

**Opening Address of Professor Federico Mayor Zaragoza,
Co-President of the High Level Group of the
Alliance of Civilizations**

Palma de Mallorca, November 27, 2005

Mr. President of the Spanish Government,
Mr. Prime Minister of Turkey,
Distinguished Members of the High Level Group and
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is time for action. It is time for encounters, for dialogue and for mutual recognition. It is time to forge attitudes of solidarity. It is time to mobilize all peoples on the side of concord and conciliation. It is time to abandon forever the perverse proverb, “if you want peace, prepare for war,” replacing it with “if you want peace, work for it through your actions each day ...”

The Alliance is founded on the equal dignity of all human beings. In their diversity —because each individual is unique— capable of creating, with that power that distinguishes us, our hope. All of us are different, but all are united in universal principles and values. An Alliance that has respect for all, that includes rather than excluding, that maintains self-esteem, that does not homogenize nor weaken diversity in a melting pot that does not rank its citizens nor permit dominance of any kind.

Mr. President, the very composition of this group is a symbol of the Alliance that we seek and are striving to achieve: people from different ethnic groups, with different ideologies, beliefs, traditions, projects... all

seated around a table to calmly present their points of view and to listen to those of others, being aware that we all share a common destiny, that all of us have the duty to remember and, above all, the duty to forge daily with our actions a brighter and clearer future for our children.

We cannot wait for “others”, those in higher positions, to clean house and to put things in order. Each one of us, each citizen who yearns to live in peace must do his part so that his children and grandchildren cannot look back and ask, “Why did they remain silent?” “Why did they let fear overcome them when their future, our future, was at stake?”

All representatives of society—NGO’s, and student, artistic, academic, scientific and sports associations and institutes, all must collaborate in this mobilization, because it is their security, peace, happiness and sharing that must be sown and built each day... Those which most easily attract our youth have special responsibilities in that regard...

From Palma de Mallorca by the sea: by a sea that tells us at each moment, with each wave that there may be many seas, but that there is really just one...

I want to express to all of the inhabitants of the Balearic Islands our pleasure at being able to hold this first Group meeting in Palma de Mallorca, a place of exceptional beauty, which is so renowned for its hospitality.

I would like to express my appreciation to President José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero for this initiative, to which today –since the recent United Nations

summit– all Heads of State and Government are now committed... and to Prime Minister Erdogan, co-sponsor of what is now a worldwide initiative:

We reaffirm the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace as well as the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations and its Programme of Action adopted by the General Assembly and the value of different initiatives on dialogue among cultures and civilizations, including the dialogue on interfaith cooperation. We commit ourselves to taking action to promote a culture of peace and dialogue at the local, national, regional and international levels and request the Secretary-General to explore enhancing implementation mechanisms and to follow up on those initiatives. In this regard, we also welcome the Alliance of Civilizations initiative announced by the Secretary-General on 14 July 2005. (Paragraph 144 of the Final Declaration of the Millennium Summit +5. A/RES/60/1)

In the name of the entire Group we wish to thank the Secretary General of the United Nations and the Secretariat for their special support.

My dear and distinguished Group members: there is still time to mobilize the people in support of dialogue, of the alliance, of conciliation and of peace. At crosscurrents, against those who refuse to accept that the time for knowledge and the word has arrived, forever replacing force, imposition and violence. We cannot change the past, but we can change the future and it is our responsibility to do so. We must commit ourselves to this task, because we cannot leave our descendants, the future generations, a house full of hostility, dilapidated and cold.

This is the time for action. Mr. President, Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Secretary General: please rest assured that this Group's firm intention is to help you to make your dream a reality, your dream of weaving, with all of our hands together in a tapestry of multicolored filaments, an alliance among all cultures, customs and civilizations in which only one attitude is unacceptable: the attitude of extremism, violence and imposition. We need only to erase one word from our minds and our dictionaries: "indisputable." Let's put this into practice. The time for action has come!

Thank you very much.