



MISSIÓ PERMANENT DEL PRINCIPAT D'ANDORRA A LES NACIONS UNIDES

71st session of the United Nations General Assembly
-speech by the Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra

H.E. Mr. Antoni Martí Petit-
New York, 23rd September 2016

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Mr. Secretary-General,

Mr. President,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year, once again, the United Nations calls upon all the countries on Earth to participate in this General Assembly which is a kind of —one could say— global parliament.

Once again this year, we have the chance to take stock of the advances and setbacks we have experienced in this large joint enterprise to promote peace, security and respect towards human rights.

Once again this year, we are here to be critical and demanding, self-demanding; and also to reflect on the need to renew and improve the system of the United Nations.

However, the fact that I can say “once again this year” is, in itself, a success. Beyond the good decisions and the not so good ones made over the years, the mere fact that almost 200 sovereign states symbolically renew their commitment to the United Nations is a reason for hope for those of us who, like the people of Andorra, firmly believe in multilateralism and in the need to promote peace, security and justice.

Because, throughout its more than seven decades of life, the United Nations has not been a passive stakeholder or a static feature. Quite the contrary: it has managed to extend its mission, make its objectives more ambitious and specify them with tangible results. The United Nations was created to promote peace, security and human rights. However, year after year, it has spread its area of action to become what we are seeing today: a large assembly of all the countries on Earth, with the aim of resolving what affects all of us, between all of us.

The last twelve months have been highly profitable with respect to advances in the multilateral area: just one year ago, in September 2015, we all decided on the Sustainable Development Goals, listed in the so-called Agenda 2030. A few months later, the international community —thanks to the driving force and leadership of the French republic— demonstrated its ability to specify and give content to these goals with the writing up and signing of the Paris Agreement to fight the climate change.

Following in the wake of the United Nations, Andorra dedicated this year's edition of its Summer University to the Sustainable Development Goals stated in the Agenda 2030. For a week, Andorra la Vella was home to the reflections and debates of experts as well as institutional representatives, such as the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe and the two Under-Secretary-Generals of the United Nations.

The Andorra Summer University marked the beginning of the academic year in our country, after the summer break. This year, the people of Andorra have started the academic year by confirming and demonstrating our commitment to the values of multilateralism and international cooperation. We have done so, by adding our own particular accent: placing emphasis on education. This is why we chose the Summer University as the setting for Andorra to show our commitment to the Agenda 2030.

All the Sustainable Development Goals share the same priority. However, Quality Education, goal number 4, is doubly important: on the one hand, it is an objective in itself, which has a direct link to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. But it is also a means to achieve the rest of the goals.

When adopting the Agenda 2030, the General Assembly warned about the need to detail the goals in specific implementations and to seek the involvement of all the stakeholders —

not just the public institutions— in this ambitious enterprise. Therefore, this global involvement —from individuals and local institutions through to huge supranational organisations— requires a key tool, such as education.

The great construction of the United Nations' principles and values is built on the idea that what affects all of us needs to be solved by all of us: that global matters require coordinated global actions. It is true, a global world needs global institutions, as well as global regulations and global solutions. But this entire architecture is as fragile as a house of cards if we do not educate the new generations to be global citizens. A global world needs global citizens.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When fighting to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, Andorra places its emphasis on education. On extending quality education to everyone, as a goal in itself; but also to promote education for global citizenship: A citizenship that is aware of the challenges and the opportunities in our world, sensitive to the protection of human rights and open and prepared for the dynamics of our times.

Over recent years, the Government I head has made education the central hub of the external policies of Andorra in the multilateral area. We did so during the Andorran presidency of the Council of Europe in 2012-2013. We did so by joining the Global Education First Initiative (GEFI), promoted by the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon. We have done so in the contexts of the Ibero-American Community and the International Organisation of La Francophonie. We will also do so by making education one of our priorities as members of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

We will continue to do so in all the multilateral forums which deal with education. However, in keeping with goal 17 of the Agenda 2030, we are aware that we need to seek alliances with other countries, joint actions and also partnerships between the public sector and the private sector.

Allow me to offer a recent example of Andorran action in the multilateral area. Two weeks ago, the 25th Conference of Ibero-American Ministers of Education was held in Andorra. This meeting gave rise to a commitment from the Ibero-American governments to favour the mobility of all our students. An agreement signed between the governments, the Ibero-American Secretary-General, the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture and the Ibero-American University Board will favour the mobility of university students within the Ibero-American area, which currently has 22 full member states. The aim of the signatories is to offer mobility to 200,000 university students between now and 2020.

As always when talking about education, the goal is a double one: on the one hand, to promote an exchange of experiences that contribute to improving the quality of our respective education systems. And on the other hand, and this is probably the most important part, so that our young people become aware that their reality and that their future do not end with the borders of the country in which they were born; but that they are citizens of a global society. To some degree, we are following in the wake of the Erasmus programme in Europe. What has done more in favour of European construction? All the regulations and directives that make up the *acquis communautaire*, or all the young people who, for decades, have been spending part of their university courses in other European countries and who feel European?

It is not the young people who wish to isolate themselves. And those of us who are here today —most of whom are from a generation that has left its youth behind it— must be increasingly more generous and more open-minded; because the future of our young people, the future of our countries and the future of our world depends on this.

If we educate our young people as citizens of a global world, we will be laying the foundations for a much more open, cooperative and fair world.

Following the philosophy of the Agenda 2030, Andorra's commitment to quality education is not limited to diverse actions in multilateral forums, but it also has a local dimension.

A local dimension that starts as a result of the good fortune — and these words need to be said, because it is good fortune— we enjoy having three public systems which are free and available: the Spanish, the French and the Andorran systems. This, in itself, makes up a plural education community with a marked international component.

In this sense, the people of Andorra have been pioneers—in our own education system—in introducing the so-called “education by skills”: a model that seeks to overcome the old concept of education as a simple accumulation of knowledge, to focus on education understood to be a set of abilities and skills to be able to apply this knowledge. Because what is important is not so much knowing, but thinking; we do not wish to create encyclopaedias, but citizens.

Citizens who can develop themselves and grow in a world that is changing at a great speed; who, when faced with the expected and the unexpected, are always able to have a suitable reaction; and who are not afraid of changes, of dynamism and of opening up.

In Andorra, we have been working on education by transversal skills for some years now. And now—precisely because of the need to educate global citizens—we wish to go one step further: Andorra, in coordination with the Council of Europe, will introduce training programmes in democratic values. And it will also introduce systems to measure the abilities and skills of our young people in these democratic values.

Why not think about a global commitment to educate our young children in the principles and values of the United Nations? And more specifically, in the Sustainable Development Goals that make up the Agenda 2030? Because in 2030, it will be them, and not us, who will be sitting in this General Assembly.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The great dialectic of our times is not—as it used to be in the past—between the right and the left; or the policy of blocks typical of the Cold War, which we have thankfully left behind. The great dialectic of our times is between being open and being closed: between those who wish for an open, transparent, cooperative, dynamic world with strong multilateral institutions; and those who wish for a closed, opaque, static world in which each country only and exclusively looks after its own interests.

The road to opening up to commitment, to negotiation and to multilateralism is the path we have been writing and following for decades under the auspices of the United Nations. The path to closing down is the reflection of fear and is a recipe for populism and

opportunism. When faced by an economic crisis of a global scope: withdrawal and protectionism. When faced by a threat to security of a global scope: closing down borders. When faced by a challenge such as the climate change: the selfish attitude of free riding, of expecting others to make the efforts. This is populism's answer: it is other people's fault, we will isolate ourselves from the others. However, in a global society, we are the others.

I believe that everyone here at this General Assembly is here to renew our confidence in a multilateral way. To continue practising the maxim that says that global matters require global answers.

The Principality of Andorra today renews its belief in the multilateral way. Because it is in forums such as this General Assembly that a country like ours, with a surface area of 468 km² and with just over 70,000 inhabitants, is on an equal footing with the rest of the nations on the planet. And this is not just rhetorically: we have been participating and becoming involved in coordinated, balanced actions that involve the entire international community, for years.

We have demonstrated this —sufficiently, in my opinion— by participating with all our efforts to construct a more cooperative, transparent and fair global economy. In the last five years, Andorra has opened its economy to foreign investment, has given economic rights to all international residents, has set up a comparable tax system following international standards, has made progressive advances in matters of exchanging fiscal information which will culminate next year with the automatic exchange of information (in the area of the OECD and of the European Union) and has set up a network of double taxation treaties to internationalise the economic model.

In a parallel way, along with Monaco and San Marino, we are negotiating an Association Agreement with the European Union that will allow the full participation of Andorra in the European internal market.

We have done this because we had, and we have, the need to modernise and diversify our economy. But also, because we have the conviction, the firm conviction, that a world with more intense economic and commercial relations is, by nature, a world that cooperates more and is less selfish. A world that is more inclined to peace, harmony, negotiated solutions to conflicts and respect for human rights and liberties.

It was with this same spirit of firm confidence in global actions that we participated last year in the COP21 that led to the Paris Agreement on the climate. In forthcoming weeks, our Parliament will be asked to ratify the Paris Agreement.

It is with this very mindset that we believe that we need to deal with the matter of huge displacements of refugees and migrants, which has become one of the great challenges of our times. A challenge that needs to be dealt with through regulation, both internationally as well as locally, through migratory flows and the right to asylum; through the fair distribution of the impact that taking in a huge contingent of displaced people may represent; and through care and vigilance to guarantee respect of rights and the dignity of displaced people.

In this sense, I am delighted —taking up again what I said before about the fundamental role of education— that the summit for addressing large movements of refugees and migrants that took place on the 19th also emphasised the need to construct a positive narration on immigration. Andorra, which for decades has been a land that has welcomed many families from all over, is a good example of this positive narration. As, I am convinced, are many of the countries represented at this General Assembly. However, so that this narration can be valid, we also need to educate in values of respect towards diversity. We need to form citizens of the world who are not afraid of difference or of change.

While populism would prefer protectionism and economic close down, we opt for opening up and a greater integration of national economies. While populism would prefer to deny the scientific evidence of the climate change and turn its back on the problem, we opt for commitment and for specific, measurable actions. While populism would prefer to close down borders, build walls and exacerbate fear of difference, we opt for the dignity of people, for regulation and for education in diversity.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is the last General Assembly with Mr. Ban Ki-moon as the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Several speakers who have preceded me these days on taking the floor have highlighted the career and the wise decisions of the current Secretary-General over the last decade.

Mr. Ban Ki-moon has been the Secretary-General of the effective introduction of the Millennium Goals. The driving force behind the Post-2015 Development Agenda. A key player in the relaunching of the multilateral strategy in the fight against the climate change which culminated in the Paris Agreement. And, as a legacy of his 10-year mandate, he leaves us with a clearly marked path in the Sustainable Development Goals contained in the Agenda 2030. Therefore, Mr. Ban Ki-moon will be a fundamental player for understanding and explaining what the United Nations are, and with them, the entire international community, during the first third of the 21st-century.

For the people of Andorra, Mr. Ban Ki-moon will also have been the first Secretary-General of the United Nations to make an official visit to our country, in April 2013. The people of Andorra have paid good heed to his teachings: if education is the guiding thread of a good part of the multilateral action of Andorra, it is also thanks to the insistence of the Secretary-General on placing education —quality education, education for everyone— as one as the main pillars of his action during the 10 years of his leadership of the United Nations.

As Mr. Ban Ki-moon said during his visit to Andorra, three and a half years ago: the United Nations will always be able to count on our country in the collective enterprise to construct a more peaceful, secure and fairer world.

Thank you.