**Your Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations,**

Allow me, on behalf of my distinguished colleagues, to thank you for joining us to celebrate **this special anniversary** for the countries we represent and for the history of the United Nations. It was six decades ago, on this very day - 14th of December 1955, when the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution, which allowed our sixteen countries **- Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Laos, Libya, Nepal, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Sri Lanka** – to assume their rightful place in the reinvented community of nations.

Let me take the opportunity to also **thank Spain** for bring all of us here today.

For variety of reasons our countries were not among those who signed the UN Charter in San Francisco in 1945 and during the subsequent decade **there were still very powerful geopolitical considerations against** the first important enlargement of the aspiring to be global Organization. During that period the Cold war was ragingand its first major conflict devastated the Korean peninsula. The world was bitterly divided along ideological lines and the dream for a truly universal world organization seemed to be among its many casualties.

However, in 1953 the world witnessed a dramatic **change at top of the Soviet leadership** following the dead of Joseph Stalin, which presented a long awaited opening for a change in the status quo. At the meantime **the member states of the UN** adopted two resolutions of the General Assembly that called for the increase of its membership.

Then, in San Francisco, at the 10th anniversary celebration of the signing of the UN Charter, **the Canadian statesman and soon to be Nobel Peace prize laureate Lester Pearson** came out with a strong appeal for a wider UN membership on the basis of universality and laid the ground for the subsequent decisions of the Security Council and the General Assembly that granted membership to sixteen countries.

Six decades later we, the permanent representatives of those countries, are here to **reaffirm our commitment** **to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations**, which have proved timeless and universal.

**Your Excellency Secretary General,**

**Distinguished colleagues,**

Allow me to propose a toast for the enduring strength of **the collective wisdom of the united nations** andthe **visionary leadership of remarkable individuals** which when combined can lead to a “*Strong UN and A Better World”*

**Cheers!**