

Check against delivery



**Speech of Mr Thorbjørn Jagland
Secretary General of the Council of Europe
2010 North-South Prize ceremony
(Lisbon, 29 March 2011)**

Mr President of the Republic,
Mr President of the Assembly of the Republic,
Esteemed winners of the 2010 Council of Europe North-South Prize,
Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

In Lisbon I always like to go to the impressive Castle of São Jorge. There, overlooking this beautiful city and the Atlantic Ocean, one is automatically drawn to the sea and to explore the world, as so many Portuguese have been during times.

The Portuguese authorities' continued strong support of the North-South Centre here in Lisbon is very much in line with this spirit; opening the eyes to the world and bringing people together. Let me also thank the Portuguese Parliament for hosting this event, and as always making it so memorable to us all.

Albert Einstein once said that "The world is not dangerous because of those who do harm but because of those who look at it without doing anything".

Through history human suffering has repeated itself because people stood by, not acting. But history has also shown great progress because brave people acted to protect and advance humanity.

The lesson we learned from World War II was that if human dignity does not apply to everyone, it applies to no one.

The Council of Europe was established as a consequence of this horrible war, and the understanding that universal human rights and values are fundamental to safeguard humanity.

And it was on the same notion that the North-South Centre was established 21 years ago. To advance the understanding between Europe and other regions of the universality of human rights.

Today I believe it is clear to all of us, that although there might be many regions, we are one world. And as there might be many cultures, we only have one Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and as we have become billions of people, there can only be one set of human rights – applicable to every one of us.

One world – our world. This is an excellent summary of the ideals which are behind the Council of Europe North-South Prize.

This years two winners, like all prize winners since 1995, have been working their whole life in favour of global interdependence and solidarity, universal human rights and the promotion of intercultural dialogue and intercontinental co-operation.

With Louise Arbour, we recognise the vital importance of the international rule of law, based on universal human rights, impartial justice and political accountability.

As Prosecutor of the International Tribunals set up for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda, she represented the determination of the international community to make sure that war crimes and crimes against humanity would not remain unpunished.

As United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, she has upheld the fundamental principles of universality and indivisibility of human rights, which are so dear to the Council of Europe.

And in her present functions, at the helm of the International Crisis Group, she continues to play an indispensable role in the prevention and the management of international tensions.

Our second Prize winner, Luis Inazio Lula da Silva, is a striking example of someone who had fewer chances in life than many of us, but made more out of them than any of us will ever do.

Unlike many other “self-made men”, when reaching the top he never forgot about where he came from: as President of Brazil, he brought education, social justice and the fight against poverty at the top of the political agenda.

And such a policy not only served his country but also strengthened its place on the world stage.

President Lula is a symbol of our new - multipolar - world, in which North-South relations are not based any more on development aid and unbalanced exchanges, but on fruitful co-operation between equal partners.

Mr President, ladies and gentlemen,

Europe no longer absorbs the world with its problems. Neither does it absorb the world with its ambitions. It has become just a partner in solving global problems, and its political way and role in the world today is different from what it once was. But that is natural. The Council of Europe and the North South Centre is a consequence of this.

I read that some say Europe is going through a mid-life crisis. They overlook the fact that after the mid-life crisis comes the time when most people feel the greatest satisfaction with life.

It has nothing to do with power or influence. It is simply about knowing what really matters for a good and decent life, what matters for human dignity. Human rights, guaranteed by the rule of law and developed in the framework of democracy, have proven to be the best recipe for such a life.

The emergence of the “South” as a key actor in international affairs is not a threat to the “North”: it is just another partner in protecting and advancing universal values, and a good and decent life to more people. And that is why international law and its supporting institutions, upholding core principles and values, are fundamental to the world and its future.

This year’s winners have in different ways done something about what matters the most. They have acted and made the world a better place.

I congratulate Ms Louise Arbour and Mr Luis Inazio Lula da Silva as this year's North South Centre prize winners.

Thank you for your attention.