



**EUROPEAN CENTER FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT (ECPD)  
UNIVERSITY FOR PEACE ESTABLISHED BY THE UNITED NATIONS**

**ECPD International Round Table  
PEACE AND DEMOCRATIC MULTILATERALISM**

**CHAIR'S SUMMARY**



**(Belgrade City Hall, 27 October 2017)**



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## **CHAIR'S SUMMARY**

**Federico Mayor Zaragoza**

### **INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT AND THE CHALLENGES FOR DEMOCRATIC MULTILATERALISM**

There are many challenges in the current world that can only be addressed by democratic multilateralism.

Zones of conflicts are the places where the competing interests of the great powers and the regional powers clash. Russia has managed to regain a significant place in the international arena. China, due to its economic and military power, is consolidating itself as a global force, whereas the U. S., under the leadership of President Trump, based on discontinuity and supremacism policies, represents a continued source of instability and preoccupation for the world as a whole. The European Union, constrained by the nature of its market-driven monetary and trade union, is losing influence as it struggles to maintain the weak unity of its members. Latin America, that appeared some years ago as the continent with new social and economic dynamics, is being finally dominated by neoliberalism.

Regional powers such as Israel, Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia are a quite important geopolitical space, while North Korea insists on a tragi-comic demonstration of its weapons and potential nuclear strengths.

### **GLOBAL CHALLENGES**

**Globalization** has weakened the nation-states. Multilateralism has also been weakened at a time when a strong UN is needed more than ever before. The plutocratic groups such as G-7, G-8, G-20, take decisions on behalf of nearly two hundred "passive" countries that affect the future of the world.

**A fourth generation of new wars** is emerging involving states and non-state actors. **Technology** is bringing, together with many beneficial advances in biomedicine and popular capacity of expression, new problems for peace, through the spread of new weapons, drones, and cyber warfare, among others.

The invasion of Iraq based on lies as well as the war in Syria and the outcome of the "Arab Spring", demonstrate how important and urgent it is to **reinforce the United Nations System** with a composition of the General Assembly reflecting the Charter ("We, the peoples..."), and the rapid implementation of a **new concept of security** (not only of territories and the borders, but the security of the human beings living in them). All these emphasize the relevant role of the European Union based not only on short-sighted economic goals as at present, but on key values of freedom, human rights, democracy and the rule of justice. Only in this way can corruption and the growing power of financial markets be contained.

**Terrorism** is a widespread threat. It is necessary to know its sources and roots. The marginalisation of the UN System, the invasion of Iraq with thousands of victims and several millions of displaced populations, the lack of solidarity with refugees and emigrants -hate is the seed of terror- as well as the unbelievable behaviour of some countries financing terrorism-promoting groups are the roots of several terror actions.

Supremacism is at the very origin of many terrorist acts. The best way to counteract it is to consider **all human beings equal in dignity**, regardless of their gender, colour of the skin, beliefs, ideologies, cultures, etc.

One of the most important **sources of terrorism is extreme poverty** and hunger. Every day thousands of people die of starvation and abandon whereas more than 4 billion USD are invested in military expenditures and armament.

**Climate change** is one of the most urgent global problems that should be addressed in a timely fashion, without any further delay, because points of no return can be reached. A dignified life in the planet depends on collective decisions. For the first time **irreversible damage could be produced and the legacy to the future generations would be a historical irresponsibility of human kind**. Unprecedented problems need unprecedented solutions (Amin Maalouf).

## EUROPE IN CRISIS

The problem of the borders around and inside Europe is still a major challenge. The Balkans, especially the Western Balkans, have originated important conflicts, because of the inefficient and interest-driven decision adopted for the former Yugoslavia. An important international question is the problem of unresolved border disputes. The rules of the "right to self-determination" established in Article 1/2 of the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, July 1993) should be followed, always under the supervision of the United Nations and, when necessary, of the International Court of Justice.

The European Union is in crisis. It is necessary and urgent to create alternatives **to the "market economy"** policies. In the Summit of Lisbon (Year 2000) a **knowledge-based economy for a global human and sustainable development** was decided. But the strictest neoliberal practices have prevailed.

It is particularly relevant "to be **guided by democratic principles**", as stated in the UNESCO's Constitution. And therefore, it is crucial to ensure that "democracy" is not wrongly and dangerously related exclusively with elections and "majorities" that can be easily manipulated by a dominant media power. Special attention must be paid to the "absolute majority", because "absolute" is the antithesis of "democracy". It is highly recommended that **a Universal Declaration on Democracy should be adopted** in the United Nations to avoid the permanent misconception of what "democracy" really means. The widespread political disaffection and the extremely worrying nationalistic and supremacist trends of many ultra rightist parties must be dealt with through really democratic practices at the parliamentary level.

In Europe, since the financial crisis in 2007 a clear decline of the traditional parties has taken place. Austria is an example of how European national politics have changed. The crisis brought insecurity and fear, and in the same year the Austrian far right got the same percentage of votes as today. The agenda of the right wing has been incorporated in the traditional parties.

**Cultures that count, cultures that should be countered.** Cultural diversity is an asset. Xenophobia, hate and rejection are a threat to peace. When integration is more needed than ever before, fragmentation is increasing. Fragmentation results in conflict.

Divisive processes such as "Brexit" show clearly the weakness of the inter - European links, particularly when -in a monetary Union- the currency (the Pound) is different. It must be also emphasized that **the referendum was not balanced** democratically, because 1% of the UK population decided the future of 49%. The impact of local identities must be wisely addressed and regulated in order to adopt the most convenient structure of the Nation-State in a world regulated framework of the United Nations. This is especially relevant for the candidate countries, as happens in the Western Balkans, which have shown no loss of interest in joining the European Union. The shadow of Brexit has spread across all Europe. In the elections processes the information related to percentages and the results of polls, together with the "fake news" propagated by social media, are to be duly taken into account.

It is clear therefore that multilateralism has been weakened in these times and **a strong United Nations is needed**. The plutocratic groups such as G-7, G-8, G-20 cannot take decisions -7, 8, 20 rich countries! - that affect the future of the world. For the first time in history, if we do not apply **timely** solutions to climate change and other potential irreversible processes, the habitability of the Earth can be seriously degraded. Tomorrow may be too late.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

Also for the first time, the recent crisis has taken place in a context in which there are real opportunities for change: human beings have progressively gained access **to knowing what happens** in the world as a whole; because of digital technology they can freely express themselves and, particularly relevant, **women**, marginalized completely until 20-30 years ago, are having decision-making opportunities that they deserve, in complete equality with men. The "great domain" (military, energy, financial, media...) must be overcome, and a new concept of security, of work, of international governance, should emerge.

Now yes, is the time to implement the "We, the peoples..." that with farsightedness but prematurity was in the first phrase of the UN Charter. Now, yes, the peoples can be women and men, of one belief or another, or one ideology or another, of one ethnic identity or another. All these are the main pillars for the new era of global inclusion.

As well established in the UNESCO's Declaration on the Responsibility of the present Generations in relation to the coming ones (1997) this duty is one of the main aspects of the "road map" that we must now rapidly put into practice. **Climate change, nuclear threat and extreme poverty** are the three main challenges we must intensively try to overcome in order to offer a dignified legacy to future generations.

Now, humanity can face these very big problems with the **promotion of global citizenship and common goals**. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) as well as the Agreements of Paris concerning the Climate Change must be implemented without any further delay. It is unacceptable that -as already mentioned- every day millions of dollars are devoted to military expenditures and armament, whereas thousands of persons die of hunger and extreme poverty.

Two main transitions must take place:

- **From an economy of speculation**, productive delocalisation and war to a knowledge-based economy of global sustainable and human development.
- From a culture of domination, violence and war to a culture of encounter, dialogue, conciliation, alliance and peace.

Youth is the main actor for this new design of the times to come. Youth, together with their elders, must urgently **agree on concrete proposals and actions** in relation to the three main threats mentioned above that the world is facing.

**Education for all throughout life is crucial:** education to be "free and responsible", as enshrined in article number one of the UNESCO Constitution. Free and responsible: yes, this is the solution. Education at all levels, taking advantage of digital technology, must be widespread in order to promote international understanding and trust. Education of children, of **parents, of society as a whole, of the media and, particularly, of those related directly to governance**, in order to overcome ignorance that is the cause of most of the problems humanity is facing today.

The **academic, scientific, artistic, intellectual communities at large must be at the forefront** of this mobilization, every single human being able to create the hope of humanity at these very crucial moments.

Yes, creativity is the clue: **a new design is necessary to invent a different future**. Global citizens well educated in order to put into practice the "democratic principles" (justice, peace, solidarity, equality) and to fully exercise the distinctive capacities of the human beings: to think, to imagine, to anticipate, to innovate, to create! Only in this way, humankind will be actors and not spectators of the events taking place in the different main aspects of life. It is absolutely indispensable to avoid the **globalization of indifference**, to overcome the "massive distraction" that can lead many human beings to passivity and skepticism.

**Philosophy and Creative Arts are particularly important** to ensure that global citizens are able to promote a dignified life both conceptually and environmentally.

## INCREASING MULTILATERALISM IN DEMOCRACY

Good governance is only achieved through reason, justice, and rigor. Integrity and trustworthiness are essential to make democracy work.

Strengthening the concept of "**peace through the rule of justice**" and in general the role of international law is an important response to the rapid changes of modern society through the process of its globalization. The establishment of the principle of the rule of law (justice) as the guiding principle of the modern state produces two major benefits in this new era of civilization: the universal acceptance of the concept of human rights and freedoms, and globalization which strengthens the sense of common affiliation and collective responsibility for the human and sustainable development of society.

## THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Better leadership is urgently required to deal with global problems. It is **urgent to reform the United Nations** and many proposals have been made, but this requires political will. **The General Assembly** should reflect the "We, the peoples..." of the Charter and, consequently, have 50% of State representatives and 50% of representatives of civil society institutions. Furthermore, to the present Security Council should be added a Social Economic Council and an Environmental Council. In this way, the new concept of security will be accurately addressed.

**The different religions** have already shown -Barcelona, 1994; Lille, 2009- that there is little incompatibility among them. To confirm at the level of United Nations these declarations and thoughts will be a very important step for the new era. With this new structure, the United Nations could show its complete independence and capacity of action when its rules and recommendations were not followed (conflicts, immigrants, refugees...).

**Sustainable Development Goals and the Agreement on Climate Change** (Paris, 2015) are a very important opportunity to promote the united efforts and to strengthen the framework for multilateral development.

Renewable energy and wiser water management become increasingly relevant for all parts of the world. South-South cooperation on climate change is very important to decrease and regulate the present situation.

Concerning the European Union, the **EU Global Strategy** has been designed as a normative framework to provide guidelines for the protection of European Union values and interests in a context of many changes that must evolve the present situation to a human development one. **The European Union should be political**, social, cultural and economic. In a multilateral framework, national **governments** should improve measures for regulation, financial incentives and research, as well as promote cross border interventions.

NGO's and cities are progressively new actors in world governance. A good example is the Agreement between Mayors of Capital and Large Cities, under the leadership of the Mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, regarding climate change. Mikhail Gorbachev emphasized this Agreement during the "International Climate Change Symposium" that took place in Rome, 27-29 May, 2015.

**It is intolerable that the President of the United States, Mr Donald Trump, has declared that United States will not follow the commitments promoted by President Barack Obama to protect the Earth's habitability.** The role played by President Obama and by Pope Francis, with his Encyclical *Laudato Si*, a universal appeal to address the environmental challenges humanity is facing, were very important to reach the Paris commitments. For this reason is unacceptable that Mr Obama's successor has adopted this attitude that should be counteracted **by a worldwide popular reaction** -"We, the peoples..." - telling very clearly that if United States abandons "the Earth", the population of the Earth will "abandon" the United States.

Humanity needs to consider in depth the global nature of our world and to focus much more on the **global planet**, on a **global community**. Only in this way **the "five priorities of UN" -food, water, health, environmental care, education - could be at the very centre of the worldwide agenda for the new era.**