

**80<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly of the United Nations**

**Intervention of the Head of Government, H. E. Mr. Xavier Espot Zamora**

New York, 26 September 2025

Madam Vice President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The coat of arms of Andorra bears a motto that embodies a profound political and ethical truth: “*Virtus Unita Fortior*” — united virtue is stronger. This motto, which guides the preamble of our Constitution, carries a universal message: moral and political strength does not lie in imposition, but in the unity of values, in shared coherence, and in collective virtue. It is a lesson that transcends borders and is more relevant than ever in today’s global context.

And in this spirit, which carries something Aristotelian, we are reminded that virtue is not an extreme, but a middle ground attained through reason and, above all, for the common good. International cooperation, when balanced, fair, and guided by prudence, is a demonstration of political virtue. And when this virtue is shared and organized among nations, it becomes stronger.

We face more challenges than ever: climate change, armed conflicts, and forced migrations. Where we once saw horizons, walls now rise. For this reason, now is the time to bring to the international level the spirit that guides a country like ours, with more than seven centuries of peace. We must uphold the essence of multilateralism — the *raison d’être* of this United Nations organization, an organization of peoples and for peoples.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor and a profound responsibility for me to address this General Assembly today, on behalf of the Andorran people and the Government.

I would like to begin this speech with a double expression of gratitude. First, to H. E. Ms. Annalena Baerbock, whom I congratulate on her election as President of this 80th General Assembly. We wish her every success. Second, I would like to say that for Andorra, it is a privilege to serve as one of the Vice-Presidencies of this symbolic session.

This year’s theme, “Better Together: 80 Years and Beyond for Peace, Development and Human Rights,” speaks to us powerfully. And not just as a declaration of intentions, but as an urgent necessity. We live in difficult times — times of conflict, polarization, and uncertainty. But they are also times of opportunity to strengthen international cooperation, to update the institutions that support it, and to build lasting solutions collectively through multilateralism.

Eight decades of diplomacy, peacebuilding, development aid, and human rights promotion. In this context, Andorra also celebrates thirty-two years as a member state. A shorter but intense history, during which multilateralism has been fundamental to our international recognition, to making our voice heard abroad, to our legal security, and to our economic and social progress.

Since our accession, our commitment to this organization has been clear: Andorra advocates for effective, inclusive, and people-centered multilateralism. A multilateralism that leaves no one behind, that listens to all voices — including those of small states. This position was evident during the first summit of Heads of State and Government, held last May in our country, on the occasion of the Games of the Small States of Europe. From this summit emerged a declaration in which the participating states affirmed the need to strengthen multilateral governance, defend international law, promote human rights, and adopt joint measures to address global economic, social, climate, and technological challenges. It is from this perspective that we wish to contribute to the renewal of the United Nations to meet the global challenges of the 21st century.

We cannot speak of development or human rights without also speaking of peace and security. The world is facing an alarming multiplication of armed conflicts of a scale and violence unprecedented in the past 80 years. The war in Ukraine is approaching its fourth year, with devastating consequences for the civilian population and international stability. Andorra reiterates its condemnation of all violations of international law and once again expresses its firm support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Looking toward the Middle East, the situation in Gaza strikes us with severity. The number of civilian casualties, the destruction of essential infrastructure, and the worsening humanitarian crisis demand an urgent response from the international community. We wish to express our deep concern and strongly call for respect for international humanitarian law by all parties.

For this reason:

- We condemn without distinction all attacks against the civilian population, including all acts of terrorism and indiscriminate assaults.
- We strongly and specifically condemn the Hamas attacks of October 7, 2023, and call for the release of the hostages.
- We believe that a lasting peace process for the conflict between Israel and Palestine, and in the Middle East region, can only be achieved through the two-state solution.

It is for this reason, and following these premises, that last Monday we decided to recognize the State of Palestine.

This much-needed gesture will take full diplomatic effect once a series of conditions are met, such as the release of hostages, the disarmament of Hamas, and the establishment of a Palestinian government that excludes Hamas.

Andorra reaffirms, on the other hand, its support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). This agency, through its education, health, and humanitarian assistance services, is an essential pillar for the protection of millions of Palestinian refugees. In the absence of a political solution, it represents the only institutional support that ensures minimal stability and dignity in the region.

As a State committed to multilateralism, Andorra defends that only dialogue, diplomacy, and the pursuit of shared solutions can lead us toward a just and lasting peace.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The founder of *Save the Children*, Eglantyne Jebb, once said that “all wars, just or unjust, disastrous or victorious, are wars against children.” That was more than a hundred years ago, and sadly, we have still not been able to prevent armed conflicts from leaving indelible scars on girls and boys.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1612, which established specific mechanisms to protect children affected by armed conflict. But as mentioned, the situation is deeply concerning: 2024 has seen the highest number of grave violations since the adoption of this resolution in 2005, with a 25% increase. More than 3,000 cases of abduction, forced recruitment, or sexual violence. These are figures we cannot accept as normal. Today, 473 million children live in areas affected by armed conflict.

Junior Nzita Nsuami. Not the name of a football prodigy, nor a movie star; you won't find him on Wikipedia, and he barely appears in internet searches.

Junior Nzita Nsuami had his childhood stolen in 1996 when soldiers from the Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo abducted him and his friends. At the age of 12, he became a child soldier.

I had the opportunity to learn about his experience during the launch of the “Prove it matters” campaign in Geneva, which our country sponsors jointly with Malta to guarantee children's rights. A harrowing experience that must prompt us to act. How is it possible that in a world of such extraordinary progress, there is still a generation of children born and raised marked by war? Every child has the right to aspire to a full life, to build their memory with good moments and enriching experiences, because in this world, which progresses and advances so much, the only difference between them and us, is the destiny which determines where we are born and live.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the outstanding work of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, with whom we had the privilege of cooperating in support of this cause. I also wish to thank the many states, represented at the highest level this Wednesday at the side event of this Conference, for demonstrating that the protection of children in armed conflict concerns us all.

Child protection must not be limited to physical environments. In the digital age, children face new risks, new threats — often invisible. For this reason, Andorra has created the Centre for Digital Wellbeing and Digital Skills and Competencies, and has approved the Digital Wellbeing Plan for Children and Youth, which includes specific actions to protect minors in the digital environment.

All stakeholders are actively working on the actions and tools required to ensure the digital wellbeing of our youth. Above all, they seek to understand — from an adult perspective — the key factors shaping the lives of today's children and adolescents, in order to educate them on the responsible use of new technologies.

To reinforce these measures, Andorra has decided to join the New York Declaration for the Protection of Children Online. We advocate for a safe, inclusive digital environment that places children's rights at the centre. We work with the ITU and other agencies to ensure regulatory and technical frameworks that make the internet a tool for development and child protection.

Women, unfortunately, remain another voice too often silenced. We take the opportunity of the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration to once again promote this comprehensive and most influential framework to date for advancing women's rights, fostering an economy that offers equal opportunities, improving access to education, and addressing the social gaps that persist between women and men in many areas. In this regard, the Minister of Foreign Affairs participated in the high-level meeting of Beijing+30, where she reaffirmed Andorra's commitment to ensuring that all girls born today grow up in a world where their rights and leadership are fully recognized.

In this sense, we also believe that time has come to see a woman as the Secretary General of this Organization.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Exactly a decade ago, the General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 integrated and indivisible targets across economic, social, and environmental domains.

And a decade ago — also from this very podium — Pope Francis described the SDGs as “an important sign of hope,” but warned of the danger of falling into “declarative nominalism,” with solemn and pleasant statements instead of truly effective action against all scourges. In his encyclical “Laudato Si”, he invited us to reflect on the concept of integral ecology, because “nature cannot be seen as something separated from us or merely a setting in which we live.” For this reason, our interactions with the environment are always intertwined with economic, political, social, cultural, and ethical dimensions, as the Pontiff affirmed.

Andorra has sought to lead by example. We were the first to complete the initial cycle of enhanced transparency under the Paris Agreement and to submit the Third Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0), which increases our ambition in climate action. At the national level, we promote a balanced development model, protecting 30% of our territory, because our natural heritage is the legacy we have received from past generations and which we are obliged to preserve.

In March 2026, we will host the 7th Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership under the theme: “Mountains for the Future: Responsible Tourism, Prosperous Communities.” It will be an opportunity to bring the voice of mountain countries to the centre of global negotiations on climate change and biodiversity, to jointly address the challenges of mountain areas and their populations, and specifically their shared strengths and vulnerabilities.

The 13th World Congress on Snow, Mountain and Wellness Tourism is also another global significant event hosted by our country, aimed at fostering broad discussions on tourism models and exploring how we can move towards a balance between quantity and quality — a balance that should allow us to ensure the future continuity of tourism from a sustainable perspective.

Specifically, the Ministry of Tourism and Trade is working closely with UN Tourism on our General Tourism Law — a pioneering piece of legislation that places particular emphasis on governance, sector training, digitalization, and sustainability.

Climate change, excessive pressure on ecosystems, overcrowding during peak seasons, difficulty accessing housing, and economic dependence on a limited number of sectors are some of the warning signs that call us to action. For this reason, the guiding principles of our commitment to advancing a sustainable tourism model are: limiting to protect, desynchronizing to diversify, and achieving better mobility. It is a shared commitment to make our country a benchmark in sustainability.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the financial sphere, we support the Seville Commitment adopted at the Fourth Conference on Financing for Development, and we affirm the need for a deep and inclusive reform of the international financial architecture, in order to build a more just and representative global financial system.

The international financial system must be capable of responding to the needs of the most vulnerable, including small states and territories with special characteristics. In this regard, Andorra has issued green, social, and sustainable bonds and created a green fund for the energy transition. These policies not only serve as examples of best practices but also demonstrate that, despite our size, we can be a relevant actor in the fight against climate change and in promoting sustainable development.

We also reaffirm our commitment to Official Development Assistance (ODA) and continue to explore new ways of technical cooperation that enable us to share the knowledge and best practices of our administration.

We greet with hope the upcoming World Social Summit, scheduled to take place in Doha. It is a unique opportunity to renew the global social contract. Andorra will attend with the intention of defending cohesion, intergenerational solidarity, and social justice as transformative pillars.

In the field of health, we continue to work closely with the World Health Organization (WHO) and have launched several strategic lines aligned with international recommendations, especially the strengthening of primary care as the backbone of healthcare and early detection, the approval of a comprehensive mental health and addictions plan, the sustainability of the healthcare system, the One Health approach, the fight against antibiotic resistance, the emergency health response plan, and the commitment to digital health transformation.

Furthermore, we wish to highlight the importance of protecting cultural and linguistic diversity. Multilingualism is not only a symbolic richness; it is a condition for truly equitable participation within the multilateral system. As co-facilitators of the resolution on multilingualism, we propose establishing an open and inclusive monitoring platform to build bridges and synergies, and we welcome the launch of a “Group of Friends of Multilingualism” at the United Nations, with the support of the Francophonie

The expression of cultural diversity and, therefore, of multilingualism facilitates inclusive dialogue and helps bring positions closer together and connect with the citizens we serve. Diversity is wealth, and consequently, we must continue to promote multilingualism,

especially in a context of homogenization and digitalization where gaps may leave people behind.

Excellencies,

Andorra, as an active member of the United Nations since 1993, fully embraces its firm commitment to peace, dialogue, respect for international law, and solidarity as non-negotiable principles. It is not only about taking an interest in our own affairs, but also about assuming a global responsibility.

Let us remember that virtue, when united, becomes strength; and that strength, when born from virtue, builds a more just world. This is the motto, as I mentioned at the beginning, that appears on the coat of arms of Andorra — a country small in territory and population but great in values, which has made coexistence, peace, and balance its way of being.

My country reaffirms today its firm commitment to the founding values of this institution: peace, freedom, justice, and dignity for all people. We advocate for active, inclusive, efficient, and transformative multilateralism that places people and the planet at its core.

We cannot allow indifference to paralyze action. It is time to renew the pact between peoples and governments, between present and future generations. It is time to move from words to action.

That is why we leave this Assembly with strengthened hope and renewed responsibility. May our actions be consistent with our words. May the future we desire be the result of the commitment we make today.

Thank you very much.