter and, if warranted, to respond quickly and effectively to any attack or provocation.

An alliance to be able to confront natural disasters, reducing their impact through rapidly-deployed cooperation, with the adequate human and technical resources.

An alliance to work together in preventing and treating diseases and pandemics.

A world alliance against poverty.

And above all, an alliance to prepare together adequate strategies concerning matters of global importance, which can no longer continue to be decided by a minority: energy, nutrition, water... . Anticipating the future is essential to avoid “surprises” that always affect the weakest.

An alliance to protect our common heritage, our cultural identity, our diversity and uniqueness, which are our wealth. And common values that give us strength in unity.

An alliance to understand each other, to respect each other, to enable peaceful dialogue, to transcend from a culture of violence and imposition to a culture of dialogue and conciliation.

An alliance to facilitate access to life-long education for all, capable of promoting the distinct creative power of all human beings, enabling us to reach our own decisions, the result of reflection and the exercise of freedom of expression, acting upon the dictates of no one. Education that precludes the propagation of stereotypes, the distortion of history and which emphasizes the facets comprise the mystery of each human life.

An alliance for active participation and the consolidation of democratic contexts in which human rights can be fully exercised and responsibilities assumed.

Alliances in favor of the most vulnerable, children, youth, the elderly and disabled... with a permanent attitude of solidarity on the part of society.

Alliances that prevent and, when warranted, identify and isolate extremist and dogmatic attitudes, so that it will be possible to progressively be convinced of the need to abandon positions of force and, when the time comes, to effectively combat violence and terrorism.

Alliances to combat “fear and want”, as expressed in the Preamble to the Universal Declaration, through access to reliable information and the freedom of expression, sharing material goods and knowledge to foment stability and security through justice and respect for human dignity, preventing the breeding grounds for frustration, radicalization and aggression.

An alliance for interaction and exchanges among universities and scientists, among arts and sports entities, among cities... of all of the countries of the world and, especially, the farthest removed and least related.

In summary, an alliance that is the fruit of peaceful dialogue rather than imposition and force.

It is now the task of society and of its representative organizations to build, in their daily activities, this peaceful and integrated future that characterizes liberated peoples, who are free of the burden of addictions, fear and prejudice.

It is imperative to deal with the problems of energy on a worldwide scale, since only then will we fulfill our supreme commitment to ensure the needs of future generations, urgently preventing “strategic movements” already underway, for example in East Africa and the Indian Ocean, to take up positions in places that possibly could head up future oil production. All sources of energy, whether nuclear fusion or fission, wind, solar, biotechnology, even the mass-production of hydrogen, should be included in this great global commitment on energy.

An alliance to create a great human outcry to peacefully change present trends, which are guided by the short-term interests of a minority. In this mobilization, made possible to today by advances in technology and communications (especially through mobile phones), the cooperation of the press, radio and television at the local, regional and worldwide levels is essential.

This is also an especially opportune moment for the political and economic evolution that is taking place in Latin America, India and China. Undoubtedly the BRIC countries will contribute to creating a future scenario that is much different from the present.

A future yet to be determined! It is the people's turn. The time has come to cease being mere spectators, and become committed actors. This is not the time for rest. It is time to sow day and night.

Federico Mayor Zaragoza

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