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The forum 2004: Challenges and opportunities

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The main aim of this speech is to express the public commitment of the Government of Catalonia and the president of Catalonia to the Forum 2004 project.

I consider this to be a very appropriate time to make this speech because of the good understanding that exists between the institutions about how to implement the project and because it is a time when a large number of questions and doubts have been resolved, or are being resolved. The time is ripe, therefore, to stress the interest the Government of Catalonia takes in this project.

As is widely known, the Forum 2004 got off to a confused start and this confusion lasted for a long time. Even today, there are people who say they do not know what the Forum should be about. The initial confusion was a conceptual one but it had repercussions elsewhere because it made cooperation between the institutions difficult even though it was everyone's real desire to prevent the Forum being still born. Despite this lack of definition, we undertook a very large financial commitment which is the complete opposite to what normally happens—sitting down with the people who wish to do something with a fairly well developed plan and before deciding anything, drawing up a project and evaluating its cost: "This will cost so much. This is how much money we've got. It's not enough, we'll have to be less ambitious..." and first of all

precisely defining what it is that we want to do and basing any financial commitments on that.

The way we did it, it seems to me, was not the best way, but that is what happened. It later became necessary to curtail the institutions' munificence because it became clear that the initial plan was not the most suitable one and this was the view of the Government which has to prioritize the country's needs. A very large financial commitment had been made before there was any clearly defined idea about what the Forum was intended to be.

Despite this commitment, the conceptual and organizational confusion continued and this clearly had repercussions in other quarters. This is the only explanation for all the events that took citizens by surprise, such as the near-appointment last summer of Mr Caminal and his decision to decline the post. This was a symptom of internal problems, not a problem of the institutions opposing each other, since the decision to appoint him had actually been the fruit of agreement amongst the institutions. By June or July of last year, the institutions had already made an effort to clarify the situation and, amongst other things, that included an appraisal of how the project should be put into effect. It was decided to appoint Mr Caminal but then he declined the post and that showed there was a problem at the root of the matter, a problem of definition and institutional commitment—a commitment which was sincere, as I have said—but which was still poorly defined and vague.

It is worth mentioning that these events took place on the sidelines of another issue, that of town planning. I know that the Mayor does not agree with me on this issue but, as you can tell from the very friendly tone of my speech, it is in the spirit of constructive cooperation between the institutions that I say I beg to differ with him on this matter. In my opinion, there was no need to link these two initiatives; the two questions could have been dealt with separately. Well, the Mayor thinks differently and I do not attribute any importance to this divergence of opinion. What is clear is that the town planning issue has been well targeted

for a long time, it is working, it is going ahead and it is not an issue we need to worry about. We need not speak of it now.

Well, with respect to what the Forum 2004 was to be, the alarm bells were ringing and the institutions—I am speaking for the Generalitat de Catalunya—could hear them clearly. Financial commitment was always there but we saw that more was required than that. There was a need for greater political involvement and more public image. The prestige of the city, indeed the prestige of Catalonia called for that. All this occurred, I repeat, after having made a very generous financial contribution because, furthermore, an agreement had been made with UNESCO which had to be honoured.

And of course it is always a very attractive proposition to be able to play a leading role in what has the makings of a great world-wide exchange of opinion on the world's problems. An exchange of views involving everybody from all over the world concerning the problems of the World. And, furthermore, this is a necessary thing for the Catalan people. We have always maintained that Catalonia has an absolutely fundamental objective which is to preserve its own identity, something which is often under pressure from all sides and it must do this while at the same time establishing an international position for itself. Catalonia, we Catalans, can not simply lock the doors of the house and wait in a defensive position, stifling ourselves with our own company until we become a relic of history that will eventually disappear.

One of the elements of our identity must precisely be this will to project ourselves in the World. We possess everything necessary to achieve this and I think that the experience we have gained from constantly having to defend our identity in wider political, economic and cultural settings, Spain on the one hand and Europe on the other, and the call of the wider world which many of us have heeded, stand us in good stead to convey this message.

Henceforth, it is incumbent upon us to renew our efforts, especially in the field of financial commitment, but that is no longer enough. The problem is not one of

money but of the definition of ideas, of having an executive team which we are sure will get ahead and accomplish what it sets out to do, of public commitment to a far firmer projection of image.

I wrote a note on 16 September, the Mayor also has a copy, and the Ministry too, saying that the problem was now not one of personalities—Mr Caminal had already declined the post—but of focus. It was urgent to see things clearly, and to appoint the directors in accordance with the global design and aims of the Forum 2004 project, not the other way round.

That has been done and I think, as I said before, that today we are in a position in which we can talk with a certain sense of reassurance, a reassurance that comes from having done, at least in good measure, what needed to be done, and having done it well in my opinion.

One of the first things that had to be decided, and I would like to spend a moment describing this process, was not what the Forum should be but what it should not be, at least that is how we saw it in the Generalitat. What I have to say in this speech is not the opinion of a disinterested person in this respect because there were things which exactly coincided with the opinion and position of the Generalitat de Catalunya, the Government of Catalonia. They were things which, had they not been done the way they were, would have placed the government in a very awkward position. Other questions were of a more personal kind and are more debatable and I will return to them in the second half of my speech.

Now I would like to consider a number of questions which were fundamental for the Government of Catalonia, one of which was to decide what the Forum should not be. It was, and still is, our opinion that it should not be the occasion, in the name of diversity, for a mass congregation of people from Papua, African countries and the Peruvian high plateau, spiced up with a bit of pop and rock

music and a jamboree lasting six months. If that is what the idea had been, it would have been a waste of our time because any large-scale organizer of public festivals would have been able to do it just as well as us.

Yesterday the director general, Mr Oliveras, was asked by a journalist—and if he asked the question it is because the suspicion exists—if the Forum was going to be nothing more than a huge summer festival. Mr Oliveras' reply could not have been more forthright, “No, no”, he replied, “it will be quite different from that. It will *not* be just a huge summer festival”. None of us want that to happen, but, please, do not misunderstand me; that does not mean that it can not also be festive in the sense that, of course, there should be a whole range of what can, in the true sense of the word, be considered spectacles. It is not that we are kill-joys, but rather that this is the icing on the cake, if you like. A sweetener to stimulate our appetite for higher things which are longer lasting and of greater worth than a mere jamboree. Furthermore, these events should give us an indication of what the Forum is fundamentally about. Leaving aside the town planning aspects which are a thing unto themselves, something that will be bequeathed to the city for ever, what should be foremost in our minds is the reward to be gained from dialogue amongst peoples. It is certainly the case that festive spectacles, I mean the most dignified and highest quality ones, help to create the right atmosphere and can lend themselves to this end and that is the reason why we should have them.

It is also perfectly true to say that the exchange of views and opinions amongst the peoples of the world should also find as large a space as possible for the expression of creativity in the arts. That is a generally accepted principle and one we think of when we consider the peoples of the world, and that certainly includes peoples from the Peruvian plateau and African countries. The same is also true for Catalonia and its artists of every hue who are also in a position to benefit from this opportunity.

This Forum, held here, obviously opens doors of opportunity for Catalonia's artists in the fields of art, music, dance, literature and other fields. On the one hand because the event is a stimulus in itself and on the other because Barcelona will become a window on the world. Throughout, we have insisted that the tail should not wag the dog: the spectacle should be a function of what we want the Forum to be, not *vice versa*, and that is the same point I was making before when I said that we should not choose the chief executive officer in order to find out what it is that we want to do, but as a consequence of having decided that. Well, having said all this, I would simply like to state that this element, this component part, this body of spectacle, in the very finest sense of the word, can have a very useful role to play.

It is also the government's point of view that the Forum should not be an anti-globalization or anti-system festival. Neither should it be a festival *for* globalization. The Forum will, of course, contain elements of globalization and anti-globalization because they are phenomena which pervade all aspects of the modern world and, furthermore, they are powerful ones.

There will be those who are detractors of globalization and there will be, above all—and it is very important that they should be present—those who wish to ameliorate the excesses of globalization. I will talk about this later. Nevertheless, the Forum must not be either a globalization festival or an anti-globalization festival. Rather, let us see if we can not find a certain synthesis here between what we could call the spirit of Davos and the spirit of Porto Alegre.

Another thing we do not want is for the Forum to be an ephemeral event which leaves no trace behind it. We want people to be able to say more about it than, "What a lovely time we had, it's a pity there is nothing to show for it". We believe there must be something to show for it: a body of thought, the taking of positions, a deepening of our sensibilities which goes far beyond what we were talking about before which was ephemeral, immediate and spectacle, no matter

how noble. The Forum must have objectives if we really want it to serve its purpose: to serve the cause of peace, to serve the cause of equality, to serve the cause of justice and to serve the cause of sustainability to name just a few of them. It is this dialogue between cultures, this analysis of the great problems and challenges that the Forum is all about; that is what will make it a Forum for the exchange of views and opinions across the cultures of the world, not an ephemeral show but something brilliant and inspired. It will also have to be conceived for television and will have to account for the element of spectacle. It will also have to be conceived for something which we should not allow ourselves to be conditioned by too much, but which is also worthy of consideration, namely, given the high cost involved, the generation of substantial income from media and television and so forth.

So, it is the government's view that we need to stress the need for a great effort to be made to provide the Forum with content. When the Forum is over, that content concerning the great problems confronting the world and the challenges we face must be palpable. The question must be addressed in this spirit. The Forum must have content and that is what I would like to turn my attention to now.

Having discussed what the Forum should not be, I should point out that, from the government's point of view, these were conditions *sine qua non*. If the Forum was going to have been everything that we thought it should not have been, we would not have expressed much interest in it. We are now in agreement that it should not be just a spectacle and that, although it will contain elements of spectacle, it will encompass much more than that. We are in agreement that it should not be an ephemeral event which lasts a couple of days and is then rapidly forgotten, that it should not be a succession of parties and that it should be more than an open-air theatre festival even if there will be space for an element of that.

Now, the question we have been asking ourselves is, “What are the world’s great problems and challenges that dialogue could help to resolve or mitigate?” That is the question we think the Forum should be posing.

Some of the topics I am going to propose might not fall into the purview of the Forum, but at least some of them are unavoidable and others are most definitely on the Forum’s agenda.

One of them is peace and the first question we need to ask ourselves is how the question of peace should not be broached during the Forum. The whole question of peace is something which is obviously very prone to manipulation. Everyone old enough can remember that 20, 30 or 40 years ago there were peace congresses every other week. Now, with the passage of those years we can state quite firmly—and I hope no one is shocked to hear it—that those congresses, or at least a large number of them, were pure manipulation. As a result of them we have been left with Picasso’s dove and that dove has entered our political vocabulary; it is a 20th century symbol that will remain with us always. But those congresses were the instruments of manipulation and that is what we must prevent the Forum from being.

Being non-manipulative is not enough in itself, what is needed is an objective analysis and definition of the various factors leading to existing tension, confrontation and injustice and their underlying causes, some of which are so old that people have forgotten them.

I would claim, for example, that one of the roots of terrorism originating in Arab or Islamic countries is a sense of humiliation, marginalization and defeat stretching back over a very long period of time, a sensation produced by the fact that for seven or eight centuries, they have had to accept defeat, suffering and retreat. We are talking of a whole civilization, a whole culture, a whole religion and a whole number of peoples who feel ill-treated, cornered and humiliated and that is part of the root of the problem.

There are obviously many people who understand nothing of this. Many people did not understand bin Laden when he said, "We do not want them to drive us from Palestine in the same way they drove us from al-Andalus". There were many people who did not understand that. Even the CNN reporter did not know how to translate it. "What did he say? What was that?" And no explanation was offered until later, another reporter, whose knowledge was greater, explained what he had said. So you can see, it all goes back a long way.

In the United States, for example, people find it very difficult to understand this and they find it very difficult to understand why they are not held in high regard. They find it hard to understand why they are not held in high regard in many European countries and they find it very hard to understand that there are Arab countries where they pour their money galore but are nevertheless held in low esteem. They are not liked for a whole series of reasons which we, of course, all know about. Maybe we did not understand what was happening in Bosnia and we kept asking for statistics and analysis about all kinds of things. If we had read the Greek novelist Nikos Kasantsakis we would have understood what was happening in Bosnia more easily. He tells the story of life in a Greek village in Anatolia that had been under Turkish rule for four or five centuries. Reading helps us to understand a great deal more quickly than any number of statistics.

What we must not do is embark on a rash revision of history looking for the guilty and seeking compensation. Past wrongs and historical facts should and must be examined, but without poking people in the eye, otherwise there will never be a way of achieving peace, especially if compensation is being sought. Let us take a case in point. I think everyone knows that I have always been a committed defender of the State of Israel, but it is absolutely clear that it is not possible to achieve peace in the Middle East, with the Bible in your hand saying that 2,000 years ago this and that territory was populated by Jews and they should be allowed to live there again because that is the Divine will. Peace will not be achieved in this manner because this attitude brings with it the policy of

establishing Jewish settlements and colonies which make the principles of the Oslo peace accords, based on peace in exchange for land, impossible.

It should also be mentioned that neither will there be peace as long as the Palestinians continue to claim, basing their claim on UN resolutions which, it is true, were passed but which can not be applied, that the three or four million Palestinians who in theory could return to Israel should be allowed to return. The most dove-like, most peace-loving Israel could never accept that after so many years of war, suffering and persecution they should become once again a minority in their own country. If neither side can make the effort necessary to empathize with the other and understand that the others have justifiable reasons for not ceding beyond a certain point, agreement will not be achieved and there will not be peace.

These are matters worthy of debate in the Forum during discussions on peace which are not manipulated but which go to the heart of the matter. I hope it will be possible to do that here because that would be the kind of service we could offer. Of course we also have to seek ways of making proposals and acting energetically to help eliminate the causes of war, conflict, humiliation and suffering and we have to try and inculcate true solidarity that will be as effective as possible. Above all, the message we have to convey during the Forum is that we want nothing to do with manipulation.

A short time ago there was a conference in Durban, not about peace but about racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance. It was an utter failure. Why? Because people sought to manipulate it from the outset. Mary Robinson who is, and still is the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, despite having said that she wishes to relinquish the post, said that the conference was "an opportunity for humanity". So why was the conference a failure? Because many of the people who attended it went with the intention of seeing what they could get out of it and how they could manipulate it. In other words, from the moment a large number of countries had decided that the conclusion they wanted to see

as a result of the conference was that Zionism should be equated with racism, Israel could no longer attend. Neither could the United States. So the conference was a failure before it had even commenced. There is no more to be said about it.

Then the subject of slavery was raised. This is a very important subject even now because it continues to exist in the Sudan and also in other countries. And that discussion went badly wrong too because more emphasis was placed on achieving declarations of guilt and financial compensation than finding solutions.

How is this financial compensation going to be organized? Who is going to pay it? Who are they going to pay it to? And bear in mind also that, when it comes to apportioning blame, people forget that a large part of the slave trade was of Arab origin. It was Arab traders who transported the slaves to and fro. And it was black people too who went searching for slaves delivering them up at the French forts on the west coast of Africa to be picked up by the ships that would transport them to Cuba and the United States and other places.

If we start delving around like this, we will get nowhere. When people talk of financial compensation, who do they think should be the beneficiaries? The families of those who were carried off? Or the current leaders of the countries of these independent African countries? An African cardinal has spoken out on this matter saying, "No way. Do not do it until the tax havens in the Bahamas and other places have been abolished because all the money ends up there. The money never gets here".

So, if this is the road we are going to travel along, what happened in Durban will happen to us.

If we seek another path we could have a more worthwhile discussion here in 2004.

Another topic for debate during the Forum in 2004 is globalization. It is on everybody's agenda because it is an established fact of life. You already know that I personally think globalization is a positive thing but that it contains serious risks. It is not my intention for anyone to share my opinion. I mean, the conclusions that come out of the Forum debate will be whatever they will be. It would be useless for me to try and disguise my opinions on this matter because they are well-known. I believe that globalization can be a good thing but that it entails serious risks. On the other hand, globalization is probably inevitable and it is in any case a fact of life in today's world and an unavoidable one. The question is, how can we avoid its negative effects?

That is one of the major topics for debate that could be raised during the Forum.

Furthermore, the matter can be discussed dispassionately without prejudice, or anguish because, at the end of the day, globalization is not anyone's particular preserve. Globalization today is the preserve of the Internet, of communications, of the financial markets, of a language that is imposing itself over all others - English, and it should be the preserve of many similar things. Ideologically, globalization depends on the times. Radical internationalism was the preserve of the Left, so even from this point of view nobody should be shocked by it. "Workers of the World, Unite" was the preserve of the Left, the International was the preserve of the Left. Marx himself theorized well on the subject and explained how the markets were evolving and how communications, the train and the telegraph in his day, were developing.

So, at some time or other we have all had to confront something which is not a passing whim but a fact of life. The fact is that the world is getting smaller. And we can all debate this matter together without prejudice because it belongs to nobody in particular.

Some time ago, *Le Monde*, a newspaper that can hardly be accused of being right-wing, organized a forum on *Quelles valeurs pour demain*. The proposition being made by *Le Monde* was that we were passing through a time of great

crisis in values and that the time had come to see what new values could be built and forged for tomorrow's world. I quote, "European socialism must correct the error it committed in neglecting national realities", and later on, "The 20th century European left allowed itself to be fooled by a false dichotomy between nationalism and internationalism". In today's vocabulary we might say between identity and globalization. *Le Monde* concluded, "It is now possible to be fundamentally Scottish, completely British and truly European". Now I could say it is possible to be firstly, Catalan, also Spanish and finally European.

Well, this is the great phenomenon which faces us. It clearly contains risks and they are worthy of analysis. I believe the Forum is a very important place to do that. Furthermore, I believe that Catalonia is a country that has a special sensitivity concerning this question. Our country has always had to confront those aspects of globalization which threatened to engulf us, yet we could not reject them completely without isolating ourselves from the world. If we isolate ourselves from the world, we will perish. We have therefore been navigating these waters of globalization for a long time, for decades, and in a certain sense, maybe for centuries, without being engulfed by the waves while at the same time following what we might call the main currents.

During the Forum we can make an initial contribution. Globalization brings with it the danger of imbalance in the shape of the uniformity of mass culture, the loss of identity, the loss of personality and the loss of the sense of being, both for individuals and for countries themselves. The preservation of identities, maintaining them and strengthening them, in the first place, constitutes a struggle to correct this imbalance and secondly, it embodies a respect for diversity, the same diversity that the Forum wishes to emphasize as a fundamental value. The strengthening of identity is therefore not a caprice but a necessity. It is a counter-measure against the danger of the uniformity of mass culture.

I always quote two authors when discussing this question. One of them is well known to all of you and I hope he will play an important part in the Forum's debates, professor Manuel Castells, who wrote, "The world we are entering can be defined this way: 'the Net and the self'". The Net is the Internet, constant direct contact with the entire world in real time and so many other things such as communications or the English spoken by everyone, what people call surfing the Web. And the 'self' as Castells puts it. That means if you surf the Web and you have no point of reference, no mooring place, if you have no anchor, you will get lost, you will drown. You need a point of reference. This point of reference amongst others but what is crucially important is one's own sense of collective identity, national identity, cultural identity and so forth and that clearly implies a sense of strengthening one's own personal identity.

The other author is Naisbitt, a sociologist who, as early as 1990, wrote *Megatrends 2000*, in which he formulated a kind of prognosis on what he thought the world would be like in the year 2000. He described ten 'megatrends'. In one of them he describes the world becoming a mixture of 'global life-style' and 'cultural nationalism'. In the year 2000, he said, the world would be characterized by the conjunction of these two phenomena. I think this has already started to happen and that by the year 2010 it will be even more pronounced. On the other hand, it is he who can describe the balance between the two.

A consequence of all this is that we will be increasingly obliged to surf the Web, to navigate our way around the whole world, to speak English, to think in terms of world-wide and universal concepts, to be aware of what is happening in Tokyo or San Francisco. That is the way it is going to be and God help us if we are not up to the task. At the same time, however, there must be other aspects which define our own way of life, that make us what we are and these must be strengthened. Many authors, Castells and Naisbitt amongst them, mention language, culture, literature, the popular arts, art in general, in fact, every kind of art and everything that has a bearing on sensibility, the landscape, traditions

and customs and religion which has a very important role to play in terms of having a rock to stand on. And they all say this, "Safeguard your collective and individual ideas".

One of the other questions we should ask ourselves is whether the globalized world eliminates or strengthens the individual. The individual person, not the nation, nor the cultural entity, but the individual person. It has always been said that it would eliminate the individual, but it has become ever clearer that the Internet can help; it gives the individual more autonomy, more capacity for contact, self-projection and initiative. At all events it is clear that everything that goes into the make-up of the individual—social groupings, countries, languages, cultures, religions, feelings, art, etc.—helps you as an individual to have roots, an inheritance, something to relate to, something you receive, something which is given to you and that helps you cultivate your personality.

And so, so far as the defence of identities is concerned, all sorts of identities, it is a positive thing.

It is worth mentioning, of course, that people, being people, need what we call "identities", but they also need other things that could be threatened by globalization if it is done badly. They could be threatened by social and economic inequalities.

For example, many people could be threatened by poverty. It is difficult to talk calmly about poverty, but we must try. I believe that we must talk about it calmly—not in 2004 but starting right now—calmly and with objective data. And I suggest that the objective data we use—there are plenty more—be those of the United Nations Development Program, the UNDP, because the United Nations is assumed to be a source of objective information.

And what does the UNDP say? Two things. Normally you only say one of them, and according to the case in question it is one or the other, according to which way you want to tilt the balance. You can say: the UNDP says that the gap between the very rich and the very poor is widening. And this is true. There are those who say only this. And there are those who say only something else—which is also true: the UNDP says that there has been an overall improvement. That is, if we look for example at life expectancy figures for the last ten or twenty years for underdeveloped countries—poor countries, where people live in poverty (take Africa for a start, or some Asian and South American countries)—we see that life expectancy has lengthened considerably. Infant mortality is lower. Illiteracy is lower. Access to water for houses and villages has improved, et cetera. There are also other countries that have gone further. They have succeeded in breaking away from the group of poor, underdeveloped countries, and have started to catch up with, or have themselves become, countries with a good level of development.

Hence, both things are true. The gap is widening because some rich countries—and we are one of these—are escaping upwards. And at the bottom end of the scale, there has been an important improvement which means that standards of living are much better than they were ten, twenty or thirty years ago. And steadily improving. Both things are true.

If Forum 2004 wanted to attack this question from a different angle, the most dramatic and heart-rending one that could be chosen would be a very thorough, serious study of Africa, because the drama of the world is in Africa. Everywhere else there are signs of hope—albeit a long way, I repeat, from the situation of rich California. True. The richest sector of California is ever further ahead, but in fact in the rest of the world people's standards of living are in general rising. There might be some exceptions. Haiti would be one, or Sierra Leone. And there is an exception that has lasted ten years and now has started to recover again: in all the former Communist countries all the indexes that measure quality of life fell sharply for ten years, starting with life expectancy, which fell

very dramatically, frighteningly and surprisingly. But they too are starting to recover. Things have started to improve there. But not in Africa. Or very little. The Forum should focus its attention on Africa, because that continent is the worst off and it is the one with the most dismal prospects for the future.

We should analyze the causes seriously. Colonialization: a bad thing. Decolonization: also bad. It has been said that when Congo was decolonized there was only one university graduate. I would like to confirm this but I have never been able to do so completely. But if there was really only one university graduate—at all events there must have been very few of them—it is a terrible indictment of the colonial power. It was the same with many other things. It must be said that decolonization was also done very badly, and not always through the fault of the Europeans. So much so that one of the great apostles of decolonization, René Dumont, published a book in 1962 called *L'Afrique Noire est mal partie*, in which he describes the badly-executed processes of colonialization and decolonization.

Whose fault is all this? Partly the Africans' fault, of course, but also in very large measure it is ours. Twenty-five years ago a very serious study was carried out to see which countries had the best prospects for a leap forward in the future. At that time, amongst the best placed were considered to be some countries in French, and also British, west Africa, such as Guinea Conakry, Senegal or Ghana, and it was thought that Madagascar would do very well. At the same time, it was thought that prospects for Korea were bleak. In 1954 Korea had just emerged from a war, it was a country that was wrecked, divided and occupied. Things looked bad, they said, for Korea. Well, we know what has happened since in Korea and we know what has happened since in Guinea Conakry, and in countries that while they have fared rather better than Guinea Conakry have still done badly, such as Ghana or Congo Brazzaville.

We cannot analyze the reasons for this here and now, but it can be done at the Forum. A proper analysis needs to be made; AIDS, corruption—what I was

saying earlier about the aid money that is sent but never arrives—but in any case the problem is not simply one of money, although the money question clearly figures largely.

This could be one of the topics for debate, there could be a workshop to study it. What is the matter with Africa? Do we, does anybody have sympathy with Africa? Not everything is just a question of money, although that evidently enters into it. In the Forum we should talk about this. Just the other day at the European Summit we achieved a 'success' that left us all speechless and ashamed. I was ashamed and I think the Catalan, Spanish and almost all the European governments were ashamed too, except the Scandinavians. We made grandiloquent speeches about the 0.7 per cent, a 0.7 per cent we none of us comply with. During the Summit we decided to stump up 0.33 per cent. If now we are going to contribute 0.33 per cent, with the recommendation this should rise to 0.39, and that is a success, it can only be because at the moment half of them do not even contribute that.

One way or another money is important and we must come up with it. Then there's the Tobin tax, proposed by some. But there is a problem with the Tobin tax from the start: Tobin himself said it was no good. You probably already know how when he was told how the anti-globalization lobby applauded it he retorted, "Yes, but the loudest applause is coming from the wrong side ... these people don't understand anything. It's no good". Tobin himself said it.

What is certainly true is that Europe can and should spend much more money than has been the case until now in Africa, and in other places. I know that if this were proposed one day it would be badly received in Brussels. If you were to propose the introduction of a tax—probably a very small tax, but a general one—there would be a great deal of opposition to it. But Europe has the economic capacity to consider this and the technical means to administer it, without European standards of living suffering as a result. The European Union has resources to devote to Africa, or to wherever. They could also be devoted

to South America. Europe has the resources to do it. We and the north Americans have the money to do it. So we could do it without any problem at all.

I will go so far as to say that we ought to pay a special tax, a small tax, but a general one, as general as possible. This is perfectly possible. Not that this would solve the whole problem because the problem is not one simply of money. There are many other things. The editor of *Le Monde Diplomatique* once said that since Africa had started out so badly it needed some sort of protectorate. I would not go so far as to say this, but it does show how people who were in favour of decolonization are shocked to see the problems there are. This is one of the things that ought to be pricking our conscience and the worst of it is that we are pretty unconcerned about it.

Why are we so unconcerned? Another question for the Forum to consider. It is because we are full of contradictions. There are the indignant and the innocent. There are cynics and moralists. And the moralists are sometimes hypocrites. Some examples of contradictions: Sustainability. We are in no position to demand that Third World countries apply the same standards of sustainability as we would like to apply in Europe, because it would be the ruin of them. When all those incidents were taking place in Seattle one of the issues involved American trades unions who were calling for a certain type of labour policy. As it happened I was in New Delhi at the time following events in the papers and speaking at a large gathering of politicians. Who spoke against what the American unions were saying? The Indian Communist parties, amongst others. There are two Communist parties in India, one of Soviet and the other of Maoist inspiration. Both have evolved but continue to exist. They said, "What are these guys saying? Do they take us to be so stupid as to think they are doing this for our benefit? They are doing it for the benefit of textile workers in the United States".

I don't know if that is why they were doing it, but it is clear that the reform of India's economy and society must be done progressively, because if they are obliged to adopt certain standards now, they are likely all to end up closing down, and then we shall have to go back to the United States to buy our textiles. So, these are some of the contradictions which have arisen and they have sprung from abroad.

Some contradictions are even more striking. For example, the Scandinavians, who to my mind are the best model we have for Europe, combine economic progress with the welfare state, and furthermore donate more than 0.7 per cent in aid. But they are opposed, for example, to a European Mediterranean policy. They are opposed, and I would like to say one thing to them: for all that you contribute more than 0.7 per cent, it will never produce the same benefit as the creation of plenty of jobs in Third World countries, many companies paying out wages and salaries every week and every month. That is what brings about progress. The 0.7 per cent is all very well, but it is largely charity. The important thing is the creation of employment. The Scandinavian countries—all so very strict, so moral, ready to give lessons to everyone (and it is true that sometimes they *are* in a position to do so, since they do many things better than anyone else)—the Scandinavian countries say no. Their excuse is something which it must be said is true: the ineffectuality of the Arab countries. I have been in favour of Morocco all my life, and I have always argued we should be friends with Morocco and help them. I do not fully agree with certain aspects of present Spanish government policy towards Morocco; yet even I have to admit that the Moroccans are not doing all they ought to be doing. This suits the Scandinavians down to the ground, since it provides them with an excuse. Such are the contradictions.

And here is another contradiction, this time falling into the category of amusing contradictions, though it still helps us to analyze how problems can be resolved. Just yesterday there was an item on the television about ethical trade. You have to buy a certain kind of coffee... Good. You have to buy certain bananas...

Good. I say this with all sympathy—please do not think I am criticizing at all. But what would really help these people would be for us to open our European markets to their agricultural produce.

Arzú, the president of Guatemala, once said to me, “Listen, president Pujol, I want to thank you for everything you are doing...”—we had said we would build a hospital and some schools—“...we’re very grateful to you, but do you really want to help us? Use whatever influence you have in Spanish policy and European policy to persuade them to let us export our agricultural produce to Europe. If we could do that we’d soon get ahead”.

And now, please allow me a little immodesty. One of the few politicians capable of saying this in Spain has been me. That is why I am speaking rather bluntly. I am one of the few, the very few, who has been able to do it. Once Felipe Gonzalez asked me to give a speech in Madrid—which I did—to defend the policy of the Socialist government of the day toward Morocco, because they had just signed an agreement allowing a few more tomatoes in from Morocco, and half of Spain was up in arms on account of those tomatoes.

But what do we get out of offering a little charity if we then want them to eat all their tomatoes, all their strawberries, all their bananas? None of this, may I repeat, detracts from the ethical merit, or even the economic or political merit of what is known as ethical trade. What I mean to say is that the solution really has to lie on this other side.

Who dares to say—although I myself have indeed said it, and pardon me if I am once again being immodest—that we have to invest in Morocco? Because tomorrow someone organizes a demonstration against you? Sometimes the same ones who demonstrated a couple of weeks before—and I’m talking here about a real, specific case—to demand the 0.7 per cent. Demonstration in favour of 0.7 per cent today, and a demonstration against investment in Morocco a couple of weeks later. What a contradiction! In good faith, I suppose, but nonetheless a striking contradiction because one of the most coherent and

honest responses to all these problems, and particularly to the problem I want to speak about next, which is immigration, is precisely investment in these countries.

I do not think I need say much about immigration, as so much has already been said about this combination of underdevelopment, demographic explosion, globalization, etc. Of course, thanks to television, people in Morocco or on the edge of the desert or in Turkey and so on, can see how the other half live, that is, how we live, and, of course, why should they stay there, in these days of globalization, television, transport, the Schengen agreement? At a time like this, with the Barcelona summit taking place and stricter frontier controls in force, we can see how many people are going through every day. In just a few days 4,000 people have been detained who otherwise would have got through. That is globalization: the mafias are globalized too, it is a ubiquitous phenomenon.

These are ubiquitous problems. The other day, during the lunch at the Barcelona summit presided by the King and Queen, I sat at a table with, amongst other, Tony Blair, and I asked him, "How is it possible that so many illegal immigrants from the Sangatte camp, just two kilometres away, can pass through a tunnel, which at the end of the day is just a hole? That should be easy enough to guard? Every day a horde of people go through to the UK, on foot, by train, and in trucks too". On my other side I had the Irish prime minister and he said that sometimes they go to Ireland too, where three weeks ago something dreadful happened. Thirteen Turks had hidden in a truck they thought was going to England, but which in fact was headed for Ireland, and since it takes much longer to get there, eight of them were dead when it arrived. This is the world's drama and I was reminded of it by the Irish prime minister.

Prompted by my question Wim Kok, the Dutch prime minister, lamented what had happened in the Dutch municipal elections two weeks earlier, when 35 per cent of the people of Rotterdam had voted for a xenophobe party. The Dutch,

who feel they do things very well—and in general they do—had always thought that what happened at Anvers, where there was a 36 per cent xenophobe vote, would never happen in Holland. And it did not happen, since rather than 36 per cent it was only 35 per cent, but the difference is tiny as you see.

This, then, is a question not to be taken lightly and I do not want to try to deal with it briefly now, but I do want to say one thing. You already know my point of view, and that is that the culture of each country is a central factor and it must be maintained. Ways have to be found to prevent compartmentalization, so great efforts need to be made to encourage integration. Such efforts may or may not be successful; but look how they have succeeded in Catalonia, with all the immigration we have had over the last forty years! How they have succeeded! We do not know if they will succeed this time round because we are now dealing with a wave of immigration with very special characteristics. But we must try. We must try because we need to keep our identity and our cohesiveness. And we must try so that newcomers can live in a cohesive, welcoming society. For this reason we must make our society as osmotic as possible, and make it possible for people who come from abroad to move upwards within it. Their rights to health care, housing, jobs, et cetera must be respected. But for our part we must maintain the will to preserve our identity and we must tell newcomers they must make an effort too, so that between us all our identity can be maintained and newcomers can become part of it as soon as they are able. We must also make efforts to avoid serious problems, problems of the reactions of our own people, who might have the sensation—and this explains what happened in Rotterdam—that newcomers are receiving favourable treatment, to the detriment of natives.

This is so in Barcelona and throughout the Barcelona conurbation, as well as in many other places in Catalonia. Our attitude to this must of course be open and humane, but not angelic, because an angelic attitude will lead only to an absolute, total and radical failure.

I cannot go into this any further today.

I would like to end with just two more points. First, I think the Forum would do well to devote particular attention to the matter of religions. Some of you might say we should not talk much about Christianity. But let me tell you this: if we do not talk about Christianity we shall have to talk about Islam, because the Muslims will want to talk about it. And we will have to talk about Greek and Russian Orthodoxy, et cetera, because people continue to believe in them to an extent that may seem to us rather over-conservative. And we will have to talk about Buddhism and even, if we really want to take account of what is happening in the world, about the United States version of Christianity, which is a very important religious phenomenon. Very important and not a minority religion. And in passing, perhaps we would have to talk about Judaism. One way or another we shall certainly have to talk about these other faiths.

I recently read a study by a sociologist who says there is a gap between the American and the European mentalities arising precisely from their differing attitudes to religion. American society is religiously observant, while European society is not, according to this sociologist. Europe is characterized as a “post-Christian continent”, while America is not. America is “moralist”, Europe is “relativist”. Fine. This may or may not be true, but it must be borne in mind.

This is a question that will also arise in connection with the convention on the European Constitution, when there will once again be a discussion about whether the European Constitution should recognize that Europe is a continent with Christian roots, which, of course, it evidently is. However, because of French opposition this assertion did not form part of the European Bill of Rights. We will not go into this now, but the first thing we will have to do at the Forum is to make it clear that the link some people want to make between religion and conflict—which unfortunately does exist at times, as exemplified by events we all know about—does not lie at the root of the religious faiths, nor in the roots of

Christianity. May I read just one verse from the Koran? “If you kill an innocent who has never done any harmful thing in this world, it is as though you had killed the whole of humanity, and if you save a single life it is as though you had saved the whole of humanity.” That is their fundamental attitude. Thereafter, people are able to corrupt everything. That is another question.

I will not go further into this now. But among those points of reference, those anchors, those hooks, as Manuel Castells calls them, be in no doubt that religion is one. It may be more or less structured, such as Christianity or Islam, or it might be a religion invented by a small group to give them the confidence that there is something that transcends their own lives.

We must go to the Forum in an open and uplifted spirit. By uplifted, I mean with confidence and without remorse. We Catalans, and we Europeans, have values too, but it seems that at times we are a little ashamed of them. We have a system of values. And we have a model for our society. Is this model better or worse than others? It depends on the scale of values you apply. European Commissioner Patten said, “Look, our European system has produced a Hitler and a Stalin”. There are other systems of values which have not produced such figures, or at least they have not done so for many centuries. At least they are not remembered. But our society did so only yesterday. So it is a system of values that has its faults.

It is not that we ought to consider this system better than any other. For example, people who put a high value on transcendence will not think highly of our system of values, or European society, or the European social and political system, which is Christian in origin. They would value, for example, Buddhism or Islam more highly. We have a fairly materialist society, a society lacking in a sense of transcendence, a society which is quite lacking in solidarity, which is individualist, arrogant; arrogant because we were colonizers till just recently, and because we have a considerable advantage over many others, at least as

far as standard of living and technology are concerned. But the Americans are ahead of us in technology. So I invite you to maintain a degree of modesty.

I have been saying this quite a lot recently and I think it needs to be repeated so that people will be aware of it. Be aware, that is, of Hitler, Stalin, arrogance, materialism, et cetera. But in spite of all that, of all the systems in the world, the one that best combines the capacity to create wealth, the ability to distribute wealth, the ability to protect people through the welfare state, and respect for people in general and for women, the one that is most concerned about the environment, the one that most respects freedoms and so many other things, is ours.

One more thing. Many people who do not belong to our system want to join it partially. I say partially, because they do not want—quite rightly—to renounce certain values they have that we do not.

So, we should go to the Forum in the spirit of respect for these people because others have values we do not have and we are guilty of a series of sins of which others perhaps are not guilty, such as colonialism, Hitler, Stalin or the lack of solidarity. We certainly have positive aspects. And so we must be as open as you like, as modest as you like but without remorse, combining this modesty with a degree of pride: no-one has a system like ours.

I would like to say one more thing about the question of religion. There is no other religion in the world that has done two decisive things. Not one. Judaism has not completely done them, and neither has Islam. Nor indeed has Orthodox Christianity. These two things are, firstly, to separate theology from philosophy, that is, religious thought from scientific thought. This is very important. And secondly, to separate temporal power from spiritual power. This is the basis of progress, technical progress and political progress, that is, the basis of freedom.

I am saying all this, not to give lessons to anyone, since we have been colonialists, we have had Hitler and Stalin. But let us not forget our achievements either.

To conclude, I would just like to say that perhaps the Forum will be something else. But what it can not be is what I started by saying it ought not to be. Discussions will incline one way or another, and I have just put on the table a few issues which seem to me to be essential, amongst other reasons because they are central to the aims of the Forum.

I think the things I have been talking about today are amongst the greatest concerns of humanity, and at all events what I wanted to do here today was to publicly declare the commitment of the Government of Catalonia to Forum 2004.