

SPANISH AMBASSADOR BRANDS PRESENTATION DINNER. NEW YORK, 16
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SPEECH BY DR. VALENTÍN FUSTER

Good evening, Your Royal Highnesses, Minister, State Secretary of Commerce, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I would like to start my short speech by thanking the Leading Brands of Spain Forum for kindly inviting me to be here tonight, together with my colleague Joan Massagué, in my role as *Honorary Ambassador of the Spain Brand*.

For those of you who are not familiar with the role of the Honorary Ambassadors of the Spain Brand, please permit me to explain that in 2005, in the Palace of Santa Cruz in Madrid, the seat of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, the first official appointments ceremony of the Honorary Ambassadors of the Spain Brand took place. The event was chaired by their Royal Highnesses, the Prince and Princess of Asturias and by the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Miguel Ángel Moratinos.

It was a great honour for me to personally receive, from the Prince and Princess themselves, an award that accredits me as a Spaniard with an extensive international career in Science and Innovation. And I trust that I have modestly contributed to promoting and reinforcing the image of Spain abroad, particularly in the United States, the country where I reside and carry out most of my work.

Back then, in the contact that I had with the representatives of the Leading Brands of Spain Forum, we fully agreed that the country brand abroad is basically built through collaboration between three agents: firstly, state institutions and the public administration; secondly, national companies and their internationally renowned brands, such as those represented here; and, thirdly, those figures in civil society, physical or legal persons, who excel in their professions throughout the world and help to project a positive image of their country of origin.

In 2005, I humbly accepted the challenge put forward to be by the Leading Brands of Spain Forum, and today I would like to reaffirm my commitment and my acceptance of the responsibility to help with all the initiatives, such as the one that brings us together today, in order to show the true potential of Spain today. And to do so in a manner through which we can gradually close the gap that has traditionally distanced the current reality of a dynamic, modern and competitive Spain, and the perception still rooted in stereotypes of the past, which still exists in some parts of the world.

Today, Spain is worldwide benchmark country in many areas, and many of the companies represented here today are international leaders in their sectors. But of all the economic and cultural manifestations that Spain is truly remarkable for, I would like to emphasise the importance and innovation of Spanish gastronomy, and mention the

Mediterranean diet, which incidentally I encourage everyone, Spaniards and Americans, to adopt, for its proven benefits and the positive influence it has on our health and well-being.

Today, heart disease is the number one killer in the world. To fight it, it is crucial to educate society, from childhood, on the benefits of healthy living. However, prevention is also vital through a balanced diet, sport and exercise, and eliminating smoking. The products of the traditional Spanish diet – such as olive oil, Iberico ham with its fat removed, fish and seafood, vegetables and fruit, and wine consumed moderately and in small quantities – are well-known for their beneficial properties to the body. And consuming these products not only contributes to strengthening the image of Spain, but also to helping people to live longer, with stronger and healthier hearts, which unquestionably brings them health and well-being.

Thank you.