



Speech by the President of the Government of Catalonia at the 2010 Premi Internacional Catalunya award ceremony Barcelona, 1 July 2010

Good evening,

When the Jury of the Premi Internacional Catalunya announced in March that the 2010 award was to be presented to former US President Jimmy Carter, it was in recognition of a political career and a lifetime that embodies both the spirit and the will of our country's most prestigious award.

After 22 editions, the Premi has become the genuine expression of the admiration of Catalans for the ambitious and often risky careers and works that have gone beyond well-trodden paths and have opened up new highways in their respective fields. Men and women who, with their personal or combined struggle, have become shining lights on the road to a better humanity, one that is more worthy of its name.

Some of the people to whom we have awarded the Premi Internacional Catalunya already knew of our history and of our present. Others have had the opportunity to discover us when they received the award. But they have all included in their biographies the honour bestowed on them by the government of this small country in southern Europe.

It is in mirroring ourselves in the example of the prize-winners, and in the projection of our recognition, that we find the incentives that enable us to consider the country we want to be and tell the rest of the world what we are like today.

I would therefore like to thank the whole of the jury for its hard work, its involvement and its wise choice in the selection of this year's prize-winner.

President Carter, it is a pleasure to have you here today among us and an honour to be able to award you the 2010 Premi Internacional Catalunya in person.

Ours is, in effect, a country that proudly projects the unique nature of a thousand-year-old culture and its own language, in which I am speaking to you now.

Ours is a people with a profound vocation of self-government, with institutions that represent the continuity of our historical consciousness.



Ours is a plural consciousness, forged from different origins and accents, that has made cohesion a value to be preserved. We Catalans are happy when people come to Catalonia, no matter from where, and they feel that we all make up a single people.

This is a people that recognises itself in the culture of agreement and harmony, in which the democratic ideal and principle is represented.

The historical episodes that you have quoted are a part of our most prized cultural baggage.

The character of the Catalans today is expressed once again through the desire to build a future in harmony with the democratic aspirations of our citizenry.

Catalonia is also committed to the construction of a Spain that some seem determined to make impossible on the basis of trying to impose another that fortunately no longer exists.

Catalonia expresses, finally, a European and a Mediterranean will; as a way of being present in the world.

We have always felt close to the ideals and the efforts to build an international community that coexists in peace, in complete respect and promoting human rights.

Seeking the ways that allow greater prosperity and progress for all the peoples of the Earth, in fairer, more equal and more sustainable conditions.

It is for this reason that we feel completely identified and we share many of the aims to which you, Mister President, have devoted an essential part of your life.

Mr Amble Moss - whose knowledge and commitment to the reality of our country over many years I would especially like to thank - and Xavier Rubert de Ventós have perfectly stated the milestones and the achievements that make you a worthy recipient of international recognition, most notably the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002.

President Carter has been accurately defined as *a man of heart and of courage*.

A man of heart who, despite leading the most powerful country on the planet for some years, has always retained the sensitivity required not to lose sight of the noblest causes, which can never be left outside the public agenda.

Throughout his career, the defence of dignity and human rights and the fight against any form of inequality and discrimination have been a constant.



He was able to make the diplomacy of *realpolitik* evolve towards a model that is more sensitive to the needs of a complex international community.

Seeking in shared values the persuasive route to progress towards common aims.

Acting always with convictions not subject to the political situation, to demoscopic dictates or to electoral calculation. Doing what he believed to be right at all times.

It is in this courage, which is able to question inertia and prejudice, able to face up to illegitimate interests, where we find some of the weapons with which to face the challenges of today.

Barcelona looks at the far-sighted vision of President Carter on the conflict in the Middle East to foster progress in dialogue and cooperation in the Mediterranean.

President Carter, I would especially like to ask you to persevere in all your efforts to contribute towards forging a fair and lasting peace in a region that is highly sensitive for us. Efforts that must enable us to resolve the unending conflict between Israel and Palestine.

In the Wilsonian spirit of your thought and your action, we find examples and references for resolving many of today's global challenges.

Because government is a call to action that requires ability and determination.

Government is being aware that the result of our decisions and of our actions may alter the course of history – on whatever scale it may be – and it is up to us to address them to a fair administration.

Legitimate government entails, above all, that the values of a democratic culture are deeply rooted, and aiming part of our action at perfecting these values and the milestones that are derived from them.

Acting in the same spirit that President Kennedy defined as a *gradual evolution of human institutions* that enables the establishment of new collective forms of progress and peace.

Since leaving the White House, and consistent with his vocation of serving the common good, President Carter has worked tirelessly for a fairer world and a world at peace.

From the Carter Center, with his wife Rosalynn and for over thirty years, he has persevered in the endless struggle to find peaceful solutions, acting as mediator



in dozens of conflicts, such as the remarkable experience of Haiti and other contexts closer to home.

He has also distinguished himself for his continuous commitment to the promotion of democracy and human rights and for fostering economic and social development to improve living conditions in developing countries, especially in Africa.

Countries that struggle to escape the poverty and the injustice to which they are often condemned.

Because when human rights go unprotected, peace becomes an empty promise.

When there is no redistribution of wealth, or development, the wellbeing of the general population is impossible and inequalities rise.

When moral and spiritual values are lacking, democratic freedoms cannot be exercised to the full.

When the will of the people is not respected, nations cannot govern themselves and become free from paternalist governance.

Only through the positive affirmation of a fairer peace, according to the expression of the much-admired Dr Martin Luther King, born in the same state of Georgia as Jimmy Carter and who led the civil rights movement, will we be able to face the urgent challenges of today.

These are the premises that the Carter Center has always held very clear.

I am drawing to a close. In just a few years, we have gone from a bipolar world to a much more complex international panorama.

During this time, it has been shown that unilateral hegemonic aims lead us down dead ends.

Today, another President of the United States is trying to renew the commitment to a fairer global order.

In this context, the complexity and interrelation of the problems that we have to face highlight the validity and the need for institutions and international governance that allow the assumption of shared responsibilities.

Only a multilateral system, firmly established on solid institutions with capacity and resources, that act in accordance with international law and within the framework of the United Nations, will be able to find the appropriate answers to the questions that the direction of the global world engenders. We are aware of



the time in history that it has been our fortune to live and of the changes in paradigm that may occur at all levels.

We in Catalonia want and are able to make a modest contribution to the search for answers to these global challenges.

For this reason, the 2010 Premi Internacional Catalunya seeks to recognise the whole of Jimmy Carter's life's work, devoted to serving the common good and in defence of the ideals of peace, human rights and the struggle to improve the living conditions of the least privileged.

His moral fortitude, his tenacity and his brave and transforming spirit have contributed from the original ideals that inspired the founding fathers of American democracy to some of the global advances that have occurred in recent decades.

President Carter, you will always find in Catalonia a land of welcome and a people willing to share and take part in the future projects that you propose.
Thank you very much.