

GENERAL MICHEL AOUN

President of Lebanon

"Ladies and gentlemen, by passing on this message to you, I am aware of the honour given to me to address this most recent edition of the World Policy Conference, taking place in Rabat, Morocco.

First of all, allow me to express my appreciation to His Majesty King Mohammed VI, King of Morocco, for hosting this very high-level meeting in his country. A land of encounters, history, beauty and tradition, Morocco continues its march towards modernity under the leadership of His Majesty, who regulates, commands and arbitrates so that harmonious coexistence may continue in the present and the future for an entire people, proud of what it has built and confident in what it will build in the future. This firm belief in living together among different cultures, civilisations and religions continues to inspire us, the Lebanese people. It has made Lebanon more than a country: it is a message for the East as well as for the West, as His Holiness Pope John Paul II described it. Now, this belief is universally needed.

Today more than ever, the peoples and States of the world urgently need to learn how to see, in the midst of almost universal chaos, the meaning of and respect for the truth, namely, that we do not live separate from one another. The recognition of the unity of the human family in its diversity and plurality and the attention paid to the unified dignity of each person must be given impetus in the responsibility to protect every human being. Conversely, it is indifference or the lack of intervention that causes real damage. Methods need to be developed to prevent or resolve conflicts, not only through the means available to diplomatic action, but above all, and perhaps before anything else, by giving attention and support to dialogue, the desire for reconciliation and transactional justice.

By launching last year my initiative at the United Nations to make Lebanon a world centre for interreligious and intercultural dialogue, and by launching this year at the same forum a multilateral convention to establish the Human Academy for interaction and dialogue in our country, Lebanon wanted to show once again its mission in this region of the world, the cradle of all dreams and legitimate expectations, which for some has become a space fated to experience endless conflict.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am confident that your conference, driven by intellectual freedom, will provide answers to essential questions, namely: how do we step out of chaos? How can we restore a world order that would enable our children to live in a peaceful, prosperous, fairer and governed world? Lebanon will not fail to take part in these debates, because it remains a bearer of hope, that of bringing to life and sharing a humanist ideal uniting all people and of making the reshaping of collective responsibility ethics prevail.

Please accept, ladies and gentlemen, members of the World Policy Conference present here today, my warm thanks and appreciation and the expression of my highest regards. Thank you."