

Courtesy translation

Mr President,

The more we know about the nature of development, the more we understand its links with the concept of security. Armed violence, armed conflict and poverty have an undeniable influence in countries with low development rates. Funds that should have been allocated to Education, Health and the improvement of living conditions in affected areas are diverted towards armed violence, in its different forms.

Simultaneous and steady attention to both concepts –security and development- is required in order to achieve tangible results. Should we fail on acting in both fields at the same time, real progress in terms of the Millennium Goals would become hardly imaginable.

The Government of Spain is fully aware of the key importance of this Agenda, as well as of the commitments it entails for the International Community as a whole. This was the reason why our country created, together with UNDP, the Millennium Objectives Trust Fund, with an initial contribution of 528 million Euros.

Driven by those very principles and ideals, my country participated from the beginning in the Geneva Declaration process. The Spanish Government subscribed to this declaration in March 2007, and it immediately became part of a core group of states parties, the mission of which is promoting this diplomatic initiative and turning initial endeavours into concrete actions.

As a committed and active member of the Geneva Declaration, Spain has organised and co-sponsored a number of panels, workshops and other events, most of them held Latin American countries.

With this occasion, we would like to express how satisfied we are with the accomplishments of the Geneva Declaration over the last seven years. We would also like to take this opportunity to recognize the work made by the secretariat, led by our good friend Luigi de Martino, as well as the leadership and generosity of the Swiss Federation, as a host state. The two past review conferences (held in 2008 and 2011) have shown that this initiative has turned into a landmark reference. Nevertheless, it is also evident that there is still much work to do.

In view of the Agenda post 2015, we believe that the cycle of regional conferences we are holding is another step in the good direction. A regional approach to the complex problematic of armed violence and development is, in our view, both adequate and pertinent. Admittedly, violence has a different impact in each region, but none of them can claim to be immune from it.

The Regional Conference for the American Continent has recently taken place in the premises of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation in La Antigua (Guatemala) under the motto “putting an end to armed violence for peace and development”. The overall impression has been that of a fruitful and open dialogue, enriched by presence of some 150 representatives of different countries of the region.

Mr President,

This Declaration, like many similar initiatives, is not immune to the effects of the prolonged financial crisis we are in. Its budget has experienced dramatic cuts due to the

diminution of voluntary contributions. In this context, we want to appeal to all member states, but in particular to those that have been less affected by the crisis. The GD Secretariat always reminds that in kind contributions are as valuable as financial ones. The support and development of this initiative could only be achieved as the result of a collective effort.

We hope that this Regional Conference for Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia will follow the path of the one recently held in Guatemala. It is also our wish that the forthcoming review conferences be held with success. This will allow us to face the challenges ahead –notably those waiting for us in 2015- with the invaluable input of our joint reflection, in the framework of the Geneva Declaration.

Be assured, Mr President, of this delegation's full support on these endeavours.