

Mr. President, H.E. the Secretary-General

First of all, I would like to congratulate the newly appointed President of the Assembly, Mr. Joseph Deiss, and to wish him a great success during the Sixty-Fifth session of the General Assembly.

September is an important month in the agenda of international politics since the middle of the twentieth century, as it marks the beginning of the General Assembly sessions.

The Conference of San Francisco turned the page of the world disputes, and opened the road for international cooperation to establish a new Organisation of the United Nations; an Organisation focussed on the promotion of peace, justice and a better life for the humankind as a whole. Also back in time, the Bretton Woods Agreements established the free-trade rules for commercial and financial relations among the world's most industrialized States in pursuit of peace.

During the first decade of the present century, New York and September have witnessed events that have marked the future of international relations and the birth of a new world.

On 11 September, 2001, New York and Washington suffered terrorist attacks that commotioned the world being the most traumatic attacks in the history of the Western world. In September 2008, New York was the centre of the panic caused by the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers, while just a few weeks ago the city hosting us now has endured stress in the intercultural relations and has witnessed the re-launch of the most ambitious programme of international cooperation in history, the Millennium Development Goals.

These events mark the true beginning of the XXI century, which is taking place in an environment of accelerated global and interdependent transformation. We are still at a historical crossroads where we must promote the awareness of the reform of the United Nations. We should establish new mechanisms of global

governance in order to update the system of international relations. We should also strengthen multilateralism and security, reinforce the way out from the global recession and properly manage the growing interculturalism.

Mr. President,

An effective multilateralism is the method that will allow us to face the global challenges of the twentieth century; a method that stems from the efforts of this General Assembly and the commitment and work of the leaders of the States here represented; a method based on respect and recognition to establish new alliances and build common strategies and policies.

On many occasions we hear statements that highlight the inabilities or deficiencies of the United Nations system. Please allow me not to make the traditional catastrophic statement but to recognise the work and success of the United Nations and its capacity to deliver, as it has been the case with natural disasters suffered by Haiti and Pakistan. This capacity to act and effectively give expression to the effort of all countries through a multilateral approach is the way for the international system to meet the challenges we presently face.

11 September transformed and enhanced the concept of security. The Member States approved, in September 2006, the Global Strategy against Terrorism; a resolution and an action plan that for the first time defined a common strategic approach agreed by all member States. Such strategy was presented by Secretary-General Kofi Annan one year after the brutal and traumatic attacks on 11 March 2004 in Madrid. To this day, the intensity and number of terrorist attacks have diminished and we have improved on security, although we are far from winning the battle against international terrorism.

This year significant progress has also been made in security, disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation matters. The new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) makes possible the reduction of 30 percent of the nuclear heads deployed by the United States and Russia, and represents the greatest nuclear agreement in 20 years. Last May, all 189 countries signatories to the Non-

Proliferation Nuclear Treaty approved the convening of a Conference in 2012 to transform the Middle East into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. President,

We are beginning to come out of the worst financial and economic crisis since the 1930s. Its negative effects will continue for millions of people, particularly in terms of decent employment. Since the collapse of Lehman Brothers on 15 September 2008, the international financial system has required an unprecedented intervention from both States and international institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, in order to maintain the global demand and the financial markets.

The absence of an international regulation favoured the crisis of the financial institutions. It has required an enhanced coordination, making the G-20 a new forum for economic governance. The lesson learned from this crisis is that the development of the international markets needs not only the invisible hand, but also a global regulating system. This is now clear for us in Europe, where we have adopted measures to harmonise the legislation of member States, so that the regulating authorities can exercise their executive and disciplinary powers.

Europe, subsequent to the Lisbon Treaty, has followed the road of cohesion in foreign policy and it should be seen as a unique interlocutor, with its own voice in the international community. That is why the European Union must have an appropriate status in the general Assembly.

Mr. President,

The Government of Spain is in the frontline in the fight against hunger and poverty, and has proposed to the United Nations, together with other member States, the creation of a tax on international currency transactions to be allocated to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Although the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) provides satisfactory statistics,

since hunger has been reduced in the world for the first time, the amount of 925 million hungry people is morally and politically unacceptable.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon knows that he can rely on Spain in the movement towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals: the fight against poverty cannot be a victim to economic recession. Despite the crisis, the key for achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 is to generate strong political will.

Mr. President,

The time to take responsibility for fighting climate change has arrived. In order to face this challenge, we are required to modify the manner in which we perceive the concept of development and economic growth. A greater effort is required to limit and reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as our dependency on fossil fuels, and to pledge on renewable energy and on an efficient and responsible consumption.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change has created a point of reference to provide us with a system that sets realistic solutions. In a few months we will attend the Summit on Climate Change and we should be aware of the necessary effort to level the road to the meeting in Cancun: the credibility in the multilateral system is at stake. The Summit will be successful if we work on an approach rich in solidarity and generosity towards the most vulnerable countries, which should bring us to an ambitious agreement so that the States represented in this General Assembly assume certifiable objectives and commitments.

A necessary condition to carry out these objectives is integration on equal terms of almost half the world population: women. The Tenth Anniversary of Resolution 1325, "Women, Peace and Security", should bring us to consolidate gender equality in the public and institutional scopes, as well as in the economic, social and cultural spheres. We can and must make progress in these reforms, because there are positive signs such as the recent creation of

UN Women, which will carry out this mandate under President Michelle Bachelet, whom I wish to congratulate for her election to lead this new entity.

As regards to Human Rights, Spain is firmly committed to the abolition of the death penalty and for this reason we presented to the General Assembly an initiative to abolish capital punishment two years ago. In a few days, it will begin the work of the International Commission against the Death Penalty proposed by the President of the Government of Spain, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. We believe that the capital punishment is an absolute violation of Human Rights due to its irreversibility, which makes it the most extreme case of a cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

Mr. President,

My country fully supports the peaceful and negotiated solution of international conflicts, in accordance to the United Nations resolutions. Reaching peace in the Middle East continues to be a strategic priority for Spain. For this reason, and while the twentieth anniversary of Madrid Conference is approaching, we continue to decisively work so that the process of direct talks between Israel and Palestine finally lead to the two States solution. Both Israeli and Palestinian peoples know they count on all our support in these moments, when some of the thorny issues of the conflict are on the table. To this effect, I join the appeal of the President of the United States of America at this podium for the freeze on settlement activity to be maintained.

A global and lasting peace will not be achieved until the issues affecting Syria and Lebanon are resolved. A true global coalition for peace in the Middle East cannot be created without a multilateral framework.

Mr. President,

We all know that stability in the Western Balkan region and the full integration of its countries in the European Union is one of the essential priorities for Europe. In 2010 we commemorated the tenth anniversary of the Zagreb Conference,

which laid the foundations for an ambitious programme for the stabilisation of the Western Balkans. In spite of the evident achievements, some issues have to be worked out. Aware of these challenges, Spain, as rotating Presidency of the European Union, convened last May a High-Level Meeting in Sarajevo, attended by all stakeholders, and which helped to renew the commitment of the European Union in the stability and European future of the region.

Recently, the adoption by consensus by this General Assembly of a resolution sponsored by the 27 members of the European Union and Serbia on one of the pending issues, has expressed the will of all actors in the international community to achieve the aforementioned objectives.

Mr. President,

Spain reiterates its support to the mediation efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Western Sahara conflict, Mr. Ross; a conflict which must be solved by mutual agreement between the parties and according to the United Nations resolutions.

Latin America is witnessing an unprecedented social and political change. At the onset of the bi-centennial commemorations on the independence of these republics, Spain would like to join the processes through the Ibero-American Summits, reinforcing their bilateral relations and those between the European Union and Latin America. Cuba deserves special mention after the recent decisions by Cuban authorities. Embargos are useless and make no sense, the same as one-sided attitudes that only harm expectations.

Without doubt, Africa is one of the most important challenges for the international community and for the Millennium Development Goals. The progress made in good governance and democratisation in the continent must encourage our optimism and allow us, through international cooperation, to overcome crisis like the one in the Sahel, Somalia or the Great Lakes Region. Spain reiterates its full commitment with Africa.

Mr. President,

Living together in a globalised world must encourage us to reinforce the instruments for the good governance and cultural and intercultural diversity, which is presented as one of the most urgent challenges of the XXI century. The international consolidation of the Alliance of Civilisations as an instrument of preventive diplomacy is already a fact and a resource that we must utilise. Over one hundred States are part of the Group of Friends, together with 23 international organisations, and I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to invite those countries that have not joined yet to do so.

In a situation of international economic crisis, intercultural stress is likely to grow, which encourages us to continue working for the respect and understanding among cultures and civilisations, to counteract expressions of hatred, fanaticism, divisions and confrontations.

Mr. President,

The new world requires that we adapt and enlarge the international institutional architecture, since as Spanish thinker José Ortega y Gasset quoted, "men do not live together for no purpose, but to undertake big enterprises." And today, at the United Nations, we are presented with a big enterprise: to complete the reform of our institutions and set the foundations of global governance, because together we can face the challenges and global crises of the XXI century and build a more just, balanced and sustainable international system.

Bretton Woods in 1944 and the San Francisco Conference in 1945 were the result of half a century of crisis and two world wars. Believe me! Our fate is not to wait another half a century to be able to reform and establish new institutions for the XXI century. We have already waited a decade, but we cannot wait much longer, because we feel the breath of History on our backs.

Thank you very much.