



## A New Beginning\*

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*“I pretended not to know. / And now / my conscience / is without rest / night and day”.*

### Abstract

*In the last few years, there has been an enormous decline on all fronts and in all areas. The world, Europe and Spain undoubtedly suffer its effects. Our political leaders have surrendered to the rules of the markets and obediently subjected our society to “austericide”, with profound negative social effects. The present economic guidelines don’t work and there is no end in sight to the widening inequalities originated by budget cuts.*

*Although it will require much effort, changing course is possible for the first time in history: in a short period of time human beings are experiencing an unprecedented transition from invisible to visible, from anonymous spectators to identifiable protagonists.*

*At present, thanks to modern communication and information technologies, the urban era is fast becoming the digital era. “We, the peoples...”, as the United Nations Charter so lucidly commences, may now become a reality for those who at last can take in their hands the reins of their common destiny.*

*It is intolerable that the values of the stock market have replaced ethical values. It is time to oppose neoliberalism and reestablish social justice, to eliminate groups of oligarchs (G-6, G-7, G-8... G-20) and re-found a strong United Nations System.*

*In the last few decades, women, with their inherent faculties, are rapidly increasing their role in decision-making. “The peoples” can express themselves freely and participate, with global consciousness, in building a culture of peace and non-violence worldwide.*

*The time of silence and submission is over.*

*A “new beginning” can now take place.*

It’s true that in the last few years there has been an enormous decline on all fronts and in all areas. The world, including and not restricted to Europe and Spain, undoubtedly suffers from its effects. Our political leaders have surrendered to the rules of the markets and obediently subjected our society to “austericide” (economic self-destruction). It is irrelevant that their formulas don’t work and that there’s no end in sight to their budget cuts. Spaniards are

\*Already published in the book *REACCIONADOS* Editorial (Madrid: Aguilar, 2015)

now “cheaper” than a majority of Europeans. With the worsening of our standard of living we have become (paradoxically) more submissive, accepting whatever is imposed on us. But not all of us are compliant; a new type of citizen power is emerging. It is so strong that it provokes much fear among members of the “establishment.” Perfectly aware of what this means, they are attempting to stop this trend by any and all means at their disposal.

And the fact is that the changes are significant. Real possibilities are opening up. It is time for a federation, a relationship between states, nations and communities, to weave a new tapestry of a reconciled mankind that lives in harmony and fraternally faces the great challenges of a future that may still be bright. But this will require taking measures with much foresight and moral integrity.

A federation in Europe and Spain and genuine democracy in particular are in contrast to the current system that has reached abominable limits, especially since the mid-1990s. Many facts are coming to light that justify citizens’ discontent and their total lack of confidence in political leaders. Social measures and those that encourage endogenous talent and capabilities such as the Dependent Persons Act or support for R&D and innovation and cooperation have quickly been replaced with austerity measures decreed by the markets, while we bewilderedly observe how our Gross Domestic Product has increased by 0.85% with the addition of income from prostitution and drug trafficking. And many of the Members of Parliament mechanically offer their applause, being incapable of expressing dissent for rigid decisions taken by political forces shielded by an absolute majority, which prevents any new ideas or tendencies from taking hold.

And what is worse, and what will directly impact this future that requires and is already requiring a different frame of mind and attitudes toward others, is an educational system that is solely modeled from reports by economic institutions while it continues to ignore experience, the immense and unexplored treasure of thousands of national and international educators, teachers and scholars.

Changing course is possible, although it will require much effort. More is lost when we are swept along by the currents, by those that make so much effort to work against us, against the common good of all citizens. But there are reasons to believe that something is definitely changing. In a short period of time there has been an unprecedented transition from invisibility to visibility, from humans being anonymous spectators to becoming identifiable protagonists. A new beginning is now viable.

## **1. Global Conscience**

Physically and intellectually confined in very limited spaces for centuries, human beings were invisible, silent, obedient and fearful. They lived in such a restricted world that they barely knew what happened just twenty kilometers from their homes. Later, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the transformation to an “industrial” civilization, very different from a rural society, prompted the migration of large populations to urban centers. At present, thanks to modern communication and information technologies, the urban era is fast becoming the digital era. Indeed, we are currently immersed in a process of “internetization”, so aptly

defined by John Palfrey in his article “The Web at 25: Looking Ahead to What Might Be”. In a very short timeframe we have reached a significant turning point that has progressively enabled many people to be able to express themselves, to know what is taking place around the globe in real time, and to have access to the lessons of yesterday and to the great issues and challenges of the world today.

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*“Inertia is a great obstacle to evolution. The only thing that separates “evolution” from “revolution” is an “r”, the “r” of responsibility.”*

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All means are being used to delay the emergence of this new citizen power in decision-making centers that to-date has been exclusively male dominated. “We, the peoples...”, as the United Nations Charter so lucidly commences, may now become a reality for those who at last can take in their hands the reins of their common destiny.

Since 1945, after President Roosevelt’s magnificent design of democratic multilateralism, “the peoples” have gradually been replaced exclusively by States, some of which have also replaced votes with vetoes, thus neutralizing the democratic nature of the United Nations system. Later, when international cooperation and global development led by the wealthier nations appeared to be the perfect solution for resolving the inequalities, insults to the human condition and countless military conflicts and confrontations, the “democratic principles” so carefully set forth in the UNESCO Constitution were replaced with the values of the marketplace and the United Nations with groups of plutocrats who, as was to be expected, have proven to be totally inept at managing problems at the global level.

They are now seeking to stop the emergence of citizen power, since digital technology is rapidly and progressively enabling not only instantaneous global intercommunication, but also makes expression of thoughts and feelings possible. This rapidly ensuing turning point is issuing in a new era of global coexistence, of accepting our immense cultural diversity and of recognizing the equal dignity of all human beings which is the cornerstone of Human Rights.

In an attempt to halt this force of renewal, the powers that control society seek to impose uniformity and distract us by broadcasting biased newscasts that distort our capacity to clearly discern what is happening, thus increasing our dissatisfaction with institutions that should be playing a fundamental role in the great transition which has now commenced, while many of the communications media — “their master’s voice”— unduly and fraudulently manipulate the information they disseminate.

Professor María Novo\* has rightly said that the greatest problem of our time is “TDU” (“they’re distracting us”). Obsessive and excessive membership in sports clubs (especially

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football), flooding all types of print and audiovisual media with trivial news about sports or any other topic that makes us forget the hard realities of life, presently prevents many people, who have become simple passive spectators, from working toward the true fulfillment of their responsibilities as free citizens. According to Article 1 of the UNESCO Constitution, educated people are those who are “free and responsible”, those who act upon their own reflections and never in response to the dictates of others.

Perhaps they may be able to delay the people’s “taking possession” of this new citizen power, but it won’t be long before it is “the peoples” who, endowed with a global conscience, will finally impose genuine democracy, the only context in which full compliance with Human Rights can be achieved and the urgent radical changes that are needed may be put into practice.

Inertia is a great obstacle to evolution. Instead of accepting and even promoting necessary changes while preserving timeless principles, people who cling to their privileges in the belief that nothing can beat the “good old days” seek to postpone the historic moments that lie on the horizon. I like to repeat that the only thing that separates “evolution” from “revolution” is an “r”, the “r” of responsibility.

What is indisputable is that the time for silence is over. The “outraged” — those who followed two young ninety-somethings, the Frenchman Stéphane Hessel and the Spaniard José Luis Sampedro — sent us a message from Madrid’s Puerta de Sol, a message of peaceful but determined involvement of citizens and their mobilization. It appeared to have “faded”, but a “new beginning” is germinating, in the words of the Earth Charter.

On several occasions I have described how much I was impressed by the silence of the silenced, especially on my first visit to the Soviet Union in 1961. They didn’t express themselves because they couldn’t. Later, with time, I realized that the problem doesn’t lie with the silenced, but rather with the silent. And I wrote *Crime of Silence*. Martin Luther King was right when he affirmed, “History will have to record that the greatest tragedy of this period was not the strident clamor of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the good people”. The voices so long overdue but unable to speak will now be heard; they will now ring forth to the ends of the earth... until all bonds restraining them are broken.

## 2. Citizen Power

Since the 15-M Movement, the Spanish, especially young people, progressively began to recognize their capacity to freely express themselves. As a part of their global conscience, the traditional powers have already known and feared that citizens’ full commitment to change is only a matter of time. The reason of force will soon begin to be replaced by the force of reason. Intellectuals, scientists, educators, artists, that is, creative people will take the lead in a great mobilization of citizens that will reestablish the democratic principles which the neo-liberals replaced with the laws of the marketplace, and the United Nations will be re-founded with the personal, financial and technical means required to rapidly establish the basis for global governance.

Civil society, now aware and capable of expressing itself, cannot tolerate even for one more minute the fact that each day thousands of persons, the majority of whom are children under five years of age, die of hunger and neglect in a genocide of immense proportions while at the same time over 3 billion dollars are invested daily in weapons and military spending. According to a recent study by *Oxfam*, 85 individuals possess more wealth than half of the world's population (3,300 million human beings), which is intolerable. It is also intolerable that "security" and "welfare" are enjoyed by fewer than 20% of the world's inhabitants, with the other 80% surviving in progressive gradients of scarcity, reaching levels of extreme poverty that threaten their very lives.

It is intolerable to continue living with the threat of nuclear war, with this sword of Damocles that darkens the horizons of our common destiny.

It is intolerable to see how the habitability of earth and conditions for life with dignity are ignored when it has been scientifically demonstrated that the conditions of our environment depend directly on human activity (Anthropocene). Mankind cannot leave the future generations a house that is "dilapidated and cold". It's intolerable that the wealthy nations fail to contribute to the development of the less wealthy ones that they are simply content to exploit.

In summary, it is intolerable that the values of the stock market have replaced ethical values to the point of shamelessly appointing governments without holding elections in Italy and Greece, the cradles of democracy, and without any reaction on the part of European countries that were subjected to the reins of absolute economic power...

The foregoing are merely examples of the notorious efforts being made to enable citizen power to commence a new era. Likewise are the efforts to prevent that from occurring. But they will be in vain. The great transition from force to words has begun.

### **3. Women, Cornerstones of the New Era**

President Nelson Mandela, a symbol of the unexpected, a prisoner who liberated his captors, told me one evening in Pretoria in 1996 that the transition from a culture of imposition, domination, violence and war, to a culture of encounter, dialogue, conciliation, alliance and peace could not be achieved unless a large percentage of women were included in decision-making processes. When, usually for dynastic reasons, women previously achieved power, they logically imitated men, the only example they had to follow when exercising that power.

After that interview, we conducted a study at UNESCO to evaluate the participation of women in decision-making at different levels. It was not even five percent. That meant 95% of decisions were being taken by men. Fifteen years later the percentage of women's participation rate in decision-making is around 15%. It is clear that there is still much progress to be made, but it's also true that in a very few years there have been changes that hadn't occurred in centuries. There are now many fully qualified women on the edges of power, who are hopefully making it possible for the rest to reach the state foreseen by President Mandela within the next few decades.

In the buildings of tomorrow, women will be the cornerstones. Women, with their inherent respect for life, and who hesitate before resorting to force. Women who certainly don't imitate men.

In summary, we are on the verge of great transformations on a global scale.

#### 4. Today's Impossible, Tomorrow's Possible

Global conscience, the capacity for expression, and gender balance enable us to reexamine problems that were previously thought to have no solution. Today there are many impossibles that will be possible tomorrow because a profound knowledge of reality — and thus the ability to make profound changes — and the capacity for citizen participation will enable us to live within a genuinely democratic framework. It is necessary to have a true knowledge of reality without being influenced solely by newscasts that highlight the unusual and narrate extraordinary and exceptional events. In consequence, the necessary analyses must be made to enable us to adopt the right measures *in time*. As is the case with any pathology and with natural events, any potentially irreversible phenomenon requires that measures be taken before reaching the point of no return.

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*“Neoliberalism has led humanity to an economy based on speculation, delocalization of production and war.”*

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This is another requirement that citizen power should bear in mind from this moment forward: especially when dealing with potentially irreversible matters, timely action is mandatory. *It is time for action*. It is time to ascertain exactly who is responsible for the world's present situation to preclude their continuing to exercise influence and preventing the adequate formulas for treatment from being applied.

#### 5. Systemic Crisis. Solutions (Democracy at All Levels; Federations)

One matter that must be made very clear is the definitive demise of the neoliberal capitalist system that has been incapable of applying corrective measures when warranted. In the early 1990s I wrote, “A system that was based on equality but had forsaken freedom has collapsed, giving way to systems of public liberties in States that had previously belonged to the Soviet Union. Likewise, the alternative system based on freedom but one that has never taken into account equality must now learn the lessons that the fall of the Berlin Wall symbolizes”. But that didn't happen. On the contrary, neoliberalism has led humanity to an economy based on speculation, delocalization of production and war.

The repeated failure of attempts to achieve democratic multilateralism (the League of Nations in 1919 and the United Nations in 1945) is due to the excessive influence of the Republican Party in the United States at the national and international levels. There are other examples too: the United States is the only country that has not signed the conventions on the Rights of the Child (1989), or the International Criminal Court (1998). In 1993, the Republican Party that was already manipulating for its own use and pleasure the International

Monetary Fund and the World Bank (which had lost from its original name “for Reconstruction and Development”) directly added the World Trade Organization, placing it outside of the scope of the United Nations.

Neoliberalism is also responsible for the delocalization of production, the result of “greed and irresponsibility”, in the words of President Obama. Indeed, China, previously a great communist country, is presently a huge capitalist power and has ceased to be the “world’s factory” to become a “factory for the world”. In effect, not long ago China’s investments in R&D and innovation surpassed those of the European Union. The country’s competitive capacity has increased immensely. If we add to this the fact that the countries that should demand a minimum of compliance with Human Rights, commencing with working conditions, have excluded the possibility of applying universal jurisdiction to China, the situation becomes even more complicated.

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The 2003 invasion of Iraq based on manipulation and lies and without the approval of the Security Council is another of the recent excesses committed by the Republican Party and it is thus essential that citizen power takes note of what its priorities should be in the near future. Such conflicts are not only the “adversaries” of the Democrats in the United States. They are the principal opponents of the other world of which we all dream.

Faced with progressive ethical, social, economic and environmental damage and the decline of humanity as a whole, the moment has undoubtedly arrived to rapidly implement profound transformations. In 1989 when everything pointed to peace, when everything pointed to change, with Presidents Mandela and Gorbachev and the culmination of the peace processes in Mozambique and El Salvador, those changes couldn’t be made because at that time citizen power didn’t yet exist.

Is Europe still a vantage point, a catalyst? Unfortunately, the markets prevailed and starting from the roof down, the European Union created a monetary union without previously creating an economic and, above all, a political union. This “Europe”, deprived of its ethical foundations — so beautifully expressed, I may add, in its 2000 Charter of Fundamental Rights — has progressively deteriorated into its present state of confusion. Action must be taken quickly. So many wrong turns, so many adverse tendencies must be rapidly reversed.

It is clear that the force of Europe is not a Europe of force, but a Europe of Human Rights, democratic multilateralism, principles, international cooperation, cultural diversity and prospective vision.

Instead of serving as a watchtower and a symbol of pluralism and public liberties, instead of symbolizing for the world the dignity of all human beings (proclaimed at the beginning of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights), the European Union has become the Europe of markets, of extremists (Le Pen at the forefront in France, of what should have never been),

of xenophobes, nationalists and secessionists. And when what was most needed was citizens of the world, the projection from Europe of a new international order, a rapprochement between Ukraine and Russia (instead of pushing Ukraine further to the east), building solid bridges with Turkey. The markets have invaded everything.

It is time to oppose neoliberalism and reestablish social justice; to eliminate groups of oligarchs and re-found a strong United Nations, with weighted votes but without vetoes, with a General Assembly electing 50% of its representatives from civil society and with both an Environmental and a Socio-economic Security Council in addition to its present one. The time has come to govern globalization at the dawn of the digital era. The time has come to stop the “ecocide” and fulfill our duties to future generations.

It’s time to fully integrate India and China within the institutions of the United Nations, ready to face truly complex situations but supported, for the first time in history, by this “popular outcry” that should and can establish, from the bottom to the top, the course of these new times.

It is clear that rapid decisive changes are required. In the areas mentioned, federation, relations between States, nations and communities. Guided by the overall perspective gleaned from the vantage point of UNESCO over several years, in my blog, articles in the press, conferences and contributions in various publications I have insisted on drawing attention to the *conceptual changes that are so essential and so urgent* for achieving democracy at the international, regional, national and personal levels. I don’t believe there is any other alternative: democracy vs. the dictatorship of economic power and the concentration of all types of resources and power in a very few hands. I have already mentioned the “great dominion”. The only alternative, which had already been offered in 1945, is “the peoples”. “We, the peoples have resolved to save the succeeding generations from the scourge of war”...

This is the solution: the peoples, building peace, the future generations. Rapidly converting the immense excessive amounts invested daily in military spending into the resources needed to build peace, safeguard the environment and achieve global sustainable and human development. Now is the time to combine our efforts and join our arms and hands in favor of a rapid transition from an economy based on force, imposition and the dominance of a few to an economy of global development. That great turning point to which I have already referred, from force to words.

In the words of Amin Maalouf,\* “Unprecedented situations require unprecedented solutions”. I believe we should bear this in mind when preparing our roadmaps for the future.

*“Unprecedented situations require unprecedented solutions.”*

*– Amin Maalouf*

## 6. New Points of Reference and Meanings

- *Employment and jobs.* In the digital era work should be the protagonist, along with

\*Amin Maalouf is a Lebanese writer who writes in French and is a 2010 recipient of The Prince of Asturias Award for Letters.



personal dedication and productive activities, vs. the immense possibilities afforded by automation and robotics. This alters present concepts of working hours and traditional employment, making working schedules, forms and activities more flexible, which will also allow full incorporation of women into the workforce without the barriers that still exist in that regard.

- Distinction between *information* and *knowledge*. Between knowledge and wisdom. We are inundated with information, but it is essential to allot time for reflection, to absorb the knowledge that will result in innovation, in inventions. “Research,” said Professor Hans Krebs,\* “is observing what others observe and to think what nobody has thought”. The distinctive capacity of each human being, that creative power, must from now on be used progressively to draw a new world design. One that distinguishes between knowledge and wisdom, one that distinguishes the *who* from the *how*...
- *Longevity*, one of the pillars of the future that has yet to be written, is a fundamental aspect of this new design. As mentioned previously, today we have the immense benefit of experience that was often lost too soon before. In the words of an African proverb, “when an old man dies, a library is burned.”
- *The educated*, those who are “free and responsible”. We must take into account this view of the educational process, a process that lasts a lifetime, when designing the future that, at the dawning of this new century and millennium, is now finally within the scope of citizen action.
- *Learning the lessons of the “emerging nations”*. In 1997 I wrote, “Sap rises from the South”. For centuries Latin America and Africa have first depended on and later looked permanently toward Europe, toward the West. We should all now learn from the lessons, initiatives and ways of countries that have rebelled against the exclusively mercantile models imposed on them and from which they are now progressively being freed.
- *It is still today*. It is essential to take action to avoid reaching what in many cases may become an irreversible situation, or at least to lessen their effects with the appropriate measures. *Tomorrow is Always Late* was the title I chose for one of my books in 1988. I must insist that now is the time for action because the majority of the diagnoses have already been made and it is presently urgent to apply the appropriate treatments. And to do so in time.
- *The feasible and the admissible*. Knowledge is always positive but how it is applied may not be. It may even be perverse. Thus it is necessary to know how to distinguish knowledge, which is always liberating, from erroneous ways in which it is applied.

Our greatest hope is the distinctive capacity of the human race that enables us to devise, invent and to think outside the box, in unexpected ways. The unexpected is our hope.

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\* German biochemist and winner of the 1953 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

## 7. Urgent Radical Changes

*“I’m writing from a shipwreck... / for what we have destroyed / especially in ourselves... / ... but I’m also writing from life, / I’m writing of a world to come”.*

– José Ángel Valente

In 2000 in my book *Un mundo nuevo* I published four great contracts that, in my opinion, are capable of putting us back on course at the dawning of this new century and millennium. They include: a new social contract, a new environmental contract, a new cultural contract and a new ethical contract. Only by making fundamental values, democratic principles and essential ethical values the focus of our daily behavior will we be able to bring together the infinite diversity — to achieve the uniqueness — that characterizes all human beings. For that reason they are considered “*universal values*”. This is the only way for achieving the beginning of a new era and peaceful and prosperous coexistence.

Based on experience, on decades-long reflections during my lifetime, and based on the problems that the present situation poses, I am proposing remedies that must be applied urgently at the international, regional, national and local levels.

## 8. At the Global Level

- Dissolution of plutocratic groups and reestablishment (establishment) of an effective multilateral system.
- Reform of the United Nations, with the participation and representation set forth above, to provide it with the moral and functional authority that is so essential today.
- Putting an end to systemic crisis prompted by the Republicans in the United States who replaced democratic principles (justice, equality, freedom, solidarity) with the laws of the marketplace and multilateralism with groups of plutocrats, and whose resounding failure in their attempt to likewise replace the United Nations is there for all to see.
- Rapidly reduce the risk of reaching points of no return in environmental degradation resulting from human activity (Anthropocene), by adopting throughout the world and without exception or delay the measures that our responsibility toward future generations demands.
- Nuclear disarmament: This is extremely urgent and a great popular mobilization in cyberspace should foster the end of this terrible “Sword of Damocles”.
- An end to the supranational trafficking by mafias: trafficking in arms, drugs, people... Regulation of the sale and consumption of drugs whose extremely high price nevertheless is never a deterrent to use and, as is the case with alcohol and tobacco, in the future considering drug use which is essentially a health and not only a security problem.
- Restructuring of economic systems, establishing global regulating mechanisms, elimination of tax havens without exception, and the transition from an economy of

speculation, delocalization of production and war to an economy of global sustainable development that would put an end to the exploitation, social inequalities, extreme poverty, death from starvation that cast a shadow over the dignity of the human species as a whole.

- Promote the effective and efficient functioning of “regional associations” such as the European Union, CELAC, OUA to thus facilitate world governance.

## **9. At the European Level**

- Reform of the EU Treaties, strengthening the economic and political unions that were not defined prior to the monetary union.
- If less than 60% of the electorate in a given country votes in the European Parliamentary elections, those elected should not be allowed to take their seats in the European Parliament.
- Autonomy in security matters, withdrawing from NATO whose existence is no longer justified after the disbanding of the Warsaw Pact and costs Europe immense amount of money, also ceasing to acquire unnecessary and outdated military equipment.
- Balanced industrial relocation.
- Incentives for R&D and innovation.
- Reasonable postponement of deadlines for reducing the deficit and regulation of financial flows.
- Repositioning of democratic principles to guide the EU’s actions, promoting cultural, ethnic, ideological and religious pluralism as the basis for peaceful coexistence, placing social justice at the center of Community policies, and always safeguarding the necessary means for education, knowledge and health. Also through the necessary incentives, jobs for all, being aware of the impact that delocalization of production, automation, robotics and new information and communications technologies have on the labor market.

Particularly urgent is genuine democracy at all levels. See the “Universal Declaration on Democracy” project that has earned the support of many prominent figures.\*

## **10. At the National Level (Spain)**

- Urgent reform of the Electoral Law to cease to maintain the present incoherent situation, the sense of representative weakness of the will of all Spaniards.
- Reform of the Constitution (particularly Chapter 8), establishing a federal system and allowing broad autonomy. The Constitution should not only be calmly updated but it should also be seen as a solution, rather than a problem, as the Magna Carta of a State

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\* See “Proyecto Declaración Universal De La Democracia” [http://www.fund-culturadepaz.org/democracia\\_esp.php](http://www.fund-culturadepaz.org/democracia_esp.php)

encompassing all Spaniards and with extensive powers of self-government and well-established and generally-accepted common principles.

- Independence of the executive, legislative and judicial powers, establishing the necessary corrective mechanisms to safeguard the role of minorities and civil society in the event of an absolute parliamentary majority, and with impeccable respect for democratic processes.
- Support for education, health and R&D and innovation as matters which should be placed above politics and which are presently being subjected to possibly irreversible budget cuts.
- Judicious relocalization of foreign production.
- Implementation of a project to promote tourism and residence in Spain, taking advantage of longevity and the unequaled human, cultural, climatic, natural and gastronomic features that the Peninsula and its two island chains have to offer.
- Promoting renewable energies.
- Speedy and severe measures to penalize taxpayers' lack of solidarity and tax evasion.
- Initiatives to promote self-employment and SMEs.
- Given its special past history, mobilization of Spain's capacity as a bridge with Africa, the Arab countries and certainly, with Latin America.

These are some of the proposals that the majority of the world's citizens must decidedly support, particularly those that involve personal behavior and world governance. In all cases they should be implemented democratically, listening to the voices of the people who now for the first time in history are able to freely express themselves.

As explained in my book *La nueva página* (1994), democracy is a culture, a way of conducting oneself. With the ethical and social collapse of the West, it is essential to re-found the United Nations to enable the excellent concepts that Roosevelt designed in 1945 to be put into practice. Only then will it be possible to achieve the global and human development sought in the 1940s. Only then will the world's priorities become the task and commitment of all. "Who, if not *all* of us?"

*All of the dimensions and aspects of the economy must be subordinated to social justice*, as we have firmly proclaimed in Article 11 of our draft Universal Declaration on Democracy.

## 11. A New Beginning

A new paradigm is needed in line with the proposals offered by Ivo Šlaus\* and Garry Jacobs† of the World Academy of Art & Science. We must be very attentive to the major

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guidelines that in a very few years should ensure the beginning of a new era, with the possibilities that derive from humanity's great transition from subjects to citizens.

"Be the change you wish to see." Following this advice from Mahatma Gandhi, we must realize that all of the many transformations that are now necessary and urgent will not be gleaned from the great powers but rather from seeds sown one by one, day after day, by individual citizens who at last realize that their destiny is actually in their own hands. Each dawning is a personal occasion for a new beginning...

As the Earth Charter's Preamble reads, "We stand at a critical moment in the Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future...". That's how it begins. And it ends, "As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning." The Earth Charter is based on respect and care for the community of life; on integrity; on social and economic justice; on democracy, non-violence and peace, and in the end it shows us the most important steps to be taken on the road before us.

It may be one of the essential documents to inspire specific actions to enable this new beginning. A new start, in which all human beings are "free and responsible". The intellectual, scientific, academic and artistic communities, or any community with ideas, decency, heart and courage must join in and, as indicated previously, place themselves at the vanguard of the popular mobilization. *For the first time it is possible, among all of us, to invent the future.* Together we can illuminate the paths of tomorrow. As the Mayan Popol Vuh urges us, "Let us all rise, let no one be left behind".

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