

Now is the time for cooperative leadership, not nationalist rhetoric, Spain's President says at UN

The world is facing enormous global challenges, Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón, President of Spain, told the United Nations General Assembly on Thursday, underscoring that these times “do not need nationalist or non-inclusive rhetoric.”

“Now is the time to cultivate a new cooperative leadership, based not only a willingness to listen to others, but also on a readiness to understand their motivations,” he said, observing that “no single person has a monopoly on the truth.”

We need leadership that can build consensus and forge agreements; that can find solutions and make the most of synergies,” he added.

He stated that the UN’s real strength lies in “everything it can do to shape the future,” saying “we are the last generation that will have the chance to halt the consequences of climate change” and the first to eradicate global poverty.

“It is not a question of seeing obstacles,” he continued, but of identifying opportunities” for making sustainable development.

He urged the global leaders to look beyond the dictates of today’s fast-moving times and instead focus on the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development.

“Without dignity, without equality between women and men, without respect for human rights, there will be no peace and no development,” he stated.

Saying that humankind must not tolerate gender discrimination, Mr. Sánchez told the Assembly that he leads by example, pointing out that his cabinet of Ministers is 60 per cent women.

He argued that companies, education and society as a whole are “the battleground,” asserting that glass ceilings remain in leaderships “simply due to inertia.”

“We must develop a truly global roadmap to eradicate all forms of discrimination still suffered by women,” he stressed, pledging Spain’s support in promoting the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, because “it is crucial that women participate as peace brokers in all phases of conflict.”

Turning to the refugee and migration crisis, he stated: “There are no shortcuts or quick fixes.”

“Humanity cannot simply accept as inevitable the fact that 68 million people have been forcibly displaced around the world, of whom more than 25 million are refugees, and over three million are asylum seekers.”

Calling the [Global Compact on Refugees](#) “a great leap forward,” he flagged that 85 per cent of the world’s refugees and asylum seekers are in developing countries.

Noting that Spain was one of the hardest hit Western European countries during the economic crisis, he took pride in saying that “the vast majority of Spanish society has never turned its back on the tragedy resulting from migration.”

“These States need our empathy and commitment,” underscored President Sánchez, adding “we all have the obligation to help.”

He believes that safe, orderly and regular migration can yield positive impacts, as opposed to fortress countries, with exclusionary and xenophobic narratives.

“For the multilateral system to be effective, we must renovate and reinforce,” he asserted. “In so doing we will be defending everything that we believe in.”

[Full statement available here.](#)