

A LETTER FROM THE SOUTH

NOTES AMIDST
GLOBAL
DISORDER



**Manssour
Bin Mussallam**

Translated from Spanish

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Greater South

Translated from Spanish.

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Note on the Margins

An friend of mine—one of those rare ones who accompany you throughout a lifetime without necessarily sharing it—asked me, with the seriousness that only fraternal trust can confer, for my views on the events unfolding in the world and their possible outcomes. I replied with a letter. And from it emerged *A Letter from the South*.

I will not pretend to present the obvious as if it were revelation: the velocity of recent developments in world affairs is so dizzying, and the events so often contradictory, that it is difficult to keep up and even tougher to decipher the deeper implications or to articulate a coherent analysis that is not immediately refuted by the following day's events. For the sharp-eyed and clear-minded, some underlying dynamics may perhaps be glimpsed through the fog. But I do not claim such gifts as my own. If I have achieved anything, it has been more through sheer stubbornness than through clarity of insights; more through the obstinacy of remaining standing in the face of adversity than through any particular virtue that I could claim as my own. Of course, if we are to take our cue from the relentless proliferation of self-proclaimed experts and opinion leaders, it appears that talent is no longer required to pontificate. All that is needed is a confident tone and some fluency in technical jargon for many to naturally assume the role of oracle. But that has never been my destiny, let alone my aspiration.

The text that follows, then, should not be understood as a definitive assessment, and much less as a complete thesis. Perhaps that I will one

day develop it into something more exhaustive and coherent—since, being discontented by nature, I am dissatisfied with some of its simplifications and omissions. For now, however, it is merely a series of notes—at times scattered, at others perhaps contradictory—gathered beneath the shelter of a conviction that has not wavered: that our Southern cause, in spite of everything, is a just one.

Perhaps, for some, I have said more than prudence would advise; for others, perhaps not enough—those who may ask: where are the concrete projects, the timelines, the numbers?

Both complaints might be justified.

But to those who will think that I have gone too far, I would say bluntly: I have not said anything here that I have not said before, albeit in a different way, at different times. I suffer from many faults, but I do not bear the one of claiming the celestial virtue of infallibility, nor—much less—the moral stain of falsity. My convictions are not fleeting, nor are my words momentary blossoms. The only difference is that, this time, I have gathered into a single thread what was previously scattered. This is my personal vision—not an official mandate, nor an institutional line.

If, by revealing it in an unbroken sequence, it is deemed unacceptable by those who entrusted me with this responsibility; if, by presenting it in this manner, it proves discordant with what our Members expect from the person serving them today, mine will be understanding without offence. For our family of Nations deserves to be guided by someone whose vision it shares. This is mine.

I have spent five years at the head of our beloved Organisation of Southern Cooperation; I have three left. I have accompanied this Organisation—I have fought for it, I have endured setbacks for it, I have dedicated myself entirely to it—since it was barely more than an aspiration. I have witnessed its roots take hold; its first fruits emerge.

And I believe that I have still more to give, that I still have strength and clarity to contribute. Yet I also firmly believe—as I have said at other times—that cemeteries are full of those who believed themselves indispensable. I will not make that mistake.

To those who, by contrast, will reproach me for excessive abstraction, I will readily concede their point: this letter was not written as a government plan, but as reflections and impressions at a time of global upheaval. Nevertheless, institutionally, I have not neglected my programmatic duties. The record stands, with all its achievements and errors; what has been done, for all its strengths and shortcomings, is there for all to see. Were our projects sufficiently ambitious? In spirit and scope, yes. In execution, not always. But give me the means—or at least the support—and I do not promise success, but I do promise full devotion to so noble an endeavour.

And even now, in sharing these words, I do not present them as dogma, nor as a programme, and certainly not as a lifeline. This is not a proclamation nor a manifesto. It is simply an invitation. Debate it. Develop it. Refute it. Ignore it, if you wish. There is no coercion here, only a fraternal incitement to think together about the future and, perhaps, to shape it. But that decision is not mine to make; it belongs to each individual, according to their own convictions and commitments.

The rest—and I say this with the very same conviction with which I wrote the original letter from a corner of Addis Ababa—belongs entirely to our Peoples: it is they who will choose between silence and destiny.

Manssour Bin Mussallam

Addis Ababa, 1st May 2025, at 02:04

*Each generation must, out of
relative obscurity, discover its
mission, fulfil it or betray it.*

—**Frantz Fanon**



*and there are those who die
and there are those who live
and thus, amongst them they achieve
what was once believed to be impossible
that the entire world may know
that the South also exists.*

—**Mario Benedetti**

A LETTER FROM THE SOUTH

NOTES AMIDST GLOBAL DISORDER

To:

Those Who Refuse Resignation
Club of the Dissatisfied,
GREATER SOUTH

I. The End of Illusion

The hegemonic world order achieved, over the past three decades, a feat of singular proportions: it managed to reign uninterrupted whilst inequalities were deepening, our social contracts were coming undone, and the ecological balances sustaining life were being upset. And yet, under its influence, we came to believe—with an almost mystical conviction—that the end of History was more plausible than the end of the system itself; that Humanity's extinction was more likely than its transformation; that the annihilation of the world was, ultimately, more feasible than the collapse of the order that drove us to the brink.

This is no longer the case. That illusion has finally dissolved. But not by martyrs, nor by poets, nor by prophetic leaders—but by the very occupant of the throne. It was the President of the United States who, perhaps in an unintentional act, provoked the evaporation of certainty in the eternity of the neoliberal world order. It was from the centre of power that the mask fell.

And thus, the modern Crassus—the one who, as in ancient Rome, ordered his private fire brigade to let houses burn until the desperate owners agreed to sell for a pittance and then rent back their own homes—has now set fire not only to the dwellings of the People, but also to the estates of Caesar and Pompey. In his greed, he has crossed the threshold of mutual destruction. And in so doing, he has become, without realising it, the King Midas of our era: everything he touches turns to dead gold, gilded ruin, wealth that suffocates.

The consequences can no longer be concealed. The whole world, from the poles to the tropics, feels the tremor of a model in its death throes, yet still resisting its demise. Democracies are in crisis, social contracts have been mutilated, promises of universal wellbeing have been replaced by pacts of precarity. The air is unbreathable, the waters polluted, food has been commodified, and knowledge is concentrated in digital fortresses inaccessible to most. The Peoples are exhausted, the institutions delegitimised, and the leaders—with honourable exceptions—act as administrators of the disintegration.

And yet, amidst this twilight, not all has been said. The die has been cast—that much is true—but it has not yet touched the table. It rolls, in this uncertain hour, as the symbol of a destiny still unsealed. And I, not being a gambling man, prefer not to remain on tenterhooks, awaiting the whims of the throw. Rather, I propose that we question the game itself: What rules are we following? What kind of table is this? What possible victory could ever redeem such a game?

Because if we do not—if we neither change the rules nor the table, if we fail to renounce the game that has stripped us of our humanity—then it will be impossible to say whether the South is about to rise... or to break apart.

II. The Stage, the Actors, and the Southern Pulse

China stirs, after decades of carefully calculated diplomatic equanimity, invoking Mao's combative rhetoric, as honour and dignity demand. It does not seem, however, that it seeks to design or lead a new world order; rather, it wishes to make clear that it will not retreat if pushed, that it knows how to stand its ground, even on uncertain terrain. Its message is not one of invention, but of determination.

The old adversary, Russia, remains a formidable actor, although visibly diminished. The protracted war in Ukraine, together with its withdrawal from Syria, have revealed a power that is still fierce, but confined to the regional stage, more preoccupied with immediate, vital interests than with rising as the architect of a renewed order. For the moment, its global ambitions have withdrawn beneath the weight of its own imperatives.

Brazil, under Lula's leadership, has both the vision and the means, but drags behind it the burden of a recent electoral history marked by turbulence and the judicialisation of politics, as well as the growing polarisation of Latin America. With new elections on the horizon, domestic priorities—as legitimate as they are pressing—threaten to subordinate global ambitions to national needs. Thus, for now, its Southern project remains within the realm of that which is possible, not quite the pursued.

In Mexico, Sheinbaum has impressed and enamoured by masterfully combining resolute firmness with supple conciliation. Nevertheless, the

country remains anchored to the prudence of the Estrada Doctrine—that form of neutrality which is by no means cowardice, but is a limit all the same. To this are added the immutable geographical bonds that are not decided at the ballot box. Perhaps, if her moment is to come, it will be as the architect of the long-overdue institutionalisation of CELAC rather than of a restructuring of the international system.

India, in the meantime, is expanding its footprint in diplomatic circles with an ever-growing clarity of purpose. Its discontent with global governance—so very unrepresentative, so very divorced from Southern realities—is genuine, but its ambition, for now, does not appear to be the refounding of the system, but rather that of securing the place that it is due within it. Its struggle is for a seat, not yet for the table itself.

The Gulf States, for the most part, share this same stance. Although their ambitions are more visible, and their room for manoeuvre broader, the immediate priority in that turbulent Middle East appears to be that of maintaining what stability remains. National ambitions and regional equilibrium will always take precedence over global reconfiguration.

South Africa, for its part, has shown unmistakeable signs of political will, but one which needs to be accompanied by the determined and sustained backing of the African Union. The African Union, however, remains too fragmented, focused on procedural matters, and limited by the financial dependence that constricts its actions. The deep institutional reforms that could lay the foundations for effective continental leadership are still in their infancy and will require years before they bear fruit.

Other countries that could raise their voices—Cuba, Colombia, Iran, Mali, amongst others—remain consumed by existential struggles, constrained by internal electoral politicking, or caught in geopolitical echo

chambers, whether imposed by others or of their own making, which prevent their appeals from resonating beyond their own borders.

Certain solitary, clear and courageous voices—such as that of Mia Motley in Barbados—have risen with clarity. But their voices alone are not enough. What is needed is the fertile ground of a Southern coalition of the willing. And this coalition, at the present moment, has neither been formed nor does it seem to be in the making.

The other States of our Greater South are by no means blind to the seismic shifts shaking the world. On the contrary, they perceive them with mounting unease. The tariffs that were announced, at the time, with great commotion—particularly those aimed at the European Union and Canada—were no minor event: they signalled, with the clarity of a stampede, the collapse of old certainties. Many, at some point, preferred to deal with the devil they knew, taking comfort in that tacit acquiescence offered by *la servitude volontaire*: better the familiar yoke than the chaos of the unknown. But today, that incentive has disappeared. The system, by its own hand, has destroyed the conditions that once made it tolerable. The abrupt end of international cooperation by US-AID—although it caused suffering as real as it was immense—forced an essential awakening. We could not continue to sustain, without moral anguish, a development architecture based on external dependence to guarantee our Peoples the most basic services. This episode also starkly revealed that the “progress” presented to us as vindication of the auxiliary development system was nothing but a façade: fragile because it was artificial, cosmetic because it was conditional, and incapable of standing without the strings holding it up from the outside.

Nevertheless, most of our countries still linger on the threshold of decision. They watch the storm from their doorways, waiting to see whether what we are experiencing is a fleeting detour or the beginning

of a new era. Some even nurture the hope of a return to the old order, although that for which they truly yearn is the comfort of its predictability. Instead of channelling their energy into building a different system—one that is fairer, more solidary, more sovereign—many choose to take part in this global confusion, playing a multilateral version of musical chairs, in which each tries not to be left without a seat at the whim of whoever still controls the music player.

But our Greater South does not exist only in those official halls, nor is it confined to the corridors of power. Much less does it dwell in the conference rooms that I have so often paced. The South is alive, but elsewhere: in the ethereal breath of the quena, rising from the chest of the Altiplano, carrying the spirit of an ancient world that is still breathing; in the contemplative steps of the kora, whose unpredictable journey weaves together the memories of generations and the stories yet to be told; in the pulsing strings of the oud, whose ancient tongue is older than the verb and truer than the archive; in the restrained lament of the shehnai, whose melody does not answer but rather questions the mystery of transcendence.

Our South is there, in the stooped back of the Mexican agave farmer, who works the land with greater fidelity than expectation; in the rough hands of the Ethiopian coffee grower, which greet the dawn with the aroma that others will drink; in the callused fingers of the Syrian artisan, which rebuild beauty amidst the dust; in the strained eyes of the Cambodian weaver, for whom silk knots itself with fatigue. It is also in the climate activism of Caribbean students, in the mobilisation of pan-African student unions, in the bravery of Palestinian youth, in the tenacity of Afghan women.

III. The Open Wounds of the Peoples

When we turn our gaze towards our Peoples—those in whom we place our most unwavering faith, to whom we entrust our purest dreams, through whom we express our noblest aspirations—four realities are revealed to us, which cannot be ignored without betraying the very cause we proclaim.

The first is that the global polycrisis, relentlessly accelerating since the darkest days of the pandemic, has struck the material foundations of existence with such force that meeting basic needs now takes precedence over systemic change. What is essential overshadows what is aspired. No rhetoric can spur towards the future those who are unable to sustain themselves in the present. This is not an argument against structural change, but rather a reminder that, in order to be possible, it must also be tangible, uniting long-term endeavour with urgent response.

The second is that decades of enforced resignation—stemming from that triumphalist narrative that came to be known as the “end of history”—have eroded, down to the roots, our faith in the possibility of change. And I wonder, with a bitterness that is far from rhetorical: would anyone today storm the Moncada? Would we even have the audacity to imagine it? For more deadly than repression has been the pedagogy of capitulation. We were taught to mistrust all collective action, to mock every attempt, to fear causes as if they were diseases. Coercion by the gun failed, but our spirits were numbed with empty reformist speeches. Initiatives were thus reduced to managing the lesser evil.

The third reality is that, beyond reforms which barely scratch the surface, or loud denunciations of the current order, we have yet to articulate a unifying vision that can inspire and rally, that can ignite the imagination and drive collective action. The status quo is a thief that has stolen our

ability to dream, yet without dreams, there can be no mobilisation; and without mobilisation, there can be no transformation.

The fourth, and perhaps the most profound, is that we have not built the necessary bridges between our Nations. We remain trapped in a crisis of Southern identity that fragments us. For many, the South is little more than a geographical term or a slogan for summits. Very few truly feel a sense of belonging to the South as a living, embodied, asserted identity. For the majority, the South remains merely an abstract notion, a mark on the map, whilst Arab, African, Latin American, or Asian identities—all of them legitimate and necessary—are experienced deeply and compellingly. We lack a pedagogy of the South. We have not cultivated a Southern consciousness that, without denying regional identities, transcends and unites them—condemning the South to remain a demographic and moral power... but not yet a political force.

And so, after three decades of an order perpetuated by the imposition of widespread inertia, what we face is not merely a structural crisis, but something more subtle and dangerous: a collective depoliticisation, spread equally across both the South and the North, which threatens to disarm wills before it can even be shaped into a project. By mistaking indifference for maturity, and scepticism for clarity, we arrive at a single, wretched outcome: impotence. And a society that has stopped believing it can transform itself is closer to decay than to stability. Restoring politics—in its noblest sense—is not merely about revitalising debate; it is about rescuing hope as a driving force, turning discontent into action, consolidating collective potential.

IV. The Retreat of the Torchbearers

The issue of depoliticisation in the South is, more than a theoretical concern, an open wound. For generations, the Peoples of the South made politics a vital, intimate, everyday exercise. In squares and cafés, in homes and trade unions, debate was not the privilege of enlightened elites, but the natural breath of an alert citizenry. Today, that has changed. Participation has been replaced by spectacle, commitment by commentary, deliberation by mere gesticulation. And in this silent transition, the South risks ceasing to be a political actor and becoming a bystander to the history of others.

The revolts that set streets and squares ablaze in recent decades were legitimate in their cause and admirable in their courage. Yet revolt, when not anchored in structure, may become nothing more than a fleeting spark. The regime fell, yes. But its underlying logic endured. One face was swapped for another, whilst the system—camouflaged and unscathed—went on reproducing the same hierarchies, the same neglects. The flame of indignation, lacking direction or constructive purpose, died out with the dawn.

This is the tragedy of revolt without revolution: the moment replaces the movement, and exhaustion eclipses victories. Where a new social contract ought to have been sown, disenchantment took root.

This depoliticisation is no accident. It is, above all, the offspring of our own divisions.

The fragmentation of trade union movements is telling. Many, although not all, operate as bodies that surge from struggle to struggle, without shaping a common project or a shared vision. They rightly demand immediate rights, but rarely ask themselves for what kind of society they are fighting, or what future they wish to help build. And so, in fighting

battle after battle, they forget about the very war itself, which demands a strategy. Even worse is the fate of those whose only task is to defend the victories already claimed. Such a task, although necessary, inevitably confines them to the role of mere protectors of the past. And by not aspiring to what has yet to be achieved, they become subject to the logic of conservatism, stripped of all yearning and deprived of the creative impulse that once secured the very gains that they now safeguard.

Civil society organisations are not spared their own crossroads. Today, they are experiencing a period of intense fragility which, although silent, is profoundly corrosive. In general, they face one of two limitations. On the one hand, cuts to the so-called “development aid”—which began even before the most publicised cases—have caused such a severe funding crisis that many have been forced to narrow their activities to the mere preservation of their institutional existence. On the other hand, those that still retain an operational financial base must confront a surge in community needs, triggered by the global polycrisis and the simultaneous collapse of many of their sister organisations. In such a context, long-term strategy becomes a luxury: when the urgent presses from every front, what is not ablaze is postponed indefinitely. And so, each day, the future is consumed.

Even more troubling is the inward retreat of many organisations. In their drive for autonomy, many have developed a sectarian attitude, systematically excluding the State as an interlocutor. Yet in societies where the public apparatus is already weak, excluding it only further undermines its role. And when the capacities of the State are dismantled, the possibility of effective public policy is compromised, condemned to perpetual failure. Social and community initiatives are then left isolated, as scattered islands: valuable experiences, yes, but doomed to marginality. They do not become societal projects, and remain confined to the local level.

And what of our intellectuals? Here too, a double wound is revealed. The first is that we lack intellectuals who think the South. Needless to say, we have brilliant minds on the regional level: Pan-Africanists, defenders of the *Patria Grande*, Arab nationalists; just as we boast distinguished scholars in the human and natural sciences. Yet few are those who, transcending the regional or disciplinary, dare to conceive the South as a whole, as a common subject of History. We lack thinkers who, without denying the plurality that defines us, are able to illuminate what unites us: a condition of shared structural injustice; historical experiences marked by exclusion, dispossession and resistance; trans-generational longings that refuse to die.

The second wound is the decline of the authentic public intellectual—the one who not only thinks with rigour, but also acts with strategic commitment, fully embracing the discipline that the latter usually demands. In their absence, we are left with only two types—both necessary, but insufficient. On the one hand, the academic intellectual, adept at analysis and sharp in diagnosis, but enclosed within the confines of intimist preoccupations. On the other hand, the popular intellectual, a bearer of voice and enthusiasm, able to disseminate and democratise ideas, but not to construct what they pronounce—as if merely speaking the truth aloud were enough to transform the reality that torments us! One observes without intervening; the other proclaims without building.

There are, of course, exceptions, but I fear they merely prove the rule.

And, all too often, those who do try to bring ideas into the real world become objects of ridicule or, worse, suspicion. They are accused of having oversized egos for taking the initiative, or of betrayal for speaking with governments, as if it were possible to transform our societies without dialogue with those who govern them. They are charged with sullyng the purity of thought through action. But is that not precisely

the essence of commitment? Is not thought without practice, without risk, without sacrifice, simply a form of escapism?

Today, more than ever, the South needs embodied thought, committed citizens, visionary organisations. It must ensure that struggles are not fragmented, but interwoven; that energies are not scattered, but coordinated. Intellectuals must come down from their pulpits, and some must stop thinking of themselves as prophets or arbiters. The State and society must speak to one another again, without automatic suspicion or mechanical exclusions. In short, the South must think itself, organise itself, and be daring.

V. The Political Bankruptcy of the Dichotomies

When it comes to the current political currents within our Nations, the sense of exhaustion is not only visible: it can even be felt in the very air that we breathe. It can be perceived in the words that no longer mobilise, in the motions that merely repeat empty routines, in the slogans that were once ablaze but are now ashes. The political body of the South, once vibrant with diverse projects, now wanders aimlessly, dragging along legacies it cannot rejuvenate and energies it can no longer summon. It reeks of terminal decline.

The left, once invigorated by the power of a collective dream, now suffers from a triad of ills that have disfigured it. First, it has yielded to the framework imposed by the status quo, and in that surrender has lost its own banners. It has abandoned the horizon that once guided it, the utopia that once called the Peoples to march. Governing has come to mean merely managing what is immediately possible, and the pursuit of longer-term essentials has been forsaken. The left has begun to speak the language of the very system it vowed to change, and within

that language, its soul has suffocated. Under the dictatorship of technocracy, where every aspiration is reduced to the cold letter of a piece of legislation, change is inevitably sidelined: on such terrain, the status quo always prevails.

Second, wherever it has held power, the left has fallen victim to its own success. Yes, it has managed to implement redistribution policies, but it did not sow the seeds of a collective consciousness alongside them. Where there was no politicisation, there was no real citizenry—only beneficiaries. Thus, as people ascended from poverty to the middle class, many ceased to look towards the common good and, as the dominant order dictates, voted for their individual interests. The chance to build an engaged, critical citizenry—capable of defending hard-won gains and at the same time demanding what is still lacking—was lost.

Third, in its eagerness to battle powerful structures, the left has forgotten the art of strategy. There is, undoubtedly, an immediate gratification in declaring every plan—as if exaggerated transparency were a political virtue—, but that only opens the door to sabotage. Conversely, absolute secrecy, far from safeguarding the project, stifles the possibility of building collectives. Between these two extremes, action is paralysed. And caught in the crossfire of constant exposure or paranoid isolation, the left finds itself with neither the strength to accomplish anything nor the impetus to move forward.

The traditional right fares no better in judgement. Firstly, in wholeheartedly embracing the neoliberal paradigm, it has become infected by the virus of complacency. That model of *laissez-faire* governance may perhaps suit advanced economies, but in Nations still aspiring to development, it amounts to nothing more than an administration of scarcity. To restrict governance to the management of basic public services is to presume the prior existence of developed productive forces that simply do not yet exist.

Secondly, obsessed as it is with macroeconomic indicators, it has ignored the concrete reality of our popular economies. Globalisation, with all its rhetoric of growth, has silently swept away artisans, farmers, and workers—whose misery never appears in balance sheets, but is keenly felt in daily life. That Excel sheet, so revered by some officials, knows nothing of the face of despair.

Thirdly, under the spell of the personified narratives spun by tech giants, it has neglected the demands of its own lands. Enthralled by international dogma, it has forgotten that, without infrastructure, without its own capital, and without access to scalable markets, our young entrepreneur is doomed from the outset. On the other hand, the Southern private sector, for the most part—like a well-behaved electron that follows the path of least resistance—tends simply to content itself with being an intermediary. One, stuck as a start-up or pushed to emigrate; the other, limited to importing value instead of generating it.

Nor have the other dichotomies of the political spectrum brought any relief to our distress. So-called social progressives, although animated by noble intentions, seem not to know how to prioritise their battles according to the real circumstances of the South: in the face of a deeply rooted patriarchy, they offer inclusive language to those who are hungry, instead of bringing together the marginalised into a broad popular movement to confront the many forms of oppression—of gender, of ethnicity, of class—which interlock like links of a single, liberticide chain. Their banners are necessary, but their strategies are often erratic. They mistake symbolism for transformation, and posturing for politicisation.

Their conservative adversaries, in the meantime, can conceive of no horizon beyond opposition: rejecting gender or diversity quotas in the name of a theorised meritocracy—from which no one has ever truly benefited—does not address unemployment, nor does it mend the frayed

fabric of our societies. By making resistance to anything new their sole programme, their utopia is the past, even when it is nothing more than fiction. They offer not homeland, but resentment. And resentment does not feed, does not organise, does not liberate.

The globalists, entrenched behind their statistics and identical posts on LinkedIn, persist in justifying their blindness as analysis and continue to scorn popular deprivation: instead of promoting local circular economies and addressing the subsidiarity of the South, they publish technocratic editorials in which, data in hand, they explain to the Peoples that they are misinterpreting the precariousness that they experience, that they are even mistaken in feeling what they feel.

At once, the isolationists fail to see how fanciful the idea of total self-sufficiency is: faced with the harmful yoke of dependence, they respond with the vain illusion of autarky, rather than proposing a project that combines strategic independence with synergistic interdependence. Their rejection of the current order is understandable, but their response is unviable. Without bridges, there is no sovereignty: there is only solitude.

VI. The Hour of Transformation

Thus, we have reached this critical point, where the dualist partisan frameworks that have governed the past three decades are now revealed to be exhausted. It is time, therefore, for new paradigms to emerge: alternative, certainly, but above all constructive and deeply rooted in lived realities. These must begin by confronting an even more insidious division—the one that separates reform from transformation. For if all current doctrines, however much they may oppose each other, rally under the banner of reform—that cosmetic, contained change which

fails to address the underlying causes—true transformation—that which alters the fundamental dynamics, that uproots the very basis of unjust structures—has yet to find its force.

But what stands in the way of transformation? Its demanding rigour. It does not present itself as a short-lived endeavour, but rather as a sustained march, an arduous path, a constant exercise of will. Whilst reform contents itself, and entices, with the immediacy of a short sprint, transformation requires the patience of a farmer who, perhaps, will never himself see the fruits of his labour. Long-term impact always struggles to compete against short-term outputs.

This is the heart of my concern. A concern that might be easier to bear were it not compounded by the bitter irony that there has never been a moment so ripe for the Greater South to assume its historic role, to remake the world, and to put it at the service not only of itself, but of Humanity in its entirety. Nevertheless, this moment risks dissolving without a trace. We find ourselves, as so often in History, on the cusp of a crossroads that requires more than consciousness: it calls for resolve.

The world order we inherited from the 1990s has lost its anchor and is now adrift. The imperial bonds that for so long shackled our Greater South are breaking irreversibly. Today, the wind blows in our favour. What remains for us is to determine, unequivocally, our destination. Let it not be merely a change in winds, but a true change of course!

We must firmly refuse to submit complacently to Fate, just as we must reject the surrender that comes from impotent dismay. Neither the serenity of blind faith in the inevitable course of History, nor the paralysis born of fearful resignation in the face of unfolding human affairs, will serve as our guide in this moment. We still have the chance to seize this historic moment—not for mere reforms, but for a true transformation

of the world—if, and *only* if, we achieve unity. A unity that is neither rhetorical nor circumstantial, but vivid and fruitful: building bridges between our Peoples, who scarcely know themselves, let alone one another; bringing together our intelligences, which still remain scattered behind borders; mutualising our creative capacities, still segregated by sector; and confederating our efforts, which remain fragmented by petty rivalries.

Our aim is not simply unity in opposition to the status quo, but rather to embody a humanist communion forged through the collective endeavour for transformation. We are not defined by the negation of others, but by the affirmation of that to which we aspire and for which we strive together.

That is why we must proclaim, in a voice unshaken, the urgent need for a Third Way of Development—not as a universal, imposed model, but as a vital river in which multiple currents converge, flowing inexorably, sovereign yet symbiotic, towards horizon's altar.

In this hour of half-light, only the midwifery of truly transformative paths—charting unknown courses—will prevent the birth of new monsters and guide us safely to our destination. There are no jubilant promises, no written guarantees. There is only the certainty, in the midst of tempests, that we must collectively forge the future—or be forged by it. Our decision is made, and our resolve unwavering.

And if I have not mentioned the Organisation of Southern Cooperation (OSC) in the panorama I have just outlined, it is not because I do not envisage it in the future we conceive—on the contrary: never has it been as relevant as it is now. Everything that we said and proposed years ago—those issues that may once have seemed alien to the course of the world—today find full resonance in the international discourse.

Yet there is little that I can add that I have not articulated before. And although its value as an instrument is beyond question, the purpose must always transcend the means. Our shared vision has, from the outset, been broader and deeper than the Organisation that binds us together.

With the passing years since my election, I have also come to recognise my initial excess of idealism. I once believed that, against all odds and with few allies, it would suffice to build the vanguard vehicle and hand its wheel to the Member States for the vision to move forward. Today, I know that no matter how virtuous its design, the vehicle does not the driver make. As the Members gradually gained confidence in their own capacities, the Secretariat found itself obliged to pull the vehicle from the front. This arrangement, although it has yielded visible and valuable results during the first programmatic biennium, is neither sustainable nor desirable in the long term. Beyond the drivers and those doing the pulling, we also need our Peoples to push—especially when momentum falters. Their absence, I am convinced, would spell our collective failure. For our cause cannot be limited to the co-administration of its outcomes; it must be co-created in its process.

It is not a question, hence, of a lukewarm reconciliation between the doctrines of the left and the right—an artifice so often theorised and bearing no other fruit than grovelling centrism. What is now taking root amongst us springs from deep within, from the living core of our Peoples, who do not seek an equidistant midpoint between extremes, but a completely new horizon. Our task is none other than to build a genuine pluriversal order: one in which different cosmologies and models can not only coexist, but enrich one another, overlap, and interweave into a tapestry as complex as it is inextricable.

Be that as it may, the Third Way of Development must not be misinterpreted as some disorganised improvisation—a chaotic tent thrown

together during the march to achieve fleeting objectives—or, worse still, a watered-down broth that seeks to please everyone yet nourishes no one. What we propose is not ambiguity disguised as consensus, but a common vision forged from the very diversity that characterises the Greater South.

For in the face of our ideological, cultural and contextual differences, there is a thread that binds us irresistibly together: a profound discontent with the current state of the world. This dissatisfaction does not distinguish through orthodox fault lines. The Marxist sees the structural injustices surrounding us. The Schumpeterian capitalist, for his part, cannot ignore that the entrepreneur's creative destruction has been replaced by the passive greed of the shareholder. Today, both acknowledge that productive dynamism has been supplanted by the sterile accumulation of those who invest not to create, but to concentrate.

That, then, is our point of agreement: we are, so to speak, the club of the dissatisfied. But discontent alone is not enough. It needs purpose, direction, leadership. Our task is to transform that frustration into concrete action, constructive agreements, and a common project. Take, for instance, the drive to promote high value-added industrialisation as an essential part of the Third Way of Development. Could this be achieved through the market? Certainly. Could it be achieved through state-owned enterprises? That, too, is possible. The debate over the means belongs to each Nation, according to its historical trajectory, its priorities, and the sensibilities of its People. Like everyone, I have, of course, my preferences and convictions on the matter, but, at the level of our Greater South, what truly matters is that both paths lead to the same goal: the construction of prosperous, just and sovereign economies, grounded in endogenous capacities.

VII. The Clamour of Sovereignties

Epistemological Sovereignty

To free ourselves from the superficial interpretations that entrap us within a hall of mirrors, reflecting opposing dogmas and distorting the realities of the South with frameworks borrowed from alien models, we need more than fiery proclamations or cleverly crafted strategies.

Every serious attempt to imagine a different path of development—one not imposed by the traditional centres of power, but arising organically from the South, for all of Humanity—must begin with a profound reflection on knowledge itself. For it was not only territory that was colonised, but also the imaginary. The conquest advanced not merely upon bodies, but also upon ideas. Such was the depth of this invasion that, even after political independence—and even in Nations that never suffered direct occupation—we continue to adopt conceptual frameworks and theories born on other shores, forged by other histories, other geographies, and other anxieties. Thus, we end up interpreting our own realities through lenses that were never made to see them.

Knowledge is a contested ground, a battlefield where quiet yet decisive conflicts are waged. And there, deep inequities persist, shaping our very possibilities to think, to name, to exist.

The first of these inequities concerns the very essence of knowledge: what do we understand as legitimate knowledge? And who holds the authority to define it? No person in their right mind would deny the immense value of science and of the academic insights that have illuminated paths for Humanity. Yet, it would be equally myopic to ignore

that other forms of knowledge—born from our lands, nurtured by our communities, and carried down through generations and centuries—have been historically marginalised, silenced, or even ridiculed. This is not about pitting one kind of knowledge against another, nor about replacing laboratories with myths. We do not advocate for an insular identity retreat nor for the trap of self-exoticisation. It is not about empty pride, nor about idealising without criticism a past that also contains its own shadows. Nor is it about rejecting, on principle, all knowledge that comes from the North, for wisdom does not carry a passport and genuine science always aspires to the common good.

What is required is deeper and more arduous: it is about restoring a dialogue that was ruptured by colonial violence and has yet to be repaired. It is imperative that we truly reconnect with our own intellectual traditions—to look at them with clarity and rigour, rescue them from oblivion, submit them to debate, enrich them with critique, and revitalise them so that they may re-enter the global debate of ideas with heads held high.

That is the greater challenge: to forge new epistemologies that are born of the South, not merely as echoes of other voices but as our own proposals, fully conscious of their roots and horizons. Instead of reading the South from the world, it befalls us to read the world from the South. For thinking from ourselves is not an act of isolation, but of affirmation. It is, perhaps, the most profound act of freedom that we can exercise.

The second inequity of knowledge is economic, and it cannot be hidden beneath talk of open access or digital democratisation. Much has been said about paywalls that block access to knowledge, but the problem goes far beyond licences or subscriptions. What is truly alarming is

that the majority of research funding is directed towards the interests of a global minority, neglecting the priorities of the majority. The pandemic exposed this mercilessly: it was not simply the shortage of vaccines that struck the South, but the fact that these were developed under technical conditions impossible to replicate within our contexts. Cold chains designed for countries with steady energy supplies are of no use in warmer regions where electricity is unreliable and where rural areas are vast and complex. This is not merely a technical failing: it is a concrete manifestation of epistemic inequality.

A need hence arises with undeniable clarity, one that can no longer be postponed nor dismissed: the establishment of regional, transdisciplinary research centres that respond to our realities, that think from our territories and commit themselves to our most pressing needs. In parallel, the creation of Southern research councils and independent funding bodies is essential, to support long-term research projects that are not at the mercy of the fluctuating interests of external agencies. Likewise, we require regional instruments that allow us to apply what we discover—innovations that result in real, tangible changes where they are most needed. And above all, it is urgent to implement policies that guarantee equitable access to the fruits of research, which must be understood not as patented products, but as public common goods in service of human dignity.

The third and final principal inequity of knowledge that we must tackle is geopolitical. Knowledge, like power, travels along routes laid out by the North. Barriers to academic mobility, editorial marginalisation, and the invisibilisation of works produced in the South, map out a geography of knowledge that reproduces, with barely any variation, the hierarchies of old. Even today, it is harder for Latin American and

African researchers to collaborate with one another than it is to obtain a tourist visa. And if we are unaware of research being conducted in sister regions facing the same challenges, it is not through negligence, but because global visibility systems are designed to ignore such voices. Compounding this reality is the near-exclusive dominance of English, which constrains the frameworks within which what can be thought and published are defined.

From this arises another inescapable duty: to build open-access digital platforms, designed not as showcases for hegemonic knowledge, but as spaces for free exchange, where our languages, our voices, and our perspectives can find their place. In this task, recent advances in high-precision translation through artificial intelligence can and must be harnessed for the common good. This is not to substitute the irreplaceable work of our translators—who grasp the nuances, the contexts, the intentions—, but rather to break down the initial linguistic barriers that isolate us and exclude millions from the global conversation.

Yet access must not be limited to the digital realm. It requires bodies that move, ideas that travel, and presences that meet. That is why we also need regional and Southern mechanisms that facilitate student and academic mobility. And from this demand emerges a proposal that cannot be disregarded: the creation of a Southern research visa, which would allow us to meet without borders, to think together without hindrance, to weave networks without depending on bureaucratic permits.

What we demand is an act of justice: the honest recognition of these asymmetries as an indispensable condition to overcome them. For if the South is to chart its own path towards development, it must also dare to think in its own words, from its own priorities, using its own ways

of naming the world. Only then will we stop imitating external models and begin to weave, with our own threads, the future that we deserve.

Ecological Sovereignty

Our Greater South not only faces the climate crisis from a position of greater structural fragility, but at the same time holds the keys to imagining a radically different relationship with the Earth. For although we are the most affected by prolonged droughts, devastating hurricanes, uncontrolled wildfires, and loss of biodiversity, we are not merely victims of this environmental collapse: we are also bearers of knowledge and practices that can regenerate and nourish the future of Humanity.

In our territories, there are cosmologies that are still alive, thinking, and resisting—ways of seeing the world that do not separate humans from the environment that surrounds them. Ancestral visions that, far from viewing nature as a collection of resources to be exploited without restraint, understand it as a living network, a sacred fabric of which we are an intrinsic part. For many indigenous Peoples, nature is not a mute object or a warehouse of resources, but a being with which a relationship of care, respect, and reciprocity is established. These ways of knowing, born of centuries of observation and deep connection with the Earth, are not folklore: they are embodied philosophy, living science, ecological ethics in action. In contrast to a world that has confused abundance with accumulation, and for centuries has celebrated an idea of progress linked to absolute domination over nature, these traditions offer more than mere nostalgia or naivety. They offer inspiration. Whilst many discussions reduce sustainability to a set of restrictions and sacrifices, we can speak, from the South, of an affirmative, creative ecology, one that does not merely resist destruction, but proposes ways of life in which economic development and ecological balance do not oppose, but rather reinforce one another.

Within these traditions we find a fertile foundation for imagining alternatives to blind extractivism and unchecked productivism, without having to renounce the legitimate yearning for prosperity found in every society. For there is no contradiction between the desire to live better and commitment to the planet.

Inspired thus, we can envisage circular economies firmly rooted in local territories, that respect natural cycles, value communal knowledge, and build productive systems that neither exhaust the soil nor deplete life itself. And these sustainable economies need not forgo the use of technology. Quite the opposite: it is essential that we harness technological advances—artificial intelligence, clean energy, biotechnology—but always within ethical and political frameworks defined by ourselves, not imposed from outside. It is not a question of choosing between the ancestral and the modern, between memory and innovation. It is about integrating, with foresight and autonomy, whatever enables us to heal a wounded planet and thrive within it.

To say this is not to romanticise the past or to reject the future. Rather, it is an urgent invitation to redefine progress. To leave behind the narrative that has taught us to admire speed, efficiency and limitless expansion, even when these bring devastation, displacement, and despair.

The entire world now sails aboard a planetary Titanic, blinded by its faith in unending growth. The time has come for the voices of the South to chart the course for a new voyage. Not to save the world with a single, universal formula, but to contribute—drawing on our histories, our experiences, and our aspirations—to the shared fabric of that which can yet be built.

Technological Sovereignty

The project of ecological regeneration cannot succeed so long as we remain mere passengers in the dazzling march of the technological revolution.

The fourth industrial revolution has not simply opened a new technical era: it has unleashed an unprecedented civilisational mutation, whose transformations—rapid, profound, and systemic—reach into every corner of our lives. Artificial intelligence models, augmented realities, blockchain, ubiquitous clouds, and omnipresent algorithms are no longer the stuff of speculative fiction, but invisible structures shaping our relationships, decisions, and horizons of possibility. The COVID-19 pandemic, with the global paralysis it caused, only served to speed up this fusion between the human and the digital, deepening our dependence on platforms which, in many cases, promised connection, but simultaneously cemented asymmetries. For whereas innovation is accelerating at exponential rates, access remains anchored in linear paradigms, bound to precarious infrastructures, unequal connectivity, and digital architectures designed elsewhere.

It is not enough to celebrate the benefits of these technologies—from medical diagnoses to financial inclusion—without, at the same time, recognising that their distribution abides by logics which perpetuate inequality. The Greater South, rather than taking part in the technological revolution, has largely been forced to watch it unfold as a spectator.

It is now our turn to become its drivers. For the donations of third parties, however generous they may seem, will never suffice; neither the importation of patented devices nor closed-source platforms will heal the digital wound that separates us from the future. No divide is bridged with crumbs.

And curing that wound of inequality demands that the paths of the South intertwine: it is in digital cooperation, South-South technological transfer, and the development of open-source systems that the seed of truly sustainable, universal access lies. In fact, beyond access itself, we face an even greater challenge: to close the distance between those who innovate and those who consume, by developing our own, endogenous technologies.

But what is the point of creating our own algorithms if, at their core, they only reproduce the inherent prejudices, the commercial surveillance disguised as services, and the data extractivism concealed behind the veneer of “free” access—all of which now subjugate the world under the invisible yoke of a new, digital, privatised North?

The rise of generative artificial intelligence bluntly exposes the scale of this new, digital colonialism. When the data feeding the models comes from the North, what can the South expect other than algorithms that ignore its diversity, languages, and realities? These biases are not accidental flaws; they are symptoms of a structural exclusion masquerading as innovation.

Certainly, there are initiatives in the South seeking alternative paths, but most are fragmented, invisible, deprived of the public support and the open data needed to build models that are truly ours. From here, the urgency of undertaking a twofold task: to map what already exists—because resistance does still exist—and, above all, to forge South-South partnerships that will allow us to create, for instance, endogenous artificial intelligence models capable of speaking from us and for us. For the South cannot content itself with simply possessing technology; it must reinvent it from the ground up. Rethinking technology is, simultaneously, humanising it. This demands grafting it into our sociocultural contexts,

turning it into an instrument of our aspirations, and not, through a lack of foresight, replicating the mistakes made elsewhere where politicians ignored the ethical limits of the market.

Without the conquest of digital sovereignty, all other forms of sovereignty will remain a mirage.

Educational Sovereignty

How can the South embark upon the great undertaking of its technological emancipation and question the very foundations of the digital revolution that is currently shaking the globe? Such a task requires, naturally, the finest of all preparations: that of its youth, who are called not to inherit the remnants of an alien world, but the forging of a new one.

It is evident that education, as both a cognitive and social process, has always existed amongst our Peoples. Nevertheless, the modern educational *system*—as a structure, a paradigm, a project—is a child of Europe, born in the 19th century, under the shadow of two giants: colonisation and the industrial revolution.

It was not conceived to complete the humanisation of human beings. Its purpose was quite different: on the one hand, to make up for the shortage of skilled labour in the industrial heart of Europe; and, on the other, to strip colonised Peoples of their souls and cultures, to uproot their elites, and to align them with imperial thinking, with the capitalist way of life, with the “civilising” project of the victors. Jules Ferry proclaimed this openly: “*I repeat that superior races have a right [to establish colonies], because they have a duty. They have the duty to civilise inferior races.*” There lies the ideological foundation of the co-

lonial school: racial hierarchy and “civilising” mission.

Thus, the school became the favoured instrument for domestication, for forging a subjectivity that served the established order. It was not a school for liberation, but one for domination. And although times have changed and the rhetoric has become more palatable, the deep logic of this system continues to operate—like an underground current—in our curricula and our classrooms. Asia feels it. Latin America endures it. Africa suffers it. Even lands that never experienced formal occupation by the coloniser imported the model without question, along with its conceptual distortions and alien principles.

Thus, profoundly Eurocentric systems persist amongst us. Their historical narratives exclude our voices. Their structures fragment reality. For the thinking behind them is Cartesian: if you understand the parts, you understand the whole. Yet we know that the whole is more than the sum of its parts, that life cannot be explained through fragmentation but, rather, through relation. Our indigenous worldviews, our ancient philosophies, have always envisioned the world as a living fabric, where the human, the natural, and the spiritual engage in a complex unity.

Disciplinary compartmentalisation, born of European rationalism and the factory model of the industrial revolution, shatters this wholeness. From the artisan who puts their soul into every creation, we moved to the worker forced to repeat a single gesture. From the community that raises, we have come to the classroom that enforces uniformity. The modern education system was designed as a factory: grouping children by date of birth, subjecting them to a homogeneous process, dividing knowledge into sealed compartments, assessing through standardised tests, selecting, discarding... All in the service of mass-producing functional

subjects. But human beings are not interchangeable parts. Even less so are the Peoples of the South, whose cultural, linguistic, and territorial diversity demands an education that is living, contextual, and plural.

Nevertheless, even within our own countries, the imposed standardisation continues to deny the realities of our provinces, our languages, our histories. What happens when an indigenous girl, whose mother tongue is K'iche', enters a school that recognises only Spanish as the legitimate language of knowledge? In addition to the barriers imposed by gender, there occurs the silent tragedy of deculturation. The girl already arrives at a disadvantage—not due to a lack of intelligence, but because of the mismatch between her world and the one forced upon her. Whilst others arrive with books, with broad vocabularies, with parents who were themselves educated within the same system, she brings with her a living language, but one rendered invisible, leaving her to face a double challenge: to learn, and to do so in a language that she does not command. And when her results do not meet external expectations, it is not the system that is blamed: it is the girl.

She is made to understand that she is useless, that she should abandon schooling for work. She herself comes to believe she is incapable, that she cannot understand. In this way, the school perpetuates the marginalisation it claims to combat. And it is not just about language. It is the broader phenomenon of decontextualisation, of concentrating knowledge and power in the capitals, leaving the provinces forgotten. Thus, inequalities accumulate, social classes are reproduced, and mobility is hindered. The school, which ought to open doors, closes them. Few manage to escape. Few are the class defectors.

That is why it is not enough to reform the curricula. It is necessary to rethink the system itself from its very foundations. Because if there can be no development without education, there can also be no true education within systems conceived by other hands, for other purposes, to perpetuate precisely the order that we wish to transform. How ruinous were we to reproduce, through our own schools, the very servitude that we seek to break with our own hands!

There is an urgent need, therefore, for a new pedagogical pact—balanced and inclusive—born from our own depths and intended not to replicate the past, but to shape the future. We need an education that speaks our languages, that transmits our memories, that nourishes our roots and understands how, for countless centuries, they have conversed with the world; an education that teaches us to navigate complexity without shipwrecking upon the simplification of reality or of ourselves.

Not one that reduces the teacher to a disposable automaton, nor the student to a blank slate devoid of history. Rather, an education that forges a community of mutual learning, reviving the sacred vocation of teaching and learning, in which the dignity of one is reflected in the freedom of the other. This education can neither be imported nor imposed, for it must respond to our universal aspirations, our national priorities, our local realities, and our individual needs—one cannot contextualise on behalf of others.

Without the foundation of all development—the human being—and without their transformation, no other will be possible.

Cultural Sovereignty

The human dimension—consecrated at the fiery heart of our Southern cause—imposes upon us not only the noble responsibility of democratising the arts, but also the urgent task of rejecting every attempt to fossilise our cultures. For nothing is more offensive to a living People than to see its History reduced to ornament, its symbols turned into merchandise, its voice made an exotic echo to satisfy the curiosity of tourist circuits. We rebel against that aesthetic of confinement which seeks to embalm our cultures in museums, as if they were motionless relics of the past and not vibrant forces of the present.

Without a People, there is no culture. And our Peoples of the Greater South are not motionless statues or ghosts frozen in distant times. They are beings in movement, in rebellion, in constant transformation. The cultures of our South have not been banished from their past, but neither are they stuck in it. They are living forces. They exist in a constant dance, in a continual act of reinvention: in perpetual conciliation between the settlements of yesterday and the uprisings of tomorrow. In them, memory converses with desire, roots with projection, the ancestral with the unprecedented.

And if culture is this—a living, creative, and insubordinate force—then its democratisation cannot consist merely in expanding passive consumption of folkloric products. To democratise culture is to embrace it as the affirmation of creative sovereignty. It is to understand that culture is—as it should be—a terrain of contest: a battleground where the People recognise and reinvent themselves, and through which they project themselves into the future. Culture is fashioned by popular hands and, as it returns to them, forges new realities. It remains faithful

to its essence when it transmits memory, indeed, but fulfils its destiny when it enters into dialogue *in* and *with* the world—on its own terms.

For this reason, it is essential to multiply spaces of creation, of encounters, and of cultural reinvention—not as ancillary activities, but as a central part of any emancipatory project. We need popular festivals that celebrate living plurality; artistic residencies that connect creators with their territories, their struggles, their dreams; “Cultural Houses of the Greater South” that are not mausoleums for the past, but laboratories of radical imagination, rooted in memory and nourished by contemporaneity; common public funds that support our artisans, poets, musicians, storytellers, filmmakers, dancers, weavers of narratives and keepers of symbols. It is not just a question of preserving: it is a matter of transforming without betraying.

In the same way, it becomes vital to nurture creative industries that do not simply replicate the aesthetic frameworks dictated by the global art market, but instead emerge from our own wombs, proposing the unprecedented, the unexpected, the deeply transformative of the social condition.

For in art, as in politics, it is not enough to repeat what has already been said: one must say what has not yet been imagined. And not out of vanity, but because of historical necessity. For Peoples who do not create are Peoples who do not decide. And the Peoples of the South have chosen to no longer remain spectators to the narrative of others. We have chosen to tell our own stories, in our own languages, with our own voices, with our own heartbeats. And in that free, diverse, narration that is authentically our own, our true emancipation will begin.

Health Sovereignty

What is the point of speaking about the human dimension, of dreaming of a just and radiant future, if our Peoples continue to die for want of a cure that exists, due to the absence of a doctor who never appears, because of hospitals of which nothing remains but ruins, rubble, and silence? How can a future be built upon avoidable graves? If we do not defend the right to life, what claim do we have to any other sovereignty?

Health can no longer remain a privilege reserved for those who can pay for it, and even less a business governed by interests that have turned human suffering into opportunity, and need into plunder. The world cannot call itself civilised whilst a child remains ill due to the arbitrariness of an impenetrable patent; whilst a mother dies in childbirth for want of the most basic necessities; whilst an entire community is deprived of so fundamental a right as not to suffer for want of what is already curable; whilst hospitals do exist, yet appointments are ever eluding.

What was once innocently called “structural adjustment” has become a structural disease: towns without clinics, clinics without doctors, doctors without medicines. Thus was the social contract broken. And faced with this tragedy, what is offered to us? Austerity dictated by distant financial institutions, faceless and soulless, or philanthropic charity, whose apparent generosity is nothing more than the management of dispossession.

To be absolutely clear: the Third Way of Development will not be real—nor even possible—unless it is founded upon sovereign, free, universal, high-quality health systems. This task is inescapable: to build systems conceived not to follow the dictates of pharmaceutical companies nor to serve the profit of insurance companies, but to protect the human being, and the world as fragile as it is vast of which each is the custodi-

an. For if not even a global pandemic managed to breach the fortress of profit, then what hope can there be without rupture?

And that is why we must declare, with neither ambiguity nor euphemism, a total war against health injustice. For there will be no justice without confronting the economic interests of the major pharmaceutical companies.

We need hospitals built with our own hands, healthcare professionals trained with our own minds, medicines produced with our own sciences. But, above all, it is not just about curing, but preventing; not just guaranteeing access, but ensuring quality; not only treating individuals, but recognising, as well, the vital interconnection between public health and the environment—flora and fauna.

For the health of a People cannot be reduced to the mere presence of hospitals, nor measured solely by the absence of disease. True health, that which dignifies and sustains a Nation, is rooted in the structural conditions that allow human beings to entirely fulfil their lives: body, mind, and soul, in harmony with their surroundings. It is intertwined with the soil beneath our feet, with the water we drink, with the air we breathe, with the food we grow. We cannot guarantee public health if we permit the devastation of our ecosystems, if we fail to recognise that human life depends also on the nourishing flora and the balancing fauna. The medicine of tomorrow—if it is to be just—will also be ecological.

For any nation that does not guarantee life cannot aspire to call itself free. And we will not be satisfied with symbolic independence or empty rhetoric: we seek concrete liberty, incarnated in bodies that do not perish from being forgotten, that do not fall ill through neglect, that do not

suffer for the profit of a few. Every healthy body will be more than an individual victory: it will be a trench won against the system of death.

This will be the ethical foundation of our endeavour. Without it, everything else will be mere smoke.

Food Sovereignty

An elemental truth is here revealed with absolute clarity, one that is so often overlooked: health is not separable from food, and food is not alien to sovereignty. The way we cultivate the land, the destination we give to our food, the models of production we accept or reject—all of this directly impacts the possibility of living in wholeness. Where the soil is mistreated, the human body falls ill. Where agricultural knowledge is marginalised, the social fabric is weakened. Where food becomes a commodity traded on foreign exchanges, the right to life is called into question.

For this reason, a transition towards sustainable agriculture—deeply rooted in our own realities, memories, and needs—is an urgent necessity. Not the kind designed to serve monocultures destined for exports whose value is determined in distant and unstable markets, but the kind that, with a sovereign purpose, enshrines at its centre the nourishment of our Peoples, the care of our soils, and the vitality of our rural communities.

We need agriculture that regenerates rather than degrades. That does not silence the knowledge passed down through generations, but instead conjugates it with the possibilities offered by contemporary technology. An agriculture that dignifies those who work the land, rather than subordinating them to production chains that benefit only transnational

capital. For wherever respect for agriculture is lost, so too is the bond between human beings and the Earth—that is life—which sustains them.

Food sovereignty, even when conceived from a regional perspective and in complementarity amongst our Nations, is neither an act of nostalgia nor a protectionist slogan. It is an ethical and strategic necessity. Guaranteeing each person access to healthy, diverse, and culturally meaningful food is to guarantee life itself; it is to affirm that no one will be free if they cannot eat well, if this security can vanish simply because a war breaks out in Europe.

And there is more: by substituting imports that follow foreign consumption patterns, by recovering crops abandoned due to the logic of exportation, we will not only heal bodies, but also our economies. We will staunch the constant bleeding of our foreign currency reserves. We will revive the rural economy, stem the exodus to overcrowded cities, and begin to weave a new social contract. The countryside will cease to be synonymous with deprivation to become a space of opportunity. New value chains will thus emerge, woven around nutritious and sustainable food industries, capable of transforming our products without compromising the health of those who consume them or the balance of the ecosystems that sustain them. This synergy between land and industry, between tradition and innovation, between ecology and economy, will open the doors to truly endogenous development.

Because it is not only about sowing nutritious crops: it is about sowing the future. It is about cultivating the land, not as those who would exploit it, but as those who support a process of life; not to fatten the profits of a handful of corporations, but so that the existence of many may flourish; not in the service of yields that devastate, but of a future that cares, that nourishes, and that honours.

And in this noble undertaking, agriculture returns to the place it should never have lost: not as a subordinate appendage of the global economy, but as the backbone of sovereignty and national health. And whoever does not understand this fundamental truth will have no ground to speak for the Peoples—and much less for their wellbeing.

Energy Sovereignty

It would be a profound contradiction—and an act of historical irresponsibility—to proclaim sustainability as the guiding principle of our aspired Third Way of Development, without accompanying it with a clear, ambitious, and coherent project to ensure, once and for all, the energy sovereignty of our Nations.

And this sovereignty can no longer be based on the sources of yesterday, those that have left behind desolate landscapes, polluted seas, and poisoned skies. It must be founded on the energies that herald the future: clean, renewable, ours.

Persistent dependence on fossil fuels not only erodes the ecological foundations of our common home; it also subjects our economies to the whims of a global market that is exogenous, unstable, and speculative. This structural fragility—tolerated for far too long—is not a technical abstraction: it has real and painful consequences. It feeds imported inflation that overwhelms the capacity of our monetary institutions; it reduces the already scarce margins of our national industries; and it condemns millions of citizens of the South to an energy precarity that not only denies them comfort, but strips them of their very dignity.

And in the midst of this inescapable transition, a question arises which we cannot—nor should we—avoid: What future awaits our oil-producing countries? Are they doomed to lose what was once their strength? Will they be left behind in the name of a future that does not include them?

Not in the least! The imminent energy revolution is not a death sentence for our oil-producing countries, but an invitation to their deepest transformation. It is not the twilight of their relevance, but the dawn of a new era, in which they will cease to export crude oil as raw material and become Nations capable of producing—with intelligence, vision, and autonomy—derivative, high value-added goods. For the resource that is not transformed, subordinates; the one which is industrialised, emancipates.

Thus, the path towards energy sovereignty will not be a sacrifice of some for the benefit of others, but a collective endeavour, where all gain in sustainability, resilience, and destiny. And this will only be possible if the South does not simply adapt to the agenda of others, but instead forges its own, in dialogue with science, technology, and its own aspirations.

To that end, it is not enough to merely proclaim our commitment to renewable, clean energies if we continue to depend on imported technologies that perpetuate our subordination. It is urgent that we recognise that many of our Southern territories harbour the strategic minerals—such as cobalt, lithium, and nickel—essential for the global energy transition. Cobalt, for instance, vital in the lithium-ion batteries that will power tomorrow's electric vehicles, is extracted mostly from the lands of the DRC, often under conditions that violate human dignity and plunder the material prosperity of our Peoples. Thus, our energy sovereignty—and its truly sustainable dimension—cannot be achieved without a firm and visionary plan for industrialisation, one

that transforms our mineral wealth into opportunities for autonomous development. This path will not only reduce energy costs by avoiding the import of expensive technologies, but it will also turn our reserves into a legitimate source of prosperity, ensuring that the transition towards planetary sustainability does not become a new, disguised form of colonialism, but a tangible manifestation of energy, technological, and economic sovereignty.

Economic Sovereignty

All of this leads us inexorably to the historic imperative of high value-added industrialisation as an indispensable pillar of our economic development. Most of our countries in the Greater South remain trapped in an economic pattern that we did not design, but which continues to determine our Fate: net exporters of raw materials or intermediate products; net importers of manufactured goods. The structures of the colonial economy have not been abolished, merely camouflaged. We were conceded political independence, but true sovereignty was denied to us.

Coffee embodies the painful paradox. This universal fruit, consumed in every corner of the globe, has an unmistakably Southern root: it grows only in the soils of the South—in Latin America and the Caribbean, in Africa, in Asia. Yet, if we look at the world's ten largest coffee exporters, we find that four of them do not grow a single coffee tree—France, Italy, Switzerland, and Germany. They do not cultivate coffee, yet they export it in processed forms at prices that multiply the value of our raw beans many times over. Whilst Ethiopia, Yemen, Vietnam, or Colombia continue to export bags of green beans for less than three dollars—a price that, to its credit, is *fair trade*—these countries sell blended capsules for forty.

And yet, we continue to celebrate export as synonymous with success, even when, in the very presidential residences of our own countries—on lands blessed with the finest beans in the world—I have been served imported, instant coffee. This is not just an anecdote—it is a portrait.

What is said about coffee applies just as forcefully to cocoa, cotton, sugar, and also to the strategic minerals that today underpin the global energy transition. Without lithium, cobalt, or nickel—all found in our territories—there would be no solar panels, no batteries, nor electric cars touted as the clean face of the future. And yet, we continue to export countless, unbranded tonnes, whilst we import devices that return them to us with added value.

It is because of this that we must now speak unequivocally: it is no longer enough simply to produce. True economic sovereignty cannot just be proclaimed—it must be built. It is established in plants that process what was once exported in raw form. It is affirmed in facilities that roast our coffee, in capsule factories, in technical training for master blending. It is not enough to have companies that extract: we need industries that transform. We require centres that turn our minerals into technological components, not merely loading warehouses. We need textile factories that clothe our Peoples with the very cotton that springs from their fields. It is urgent to have scientific research centres that develop treatments and vaccines for our endemic diseases, not to keep importing medicines at prices that drain public coffers.

None of this will be possible without a clear, coordinated, sustained industrial policy. A policy that does not chase only abstract growth, reduced to macroeconomic percentages that rarely touch the ground where the People walk, but one which brings about a real transformation

of our productive structures. This demands strategy, but also persistent will. It requires investment, but above all, vision.

And it will also become a potent source of regional integration. For the producing country may not always have the nitrogen needed to preserve the quality of roasted coffee, nor the aluminium required to make the capsules, but its neighbours, perhaps, do. In this way, a new kind of integration is woven: not imposed from above by abstract political agreements, but born out of mutual interest, shared necessity, and collective ingenuity. This is a functional, economic, and supportive integration—not limited to diplomatic declarations, but rooted in regional value chains, in the coordination of capabilities, in the joint construction of sovereignty.

But above all, this calls for a break with resignation. We must refuse to go on walking on our heads—as the French would say—and instead walk upright, on our own feet, towards the destiny we shall have chosen for ourselves.

The future of the Greater South will not be extracted. It will be built through the sweat of our efforts, guided by the vision that will unite us.

Infrastructural Sovereignty

Yet what is the use of discoursing on the necessity for high value-added industrialisation, if our trade remains stifled by a lack of connectivity? To speak of productive transformation under such conditions would be nothing more than empty sophistry, eloquence without consequence. There is no benefit in producing roasted coffee, woven cotton, cocoa turned into chocolate bars, or refined strategic minerals, if we are unable to circulate them amongst our own Nations.

We must, therefore, resolutely open Southern markets to Southern products, and this demands, with urgency, concrete and sustained investment in infrastructure that not only connects geographies, but also destinies. How much longer shall we tolerate the perverse logic that makes it easier to travel North than to visit our own neighbours? On what authority do we speak of cooperation when a Latin American must cross Europe to reach Africa, or when an African trader loses entire days to border formalities designed neither for commerce nor for human beings? One cannot seriously speak of integration, nor even basic cooperation, without the infrastructure that makes it possible.

We need roads that link Peoples, not just capitals; ports that connect continents, not simply serve as toll gates; trains that cross our borders like threads weaving together Nations; and airports that are not mere departure points to the North, but hubs of interconnection for our Peoples. The time has come for our own hands to build the routes that will free us from commercial dependence, and for our determination to forge the alliances necessary to achieve true integration.

But such integration must also challenge another form of hegemony: that of our own Norths within the South—our overcrowded capitals and hypertrophied urban centres, which concentrate wealth and opportunity whilst our rural areas wither in neglect. We must therefore embark decisively on policies of decentralisation, alongside public investments that multiply opportunities where today there is only abandonment.

For every kilometre of road that we build, we strike a blow against inequality; every bridge that we raise fulfils a promise of self-determination; every port that we equip becomes a window opened to equitable trade; and every airport that receives flights from other regions of the South is a gateway to genuine cooperation between Peoples.

These sectors are not only relevant but absolutely critical for consolidating a Third Way of Development, and are vital—without the slightest exaggeration—for the future of the Greater South. In each of these areas, there are pathways already opening, which not only could be taken, but must be taken without delay, with bold ambition. The initiatives conceivable in these domains far exceed those that I managed to outline, with diligent effort, in the Organisation's Common Programme for the biennium 2025–2026.

Our vision, I insist, extends far beyond the boundaries of our own institutionality. This is not a matter of abandonment, but of transcendence—what began to gestate so many years ago can no longer be contained by what once held it, because although the Organisation has been and remains a most useful vehicle, the project now calling out to us does not belong to any given structure: it belongs to the Peoples, and to the destiny they are willing to forge.

VIII. The Awakening of Citizenry

In this geopolitical interstice opening before us—fragile yet fertile—we cannot simply manage what already exists. Instead, it befalls us to build genuine, committed collectives around a common project of transformation. Whilst, in the past, we have known collectives that suffocated the individual and, today, we live in the age of the individual trampling over the collective, tomorrow must belong to collectives composed of individuals—those that balance and harmonise the duties and rights of one and the other. But this enterprise demands of us, as a first step, to centre our strategies on encouraging genuine, active, and meaningful participation from all sectors—as actors, not merely as beneficiaries, of the endeavour.

Our Peoples are ready to shoulder the weight of this colossal construction, but they demand structures that guarantee their authentic participation, not just symbolic gestures. For beyond the depoliticisation imposed at a global scale, within our own Nations we have stripped our Peoples of their natural condition: of being subjects, not mere objects; protagonists, not simply passive beneficiaries of a model that rarely considers them as a living part of their own destiny.

How fatuous it would be to list the regimes that various Peoples of the South have suffered over the decades! Such a catalogue, albeit revealing, would neither excuse nor soften the responsibility of those imported Western-style democracies, which, instead of sowing citizenship, fostered disillusionment, and by reducing politics to a technocratic procedure, contributed to ever more profound alienation of the People from public affairs.

True democracy is not appearances, but consciousness. And to politicise—in its noblest and most human sense—is to involve the People in their own future, in the collective destiny of the Nation, in the very course of History. As our friend Frantz said so many years ago, to politicise is not to speak *to* the People, but *with* them. It is to make them understand that, if we move forward, it will be thanks to their strength; and if we stagnate or fall back, it will be due to their absence.

A society that limits itself to the formality of calling for a vote every few years cannot, in any profound sense, be considered democratic, as if sovereignty were a delegated contract and not a sacred and shared responsibility. Have we not already seen, in countries of the North, mass abstention at the polls, the logic of the “tactical vote”, and with it, the tacit admission that public life has become alien to those who ought to lead it? This phenomenon, already severe in those contexts, manifests itself even more starkly in our countries. What is the use of the right to vote if all it guarantees is the continued privilege of remaining *beneficiaries* of managed misery?

Each of our Peoples must, therefore, develop their own forms of democracy—whether by adapting ancestral practices or forging new approaches born out of their experiences and aspirations—that go beyond the electoral ritual and ensure the creative, sustained, and meaningful participation of all citizens in the life of the Nation. For real democracy is measured not by the formalities of procedure, but by the vitality of citizenry.

And I will go further, bluntly: a monarchy or single-party State that has managed to build real, continuous, and meaningful forms of popular participation will be more democratic, in spirit and in practice, than a presidentialist republic that holds soulless elections, whose rituals have become empty of meaning—awakening not vision, but generating fatigue.

However, in affirming and ratifying the imperative of genuine democratic participation, we must not fall into the trap of merely replacing one form of dogma with another. Just as we reject absolute verticality, which leads to disconnection, alienation, and, at its most extreme, to dictatorship, so too must we be wary of doctrinaire horizontality which, under the guise of equality, ends up paralysing all progress. For there is no politicisation without participation, yes—but neither is there transformation without direction. Where there is no leadership with balanced verticality, it is not liberty that flourishes, but stagnation; not deliberation, but sterile fragmentation.

History teaches us that leadership vacuums, rather than guaranteeing greater emancipation, often open the door to the return of authoritarian forms presenting themselves, dangerously, as saviours from chaos. Indeed, where unchecked verticality leads to the cult of a providential leader, purposeless horizontality results in endless assemblies—incapable of decision, of construction, of endurance. And it is precisely in that functional impotence that authoritarianism finds fertile ground to be reborn, disguised as efficiency.

That is why what we demand is not the replacement of one extreme with its opposite, but the lucid construction of a mature equilibrium: genuine participation, rooted in the People, yes; but also reasoned leadership, with responsibility and a sense of History. We do not need saviours, but neither can we afford rudderless dispersal, where everyone acts as if merely having an opinion were enough to change the order of the world, as if will alone, without structure, were sufficient to sustain the future. We need participatory institutions, not merely democratic façades; political leadership, not messianism; collective deliberation, not stagnant anarchy. For only from that dynamic balance can a democracy flourish that is not an empty promise, but a genuine instrument of transformation.

IX. The Realignment of the South

From a democratic worldview, our countries must recognise—not in the abstract, but with full historical and strategic consciousness—that we constitute the majority of the world. We are not the periphery. We are the South: vast, alive, present. And yet, our voices continue to be treated as marginal, symbolically represented to appease consciences, or silenced by structures that tolerate us, but do not truly listen.

If we want to transform this unjust order, if we genuinely aspire to reform the international institutions that have restricted our real participation in global governance, then we must begin by finding strength in what has, for far too long, been the stage of our defeats: unity. But not a unity that imposes uniformity—for that would be to deny ourselves—but a unity that nourishes itself from diversity. A unity that does not fear differences, but transforms them into strategic strength, political creativity, and historic advantage.

To achieve this, it is vital to strengthen our regional integration mechanisms, freeing them from the burden of excessive ideological politicisation, which does not illuminate but paralyses. That which this era demands of us is the ability to build genuinely common positions—not diluted compromises, not insipid formulas, not mockeries of consensus, but joint wills capable of transforming the order itself, not just commenting on it.

From this, one of the convictions sustaining our cause comes to the fore: the South will not be built only with efforts and resources, but also with bonding ties. South-South cooperation cannot remain a mere diplomatic declaration: it is the moral and strategic nerve of a historic project. Because, although our languages, cultures, histories, and even ideologies are extremely diverse, the Peoples of the South face challenges that are systemic, systematic, and shared. Our responses, therefore, cannot be fragmented. Where similar wounds exist, there must be solidary healing. Where parallel aspirations arise, there must be paths that intersect.

In this sense, regional integration is not merely a collateral dividend: it is the most intense form of cooperation amongst equals. The regions of the South do not just share material conditions; they share histories of struggle, challenges, and aspirations. What gives meaning to South-South cooperation is deepened, concentrated, and made more urgent at the regional level.

But integration is not only an ethical imperative—it is also a practical necessity. For if we affirm, as we do, that development must be endogenous, we must also acknowledge that absolute independence—total self-sufficiency—is an illusion. No country can achieve everything alone. No People can endure without allies. Where national self-sufficiency falls short, collective autonomy must emerge. And not as a surrender,

but as an expansion: pooling resources, coordinating capacities, combining intelligences. There is no loss of sovereignty in this, but rather a multiplication of possibilities.

Regional integration, then, is not limited to the economy: it can—and must—also be cultural. There are obstacles which are not immediately visible, yet they inflict deep wounds. In the Arab world, for instance, a word such as “transdisciplinarity” lacks a stable translation. Each author, each academic, each translator improvises their own formulation. Thus, a Palestinian researcher may never find the article of a Moroccan colleague, even though they share the same language, the same interest, and even the same idea. Linguistic fragmentation thus turns into an epistemic barrier, a brake on collaboration, an isolation of thought.

This problem will not be solved through individual or national efforts. A collective response is needed: a regional linguistic academy, an inter-governmental institution where writers, researchers, and intellectuals from our Arab Nations meet, harmonise meanings, and together forge the terms of the future. A space where our languages may live, evolve, and bravely face the twenty-first century without losing their internal logic nor their millenary souls. This would be a model form of regional integration, not dependent on politicking, but which, by being linguistic and cultural, is profoundly political.

For every endeavour that seeks to influence reality, even if not framed within traditional processes, participates in the political—in the noble sense of a collective project. And it is from this broader understanding that we reaffirm two essential foundations for regional integration: first, that the reasons making South-South cooperation desirable and crucial become all the more intense at the regional level; and second, that full sovereignty will not be achieved in solitude, but in community.

But true integration cannot be built upon the volatility of momentary affinities. It needs roots, continuity, historical maturity. To achieve this, it must be founded not only on institutional agreements, but on a deeper notion: the founding of a People. As Debray rightly observed: a population is a group that shares a space; a People is a population which has traversed time, inherited a memory, and become the custodian of a promise of the future. If we want integration within our regions, we must found Peoples in the fullest sense, which requires processes that endure, stable institutions, bonds that are not broken at the first change of government. Integration cannot remain a fleeting project tied to shifting ideological sympathies. It needs roots that traverse political cycles and bear fruit in future generations.

Building on the strength of regional integration efforts—even those yet to be consolidated—there is an urgent duty to move towards the creation of more numerous, more effective, and more concrete Southern instruments. These must not exist solely on paper or in speeches, but must take tangible form in the lives of our Peoples. South-South cooperation must be embodied in structures that nourish the common good and irreversibly strengthen our collective sovereignty.

The Organisation that today brings us together is, unquestionably, one such instrument. Its consolidation is no longer merely desirable: it is necessary. But it should not stand alone. We need to build more of our own institutions, amongst them emancipatory financial bodies that will free us from the subordination imposed by reliance on foreign currencies. Our relationship with the dollar has become a chronic addiction, shaping decisions, weakening budgets, and delaying genuine development.

Our ongoing work to make the Greater South Development Bank (GSDB) operational within two years is certainly a significant step in the right direction. But it will not be enough. We will need more levers,

more strategic mechanisms to increase our capacity for autonomous investment, to boost our industrial reach, and to enable us to plan development without having to ask for permission. Emancipation is not mere proclamation: it is instruments.

At the same time, we must work towards deeper and technically inter-operable coordination amongst our regional and continental organisations: CELAC, the African Union, the Arab League, ASEAN, amongst others. These institutions must not operate as isolated islands, but as an archipelago joined by solid bridges. For regional integration and South-South cooperation are not parallel routes: they are currents that meet, intertwine, and mutually reinforce one another. And from that confluence arises a greater river.

It is also time to organise our efforts in strategic sectors. We need robust mechanisms of sectoral cooperation, genuine “OPECs” of the South, which would enable us to act in unity in key areas such as critical minerals. Not to monopolise, but to transform. These platforms would strengthen our negotiating power with established trade and financial powers, stabilise our markets, guarantee fair prices, and, above all, restore dignity to those who have been systematically dispossessed.

Who can look the farmer in the eye, without blushing of shame, as he receives mere crumbs for his coffee beans, whilst multinationals and speculative funds amass fortunes from his toil?

An entire value chain is yet to be built! And with it, a new and sustainable prosperity that is still to be shared.

Only when we have consolidated these structures—banks, networks, alliances, value chains—will we be in a position to demand, rather than simply supplicate, the reform of the international institutions that continue to operate as relics of a vanished world. None is more emblematic

in its imbalance than the United Nations Security Council. How can we possibly justify, at this stage of History, that five countries—of which only one belongs to the South—retain the power to veto Humanity's most pressing decisions? What logic allows the power to extinguish hope to be concentrated in so few hands?

If, as is argued, there must be a smaller body able to act swiftly in the face of threats to peace, then let it at least be truly representative of the world as it is, not as it once was. There should be a seat for the African Union, another for the Arab League, one for CELAC, another for ASEAN, one for the European Union... And if historic powers are to retain some form of representation, let this be on objective and transparent grounds—let our Modern Crassus and China keep their seats—just as space should also be made for countries such as India.

But it is not enough to redraw the international architecture. We must also weave the invisible, yet vital threads that bind our societies. We need networks for exchanges amongst our scientists, artists, thinkers, trade unions, cooperatives, youth groups, and communities. For the bonds between Peoples are stronger than agreements between governments—they are more durable, more resilient, more authentic.

We must also link these Southern movements for transformation with their counterparts in the North, wherever conditions permit, for the Greater South is more than just a geography: it is a human condition. It is the name of a structural inequality. It is the shadow cast by every unjust power relation. Wherever that shadow exists, wherever there is an underlying dynamic of injustice, there, too, is the South.

The Greater South is not destined to isolationist withdrawal, but to reconcile Humanity with justice.

Taken together, these measures—all of them necessary, albeit none alone sufficient—will provide the solid foundation upon which a new multilateralism can be erected. Not one proclaimed from the lofty pulpits of power, nor grudgingly tolerated as a generous concession by those who have ruled until now, but a multilateralism born as the genuine expression of a truly international community. And this new order must rest on three, immutable pillars: equality amongst parties; equity in relations; and solidarity—not as a vertical favour, but as a horizontal practice.

And in this context of uncertainty, it is telling that even the walls of the transatlantic alliance are beginning to show cracks. It is true that these fissures are not, in themselves, enough to usher in a new era; but they undoubtedly constitute a window that is opening ever so slightly, a fracture through which the light of another possibility might seep. And if we have learnt anything from our long history of exclusion, it is that even the shortest-lived opportunities must be seized with both vision and vigour.

The European Union—disenchanted by the inconsistency and erratic drift that have characterised recent United States policy—now finds itself at a crossroads it cannot avoid. Either it pursues a path of protectionist retreat; or it embraces a renewed commitment to the rest of the world, to those it has treated as the periphery for far too long. And I want to believe that the imperative of economic self-interest, if not yet a genuine moral conviction, will nudge it towards this second path.

In the face of this potential turning point, the Greater South must act with strategic clarity and steadfast purpose. Every sincere interest in forging closer ties must be welcomed. For ours has never been a project of primitive opposition or blind rejection of the West. We do not define ourselves by what we deny, but by what we affirm. Our cause

does not stem from some lingering historical resentment, but from a humanist vision, anchored in the aspirations of our Peoples: their right to self-determination, their longing for shared prosperity, and their determination to live in justice alongside the rest of the world.

But any rapprochement, to be fruitful and sustainable, must begin with an honest resetting of the relationship. Not with symbolic gestures, nor with subsidiarity disguised as cooperation, but with a profound redefinition of ties, aimed at building mutually beneficial partnerships rooted in respect, symmetry, and alignment with our sovereign priorities.

And that will not happen by chance. Nor through the capricious ebb and flow of isolated bilateral initiatives. Only deliberate and strategically orchestrated South-South coordination will be able to shape that common voice, turning external interest into shared opportunities, and transient circumstances into a new path. For if we are not ready to speak with one voice, others will do so for us. And if we do not shape our own agenda, we shall find ourselves—yet again—as part of those of others.

History holds no place for those who hesitate. The time has come to move forward with clarity, with dignity, and in unity.

X. The Time to Dream in Motion

Within this broad and demanding context, the Organisation—with both the limitations and possibilities offered by its mandate—has a crucial role to play. It is, and will remain, a valuable instrument. Yet, like any instrument, it must not be mistaken for the entire project. The Secretariat, no matter how committed it may be, cannot—and even if it could, it should not—bear the weight of the process alone. It is not its place to drag the vehicle of History nor to replace the collective will

that must provide it direction and momentum. The responsibility to act can no longer be endlessly delegated: there is a pressing need for our own countries to take on a more active, more resolute, and more consistent leadership.

Much remains to be done. And institutional action alone will not suffice if it is not accompanied by popular impetus. This is why I insist on the irreplaceable role of social movements at the base. For when we focus on the People, as we must, we cannot fall into the trap of thinking of them as a passive abstraction—a homogeneous and inert mass awaiting awakening from above. Many are already on the move. Many do not wait for permission. Every day, I see further signs that something profound is gestating beyond the spotlight and outside the scope of traditional frameworks.

The vision that has been developing and that we have gradually shaped—and as I have repeated so often—extends far beyond the contours of any institution. For the future of the Greater South will not be decreed from offices, nor will it arise simply from accumulating reports. That is why, and I shall not tire of repeating it: the future of the Greater South depends entirely on the genuine participation of our Peoples. The destiny of the South can only be built with the genuine, conscious, and organised involvement of its Peoples. There will be no meaningful transformation unless it is with them, by them, and from them.

Our countries lack neither brilliance, nor will, nor initiative. What we face is not a desert of talent, but a persistent disconnection: a fracture between the fertile energy of our popular base and the political architecture that ought to channel it. All we lack is a unifying vision and the collaborative mechanisms for participation and collective construction. The rest will be History.

The decline of a dying order, one that no longer convinces even its own architects, is now a certainty. Those who once lectured us from the comfort of their pulpits now waver within their own structures. They failed to recognise in time that their empires were crumbling from within, gnawed away by their own contradictions. For far too long, the South was treated as a warehouse of resources and a dumping ground for crises. Yet that very South—exploited, plundered, silenced—is not destined to be the gravedigger of a moribund order. We do not want to administer ruins: we want to raise the new. Where they manage decay, we are sowing the future. With everyone, by everyone, and for everyone—in the South as in the North.

But if we want the Greater South to move beyond being an economic category without substance, or a geopolitical slogan without a soul; if we want it to become a political identity, a tectonic force, a historic cause in motion, then we must achieve unity in diversity and mobilisation in solidarity. But above all, we must reclaim something even more fundamental: our collective capacity to dream.

Yes, to dream. Because under the dictatorship of technocracy, merely dreaming becomes a profoundly revolutionary act. There can be no transformation without first having the courage to imagine the world that we wish to see born. I know there will be no shortage of those who, defeated by bitter disenchantment or entrapped in cynicism and scepticism, will see in what I have expressed here nothing more than an overabundant feast of aspirations, an overflow of intentions. But I ask: what is the alternative? What choice do we have left? To persist in inertia? To resign ourselves to what has been imposed, without protest? To surrender without offering any resistance, or to content ourselves with the struggles and achievements of those who came before us and refused to give in to cowardice? Should we really accept suffering, poverty, and injustice as our inevitable fate, just because the task is hard

and victory uncertain? Or are we to wander aimlessly, as sleepwalkers, afraid to face the age in which we have been destined to live?

To those who think this way, I say: Dream! And do so with the calm fury of justice. Dream boldly! With your eyes wide open and your feet firmly planted on the ground. And if you cannot, if you will not, if you lack the breath or the valour, then at least do not get in the way—step aside. For there are many others who will continue pushing forward, with the bravery to look at what today seems impossible, and to face it head-on.

And let it not be said that I seek to lead such a vast and noble undertaking. I do not desire it, nor is it my place. My intention is another, more modest, but no less urgent—to tell the cynics and the sceptics this:

Wake up, now! No more excuses disguised as cautious rationality. Stand up! No more immobilism dressed up as realism. Act! Enough of complaints that only prolong paralysis, and of that laziness that pretends to be common sense. Join your efforts! Contribute! Take action! For those who refuse to act will be swept along by the resolve of those who have decided to continue walking.

And if, for this, I am called foolish, **then I accept it with pride.**

**“Today, the wind blows in our
favour. What remains for us is
to determine, unequivocally, our
destination. Let it not be merely a
change in winds, but a true
change of course!”**

