



ESPAÑA

INTERVENCIÓN DE

SU MAJESTAD EL REY FELIPE VI DE ESPAÑA

**EN EL DEBATE GENERAL DEL SEXAGÉSIMO NOVENO PERÍODO DE
SESIONES DE LA ASAMBLEA GENERAL DE NACIONES UNIDAS**

Nueva York, 24 de septiembre de 2014

(cotejar con la intervención pronunciada)

STATEMENT BY

HIS MAJESTY THE KING FELIPE VI OF SPAIN

**AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE SIXTY-NINTH SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

New York, September 24 2014

(unofficial translation, check against delivery)

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Heads of State and of Government,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour and a privilege to address this UN General Assembly at the beginning of my reign as King of Spain.

I appear before you to share with the international community my country's commitment to the universal principles and values that better define our common humanity. And I have the pleasure to present to you what a renewed Spain, remaining true to herself and to her international commitments, can offer in favour of peace, liberty, justice and human rights in all nations and for all persons, wishing them wellbeing and prosperity.

Spain is a nation with millenary roots and with a well defined global projection, and has contributed intensely and decisively to shaping world history. Let us remember that Spain has been at the genesis of globalization and International Law, as well as medieval parliamentarianism and contemporary liberal democracy. With this long-term perspective, we clearly see that our best contributions take place when we move forward while opening up to the world.

Sincerely, I see Spanish society today as exemplary in its commitment to the dignity of the human being and in its solidarity with the underprivileged. Spaniards harbour a profound sense of equality, reject fanaticism, violence and intolerance and love peace. Spain is a culturally and linguistically diverse society, capable of overcoming difficulties with dignity and responsibility, while demanding integrity and intrinsic civic values in the exercise of democracy. Spain is a strong, generous and vigorous country, one I truly feel proud of.

And thus, today, we Spaniards look into the future with a firm will to share and to help building a better reality for all peoples. Our foundations are solid, forged during centuries and, in particular, strengthened in the past few decades. On those very foundations Spain anchors its commitment to the international community.

Democracy is today the essential guide to our collective coexistence. Soon it will be four decades since the beginning of Spain's political transition, which allowed us to move from a dictatorship to a political system based on freedoms and rights and inspired by a pursuit of historical reconciliation and a true spirit of harmony.

Allow me, therefore, to lay claim to Spain's political masterpiece with great pride and deep emotion, as an example for many in the world. We Spaniards have built a social and democratic order based on the rule of law, which protects all citizens and Spain's different territories in its political, geographic, cultural and linguistic diversity.

Thus, you can always count on Spain's firm commitment to promoting and defending the democratic values in the world.

Without forgetting the impact of the crisis, Spain's economic development, particularly since the second half of the past century, has placed our economy among the first in the world and among the most open and competitive. Today we have achieved global leadership rankings in various sectors with a high added value and great social impact.

Bearing this in mind, Spain strongly supports a global and sustainable economic way of development in which furthering material progress and wellbeing is possible, and which generates employment and protects individuals and their social rights; a sustainable development model respectful of the environment, mindful of international norms and inspired on high ethical economic values.

Spain has always been a major cultural power, and we understand that in all societies culture shapes our identity and is a source of material and non-material wealth.

The strength of Spanish as a universal language which is shared by dozens of countries and hundreds of million of people on all continents, in fact decisively contributes to guaranteeing a greater cultural and linguistic diversity in the international arena. This is without a doubt an objective for the human community –so diverse- which is here represented. Therefore, the Spanish language must fully assume its formal position as an official language of the United Nations and as a working language that is also fully used and represented.

Therefore, given the extension and depth of our cultural base, we affirm Spain's commitment to the defence of cultural diversity in all of its manifestations and aspects.

Spain's history and its privileged geographic position at a crossroads of continents, seas and civilizations have led to Spain developing a solid universal projection and a special connection to some regions in the world.

Among them, Europe represents an obvious dimension to our collective being. The process of continental integration around the European Union is today part of the national project of the Kingdom of Spain. We advocate for a Europe that is more united and cohesive, one that preserves and extends the democratic and civic values that inspired its creation, and which guarantees the prosperity of all of its citizens. We also defend a Europe that is marked by strength and solidarity, while generously and effectively contributing to the progress of other world regions in a peaceful context.

Due to its history and culture, the Ibero-American community of nations is a substantial part of our collective sense of identity and represents for us a true brotherhood in the international arena. This is a sentiment that extends to other areas thanks to the cultural, historic and linguistic connections that we also maintain with other nations and peoples from the Americas, Africa, Asia and Oceania.

With its North and South banks, the Mediterranean, together with the Middle East and the Arab world in its entirety, are spaces that are very close to Spain, not only geographically, but also culturally and emotionally. That is why we affirm our will and interest in contributing towards the stability of this region as fundamental requisite for achieving peace in the world.

This is a region in which some of its societies suffer the scourge of an intolerable barbarism; a criminal and atrocious violence that threatens all societies and our human civilization.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Spain's global projection and its commitments in democratic, economic and cultural matters –which I have just mentioned- are summarized by its full adherence to the United Nations Charter under which we are convened here today. It is a Charter that represents one of the greatest achievements of Humanity and which we must preserve, respect and enforce. Thus, Spain firmly believes in the United Nations and its multilateral mechanisms for preserving international peace and security and for contributing to the development of societies.

We live in times marked by the proliferation of conflicts—some of them especially devastating, due to their indiscriminate impact on civilians. Our primary objective must be to prevent wars, and when we fail in this, we must protect and assist the innocent victims. We must never relent in our efforts to resolve conflicts through diplomacy and through all of the instruments bestowed by the Charter of the United Nations.

Above all, we must not lose hope, and we must remember that, in spite of everything, the longing for harmony can and must prevail over even the most entrenched hatreds.

A tapestry version of the Guernica, a work by a universal Spaniard, Pablo Picasso, hangs outside the entrance to the Security Council Chamber. The scene depicted in this icon of art still moves our conscience and reminds us of the fatal consequences of our inability to prevent and resolve the conflicts that beset us all. We are mistaken if we think that wars or man-made catastrophes affect only one community or one region, without any impact on the others. When brutality triumphs in one part of the world, no one is beyond its reach. We are all its victims.

However, armed conflicts are not the only threats facing the international community. Evil takes many forms, and its victims have many faces. Every child trapped in situations of crisis or violence; every woman who is harassed or limited in her rights simply for being a woman; every patient who dies from a lack of medicine; or every elderly person who is abandoned; every family without bread and without hope because of an unjust distribution of wealth ...or every journalist murdered for fulfilling his or her duty to inform; all of these appeal to our conscience and to our duty, and call us to action.

The members of this General Assembly can count on Spain to confront, all together and respecting international law, those who aim to destroy –with intolerance, violence or sectarianism- the values and principles that underlie our United Nations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Spain has always demonstrated its unconditional support to the United Nations system and to the principles that in this Assembly we all recognize: liberty, justice, equality, national sovereignty, independence and the integrity of States. And Spain will continue to assume all of its responsibilities as a member of these United Nations.

Against this background, Spain is taking another step forward as candidate to a non-permanent seat in the Security Council for the period 2015-2016. Our candidacy is an integral part of my country's solid commitment to serve the international community more and better. This is what we have done in the Security Council once every decade over the past forty years, thanks to your trust in us. I only ask you to renew this trust.

In the past twenty-five years, 130,000 members of the Spanish Armed Forces have participated in Peacekeeping Operations and in humanitarian aid missions in all the regions in the world. They have been –and they have felt– part of a great collective effort to which many of the countries here present contribute.

Likewise, over these past two decades, Spain has consolidated its status as one of the leading contributors to development cooperation. There can be no lasting peace or security without sustainable development, and there can be no sustainable development without greater solidarity –both among and within nations. Moreover, development must go hand in hand with inclusive policies that take into account full gender equality and the inclusion of women in every aspect of political, social and economic life.

As you can see, Spain is characterized by a spirit of solidarity. In the past fourteen years, my fellow Spaniards have contributed thirty billion dollars to global development. Of this contribution, nearly one billion dollars have been earmarked for achieving the Millennium Development Goals through a Fund created by Spain and co-led by the United Nations Development Programme. This is the largest contribution made by any single country.

Specifically, one of the most relevant tasks of this General Assembly will be to finalize the negotiations for the Post-2015 Development Agenda and to define the Sustainable Development Goals. Here, too, Spain has taken a step forward by creating the first Fund –already running– for these Sustainable Development Goals.

Achieving sustainability involves, to a large extent, eliminating the harmful effects of climate change. Yesterday's Summit and the recent Samoa Conference on Small Island Developing States, whose organization Spain contributed to, have raised our awareness even further regarding this issue and also enable us to improve our response and resilience in the face of extreme situations, especially in the most vulnerable states, whose very survival is in peril.

Achieving the sustainable development goals we have set for ourselves is within our reach. Once again, there are reasons for hope.

I am thinking in particular of the progress made in Africa, a continent that is so close to Spain and where new examples of innovation and creativity are found everywhere. Africa is a continent of the present and the future, where over the past decade we have seen some of the fastest-growing economies.

But it is crucial to put an end to the conflicts that beset parts of this region and hold back its development. From the Sahel to the Horn of Africa to the Great Lakes Region, Spain contributes to ending these conflicts by meeting our commitments born out of solidarity and proximity.

We believe in Africa, and we are demonstrating this with deeds; as when acute crises rise as seen by the Ebola epidemic, which is affecting parts of the continent. I would like to express the Spanish people's solidarity with its victims and our support for those who are doing everything in their power to assist them, sometimes at the cost of their own lives. And I offer my most heartfelt tribute to the aid workers and all of the United Nations humanitarian staff, whose own calling leads them to leave everything behind and to give their all for the most vulnerable wherever they may be.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It has been nearly thirty years since my father, King Juan Carlos I, addressed this General Assembly for the first time. As then, Spain is today open to a new age. As then, today we take our place as active and responsible members of the international community here represented.

I can assure you that the international community, represented today in this General Assembly, can continue to count on Spain's support and its active participation in the unwavering protection of the values and interests of a Humanity in peace, evermore prosperous and just. Spain upholds a United Nations that is not only stronger but above all, more united:

More united against fanaticism, intolerance and barbarism.

More united in fighting against poverty, hunger and marginalization.

More united so that education and health reach all.

More united, Mr. President, in firmly defending the dignity of all human beings.

Thank you very much.