STATEMENT BY THE GROUP OF FRIENDS OF SPANISH
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ROUND TABLE: “LANGUAGES AND DIVERSITY, FACTORS OF PEACE”
20 MARCH 2015

Mr. President,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the "Group of Friends of the Spanish to the United Nations" (GAE, for its acronym in Spanish) in this round table that has been organized by the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie as part of the celebrations of the Month of La Francophonie in New York.

The GAE is grateful for the kind invitation that has been made to us and we hope that our groups may continue to further strengthen the bonds that unite us with the ultimate objective of promoting multilingualism as a crucial element in multilateralism. Likewise, we highlight GAE’s recognition of the importance of cultural and linguistic diversity as a mechanism to promote dialogue and peace among peoples.

Mr. President,

At the time of its creation, our group recognized the growing interest of Spanish-speaking people in the work of the United Nations. And it was that same reason which prompted us to recognize that linguistic unity can have a direct impact on the activities of the United Nations, particularly through further consultation, interactions and demands of the Spanish-speaking public. Therefore, one of our main objectives has been to promote cooperation between the United Nations and those countries that share the Spanish language, so as to advance the ideals, purposes and principles of the United Nations and the general welfare of all peoples.

However, it is important to highlight the close ties that have united us with other linguistic groups within the United Nations. This is the reason why we believe and promote the richness of diversity and multilingualism, a principle that unites and identifies us all. Similarly, we are convinced of the central role that all languages have
in the promotion of understanding between peoples, tolerance and respect for cultural and linguistic diversity.

In this context, the GAE sees the founding principle of multilingualism as the best reflection of the intrinsic diversity of our organization, making it more accessible and transparent to all peoples. It has been for this reason that we have applauded that the General Assembly has enshrined the importance of ensuring equal treatment of the six official languages of the United Nations in the work of the Organization.

This principle must be preserved and promoted through the use of different measures within the United Nations system. In particular, since the effective implementation of multilingualism in United Nations is a matter of political will and not purely cost.

Mr. President,

Regarding the role that languages have to intensify closer dialogues between peoples and the consolidation of peace, it is our group’s perspective that languages and dialects, with their complex overlap with identity, communication, social integration, education, development and other elements of culture are factors of strategic importance to human beings and the world.

There is a growing awareness that linguistic diversity plays an essential role in development, as it ensures multiculturalism and intercultural dialogue, also in achieving education for all and strengthening cooperation, building integrative societies of knowledge and the conservation of cultural heritage, as well as the mobilization of political will to implement the benefits of science and technology for a sustainable development. Therefore, we believe that urgent steps must be taken to support an international commitment towards the promotion of multilingualism and cultural and linguistic diversity.

It is necessary to recognize that every language is strongly linked to the culture of a people and it is the source of cultural enrichment of all society. It is for this reason that a better understanding of these links can be a decisive element in the promotion of peace and its consolidation.

Mr. President,

Spanish and French, as romance languages, and therefore having a significant degree of mutual intelligibility, are the primary language or second language of an
important segment of humanity. As a result, their accents, linguistic nuances, variations and similarities symbolize an amalgam of edges that enrich ethnographic studies and pride the very diversity of the human being in all its expression.

Recognizing, as rightly stated by Mrs. Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, some years ago: “respect for all languages is critical for ensuring the peaceful coexistence, without exclusion, of all societies and, within them, of all its members”, it is with great honor that our Group joins the celebration of the Month of La Francophonie, a space that commemorates the significance of a language which is considered a stronghold in the world.

Finally, we take this opportunity to renew our full commitment to the achievement of multilingualism in the United Nations based on the principles of equity and linguistic parity.

Thank you.