

# Glass will stay in our memory

WHEN in the future the United Nations historians study the tragic years of the early 2020s, they will look with curiosity at the International Year of Glass 2022. Amid the lingering effects of the pandemic's medical, economic and social crisis of COVID, with increasingly threatening geopolitical tensions and the bloody wars in Ukraine or Ethiopia, among many other conflicts, the division of the world into blocs and the paralyzed Security Council, the United Nations General Assembly was able to concentrate on the task of building a better future, to implement concretely the 2030 Agenda and unanimously adopt a resolution proclaiming 2022 the International Year of Glass.

In July 2018, Professor Alicia Durán, president of the International Commission on Glass, contacted me, the recently appointed Spanish ambassador to the United Nations. We were old friends and with her explanations I understood the magnitude of the challenge, but also its transversal importance: glass is not only one of the basic materials of civilization, but it is essential to achieve almost all the objectives of the 2030 Agenda. Upon arrival in New York, the Spanish Mission to the United Nations endorsed the objective of placing the International Year of Glass on the agenda of the General Assembly. And the person in charge of starting the negotiations to promote the resolution with the support of all member states was counselor Ana Alonso Giganto.

Little did we suspect then the difficulties that awaited us. The COVID epidemic was a practical example of the extent to which we depended on glass for the vaccination campaign that the UN tried to extend to the entire planet. It was not

glass that limited this effort. But other priorities forced diplomatic negotiations to be postponed until early 2021 to gain support of all UN Member States in the General Assembly.

The campaign was an example of what civil society, scientific organizations, artists, museums and companies in the glass sector could do. The program of scientific conferences, meetings and artistic exhibitions was accompanied by pedagogical extension and exchanges of technology and know-how about the glass sector in all its aspects. The effort was self-financed and a fund was created with the generous help of industrial sponsors and national societies, so that all interested parties could participate on equal terms in the programmed activities. The events were distributed throughout the planet to make the effort truly international: an example of establishing effective alliances in the public, public-private and civil society spheres.

As dissemination of information about the program increased, interest and pressure from scientific, museum and business organizations on their governments to join the campaign and the negotiation process at the United Nations also grew. The Spanish Mission was no longer alone in promoting the resolution and the number of co-facilitators expanded, since this resolution allowed many of the UN Member States to show their commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals.

It could not be otherwise. When it was most necessary to relaunch the objectives of the 2030 Agenda, the world was plunged into geopolitical crises. But the International Year of Glass made it possible to advance Goal 3 (Health and Wellbeing) as had been made evident during the epidemic; Goal 4 (Education), organizing hundreds of seminars and workshops to disseminate technology and scientific and artistic knowledge about glass; Goal 5 (Gender Equality), taking the fight against discrimination of women and girls within the sector and making organizations and companies aware of the importance of achieving gender parity and equality, especially in promoting the empowerment, participation and contributions of women and girls through education, in science, technology and innovation; Goal 6 (Drinking water and sanitation) developing glass filters for wastewater treatment; Goal 7 (Clean and accessible energy for all) because glass is an essential component of solar and eolic (wind) energy and green hydrogen transport; Goal 9 (Innovation, industry and infrastructure), since without optical glass fibers the maintenance of our knowledge society and the digital revolution would not be possible; Goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), glasses are perhaps the most historically present basic construction material and on whose evolution we depend to maintain and develop the infrastructure of our life together, while we recycle them over and over

again, contributing to achieving a circular and sustainable economy ; Goal 12 (Responsible consumption and production), glass is not only endlessly recycled, its production is one of the industrial sectors where continuous efficiency has allowed us to reduce the carbon footprint; Goal 13 (Climate action) the massive application of glass has allowed not only the growth of solar energy, but also energy savings; Goal 14 (Marine life), allowing not only oceanographic exploration, but also the replacement of plastic, which is one of the greatest threats to maritime life; Goal 17 (cooperation and associations), the International Year of Glass itself is an example of how commitment to the common good is capable of structuring diverse interests and promoting the 2030 Agenda.

The International Year of Glass 2022, under the coverage of the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, began in Geneva, under the dome of Barceló, in the Human Rights Hall of the Palace of Nations and concluded in New York, in the General Assembly building. In between, as planned, there were dozens of central activities and thousands of local events, financed from the sector itself.

What it is essential now is to project into daily life this capacity for cooperation and innovation in the glass field. Advance the 2030 Agenda, leaving no country behind, until all the inhabitants of the planet can enjoy the levels of development, education and health that ensure the material conditions of their global citizenship. On that day, the values of the United Nations Charter will have become a reality and the original document will rest as a testimony of the past in its glass case.

For us it has been an honor and satisfying to have participated in this process.

AGUSTÍN SANTOS MARAVER, *Ambassador of Spain*

ANA ALONSO GIGANTO, *Counsellor of the Spanish Mission at the UN*





ALICIA DURÁN AND JOHN M. PARKER  
Editors

## Preface

THIS book is based on submissions by many different IYOG participants. Indeed, so many that inevitably not all are named, nor their contributions properly acknowledged. We sincerely apologize for any omissions and hope that the mention of your favorite activity will be sufficient recompense. Equally far too many activities occurred for all to be included. Again, we apologize —please let us know of any significant gaps so that we can record them for posterity in our database or on the IYOG web site.

The book itself is intended as an informative report demonstrating how the year was structured and administered. As far as possible organization was devolved to local groups; no funds were available for a central organization —which also relied on unpaid volunteers. Indeed, the energy, enthusiasm and imagination of hundreds if not thousands of teams working together was immensely rewarding and more than justified this approach.

We hope that you will find this report both informative and heart-warming. We hope it will stimulate ongoing activity, and encourage a sense of a glass community, both locally and internationally. We hope that many existing organizations will take up the baton of ‘The Age of Glass’ and run with it. Indeed, my post this morning had a greeting card with just this message.

The book itself is structured historically starting with the Opening Ceremony in Geneva and concluding in Tokyo and New York. Individual sections are devoted to Education (Chapter 5), History and Museums (Chapters 5 and 6), significant themes throughout the year. Another chapter records the choice of 7 Wonders of the Glass

World. Chapter 9 lists many examples of books, articles and videos generated. Chapters 8 and 11 records the reactions of existing National and International Glass Organizations and our main sponsors and supporters. Chapter 4 is the heart of the book and almost half of the content —reports from the 18 regional organizations participating and indeed generating most of the year long program. Altogether there are some 372 pages of text which have been beautifully illustrated by a multitude of photographs through the efforts and energy of Prof. Durán. We have tried to avoid photographs of large anonymous groups. Many important individuals are pictured —if you are not included, again we sincerely apologize. Space is limited and so many of you were involved.

All hyperlinks have been embedded into the text. These will be live links in the electronic file that will be published alongside the paper copy. If perchance you only have a paper copy you will need to find an online copy of the text, for example on the IYOG web site. As a space saver, all dates have the format: month code and day; dates that do not mention a year are in 2022. Similarly, the International Year of Glass has become the IYOG. Similarly, the International Year of Glass has become the IYOG.

As we said at the beginning of IYOG: ‘You know who you are, we know who you are. We hope the success of this amazing project will be a sufficient reward for your contribution’.

See you all walking and working together in the Age of Glass.

Alicia Durán and John M. Parker

The image shows two handwritten signatures in blue ink. On the left is the signature of Alicia Durán, which is stylized and includes a horizontal line underneath. On the right is the signature of John M. Parker, which is written in a more standard, cursive style.