

Authorities, UNICEF members, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a great honor, for the FC Barcelona Delegation and for myself , to be here with you, in front of the UNICEF Executive Board representatives from all over the world.

Thirty-five years ago, on October 24th 1971, in this United Nations Headquarters building, the famous cello player, Pau Casals, said: "I am Catalan". He then explained that, at that time, Catalonia was a Spanish province, but in the past, "Catalonia had been one of the greatest nations of the world, among other things because Catalonia had the first Parliament, long before England did. He then added that Catalonia and its people have always worked for the promotion of peace, which is also the main objective of the United Nations and its agencies like UNICEF.

The situation in Spain has changed a lot since 1971. Catalonia is nowadays an Autonomous Community within a democratic Spanish State, and has regained all its own institutions of self-government. A majority of Catalan people consider Catalonia to be their own nation.

I, like Pau Casals, am also Catalan (or, as we would say it in our own language: "jo també sóc català"). And FC Barcelona, the great club I have the great privilege of presiding, is the most representative sporting institution of Catalunya. Pau Casals was a universal Catalan. Although he died long time ago, his music is still universal. With his cello, Mr. Casals brought and still brings hope to the hearts and souls of people around the globe: the hope for a better life, the hope of a better world.

FC Barcelona is also "universal". We are a Football-Soccer club (and soccer is the main sport at the global level). But we are not only a soccer club. Barça (which the nickname by which the world knows us) is "more than a club". "More than a club" because we have always defended the values of civism, solidarity and democracy.

"More than a club" because we have our own essence and our own style. These are the same values, essence and style that Pau Casals had while playing his cello. And with these values, essence and style we also want to bring hope of a better life, hope of a better world.

We believe we have a very powerful tool: soccer. We know that if this tool is put to a good use, we can make a difference. And this is why we have decided to work with UNICEF, an institution that shares our values and our vision. We want Barça to contribute to global UNICEF programs for the benefit of children who suffer.

Next Tuesday, for the first time in our more than 107 years of history, our main soccer team will wear an emblem on the front of its shirt. It will not be the brand name of a corporation. It will not be a commercial to promote some kind of business. It will be the logo of "UNICEF". Through UNICEF, we the people of FC Barcelona, the people of "Barça", are very proud to donate our shirt to the children of the world.

We are very happy to sign this agreement with UNICEF and we are grateful for the opportunity to start this global partnership. Together, we can do a lot to improve the lives of boys and girls around the world. Or, as we would say in Catalan, "junts podem fer molt per millorar la vida de tots els nens i nenes del món".

Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of FC Barcelona family, we thank you all.