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INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PEACE

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR: PARTICIPATION, DEVELOPMENT, PEACE

ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

Note verbale dated 22 August 1985 from the Permanent Mission of
Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to transmit herewith the text of the statement made by His Majesty King Hassan II and the address delivered by His Holiness Pope John Paul II at the people's rally presided over by the Sovereign and His Holiness the Pope at Casablanca on 19 August 1985, with the request that they be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under items 27, 89 and 101 of the provisional agenda.

* A/40/150.

ANNEX I

Translation of the statement made by His Majesty King Hassan II at
the people's rally presided over by the Sovereign and His Holiness
the Pope at Casablanca on 19 August 1985

We have among us, on our soil, at our sides, our eminent friend, His Holiness Pope John Paul II.

It is hard to believe that this meeting on Moroccan soil has become a reality so soon, since it was not so long ago that we made a visit to Vatican City.

His Holiness has come to Casablanca because it was his wish - as it was ours - his wishes and ours focusing on the same order, converging on the same objective, namely to weave together and consolidate the threads of love, friendship and concord among nations and religions.

During my memorable visit to the Vatican, when I met with His Holiness, I invited him to come to Morocco on a visit. He replied gently, with a smile: "But what would I do if I came to Morocco? I could not very well lead the public prayer, since you are a pure Islamic nation; what then could be the purpose of such a journey?"

To this I replied: "But Your Holiness's responsibilities are not religious alone; you have responsibilities with respect to education and morals as well."

"I am convinced", I added, "that the vast majority of Moroccans, especially Morocco's young people, would welcome any words which Your Holiness might have to say to them concerning the moral conduct of individuals, communities, peoples and religions."

What was at first only a dream has, thanks to God and, secondarily, as a result of our common desire that it should become a reality, come to pass. Our hope for this meeting has been realized. Thus, a truth shines for all the world to see: that when good will and good faith are joined together in the desire for understanding and peace, there is nothing which can separate peoples and revealed religions.

There is no need for me to introduce His Holiness Pope John Paul II to you, since he is very well known to you all.

I ask God to grant our great friend health, tranquillity and success. On your behalf and in my own name, I welcome him and express my warm gratitude and yours for his visit to this Islamic land, for having kindly agreed, on our invitation, to come to this fraternal country.

ANNEX II

Full text of the address delivered by the Supreme Pontiff at the
people's rally presided over by His Majesty King Hassan II and
His Holiness the Pope at Casablanca on 19 August 1985

(Speaking in Arabic): My dear young people, I greet you most warmly and, through you, the entire population of this noble country.

(Continuing in French): I give thanks to God and glorify Him who has enabled me to be with you today. His Majesty the King honoured me with a visit to Rome a few years ago, and he was kind enough to invite me to visit your country and to meet with you.

I gladly accepted his invitation to come to speak to you in this Youth Year.

I often meet with young people, usually young Catholics. This is the first time that I am meeting with young Muslims. We Christians and Muslims have many things in common, both as believers and as human beings. We live in the same world, a world that is marked by numerous signs of hope, but also by many signs of anguish. For us, Abraham is the same model of faith in God, of submission to His will and of confidence in His goodness. We believe in the same God, the one God, the living God.

It is therefore towards God that my thoughts turn and to whom I lift up my heart. It is of God Himself that I wish above all to speak to you, since it is in Him that we believe, you Muslims and we Catholics, and I wish to speak to you also of the human values which have their foundation in God, the values which concern our development as persons, but also the development of our families and our societies, and the development of the international community.

Is not the mystery of God the highest reality on which the very meaning which man gives to his life depends? And is this not the first problem which a young person faces when he reflects on the mystery of his own existence and on the values which he intends to choose to build his developing personality?

In the Catholic Church, my office is that of successor of Peter, the apostle whom Jesus chose to confirm his brothers in the faith. Following in the unbroken line of popes down the ages, today I am Bishop of Rome, called to serve among his brothers in the world as a witness to the Christian faith, responsible for the unity of all the Church's members.

It is thus as a believer that I have come to be among you today. My purpose is simply to testify here to what I believe in, to my hopes for the happiness of my fellow man, to what, based on my experience, I consider useful for everyone.

To begin I invoke the Most High, God the Almighty, who is our Creator. He is the origin of all life, as He is the source of all that is good, all that is beautiful, all that is holy.

He brought light out of darkness. He has made the entire universe unfold according to a marvellous plan.

He made us, us men, and we are His. His holy law guides our lives. It is God's light that serves as the beacon of our destiny and enlightens our conscience. He makes us capable of loving and of transmitting life. He asks all men to respect every human creature and to love every man as a friend, as a companion, as a brother. He invites us to come to the aid of our fellow man when he is injured, when he is abandoned, when he is hungry and thirsty, in short, whenever he no longer knows how to find his way on the path of life.

Yes, God asks us to listen to His voice. What He expects of us is obedience to His holy will in the free acceptance of the intelligence and the heart.

That is why we are answerable to Him. It is He, God, who is our judge, He alone who is truly just. But we know that His mercy is inseparable from His justice. When man returns to Him repentant and contrite after having fallen into sin and the works of death, it is then that God reveals Himself as one who pardons and grants mercy.

To Him therefore go our love and our adoration. For His blessings and for His mercy, we give Him thanks at all times and everywhere.

This encounter is in keeping with the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, with the declaration on the Church's dialogue with non-Christian religions.

In a world which yearns for unity and peace and yet is racked by a thousand tensions and conflicts, must not believers foster friendship and unity among the men and peoples who form a single community on earth?

The Catholic Church for its part undertook, 20 years ago at the Second Vatican Council, through its bishops, that is, its religious leaders, to strive for co-operation among believers. It issued a document on dialogue between religions ("Nostra Aetate"). It affirms that all people, especially active believers, must respect one another, be above discrimination of any kind; live together and promote universal brotherhood. The Church gives special attention to Muslim believers, in view of their belief in one God, their feeling for prayer and their regard for life. It hopes "to promote together, for all people, social justice, moral values, peace and freedom".

The dialogue between Christians and Muslims is more necessary now than ever before. It is necessitated by our faithfulness to God and presupposes that we acknowledge God by our faith and bear witness to Him by word and deed in a world that is becoming increasingly secularized and sometimes even atheistic.

The young can build a better future if they put their faith in God first and commit themselves to building this new world according to God's plan, with wisdom and trust.

Today we must bear witness to the spiritual values which the world needs. First of all to our faith in God. God is the source of all joy. We must therefore bear witness to our worship of God, our adoration, our prayers, our praise and our supplications. Man cannot live without prayer any more than he can live without breathing. We must bear witness to our humble efforts to ascertain His will. It is He who must inspire a more just and more united commitment on our part. The ways of God are not always our ways. Considering that our actions are always incomplete, and the innermost intentions of our hearts imperfect, God can never be used for our own ends because He is above everything.

This demonstration of faith, which is vital to us and which cannot tolerate disloyalty to God or indifference to the truth, is made with respect for other religious traditions, because all people expect to be respected for what they really are, and for what they believe in their hearts. We wish that all may arrive at the plenitude of divine truth, but can achieve that only by the free exercise of one's beliefs, free from external constraints which are unworthy of the free tribute of reason and of the heart which characterizes the dignity of man. That is the true meaning of religious freedom, which respects both God and man. It is from such worshippers that God expects sincere worship, worshippers in spirit and in truth.

It is our conviction that we cannot invoke God, the father of all men, if we refuse to behave fraternally towards some of these men created in God's image.

We must therefore respect, love and aid every human being because he or she is a creature of God and, in a certain sense, His image and His representative, because that is the way that leads to God and because one cannot develop fully without knowing God, accepting Him with all one's heart and obeying Him even as we follow the path to perfection.

This obedience to God and this love for mankind must therefore lead us to respect human rights, those rights which are the expression of God's will and the requirement of human nature, as created by God.

Respect and dialogue therefore require reciprocity in all fields, particularly as regards fundamental freedoms, and particularly religious freedom. They promote peace and understanding among peoples. They help to solve all the problems of men and women today, and especially those of youth.

Young people share responsibility and must work together for a more human world.

Normally, young people look towards the future, they aspire to a more just and more human world. God has made them so, precisely in order that they may help to transform the world according to His plan of life. But to them, too, the situation often seems dark.

In this world, there are boundaries, there are divisions between peoples and misunderstandings between generations; there is also racism, there are wars and injustices, just as there is hunger, waste and unemployment. These are the tragic evils which affect all of us, and particularly young people the world over.

Some might be discouraged, others might be resigned, others might wish to bring about change by violence or by extreme solutions. Wisdom teaches us that self-discipline and love are the only instruments for achieving the desired renewal.

God does not want people to remain passive. He has given them the earth so that they may master it, cultivate it and make it bear fruit together.

You are responsible for the world of tomorrow. By assuming your responsibilities fully and courageously you will be able to overcome existing difficulties. It is therefore incumbent upon you to take initiatives and not to expect everything from your elders and your authorities. It is for you to build the world, and not merely dream about it.

By working together you can be effective. Work, of course, means service to others. It creates bonds of solidarity. The experience of working together helps one to purify oneself and to discover the merits of others. This will give rise, gradually to a climate of trust that will enable each one to grow, to develop and to "be something more". Do not fail, dear young people, to co-operate with adults, and especially with your parents and your teachers, and with the leaders of society and the State. Young people must not be isolated from others. Young people need adults, just as adults need the young.

In this joint work, human beings, whether men or women, must never be sacrificed. Each person is unique in the eyes of God, and irreplaceable in this work of development. Every one must be recognized for what he is and, consequently, respected as such. No one must use his fellow man, no one must exploit his equal, no one must despise his brother.

Only thus can we have a more human world, more just and more brotherly, in which each person can find his place in dignity and freedom. This twentieth century world is in your hands. It is you who will shape the centuries to come.

This future world will depend on the youth of all countries of the world. Our world is divided, and even torn asunder; it is experiencing many conflicts and grave injustices. There is no true North-South solidarity; there is not enough mutual aid among the nations of the South. There are cultures and races in the world that are not respected.

Why is all of this so? It is because human beings do not accept their differences: they do not know enough about each other. They reject those who are not of the same civilization. They refuse to help one another. They are unable to rid themselves of selfishness and complacency.

Yet God created all men equal in dignity, but different in gifts and talents. Mankind is a whole in which each group has its own role to play. The values of different peoples and different cultures must be recognized. The world is like a living organism; each one has something to receive from others and something to give to others.

I am happy to be meeting you here, in Morocco. Morocco has a tradition of openness; your scholars have travelled and you have welcomed scholars from other countries. Morocco has been a meeting-place of civilizations: it has permitted exchanges with the East, Spain and Africa. Morocco has a tradition of tolerance: in this Muslim country, there have always been Jews and almost always Christians; they have lived in respect, in a positive manner. You have been and will remain a hospitable country. You, young Moroccans are therefore ready to become citizens of tomorrow's world, of this brotherly world to which you aspire together with the young people of the whole world.

All of you young people, I am sure, are capable of this dialogue. You do not wish to be conditioned by prejudices. You are prepared to build a civilization based on love. You can work to break down the barriers resulting partly from pride and, more often, from weakness and from fear of men. You wish to love others regardless of national frontiers, race or religion.

To achieve this end, you need justice and peace. "Peace and youth go together", as I stated in my message for World Peace Day this year. You want neither war nor violence. You know the price they exact from innocent people. Nor do you want an escalation of armaments. That does not mean that you want peace at any price. Peace goes hand in hand with justice. You do not want anyone to be oppressed. You want peace with justice.

First of all people must have sustenance. God gave the earth to the entire human race so that peoples could derive their livelihood from it in solidarity, and so that each people might have the means of feeding itself, caring for itself and living in peace.

However, important as economic problems may be, man does not live by bread alone; he needs an intellectual and spiritual life, and it is there that you will find the soul of this new world to which you aspire. Man needs to develop his mind and his conscience.

The Arabs of the Mashreq and the Maghreb, and the Muslims in general, have a long tradition of study and scholarship, in literature, science and philosophy. You are heirs to that tradition, you must study in order to come to know this world that God has given you, to understand it, to discover its meaning, with love and respect for the truth, and to come to know the peoples and human beings created and loved by God, in order to prepare yourselves to serve them better.

And what is far more important, the search for truth will lead you, beyond intellectual values, to the spiritual dimension of the inner life.

Man is a spiritual being. We believers know that we do not live in a closed world. We believe in God. We are worshippers of God. We are seekers after God.

The Catholic Church views with respect and recognizes the quality of your religious approach and the richness of your spiritual tradition.

We Christians, too, are proud of our religious tradition.

I believe that we, Christian and Muslims, must joyfully acknowledge the religious values that we have in common and give thanks for them to God. We both believe in one God, the only God, who is ever just and all-merciful. We believe in the importance of prayer, fasting and charity of penitance and forgiveness. We believe that God will be a merciful judge to us at the end of time, and we hope that after the resurrection He will be satisfied with us, and we will be satisfied with Him.

Loyalty also requires that we recognize and respect our differences. The most fundamental is obviously the regard which we have for the person and works of Jesus of Nazareth. You know that for us Christians, this Jesus led us to require an intimate knowledge of the mystery of God and to share His gifts in a filial communion, so that we recognize Him and proclaim Him Lord and Saviour.

Those are the important differences, which we can accept with humility and respect, in mutual tolerance. That is a mystery on which God will one day enlighten us, I am sure.

We Christians and Muslims have generally misunderstood each other, and sometimes, in the past, we have opposed each other and even exhausted each other in polemics and wars.

I believe that God invites us, today, to change our old habits. We must respect each other and stimulate each other in good works, following God's ways.

I hope, dear young people, that you will be able to help to build a world in which God has first place in order to aid and save mankind. In pursuing that goal, you may be sure of the esteem and co-operation of your Catholic brothers and sisters, whom I represent here this evening.

I should now like to thank His Majesty the King for inviting me, and also to thank you, dear young people of Morocco, for coming here and listening trustingly to my message.

But even more, I wish to thank God who has made this meeting possible. We are all watched over by Him. He is the first witness of our meeting today. It is He who places in our hearts the feelings of mercy and understanding, of forgiveness and reconciliation, of service and co-operation. Should we not, as believers, reproduce in our lives and in our communities the qualities reflected in the good names which our religious traditions have granted to Him? May we therefore be available to Him and submit to His will and to the appeals which He addresses to us? Thus will our lives acquire a new dynamism.

I should like to conclude by invoking Him personally in your presence:

"O God, Thou art our Creator,

Thou art good and Thy mercy knows no bounds.

Let all creatures praise Thee.

O God, Thou hast given unto us human being an internal law by which we must live.

To do Thy will is to accomplish our task.

To follow Thy ways is to know peace of the soul.

To Thee we offer our obedience.

Guide us in all our undertakings on earth.

Deliver from evil inclinations which turn our hearts away from Thy will.

Prevent us from invoking Thy name in order to justify human unruliness.

O God, Thou art One. Receive our adoration.

Do not let us stray from Thee.

O God, judge of all men,

Help us to be among Thy chosen on the last day.

O God, Maker of justice and of peace,

Grant us true joy and real love,

And lasting brotherhood among peoples.

Fill us with Thy blessings forever."
