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## OPENING CEREMONY

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### SPEECH DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR WILLIAM A. DOUGLASS

President Ibarretxe, distinguished officials, ladies and gentlemen. For the second time I am honoured and privileged to be present at the opening ceremony of the Congress on Basque Communities around the World, not as a Basque or a delegate from one of the many Basque associations that exist in a Diaspora spread over four continents, but rather as an observer and an analyst of the Basque's historic formation, contemporary expression and, as for the future, a friend in the effort involved in maintaining an international projection of Basque identity. So, rather than an active player in this event, with a say in its deliberations, I provide an external viewpoint, based upon my experience of over three decades studying the Basque Diaspora in the American West, Australia and several Latin American countries. Another dimension that I provide is a certain knowledge of the academic literature on the maintaining of the ethnicity of a country of origin by varying groups of immigrants who, with their movement, have made a major economic, political, social and cultural contribution to the world in which we live.

When I spoke at the previous Congress, entitled «Nora Goaz?» I highlighted the short and long-term difficulties involved in maintaining group identity and feeling towards a country of origin that any immigrant group has. The problems and challenges are all too-well known, especially for those delegates here today who have to face them on a daily basis without losing faith in the value of keeping up something that is more than the mere memory of the sacrifices of one's immigrant ancestors and their ties with the motherland. I do not think it is necessary to go through the difficulties once again. In fact, I think it is only fair and certainly necessary to take note of a few successes.

Thanks to the first congress, the resources that the Basque Government earmarks for relations with the Diaspora have increased. Amongst the many results that have borne their fruits thanks to this increase, it is worth highlighting the implementation of an assistance and loan system for Basque associations wishing to rent or even purchase premises in which to carry out their activities. Similarly, we should point out the draft legislation which provides certain citizenship rights to those who emigrated and their descendants. A third major result is the fact that the Basque Diaspora now regularly receives satellite broadcasts of Basque television. Obviously, this kind of activism has its positive effects that should be celebrated. They provide the foundations upon which new structures and initiatives can be built. In other words progress has been made. The current congress's challenge is to work out how to consolidate it. In a deeper sense, «Nora Goaz?» should become the motto of all these types of congresses, because rather than a question that requires a reply, this question emphasises the reality that maintaining world Basque presence as the expression of the legacy of several Basque emigrations is always an on-going task and not something that has been done in final, absolute terms. In other words, working in favour of maintaining Basque culture, especially in a Diaspora situation is almost like a life sentence, since those factors that operate against it are always present and ever-changing, depending upon new circumstances.

I should like to mention three matters which I believe should be taken into consideration during the deliberations of this congress. Firstly, I believe that both this event and the constant efforts made by the Basque Government to encourage ties between the Basque Country and its Diaspora are fundamentally a political process. And just like any other political process it is neither perfect nor has one hundred per cent consensus. It will always receive criticisms and amendments and this is good. So, in a constructive spirit I should like to underline two areas in Diaspora policy that I feel could be improved. As far as those organising the initiatives go, in other words, the Basque Government, I believe that some kind of formal steps should be taken to approach Navarre and certain institutions in the French Basque Country to suggest the possibility of a common policy towards the Diaspora. To date, and for obvious reasons, the major effort, and especially its financial

backing has come from the Basque Government. But it is also true that the demographic profile of the vast majority of Basque communities around the world extends beyond the three components of the current Basque Autonomous Region. Thus, for some people in the Basque Diaspora, the current initiatives create a certain degree of confusion about the political and cultural agenda of both the old world and the new world. If there were a greater participation of Navarre and the French Basque Country in joint tasks, these problems could, to a large extent, be avoided.

I also believe that it is up to the Congress delegations to develop their joint Diaspora policy towards the political institutions here so as to avoid friction and inefficiency created by specific interests. We should not forget that although resources have increased they are still very limited. In democratic policies there always exists the temptation to share benefits more or less equally, or at least to give something to everybody. But the reality is that each community represented at this Congress has its own peculiarities in many ways, with its own strengths and limitations. So a large part of the responsibility is really down to giving priority to requests, programmes and initiatives, both at the level of each Basque community and with regards the agenda for the Diaspora that is common to everyone. For example, some programmes such as the broadcasting of Basque television, affect the whole of the Basque Diaspora, both nation-states and continents, but when you are referring to the effort involved in keeping up the language, there is a tremendous variety from one group to another. It is more sensible to concentrate resources in those areas where there is a greater chance of success than just wasting them in the name of equality.

We should also take into consideration current shortcomings and future needs of new Basque Diasporas currently being formed. I am referring to the fact that transatlantic Basque emigration has virtually come to a standstill and Basque communities overseas are growing old. And yet, there is notable dynamism amongst Basque migration within Europe. Two of the most common destinations for Basques within Spain are Madrid and Barcelona. What is more, given the new configurations and possibilities within the European Union, the Basque people resident in London have just managed to create a large-enough critical mass to form an association. It is not difficult to imagine future significant Basque communities in places such as Rome and Milan, Strasbourg, Brussels, Berlin and Copenhagen. In other words, there is a tremendous «Europeanisation» of the Basque Diaspora currently forming. At the end of the day, the survival of political initiatives towards the Diaspora, something which is constantly being evaluated by the electorate and organisations here, will depend upon the perception of its success. So success in Buenos Aires will benefit Boise and failure in San Francisco will also affect Sydney.

My second point is more cultural than political. I believe that it is important to increase (because it is not completely absent) the attention we pay to promoting Basque self-awareness amongst the different Basque groups in the Diaspora. An orientation of Basques in the Diaspora towards the motherland, both for the immigrants themselves and, increasingly, for the descendants of former Basque colonies who have been deprived of «renovation» because of a lack of recent or contemporary immigration would always inform a large part (but only a part) of Basque identity in the Diaspora. What is more, this information is almost inevitably fragmented and anachronistic, based upon a very biased transfer of information by immigrants to their descendants about what is Basque- a vision of a Basque world which, given the changes that have come about here, no longer exists.

And yet these descendants of Basques have another Basque reality in their hands which is very much their own. I am referring here to their own traditions and behaviour in their countries of birth. Partly thanks to the help of the Basque Government and partly thanks to initiatives taken by the Diaspora we now have a great deal more material on what it means to be «Basque with a hyphen», i.e. Basque-Argentine, for example, than ten years ago. In fact in this area, it is Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Mexico and the United States where most progress has been made. But even in these countries we are only at the very beginning when we look at the enormous potential of tracing the history of specific Basque colonies in specific periods of time and how they became associated, without forgetting the importance of biographies built from archives and passed down orally. Intellectually, this work is urgent, because sources are lost over time. And yet on the other hand, and this is crucial, each one of these studies contributes towards the autochthonous formation of a Basque-Argentine or Basque-Australian identity, facilitating the specific knowledge necessary to retain an ethnic pride which will motivate future generations to feel part of something that is

historically important. It is the substance necessary for the creation and maintenance of a tradition that, together with an orientation towards the motherland, may serve as a basis for the future of the different Basque identities scattered around the Diaspora. In other words, without this kind of a substance to inform the future descendants of Basques in Buenos Aires of what it means to be Basque-Argentine, rather than a generic Basque, I very much doubt that Basque identity will survive in Argentina. And yet I believe that when my persona is informed both of its «Argentineness» and its «Basque-Argentineness» and with my generic Basque nature as a linking cultural element, I have a strong, motivating basis of my self-perception and of the way I behave, if not on a daily basis, at least sporadically.

And finally I should like to inform of a new factor which is going to have a vital influence on the formation of Basques in the future, both here and in the Diaspora. We have just commemorated the 500 years of Columbus discovering America. Now, facing a new millennium, mankind is exploring another word about which, just like Columbus, we have heard rumours, but have very limited specific data. I am talking about cyberspace where, thanks to Internet a whole supermarket of identity products is being created. Even now the range of alternatives fighting for the attention and very limited time which each human being has is enormous and is growing exponentially.

We live in a world, or, rather in many worlds, that are being formed and this process involves youngsters, i.e. precisely that sector of the population that will have the last word on the survival or demise of Basque identity. These are the consumers of products from the microelectronic supermarket, and this consumption will become more and more idiosyncratic. That means individuals are becoming more and more influenced by new technologies and depend less and less on joint efforts. It is by no means difficult to imagine a time in the near future in which each individual will be the architect (or not) of his/her own Basque identity and expression, sitting in front of a computer screen that helps (or hinders) access to a whole series of ethnic stimulants. If he/she wants to learn Basque, get to know something about his/her family tree, the history of his/her farmhouse and town of origin or any other aspect of the body of encyclopaedical knowledge on Basque subjects he/she can do so without leaving the house. We should also consider the possible virtual realities which promise to do away with both space and time distances. A Basque-Australian in Sydney will be able to take a virtual trip to his motherland without leaving home and will be able to experience San Fermin without having to wait until July.

The key point is that all these possibilities and many more will be competing with numerous alternatives. So, right away it is time to think of how to create Basque alternatives in the market of images that is going to be attracting the youth of tomorrow. Or better said, we have to foresee what media and advice we can provide youngsters with so that they have the opportunity to construct their own Basque personality in a world that is increasingly dominated by interactivity between individuals and technology and in which human beings will no longer be passive agents but rather will become active agents. The future of Basque identity both here and in the Diaspora will be at stake, without forgetting the new Basque realities that will exist in cyberspace more than in the geographical terms of the motherland and its Diaspora.

*Eskerrik asko*

## SPEECH DELIVERED BY MR. XABIER LEIZAOLA

### BASQUES IN THE OLD WORLD AND THE NEW WORLD

I should like to very warmly greet my President, Mr. Juan José Ibarretxe, the diplomatic corps to thank it for showing solidarity with the Basque people, William Douglass —out of respect and for his tremendous effort at defending the Basque soul— and to all of those present here today.

For a Basque who had to leave his little world behind, coming back home, with compatriots from overseas brings joy to my heart, my feelings and my faith in solidarity. It is at this time that I can say to all of you: «brothers, welcome».

And together with this welcome I think this is a good opportunity to congratulate all of us. The opening of this Second World Congress is a good opportunity for the painful event of exile to become one of delight and homage; delight because on the 60th anniversary of exile we have brought together here, to the Presidency of the Basque Government, representatives from Basque Centres from 18 different countries which currently have 17,000 members, thus fulfilling a double mandate of the Basque Parliament: to hold this World Congress and to enable Basque society to pay homage to all those countries who welcomed over 200,000 Basque men and women.

One of the teachers that I had in the town of Ustaritz, the capital of one of the Basque provinces, Lapurdi, said that there was a colony of people of Basque descent in Archangel, near Murmansk in the north of Russia, almost on the Arctic Circle. They are undoubtedly the descendants of fishermen who went to fish in those seas in the past.

By the way, the Venezuelan Marquis of Ustaritz, of the same name as the town that I have just mentioned, a man very fondly remembered by the Venezuela people, was the patron of young Simon Bolivar whilst he legalised his residence in Bilbao, a residence which he kept up for a whole year until he had to hastily leave Spain for differences of opinion in the Madrid court.

A book by Kurmanský has just been published in America describing the way in which the Basque people discovered cod-fishing in Canada, or more specifically in Newfoundland, where a Basque cemetery still exists. It is hardly surprising that cod is such a highly-prized dish in our country, whether it be «pil-pil» style, «Vizcayan» style or «ajoarriero». This is the result of centuries of comings and goings around the world which have brought together the best of both sides of the Atlantic.

From the north of Canada we can go right down to the south of the American continent, to Tierra del Fuego, and look out from the Magellan Straits and see how that brave sailor was to perish just a little further out at sea in the Pacific Ocean, after delegating in the Basque, Elkano, who was born just here nearby in the small coastal town of Getaria the command of the expedition that was to carry out the tremendous feat of circumnavigating the world for the first time. Every four years the little port of Getaria celebrates a simulation of the arrival back in Spain of Elkano and his few surviving sailors.

Around my neck I wear the medal of Saint Francisco Xabier, my saint. Born in a small town in Navarre, he was the youngest son of the Jabier family, that defended the Kings of Navarre to the death when faced with the annexation of the kingdom by the Catholic Kings of Spain. Francisco Jabier, in exile, when studying in the Sorbonne University in Paris was convinced by Ignatius of Loyola, who at that time was also a student to help him in the task of bringing Christianity to the world and at that time actually managed to send him to Japan. Francisco Jabier died when leaving Japan and trying to enter China via Macao. The Portuguese, those great sailors of history, embalmed his body and transported it to Goa in India and the inhabitants of Goa even today, five hundred years later, still parade the saint in a procession every year.

Not only have the Basques fished cod but also souls. When Hiroshima was bombed there was a Basque Jesuit there, Father Arrupe, Chancellor of the Jesuit University in Hiroshima. Subsequently he was to become General of the religious order, a post which the media (not without a certain degree of irony) calls the Black Pope.

But continuing on, moving from one continent to another, when we examine the field of ideas and human rights we can also remember that almost 500 years ago Archbishop Juan de Zumárraga took the first printing press to Mexico (by the way it was also the first printing press to appear in the continent of America) and at the same time he defended the indigenous peoples from colonisation. From the very city where we are today, Father Francisco de Vitoria embarked upon his own tough struggle to try to establish international law and the defence of indigenous peoples from invasion, colonisation and war.

These considerations regarding the virtues of the Basque people (and I'm not saying that we do not also have our defects) are brought up in meetings and congresses of this kind so that those of us who have built up a relationship with those countries that welcome and receive us, know how to keep the flame of human ideals burning, ideals of justice, freedom and solidarity. The peoples of America, whether they be Anglo-Saxon or Latin, know the value of the loyalty, non-conformity and diligence of the Basque people, the Basque nation. We Basques do not conquer countries but we do try to conquer minds, out of a feeling of human dignity and solidarity. As we are a small country with powerful neighbours that sometimes only understand the meaning of force, we run the risk of being smothered; but we will try to defend our heritage which, at the end of the day is the heritage of mankind and your presence will help us to carry on fighting for our survival.

I am sure that Sister Inés de la Cruz will descend from the heavens of Mexico to once again recite her verses where she vouched for the Basque language, that Gabriela Mistral, from the blue sky of Chile will corroborate her support for the Basques, just as she did when she was alive; that Andrés Eloy Blanco, from Venezuela will delight us with the reading of his beautiful poem dedicated to Mariana Larrabeiti; Lugones from Argentina, Arciniegas from Colombia will rush to sit with us and sing to the Basque oak or the land of Alava.

Dear friends, it is time to go and hand over to the next speaker. I am a Basque exile who went to Venezuela as a young boy over half a century ago and I have come back to sit on the lap of my real mother, the Basque Country to tell her about my adoptive mother, Venezuela to whom I said:

I love you a great deal when you are present  
I love you even more when you are absent  
When you are here because I can see you  
And when you are absent because you are far.

*I should like to say goodbye to you, dear friends with a Basque saying:  
Jaun-Andreak: ondo esanak onartu, gaizki esanak barkatu.  
Agur eta gero arte.*

## SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE BASQUE PRESIDENT DURING THE CONGRESS'S OPENING CEREMONY

*Jaun-andreok, arratsalde on eta ongi etorriak guzti guztioi, eta bereziki ongi etorri eta agurrik beroena euskal etxeetako ordezkarioi: Europatik hasita, agur bero bat Belgika, Frantzia, Ingalterra eta Espainiako ordezkari, eta era berean Iparramerika, Ertamerika eta Hegoameriketatik etorri zaretenoi: Estatu Batuak, Kanada, Mexiko, El Salvador, Peru, Puerto Rico, Kuba, Dominikar Errepublik, Venezuel, Txile, Uruguay eta Argentinako ordezkarioi, eta, nola ez, Australiako puntatik etorri zaretenoi.*

Arratsalde on y bienvenidos a todos, especialmente a los representantes de las casas vascas en el mundo, desde las europeas hasta las sudamericanas, centroamericanas, norteamericanas, y también, por supuesto, a los representantes de las casas vascas de Australia.

*Eta zuekin batera, euskaldunen aspaldiko adiskidea den William Douglass, agurtu eta eskertu nahi dut Euskal Herriaren alde egin duen lan oparoagatik, eta gerra zibilaren eraginez atzerrira joandako hamaika euskaldunei babesa eskaini zenieten nazioetako enbaxadore eta ordezkarioi lehendakari honen eta Euskal Herri osoaren omena eta eskerrona, eta azkenik, bertakoak, etxeak zareten guztioi.*

And a special welcome to the recently nominated «Lagun Onari», Mr. William Douglass and to all those countries who are represented today by the diplomatic corps that provided special assistance to a major part of this country that was forced to live in exile.

*Oso ongi dakigu zein pozgarria den zuentzat Euskal Herrian izatea, eusko lurra bisitatzea eta Kongresu honetan parte hartzea, baina benetan esaten dizuet guretzat ere pozgarria dela zuei ongi etorria ematea eta zuekin bat egitea.*

*Elkartasun honetan lan egiteko aukera izango dugu Kongresuko egunotan. Datozen lau urteetarako dituzuen proposamenak ezagutu eta sakondu nahi ditugu, gure asmoa benetako plan-gintza bat lantzea da eta honetarako zuen laguntza behar beharrezkoa dugu. Gure aldetik, gaurko Euskadiren errealitatea erakusten saiatuko gara, eta ondoren zuekin batera etorkizunerako planteamenduak egiten arituko gara.*

*Gaur, berez, herriak ez dira ezer prestatuta ez badaude eta lan tinkoa egiten ez badute. Zuek badakizue proiektu on bat aurrera ateratzeko bi baldintza bete behar direla beti: prestakuntza ona eta lan egiteko gogoia izatea. Euskadik ere baldintza hauek bete behar ditu herri sendo bat izateko eta nazioarteko erakundeetan onartua izateko. Eginkizun honetan gogoz ari gara lanean, besteak beste, lehendabizi, pakea eta ekonomi egoera sendoa lortzeko. Baina ez gara gu bakarrik honetan ari garenak.*

*Orain arteko zuen laguntza ere ezinbestekoa izan da eta Lehendakari honek bene benetan eskertu nahi dizue: aurrerantzean ere jarraitu honela zuen eta Euskal Herri honen asmoak berberak dira eta.*

*Lau urtetik behin antolatzen dugu kongresu hau. Gaurkoa bigarrena dugu, eta badakit helburu bat orain arte egindakoa aztertzea dela: iraganak bere garrantzia du, baina askoz handiagoa du etorkizunak, eta benetan esaten dizuet Lehendakari honek ez diola beldurrik euskal gizartearen etorkizunari. Beldurra bakarrik diot iraganean gertatutakoa berriro gertatzeari. Ahaleginak egin behar ditugu hau gerta ez dadin eta, berriro diot, zuen laguntza ere behar beharrezko dugu. Euskaditik kilometro askotara bizi zarete. Hemezortzi nazioetako euskal etxeetako ordezkariak zarete eta pentsa ezazue nolako garrantzia duen hainbeste nazio Euskadiren lagun izateak.*

*Euskadi bezalako nazio txikiak argi eduki behar dute ez direla ahaltsuak eta beraz beste batzuen laguntza behar dutela. Laguntza hau lortzen saiatu behar dugu. Ez da nahikoa gu ezagutzea, nazioarteko erakundeetan sartzea eta beraiekin batera lan egitea errekonozitzen ez bagaituzte. Beraz, datozen urteetako helburua da mundu osoan Euskadi herria ezagutzetik Euskadi errekonozitzera igarotzea.*



*Baina jakin dezagun onarpena ez zaigula berez etorriko. Guk geuk ere saiatu beharra daukagu eta horretarako informazioa izatea eta erabiltzen jakitea da gure jokoa. Douglasssek esan duen bezala lehen: bi baldintzak benetan betetzen baditugu aurrerapauso haundiak eman ditugu zuen eta herri honen etorkizunean; dena den, gerora begirako jokabide honetan ezin dugu ahaztu daukagun gure nortasuna eta identitatea, eta gure nortasun honek gaurkotasuna erakutsi behar du. Nortasunik gabeko eta gaurkotasunik gabeko herriak ez du etorkizunik eta ezin dio ezer aportatu gero eta globalago den mundu honi. Beraz, etorkizun berriari erantzuteko jokabide berriak landu behar ditugu.*

*Egun hauek garrantzitsuak izango dira gogoeta honetarako eta zeuok bizi zareten nazioetara itzultzerakoan gogoan izan beti euskaldunak zaretela eta herri honen ordezkioak zaretela. Txikiak eta gutxi gara baina elkartuta eta zuhurtasunez jokatzeko badugu, etorkizun oparoa izango dugu, bai Euskadin eta baita nazioarteko gure bizitzan ere.*

This is the second time we are holding a World Congress on Basque Communities. This Congress became institutionalised, with the agreement of the Basque Parliament, by the Act passed in May 1994.

This Act helped us regulate the institutional relations of the Basque Country with the Basque Centres and communities outside the Basque Country. But not only the relations with those Basques that had been born in the Basque Country but live outside it, but also thousands of other descendants of Basques and those who are related to Basques by marriage.

At that time, relations with over one hundred and fifty Basque Centres around the world with almost 18,000 members were institutionalised and contacts were made with hundreds of thousands of Basques who currently live outside the Basque Country.

But there is obviously a past history to this Congress. Back in 1956, President Aguirre held a similar event in Paris; in 1981 the first international meeting of Basque Centres was held in the Basque Country; in 1987 the Basque Government decided to organise the 2nd World Basque Congress, debating the reality and especially the future of the Basque Country in depth; in 1989 the International Congress of Basque Centres was held in Bahía Blanca and in 1990 and 1997 a further two were held: one of Basque Centres in Argentina and the other of Basque Centres in America.

All of these have had several things in common: firstly, the fact that they refer to the Basque Country, secondly, the projection of the Basque Country and Basque Centres outside and thirdly the permanent presence of representatives of Basque Centres in all of them.

We are at the start of a Congress that certainly is historic, a Congress that is going to lay the foundations of our relations over the next century. No further World Congress of Basque Centres will be held before the next century and therefore we are now faced with the tremendous responsibility of preparing our relationship channels for the coming four years. In short, we are going to prepare the blueprint for our relations in the next millennium, in the 21st century.

So through the law we passed we looked towards a new political way of organising ourselves in the world, in a field of action without classic border limits, at the same time self-imposing the obligation of meeting each other again once every four years to re-think our future.

Today, scientific and technological knowledge is advancing at a rapid pace. In just a few years, situations have arisen that we would not have even imagined only very recently. In only a few years we have gone from working in a supra-State environment, that is the European Union, to a setting which, in political terms, now has taken a regional flavour within Europe in order to reply to world globalisation movements.

And what about the future? What is going to happen in the future. What do we know about the future. How little we know about the future! We have a future that is full of infinite possibilities. It is very difficult to imagine what the future is going to be like and I am not talking about a future twenty years away, but rather one that is only two or three years down the road.

We are forced therefore to think at an increasingly international level and hence the great challenge of this Congress is to make a joint reflection on the Government's institutional relations

with Basque Centres and communities from this prospect of new internationalisation tendencies. The internationalisation of the Basque Country as a country and the internationalisation of the movement of Basques overseas. And therefore I believe that we have four major challenges ahead of us which I would like to just briefly mention:

Firstly: we have to move from the knowledge of Basque reality around the world to the recognition of said reality.

Secondly: after having sat back and thought, we have to make progress in the creation of international networks that make this move from knowledge of Basque reality to world recognition of Basque reality, possible.

Our third challenge is to concentrate on youngsters, something which Professor Douglass mentioned yesterday.

And fourthly, we must concentrate on showing solidarity, solidarity within Basque society and solidarity to outsiders.

Moving from the knowledge of Basque reality around the world to the recognition of said reality is, therefore the first of the most urgent challenges we have before us.

Our future, the future of the Basque Country and also the future of the Basque Centres, depends upon our ability to adapt to a world which is continually changing, at the same time as keeping our very essence and looking more closely at our own identity and personality as a people. I would say that we need to become a part of the new realities that are being built around us and that we cannot turn our back on and what is more, do so by taking a closer look at our identity. In other words, we have to accept, as a small nation, the universal values of those international movements which are springing up around us and, what is more, we have to contribute modestly, with what we are. Our personality, our identity, our way of looking at life. Business. The family. Savings. Our relationship with our Diaspora.

In this sense, the Basque Country also needs your international support. This need is obvious. It is necessary from three points of view, the first of which is to work towards a culture of peace. We have to get across to the world that the Basque people are a hard-working and peace-loving people, over and above all the clichés that are being bandied about around the world. The Basque Country is a peaceful and hard-working country. And those of us who are here know this only too well. You are extraordinary ambassadors of this value that Basque society has. We have to improve our means of production and the tools needed to develop them. And we also have to make progress in the introduction of all kinds of different international networks. Tolerance, growth, and a human face to this growth, in a balanced way. A recognition of our own personality in the world. These are the steps that we have to take in the future.

Globalisation and a growing tendency towards uniformity should both encourage us to decide upon our own participation strategies and projection out towards the world and to do so we must have the following principle quite clear in our minds: if a «small fry» wants to survive all he/she needs to do is to remember that above power there is strategy. And we should think about strategies. Because only if we triumph in our strategic approaches will we achieve our final aim: recognition of our reality as a people.

So our aim should be to move from the knowledge of a Basque reality in the world to gradual international recognition as a people. Recognition not only of our history and past characteristics. This is important, but it is insufficient. A recognition of what we are today: a country with its own identity. Recognition of our knowledge. Recognition of our technological progress. Recognition of the quality of our production. Recognition of our competitive ability. Recognition, in short, of our ability to relate to other levels of society. In conclusion, we need your active help to move from *knowledge* of the Basque Country throughout the world to *recognition* of the Basque Country throughout the world.

Our second main challenge is the creation of international networks. Within our participation and projection strategies, this Second World Basque Congress could perfectly well consider two possible avenues; one aimed at the economic sector and political support through a world association of Basque entrepreneurs and an international association of friends of Basques, and the



second involving the application of communication and information technologies both for our own system and for our social and international surroundings, because adaptation to the revolution within the information society is not just a key element in a country's future economic development, but also, as things stand today, in its cultural and political survival.

The third challenge is the challenge of younger generations. This is a common challenge for both the Basque Country and the Basque Centres. We all recognise that the age pyramid of Basque society shows that we have a greying population and therefore undoubtedly our future lies in concentrating on our youngsters and instilling in them the values of our ancestors at the same time as preparing them to lead a future which is very close at hand. The political, economic and human leadership of this country and its public and private institutions will be in their hands. And to put across this challenge we have in our favour a major asset: the best prepared set of youngsters we have ever had in history.

Our fourth challenge is that of solidarity. In the future, the Basque Country has to be known throughout the world, not for the tension that it generates, but as a small nation with a large vocation of being a leader in international solidarity and peace.

We have to prove that small countries can also play an important role in world society. In short, we must show that, in spite of being small, we are answerable both to ourselves and others.

In this sense, I think it is only polite to be thankful and in this opening ceremony I should like to pay homage from this platform, to all those countries that a long time again provided a home to thousands and thousands of Basque men and women who were forced into exile by a civil war. My special thanks, therefore to Russia, Great Britain, France, Belgium, Chile, Argentina, Venezuela, Uruguay, Mexico and the United States.

I should like to finalise with a special mention and special thanks to Professor William Anthony Douglass. He is our «Lagun Ona» and I will make this special mention with a little help from some information that has been given to us by a common friend, Mr. Koldo San Sebastian.

Many young Basques went optimistically to America in search of fortune and, on leaving their parents, said: «dear mother we will return soon»...

Those youngsters arrived at the huge Argentinian or Uruguayan Pampas, or went to Paraguay, Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Cuba, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Venezuela, Newfoundland, the United States and even further away, to the antipodes.

Some of these Basques even arrived at the Nevada desert, an arid land which they found on the way to California. They made that desert into their Sweet Promised Land. They shared the desert with the Indians and the years went by and many of those youngsters could not keep their word «dear mother we will return soon» and they stayed for ever in that promised land and formed a part of it.

Almost forty years ago, almost forty years already, that a big Yankee from Nevada with Scottish and Irish blood in his veins was preparing his PhD in anthropology living in a farmhouse, as he has already said, with his wife and family. He was Nevada born and bred and he chose to study, as his PhD thesis, a small community in Vizcaya, called Murelaga.

When the journalist Robert Laxalt, a Basque from Nevada, was setting up the Basque Studies Programme, he immediately thought of that same young anthropologist who was immediately to become the life and soul of one of the most important Basque cultural projects of this century.

Many unforgettable names have passed taken or been in some way related to what came to be known as the Basque Studies Programme. People such as Jon Oñatibia, Eloy Placer and Job Bilbao (alter ego and soul mate of Bill). Then new generations came with people such as Gorka Aulestia, Joseba Zulaika and Linda White. Bill Douglass has worked on the Basque question with a series of very important pieces of work. But he has done a lot more, he has been the main organiser of a programme which has attracted the outside world to what is Basque and he has undoubtedly brought the Basque people to the outside world.

That young post-graduate, who is now a teacher and a grandfather on the verge of retirement, fell in love with a country and its people, who were neither better nor worse than other

people, although perhaps different and more proud. He accepted the responsibility of young Basque emigrants as his own. The love which Bill Douglass has for the Basque people is so firm, so sincere, so permanent that the only thing we can do is return it.

*Eskerrik asko, Profesori William.  
Thank you very much for your work.*

*Beste barik, espero dut Kongresu hau onuragarria izatea zuentzat, guretzat, guztiontzat, eta  
berriro diot, eskerrik asko etortzeagatik eta eskerrik asko batez ere zuen arretagatik.  
Mila esker*

## WORDS OF THANKS SPOKEN BY PROFESSOR WILLIAM DOUGLASS, AFTER HAVING BEEN AWARDED THE LAGUN ONARI INSIGNIA

Firstly, I should like to thank all those people in the Basque Government who decided to award me this insignia.

Secondly, I should like to point out my professional and personal debt to my Basque friends (rather than informants) scattered around the world who have always received me courteously, keen to collaborate and on many occasions even with open hearts. I am referring to people who live as far apart as Echalar and Murélaga here, Elko and Boise in the United States, Necochea and Buenos Aires in Argentina, Montevideo and Durazno in Uruguay, Santiago de Chile, Lima, Bogota, Mexico City, Sydney, Melbourne, Jughan and Ayr in Australia and even in Bacolog in the Isla de Negros in the Philippines. Were it not for them I would not have been able to carry out my studies.

Thirdly, I think this decoration is really in honour of a joint rather than an individual effort. I am referring to the many opportunities I have had to collaborate with hundreds of people from here and in Nevada in the carrying out of our Basque Studies Programme at Nevada University-Reno which has now been running for 32 years. As there are hundreds of them, it is not possible for me to mention them one by one, but I should like to mention some names of key figures such as my friend and dear colleague, now passed away, Mr. Jon Bilbao and the writer Robert Laxalt, both of whom, together with me were part of the original threesome that created the Programme in Nevada. I should also like to mention my current colleagues: Linda White, Joseba Zulaika and Carmelo Urza who are the current threesome and who represent the future of our programme.

And finally I should like to dedicate this award to two people: to Patricia, my first wife who, when we were 24 agreed to come with me with our one-year-old son to spend three years living in farmhouses in Echalar and Murélaga when I was carrying out the field work for my thesis.

And to Jan, my wife of the last twenty years who spent years of her life with me living virtually as a nomad in Australia when we were searching throughout the continent for former Basque sugar-cane cutters, and who stoically puts up with my absences from home arising from my intellectual preoccupations and professional commitments studying Basque matters around the world. Their support and patience means that both are the architects of this moment, which rather than an honour is a thrill.

*Nere bihotzetik, eskerrik asko danori*