



**MISSIÓ PERMANENT
DEL PRINCIPAT D'ANDORRA
A LES NACIONS UNIDES**

Sixtieth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations

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Mr. President, Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our world is speeding up. Faster means of travel that began in the nineteenth century with railroad technology are today hurtling us around the globe. Transformations are occurring at all levels and in all modes of communication. From the train, to the automobile and to the airplane - even in space travel - speed is erasing spatial barriers. The telegraph, the telephone, the internet, cell phones, video conferencing - speed is altering the way we communicate with one another.

In this new age, immensely significant developments can take place in as quicker time than the mind can follow them. But as the philosopher Paul Virillio warns us, with every new technology comes the potential for a new accident, and with increasing speed comes the threat of ever more horrendous catastrophes. Even natural disasters have become magnified not only by increases in population, but by the growing dangers of environmental contamination.

60 years after the foundation of the United Nations, we therefore live in a faster world where we have to be able to react to situations immediately. We have to ensure that even with the feeling of heightened risk that we live with at the beginning of the 21st Century - whether this be due to natural phenomena, advances in technology, the threat of terrorism or the frittering away of resources - our will to act is not in any way diminished. The bar is set very high, but our capacity to act together as a whole can be just as great.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Another period of technological innovation also effected dramatic changes in the speed and mode of communication—the printing press. Let us reflect for a moment about the effects of those changes and what we might learn from them. The printing press fostered a rapid exchange of information that was readily available to large numbers of people and could not be censored or controlled, although some institutions tried very hard to enact such controls. Out of this explosion of information came the glory of the Scientific Revolution, but also the sixteenth-century wars of religion and Europe's first world war, the thirty-years war of the first half of the seventeenth century. Thus, the promise of eventual mastery over the natural world was coupled with violent attempts to dominate the minds and souls of man.

In many ways, our own information revolution has had a similar effect on developments. On the one hand, we have reasons to hope that the problems facing the world can be solved by technology. On the other hand, technology has contributed to the rise of radical extremism and provided the means to unleash violence of hitherto unknown proportions.

The radical enlightenment which first began in the Netherlands, a small country but one known for its tolerance and liberty of creative thought, offered new solutions to the turmoil and sectarian violence of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It developed a mode of critique that could be separated from religious truth - and, for the first time in the history of

the West, a fully modern ethical system. What forms might a radical twenty-first century enlightenment take? I would rather hope that we will see a new sense of human values, a recognition that we are united not only by our presence in a shrinking world, but as members of the human race.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nevertheless, we are fully aware that even as this explosion in technology seems to link all countries in the embrace of a globalized media culture, it feeds old parochialisms, nationalism, and ethnic strife. The gap between rich and poor, the have and have-not countries, seems ever wider, even as our interconnectedness grows in trade and in labour. But with visions of first-world excess beamed into every corner of the globe, can anyone be surprised that anger towards the West increases? Poverty, discrimination, war, hunger, and disease – this is the daily lot for a great part of humanity. We see the images every day. We cannot ignore nor can we fear these realities - we have to face them with real development policies, coupled with good governance and a just system for trade and dialogue. The Millenium Development Goals are our collective responsibility.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The legacy of the Renaissance nation-state remains a powerful concept. Our love for our respective countries and all this represents to us is a defining aspect of all our identities. So how is it possible to overcome the fundamental paradox of this organization—to link the pride of our national statehood—which is the source of our material, cultural, and ethnic differences—to the idea of unity, of being “united.”

In part, the answer seems to lie in the potential for rebalancing the global economy, but it also requires a reawakening of those dulled sensibilities that separate rich from poor, advantaged from disadvantaged, free from oppressed. The Millenium Declaration was a necessary step forward and the current tensions over reform should not distract this body from its ultimate mission. Whether we are speeding toward challenges that will take the form of natural or man-made catastrophes, we can be assured that their effects will no longer be contained within national borders. We must prepare to respond to them with a strength and resolve that also knows no bounds.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I spoke of a small country, the Netherlands, and of its history. Andorra is also a small country that believes in tolerance and in respect for our fellow man. Our stable relations with our neighbours, Andorra's tradition as a safe-haven during European wars and conflicts, our parliamentary tradition that stretches back to 1419 and our geopolitical realities – this makes us believe in and defend the virtues and values of dialogue, pacifism and development, which are at one with those of the United Nations. In twelve years of international life, my country has adopted some 130 international conventions and has stated its firm belief in international law, as in the creation of the International Criminal Court. We will continue in this task, reaffirming our commitment to multilateralism, and by sending to Parliament for ratification the conventions on terrorism and human rights. We also give our support to the creation of a Council of Human Rights, and we will follow closely the progress made on a new convention in the struggle against terrorism.

The United Nations represents a legacy from a period of conflict which culminated in WWII, the Cold War, and the nuclear stalemate that followed. While we recognize its imperfections, we must not forget to acknowledge the wisdom of its guiding principles: peace between all nations, universal human rights, and the development of states. We live in a time when the power of a single nation is fast becoming an historical illusion. Let us work toward a new enlightenment, the unity of the United Nations.

Thank you.