

## Presentation by Luis Arroyo Zapatero

Sixty years since the first United Nations Crime Congress was held in 1955, in Geneva, allow me, as a Spanish citizen, to evoke the memory of its Executive Secretary, Manuel López Rey, a Spaniard living in exile, since 1939, a professor of the University of Salamanca, who joined the labours of the United Nations in 1946, when Spain was excluded from the United Nations. With a Bolivian passport, he left a profound impression with all at the United Nations until leaving in 1991 and there are many who recall him. Moreover, he spent his last years as a professor at the University of Madrid and through Sir Leon Radzinowicz as an invited professor at Cambridge University. The present situation of the death penalty is determined by the resolution of 2007 of the United Nations Assembly General calling for a universal moratorium.

In 2009, the Spanish government organised the launch of a group of friendly countries to set up an international commission against the death penalty composed of prominent personalities in international political and legal spheres.

The launch of the international academic network against the death penalty was sponsored to support the functioning of that commission, the first initiative of which took place at the Hague in the framework of a large meeting organised by Cherif Bassiouni to present the conclusions of his project on victims in the second half of the 20th century. William Schabas, José Luis de la Cuesta, and Pedro David were there and we agreed to set up the academic network around 4 scientific societies, under the presidency of W. Schabas.

We have thereby recovered the momentum given by the AIDP at the Congress of Syracuse in 1987. Academics have traditionally taken leading roles in the work against capital punishment. The first Marc Ancel, with his reports for the United Nations and the Council of Europe in the 1960s. Subsequently, those responsible for the quinquennial reports have been renowned academics: Noval Morris, Roger Hood and William Schabas, this year, for the third time; thank you Bill for your commitment and for the effort of spending the night in a plane from Paris to arrive 2 hours ago in the land of the 1001 nights.

We will provide some information on the report to the Secretary General that will be made public in the following days. Thanks also to Cheriff Bassiouni always at the forefront of the penalists of the world. We all admire your condition as a man of ideas and a man of action, a man of almost all languages. You will address us on your view of the abolition process and then on the question of the Safeguards.

The Network has since then organised numerous congresses and workshops, since the foundational session in Madrid in 2009: Istanbul, Puerto Rico, Mexico, São Paulo, Buenos Aires, and we have participated as invited guests at others, for example the Ensemble contra la peine de mort in Morocco and in Lebanon. We have published numerous books: six in Spanish, three in English, one in both languages, on Francisco de Goya and the death penalty. A DVD book with text and subtitles in Spanish, English and Arabic. They are all freely accessible online at our webpage: [www.academicsforabolition.net](http://www.academicsforabolition.net). We have completed a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) on human rights and the abolition of the death penalty, with 3000 students, half of whom from Latin America, the first edition of which was in Spanish and in Portuguese, and we prepared a second edition for those participating. In the seven weeks of the course more than 40 teachers and 20 practitioners, some of whom were exonerated while on death row.

We circulated the resolution on the moratorium of 2007, the second optional protocol and, above all, the cruel and inhuman nature of the death penalty. The theoretical construction of cruelty will be our next task, of particular importance for the application of the prohibition of cruel and inhuman punishments.

We assisted the International Commission against the death penalty, composed of personalities of national and international standing, such as its president, the former director general of UNESCO, Federico Mayor Zaragoza, Robert Badinter, Ruth Dreifus, former president of Switzerland, and from Haiti and the Philippines, respectively, Michèle Duvivier and Gloria Marcapagal Arroyo.

The last collaborative act was the preparation for the visit of the Holy Father Pope Francisco, who after hosting the scientific societies last October, delivered a letter and four pages in which he not only elevated the idea of abolition to doctrine in the

Catholic Church, but committed himself to including the matter in the intra and inter-faith dialogue, which is relevant both for the discussions in the United States and in the Islamic world.

These documents are also available in Spanish and English on our web page [www.academicsforabolition.net](http://www.academicsforabolition.net) and are included in the documentation for this Ancillary Meeting.

Today we will first of all listen to our president of the International academic network, also responsible for the quinquennial report to the Secretary General on the death penalty, William Schabas.