Gilbert FAYL*

OPENING WORDS**

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Colleagues, Friends,

I would like to congratulate Prof. Momir Djurovic, a good friend of mine, and the Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts for organising this conference at this challenging time in history.

The Global Round Table is delighted to be among the organising partners.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let's take a realistic look at today's dramatic situation and the role this conference could play.

No civilisation has yet outlasted time.

History has shown that neither economic- nor military might prevent civilisations from vanishing. Great powers rise and fall. They rise for reasons of fortuitous circumstance, they crumble because they overlook or underestimate warning signals.

And there are plenty of warning signals today. The World looks more unsettled every day and faces new challenges and opportunities — as well as the ones inherited from the past.

We have arrived at a crossroads and must decide on how best to meet the transition to a new global order, how to respond to environmental degradation, global migration, global terrorism — above all, how best to renovate and reinvent our way of life and the impact it has on the world around us.

We must also face the fact that Western civilisations may suffer from existential civilizational tiredness with consequences for long-term survival of Western civilization.

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** Opening section. The papers have been printed as submitted.

What fate can we then expect for this little planet and our species in the 21st Century?

Despite what the populist media is preaching, I truly believe that there is a strong desire of societal coexistence between the various cultures. Here I think it would be useful to mention the European Union as a model of how to avoid war at all cost between Member States. Yes, they squabble and one has even decided to leave (Brexit), but it is all by peaceful means — unthinkable just 75 years ago. The 2012 Nobel Peace Prize must consequently be seen as a testimony to the success of the Union in ensuring peace between Member States. There are lessons to be learned here. And, once we stop shooting we can start handling the real issues that face us: as a species and as a planet.

For our conference the question is whether we are able to offer intellectual and moral support to the global political leaders in their challenging mission? If yes, what and how?

First, political leaders must leave behind their idealistic blindness and political naivety that is on the ways to deconstruct the global peace and is doing as much damage as military- or terrorist attacks.

Second, politicians must stop letting external events take their course while focusing on piecemeal approaches of problem management — rather than being able to help shape a vision for the future.

Third, societies must activates their intellectual resources and be ready to meet 'deviation from expectation' in an increasingly unpredictable World.

These might be some of the innovative and implementable ideas our conference could suggest. In any case, we must focus on issues that really matter to the peoples of the World and can be implemented at international- right down to local level. Eventually our brief and realistic contribution should be addressed to the most relevant global political leader(s).

We should all be embarrassed that schoolchildren find it necessary to show the way to politicians. Why are they succeeding when we have not? We must help them. Ensure that they have robust facts, realistic demands, and — above all — understand that we stand WITH them not against them.

We mustn't end-up doing nothing by trying to do everything.

Thank you for your attention.