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Address by
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Director-General
of the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization
(UNESCO)

on the occasion of the award of a Doctorate *honoris causa*
by the University of Murcia and on being appointed
an Honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Medicine and Surgery

PEACE, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT:
THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY

Murcia (Spain)
14 October 1997

Distinguished Rector of the University of Murcia,
Don Juan Monreal,
Distinguished President of the Royal Academy of Medicine and Surgery,
Don Guzmán Ortuño,
Distinguished Vice-President of the Autonomous Community of Murcia,
Distinguished Councillor for Culture and Education
of the Autonomous Community,
Faculty members of the University of Murcia,
Distinguished members of the Royal Academy of Medicine and Surgery,
Dear sponsors and guests, and more especially,
Professor José Antonio Lozano,
Students,
Dear colleagues and old friends,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Professor José Antonio Lozano, a friend of mine for many years, was far too generous - as friends always are - in his introductory encomium. He mentioned that I had the honour of working with a great biochemist, who more than anything else was a great human being, the Nobel Prizewinner Professor Hans Krebs. In addition to his extraordinary capacities as a scientist and researcher, Professor Krebs was a man of extreme personal modesty. I shall never forget the time when, following a tribute which, although not as highly coloured as today's, was very flattering, he said upon taking the floor: 'I am only a research worker, but I must confess that after listening to everything that has been said, I'm very much looking forward to hearing myself speak'.

Mr Rector,
Mr President of the Royal Academy of Medicine and Surgery,

In the presence of so many friends - because among the academics who have welcomed me to this senate today there are many whom I have known for a long time, some of you as colleagues, some whom I taught and others who were fellow students - I am not going to say whether I deserve these two great distinctions bestowed on me at this ceremony. But what I can assure you of is that I am not about to forget them and that they will inspire me to continue along the path I have chosen. There is no point, anyway, in talking about what we deserve, because, as I have just said, in the final analysis the only thing that really matters is our friends. But if I may, I would like to tell you a story, which many of you will have heard already, about His Majesty King Alfonso XIII and Miguel de Unamuno. The King had decided to decorate Unamuno. Although he found such things rather tiresome, he felt honoured by the award and when he was about to receive it said: 'Your Majesty, thank you for this honour which I greatly deserve'. To which the King replied: 'Don Miguel, I can't help wondering whether you are telling the truth, because all the others whom I have decorated told me that they did not deserve it'. And Unamuno replied: 'They too were telling the truth, Your Majesty, they too were telling the truth'.

So I will not go into the question of whether I deserve this honour or not. I do, however, have something to say to the distinguished Rector, to the President of the Royal Academy of Medicine and Surgery, to the Vice-President of this Autonomous Community - the son of the

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Civil Governor of Granada, a man who showed exceptional moral courage in extremely difficult circumstances, which I shall never forget - and especially to José Antonio Lozano. When I was president of the jury to which he referred, he stated, and rightly so, that he had no sponsors and absolutely no need of them. From that first moment it was perfectly clear that the researcher standing before us would become one of the most important figures in the field of biochemistry and molecular biology in Spain and furthermore that he would have the drive and strength of purpose he has shown in all his activities, and in particular those he undertook and carried out as the distinguished Rector of this University.

The excellent brochure outlining the main features of the University of Murcia says that it is a university with a past that is now looking towards the future. I truly believe that this university, in its three phases, is in the nature of a crucible, open to various approaches and to different ways of extending its educational and scientific influence, while aspiring with justified confidence to become an institution with a long-term vision and, above all, the capacity to carry out the tasks of prevention and anticipation, to which I shall return later. The University of Murcia has shown itself to be highly relevant in the past; the task awaiting it in the future is to be even more so. Murcia is strategically located on the shores of the western Mediterranean, at the crossroads between Europe and North Africa. Whereas its economic and culture centre of gravity previously lay in the interior of the Iberian peninsular, in coming years it will shift steadily outwards, both towards the north, in the direction of the other countries of Europe, and towards the south, in search of closer contacts with the Maghrib and even with the sub-Saharan countries.

This sudden widening of horizons, a consequence of the globalization of trends and markets, has brought a previously missing international dimension to problems and solutions alike. For this reason it is essential to have very clear ideas about the role to be played by the academic community in the immediate future. Challenges often appear to be local or regional in character, although the real context is continental, and even global. Only two weeks ago, in Palermo, the University Rectors of Europe, in response to the basic question 'What are universities for?', answered 'to educate citizens of the world'. We need an international dimension because the world today is one or it is nothing. Accordingly, one of the fundamental tasks of the modern university - perhaps the decisive one - is to train citizens of the world, men and women who can devise international solutions to today's challenges, which transcend frontiers between states and differences between cultures. I would like, then, in this address, to take a brief look at the tasks that every university - and in particular this one, which is both Spanish and Mediterranean - must set itself in order to make a greater contribution to peace, development and democracy in the century that is dawning.

Distinguished Rector,

From the battle of Salamis, five centuries before our era, to the civil war in former Yugoslavia and the bloody conflict now raging in Algeria, the Mediterranean and its shores have witnessed countless contests. A favoured backdrop for rivalry between empires and cultures, the Mediterranean epitomizes in its history the dreams, suffering and hopes of humanity.

Egyptians, Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans, Jews, Arabs and Christians have been the protagonists of a turbulent history of struggle and domination, which culminated in this century with two world wars and subsequently kept humanity on the brink of nuclear holocaust for 40 years.

‘This mode of social organization based on oppression and violence is what I usually refer to as the ‘culture of war’. But the world which gave rise to this structure has changed radically. The challenges posed by the new millennium call for an ethical, social, economic and political reordering. Ethnic and religious conflicts, demographic pressure, poverty, mass emigration and environmental pollution are the problems which have taken on greater urgency since the end of the Cold War and require immediate attention. They also require alliances, of the sort we have yet to put together in order to break out of the inertia of societies at war.

‘These challenges are particularly critical in the Mediterranean area, where conditions in the countries bordering it make the *mare nostrum* both a channel for communication and trade, and a frontier between the opulence of Europe and the poverty of the Third World - a genuine *limes* at which world problems take on special density. The region is therefore particularly vulnerable to the threats to which I referred earlier.

One of the basic difficulties in dealing successfully with these challenges - whether they relate to environment, population or security issues - is that they involve preventive measures, which in essence comes down to ‘managing intangibles’. Like good health, fine weather or a sound economy, peace and development are aspects of our existence which we take for granted, enjoy unthinkingly and only miss when we lose them. Similarly, preventive measures are usually noticed only when they fail. Generals are never decorated for preventing wars, only for winning them. If one day we manage to achieve peace and security at the regional, national and international levels so that ministries of defence can be gradually transformed into ministries of peace, an award for the enormously important task of prevention might perhaps be established.

Unfortunately, until now we have always acted too late, applying inadequate remedies once a crisis has erupted. This is, in part, because we are prepared for the challenges of the past but not for those of the present, and even less for those already looming on the horizon. The rational use of water - which is particularly important in this region - better standards of living in rural areas, which would reduce migrant flows, climate change, the loss of biodiversity, the growth of cultural uniformity and nuclear proliferation are all issues whose importance will increase exponentially in the coming decades. Yet today we ready ourselves, with a stockpile of costly equipment, for unlikely wars while we lack the facilities to predict or reduce the effects of recurring natural or human-made disasters.

Faculty members,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

An attitude of vigilance and prevention, a willingness to ‘manage intangibles’ might possibly have prevented the catastrophes in recent years in the Congo, Bosnia and Afghanistan. If we had kept the promises made in 1974 at the United Nations to allocate 0.7 per cent of the gross national product of the industrialized countries to the development of the disadvantaged countries, the situation would undoubtedly be different today. Some of today’s ‘angry neighbors’ might be good friends. They might also be good customers.

Yes, conditions would be different. But things did not turn out that way. Instead of sharing resources and knowledge and contributing to the full development of those societies, we imposed on them political and socio-economic models which failed to take due account of the history and particularities of each culture. We sold them large quantities of infrastructure, equipment and weapons, without helping them to develop on their own. We also, at times, turned a blind eye, and still do - if the country is a good customer - or supported illegitimate governments or dubious commercial interests. We wanted to solve international problems at

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the national level. And we were mistaken. No matter how important the country is, international problems must be addressed in the framework of international organizations.

Today it is clear that we cannot afford at the same time the price of war and the price of peace. If we wish to build a more just and more peaceful society for the next century, we must ensure that at least some of the resources now being wasted on the machinery of destruction and death are allocated to prevention and development. Violence and force have failed. And at what price in human life, millions of lives, especially young lives? At what price have violence and force failed? Authoritarianism has shown us the bitter face of defeat and death. We must now try peace, dialogue and tolerance. The Beatles sang 'Give peace a chance' in the 1960s. Sometimes it is our poets and songwriters who come up with genuine proposals for change.

Distinguished Rector,
Faculty members,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Existing models of development, based on the inequitable creation and distribution of wealth, will only give way to full-blown democracy - government by the people and for the people - if we can dismantle the bipolar structure under which riches are progressively amassed at one extreme and poverty exacerbated at the other. As stated in the recently published United Nations Human Development Report, imbalances have grown in the past 20 years even in countries where economic growth has been most dynamic.

According to the report, in the United States the share of wealth belonging to the richest 1 per cent of the population rose from 20 per cent in 1975 to 36 per cent in 1990. In 70 countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe, the average income is lower today than in 1980. In mid-1997, there were almost 800 million unemployed worldwide. In contrast, the world's 358 biggest multimillionaires possess an aggregate fortune greater than the combined incomes of 2,300 million people, or nearly half the world's population.

Over the last 30 years, the share of world income for the poorest 20 per cent of the world's population declined from 2.3 per cent to 1.4 per cent. During the same period, the share for the richest 20 per cent rose from 70 to 85 per cent. The gap in average per capita income between the industrialized countries and the poor countries is three times greater today than in 1970, increasing from US \$5,700 to US \$15,400.

By strengthening the links between culture and economic activities, actions which promote endogenous and environmentally friendly development can also help to shape solutions to the problems currently besetting humanity. In this context, it is of paramount importance to recognize and respect cultural identities and to draw up development strategies in keeping with the social structures and traditions of each community. This is the only approach that enables communities to overcome poverty and achieve a decent standard of living without having to sacrifice their cultural heritage. It is only by making men and women - the entire human race - the true protagonists and beneficiaries of progress that we can achieve sustainable development with a human face.

To fulfil this mission, we must be able to count on the co-operation of all sectors of society and, in particular, the new social partners: non-governmental organizations, parliaments, the media, town councils, unions, churches and the armed forces. There can be no elitist or partial answers to challenges that call for global responses empowering society as a whole. Above all, the decision has to be taken to divert to development the resources that

were previously used for war. The famous and eagerly awaited 'peace dividends' that were to follow the end of the Cold War have not materialized. Some countries have managed to reduce their military expenditure, but development assistance has not risen proportionately; quite the opposite, in fact. As a result of structural adjustment policies, debt repayments and the deteriorating terms of trade, the poor countries are making an increasing contribution to the wealth of the First World.

We must try to move on from a culture of domination and force to one of dialogue and reason. This transformation is summed up in the concept of the 'culture of peace', the promotion of which is UNESCO's first priority. In English it is called 'peacemaking' or 'peace-building', as opposed to 'peacekeeping' which is nothing more than containment or the maintaining of a ceasefire. The slow and poorly co-ordinated response of the international community to humanitarian emergencies highlights our lack of rapid-action mechanisms which would enable vital resources to be mobilized swiftly and efficiently. That applies both to conflict situations and to natural disasters.

The intervention of peacekeeping forces, although valuable - like the work of the Red Cross - clearly reflects our failure. Their deployment in the middle of the combat proves that we are arriving too late and using inadequate remedies. The greatest challenge of the century ahead will not be to persuade two sides to declare a truce once the conflict has begun - once the dead, the wounded and the prisoners are already there - but to prevent the conflict from happening at all by working to destroy the very roots of violence. One important step in that direction is the creation of permanent observatories and regional security systems which would ensure conflict resolution through dialogue and negotiation. Defence spending could then be reduced substantially and the resources used for other purposes. The greatest obstacle to prevention and the establishment of such mechanisms is the inertia of the enormous war machine. The real stumbling blocks to this great change from violence to dialogue and from war to peace are the enormous interests at stake and a lack of leadership and vision.

Distinguished Rector,

As the President of the Royal Academy of Medicine and Surgery has already indicated in his excellent speech, peace, development and democracy form an 'interactive triangle' with mutually reinforcing vertices. Without democracy there can be no sustainable development. Poverty and economic stagnation undermine democratic legitimacy and make it difficult to find peaceful solutions to problems. War is the most effective way to impoverish a society and leave it defenseless against dictatorial ambitions.

Education - as the President has pointed out - is the dynamic axis of this triangle. All the United Nations conferences held over the past 50 years have come to similar conclusions: regardless of the specific issues (environment, population, social development, human rights and democracy, women, housing) education is the key to an urgently needed change in our current approach, which is widening the gap between the haves and the have-nots, between countries rich in material goods and knowledge and those less favoured by history and geography. Education for all throughout life: this is the major challenge of our times, which admits of no subterfuge or delay. Education that awakens the creative potential of each individual, shapes attitudes of tolerance, instils values, enables all human beings to achieve personal sovereignty and self-mastery, make their own choices and rule their own destiny.

The pledge to build a culture of peace where the civic values of tolerance and love of one's neighbors are embodied in everyday behaviour thus calls for a substantial increase in the resources earmarked for education. That is the only way we can transmit values and enact

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legislation which can profitably replace the obsolete structures of the culture of war, which are still standing, due, at times, to inertia and, at others, to cowardice. The transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace implies a radical change in behaviour and habits. To achieve this, we must adopt an attitude of peaceful rebellion against the unacceptable features of our society.

In a famous essay entitled *The Rebel*, Albert Camus studies the major political upheavals in the West since the eighteenth century and comes to the conclusion that 'the history of our time compels us to affirm that rebellion is one of the basic aspects of being human. It is a fundamental truth, which wrenches man from his solitude'. Non-violent rebellion, creative disobedience, or the insubordination of those who refuse the unacceptable is the best way to ensure that humankind successfully makes the transition from the logic of force, which still prevails today, to the logic of reason.

In face of the pessimistic predictions of conflict between civilizations and the hypothesis that we have arrived at the end of history it is urgent to hold high the belief that we are merely concluding one phase in our history, that of the culture of war based on fear and oppression, and that we are at the dawn of a different history in which democracy and scientific development can become for the first time a reality for all people. The Catalan poet Jesus Massip wrote some verses which I often cite in connection with this pessimistic attitude: 'Time passes and finds us, today, mellowed and docile'. Nothing can be expected from those who are docile, satisfied, indifferent or fulfilled. We all have a role to play and if we are fully committed to this mission we can successfully meet the challenges of the modern world.

It is solely with energy, non-violent protest and a willingness to take risks that we can reach this goal. It is only with creativity, the courage to take initiatives in every sphere, imagination and generosity that we can combat marginalization and waste, in both human and material terms, safeguard the environment and pursue endogenous development.

Dear colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Each one of us, as sentient human beings, shares responsibility for this task. Nevertheless, world leaders and politicians, by virtue of their training and careers, hold the keys to development and to socio-economic transformation and therefore bear an even greater responsibility. To know where we are heading, it is important to set our sights very high. In the words of Fernando Pessoa (writing under another name): 'The moon, because it is so high, sheds the same light on to the sea or a small pool'. But we cannot see the road ahead in darkness. Nothing can be achieved outside a framework of peace and justice. Peace is a prerequisite and a basic premise.

History has irrefutably shown, at a high price in lives and suffering, that freedom and equality cannot be achieved separately or exclusively. As I often point out, in 1989 a system based on equality collapsed because it had forgotten about freedom. Today we are witnessing the downfall of the opposite system, which has failed to include equality. Equality must be restored swiftly. And what is needed to do so successfully is the profound, firm and daily experience of fraternity, which both systems overlooked from the start.

Rights cannot be exercised in the middle of a war. Efforts to bring about socio-economic change will never be fruitful in conflict situations. Similarly, it is very difficult to ensure peace and democratic governance in the absence of progress - economic, scientific, technical - at all levels of society. Only endogenous development, fully respectful of the

environment - development with a human face - can lay the foundations for constructing peace in the minds of men and women. Only with the free participation of all can we build a culture of peace for the new century.

This 'interactive triangle', or 'virtuous circle', of which I spoke earlier, formed by peace, democracy and development, can produce results only when it is driven by solidarity and justice. In the office of the Abbe Pierre on the outskirts of Paris, over a simple desk, hangs a sign that perfectly sums up this idea: *Only one thing is urgent - to share.*

The worldwide democratic upsurge, and its recent extension to countries that have never before known governments chosen by the people, has again highlighted the dangers which threaten the democratic system when it is applied amidst inequality, poverty and ethnic rivalry. In the absence of adequate socio-economic development, the citizens' participation in decision-making becomes symbolic or non-existent, and democratic institutions lose their meaning to the point where they are reduced to purely formal representations.

In order to progress from formal democracy to the real kind, it is necessary for governments to guarantee freedom, security and legal protection for all alike. Respect for human rights - especially for minorities - and the effective functioning of the legal system are the pillars of democratic governance. However, the building of this legal structure is usually the work of statesmen, and not of politicians acting with their eyes fixed on the horizon of the next elections, subjected to the short term and to the tyranny of the polls, because, in the final analysis, policy-making does not consist in looking at the same thing, but in the same direction. Above all, it consists in not looking at oneself.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Jean Monnet, one of the founders of post-war European unity, is said to have admitted that if he were to begin his task of unification all over again, he would change the 'c' of commerce into the 'c' of culture. The point is that exclusively commercial and monetary integration, regulated by macroeconomic indices, does little to improve the welfare of citizens who are immersed in day-to-day macroeconomics. Union implies economic cohesion but less as a cause than as an effect of social, cultural and moral harmonization. Economic growth and a free market are necessary but not sufficient: culture alone provides firm foundations upon which to build our common home. Our goal must be to offer all human beings the conditions under which they can shape their own destiny. It is this personal sovereignty, to which I referred earlier, that really counts.

The Declaration of Human Rights is universal and applies to everyone without exception: 'all human beings are born free and equal'. Any discrimination based on race, religion, sex or age is fundamentally inadmissible. Supremacy in any form is unjustified. All imposition, especially by force, especially by violence - not to speak of extreme violence - is totally unacceptable. We must never forget that it is the undivided responsibility of society as a whole to ensure the universal application, without exception, of human rights.

At a time when democratic principles are coming under close scrutiny we must ensure respect for the rights proclaimed in 1948, and subsequently enriched and refined at several highly important international meetings, by developing in greater detail the sections or areas of special concern to each population group. Dialogue, discussion and the forthright examination of differences are needed if we are to find compromise solutions that are mutually beneficial and therefore acceptable and viable. This approach to resolving and channelling the social tensions that are a normal and necessary part of the dynamism and

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development of all human communities is gradually beginning to replace the propensity to violence and to rejection of the 'Other'. The point is not to eliminate conflicts entirely - which would be wishful thinking - but to seek ways of dialogue and negotiation that rule out violence and lead to the peaceful and equitable settlement of conflict.

Distinguished Rector,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

To contribute effectively to such a thoroughgoing transformation, the university must fulfil certain basic requirements, which may be summarized as follows:

First, it must be an institution based on merit, in accordance with Article 26,1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that: 'higher education shall be equal] y accessible to all on the basis of merit', meaning merit on the part of both teachers and learners, professors and students.

Secondly, it must be attentive to the future, a watchtower capable of anticipating negative trends and offering the authorities solutions based on scientific knowledge, not an ivory tower of privilege and Byzantine complexity. To this end we must recognize that students come to the university to 'learn to do' and not just to accumulate knowledge. To Horace's dictum 'dare to know', we now have to add 'dare to do'.

Thirdly, the university has to contribute both to preserving the legacy of preceding generations and to shaping the future; preserving both knowledge and nature; safeguarding the intangible forms of culture - traditions, rites, celebrations and customs; and, most important of all, protecting those other features of our heritage - the genetic and the ethical heritage - that are threatened today by the blind forces of globalization. Independence and neutral it y, combined with scientific rigour, to give decision-makers what they need to make informed decisions.

Above all, the university must help to realize the ideal of education for all, throughout life, From the vantage point afforded me by my position at the head of UNESCO, I can assure you that these are the basic building blocks that will allow the university to face up successfully to the already looming challenges of the twenty-first century. And we should not delude ourselves into thinking that technological progress will relieve us of these tasks. The person we must now shape is *Homo sapiens sapiens*, with a universal conscience, not *Homo digitalis* or *Homo virtualis*, in thrall to the new technologies. Nothing can replace human contact and the wealth of knowledge and experience transmitted by parents and teachers. As you and I well know from our long years of teaching, example is the only way.

I firmly believe, ladies and gentlemen, that the University of Murcia will continue to be in tile forefront of this effort to build peace, by teaching the younger generations the ethical values which make democracy and all-round human development possible. And I wish to reiterate my deepest gratitude for the honours I have received, which will give even greater force to the only thing I have to offer - words - and will be a source of encouragement to me as I travel the roads which lie ahead.