



# MOHAMED LAICHOUBI

Former Minister of Labor and Social protection of Algeria

I think you'll agree with me that although we would grant the food served throughout this summit, especially the last lunch, the label of excellence, we do not have the leisure to settle down into a certain lethargy that would be as comfortable as it would be insidious.

It will not bring down the intensity of our discussions, especially since this is the last session devoted to general debate, which I have the daunting privilege of opening.

It is obviously usual, out of courtesy, to thank various people during an event of this scale, which is a success on every count.

I will not follow that obligation, but would like to congratulate the organisers for having initiated an extremely intelligent management framework that allowed the participants, who had multiple and various profiles, to raise the quality of our discussions to the highest level while widening the scope of issues they addressed.

Better yet, this way of proceeding opens up prospects and allows us to harbour glimmers of hope.

Some people point out the narrowing of political thought, whose production is confined to restricted partisan spaces, cabinet offices and other institutions with inward-looking rectilinear logic often disconnected from the world's multiple realities.

In my opinion, it is a very good thing that frameworks such as the WPC exist and are valued. They cannot be a counterweight, but they do offer credible alternatives of dialogue and compromises on increasingly tense international issues, which many multilateral institutions no longer have the effectiveness to address.

In the same vein, and in a second point, allow me to say that the brilliant talks here, whose content was of a rare density, often emphasized the need to get straight to the heart of the matter.

That's why it is our responsibility at this level to assess the changes that are taking shape, which are often grouped together under the label "crisis", and to interpret them, anticipate them, to create necessary new compatibilities.

In the workshops, several prominent figures, including Mr Trichet, Mr Védrine, and many others, seemed to share this concern, which, in my opinion, we should make our own.

What emerged is the need to distinguish between temporary setbacks that do not affect a system's continuity and deep, serious crises that herald a break with the past and major upheavals, which will have a lasting impact on the organisation and behaviour of societies.

In this regard, the deeper trends that often have a decisive effect on the future must be grasped in order to intelligently, relevantly interpret a world in the making.

Historical introspection will teach us something about the nature of these processes.

An examination of the genesis of the architecture of international relations reveals two major events:

- The two world wars, especially the second, saw the emergence of the United States' supremacy on the international stage.



- The anti-colonial wars, which saw the emergence of nearly two-thirds of the world's population, triggered a veritable earthquake that shook the planet, even though they are often ignored by many historians and analysts, who dwell on the winners of the two world wars rather than the victors of the anti-colonial struggles—all the more surprising since some of them are going to become major players in the changes taking shape as a part of today's globalisation.

These two events combined will have a decisive influence on all the changes we're going to mention.

In this context, after the Pax Anglo-Saxonica and the sharing of global responsibilities, the Pax Americana was established.

The United States mastered new technologies, and a new system took shape (Yalta, Bretton Woods, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington and San Francisco).

After 1949, the United States was in the centre and on top. It supplanted Europe, restructured and modernised the global (capitalist) economy and set up security systems that have lasted until today.

At the same time, and paradoxically, the involvement of oppressed peoples eager for freedom in the two world wars, portrayed as causes of justice and the rejection of Fascist domination, sped up the course of history and destroyed the degrading pecking order established by the colonial powers.

These events put together, world wars and anti-colonial wars, hastened the disappearance of the old order and triggered the collapse of the great colonial empires and the global economic system associated with them.

That is when the process of a new approach to international relations began to germinate, setting off a slow process that lasted several decades.

A new philosophy gradually came about and Africa, China, India, South America—making up the majority of the planet's population—expressed the need for a new international governance that slowly emerged over the course of several decades before becoming a necessity, even though it was hindered by the Cold War, which scrambled its readability (the non-aligned movement and theories about the new world economic order).

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the process gathered speed as new demographic and technological powers, China, India, South Korea, Brazil, etc., started flexing their muscles.

The pecking order was reshuffled and the five nuclear powers lost their monopoly on atomic weapons. These changes aren't limited to economic, social or climate issues; the whole international order established 70 years seems to be called into question.

The geopolitical restructuring that began at the end of the Cold War appears more clearly.

A new understanding of the international stage, including by laymen, is emerging.

After India and Pakistan, in the confusion Iran, at first with backing from Turkey and Brazil, which offered to facilitate talks, argued for the right to control civilian uses of nuclear power.

It must be understood that a group of countries considers peaceful nuclear power a key to scientific development and progress.

South Korea, one of the poorest countries, became a serious competitor several decades ago and has just supplanted the Western countries in the sale of nuclear power stations and other technologies. Samsung has become one of the world's top ten companies. South Korea's university teaching system is becoming one of, if not the most, successful in the world.

China, India and Brazil were forces to be reckoned with at the Kyoto, Doha and Copenhagen summits.



In 1950, the countries on the Mediterranean's northern shores had twice as many people as those on its southern shores (approximately 66%). In 2025, the exact opposite will be true: the countries on the southern shores will have twice as many people as those on the other side. The populations of Egypt and Algeria have tripled. In Algeria, life expectancy has risen from 52 to 75 and the number of women in the workforce tripled. In China, life expectancy increased from 35 in 1945 to 72 in 2009. China has become a global sequencing giant. Today the IMF officially announced that it has the world's biggest economy, while at the same time it ranks just 85th in per capita GDP.

Many emerging countries suffer from an imbalance between development and poverty and, despite significant catching up, they are threatened by social conflict.

Meanwhile, in the developed countries, distortions in development models afflict economies and societies.

Austerity policies are causing serious rifts.

All of these factors put together are changing the shape of international relations. We are witnessing the re-emergence of Asia and other postcolonial regions, continent countries such as China or semi-autonomous centres of global capitalism.

The system is heading towards polycentrism, which is why some people say that, despite Obama's stated intention of making this century another American century, the United States must become accustomed to pluralism and a smaller role in world affairs.

However, it is obvious that the end of the Cold War did not bring about the redefinition of the system it influenced, which is cracking under the pressure of new realities.

Four of the UN Security Council's five permanent members account for just 10% of the world's population. The representatives of 60% of the world's population are restricted to taking turns holding non-permanent seats.

A similar situation prevails at the World Bank and the IMF. Nine of the biggest Western countries plus Russia and Japan have 53.02% of the votes even though they account for 16% of the world's population.

In addition to all the changes we've just listed, it's important to mention demographic trends and their impact.

A report on the future of global demographics says that the Earth's population will rise to nine billion by 2050. Most of that growth will occur in Asia and Africa. The population of the developed countries will stagnate at 1.26 billion. The world will have two billion people over the age of 60 and the proportion of non-working to working people will more than double from 11% to 25%.

Véronique Riches Flores (an economist at Société Générale) says that "this will be a demographic shock with a spectacular shift in wealth from the developed to the emerging countries and an impoverishment of Europe.

In Europe, the drop in the number of working people and the world's lowest fertility rate will lead to a fall in per capita income ranging from 9 to 23%, which will spell a substantial redistribution of the world's GDP." Asia will gain eight points, the US four points because of its immigration policy and Africa one point whereas Europe will lose 12 points. By 2040 BRIC alone will account for 40% of the planet's senior citizens and will therefore experience a shortage of labour. To meet these challenges, in 2013 Germany became the second-leading country of immigration in the world behind the US (Figaro international, 21 May 2014, "Eldorado d'immigration").

Between 2013 and 2018, 2.6 million foreigners are expected to settle in Germany.

About these demographic changes with a shift of wealth, René Trégouet (Honorary Senator, Founder of the French Senate's Prospects Group) says that, "faced with such perils, it will be necessary to reconsider all our models, dogmas and ways of analysing and thinking about immigration, economic development and cooperation with the poorest peoples and to understand that our future, our common destiny, is interconnected. That is why we must start building together."



In addition to these geopolitical and demographic changes and their impact on international relations, the global economic crisis has pointed up serious distortions in development models. Oil spills, Fukushima, illegal immigration, unemployment, famine, public health, AIDS and Ebola are matters of concern to us all.

That is why confrontations and disputes to ensure pre-eminence must not dominate international relations. Common responses are called for. New global policies and new fora for consultation and dialogue should be set up, especially since we are reaching the end of cycles.

The energy model is saturated, the water-wasting agricultural model is turning its back on ecology, food insecurity and hunger wars are a part of everyday life in some regions, food models are contested with GMOs and water resources management will have to cope with serious shortages. All of these cycles must therefore be renewed. But renewing them will require extremely high public spending.

Germany says it will spend €400 billion on some of its projects. But many countries are in very deep debt. It is clear that new budget policies are necessary to pay for these projects.

It will be necessary to build new solidarity, new approaches on the global scale. But whenever globalisation is mentioned, public opinion in general is beset by two fears. One is connected to world wars. The other stems from cynicism about the preoccupation with pre-eminence in international relations.

In light of all these factors, we must soon set ourselves to the task of reinventing the world.