

Distinguished and Honorable guests,

On behalf of my colleagues on the Foundation's Board of Directors, and on behalf of my colleagues in our offices on both sides of the Atlantic, thank you! Thank you for honoring us this evening!

We are indeed proud of our work and very thankful to my great uncle, our Founder, the late Stavros Niarchos for making all this possible. We are grateful to him for the opportunity to be of help to society at large. It is on his behalf that we are accepting this award tonight. This is an award given on an evening dedicated to Greece, to helping the country during this terrible socioeconomic crisis. We salute you and thank you all for your efforts.

In that spirit, it is befitting that we accept this award tonight on behalf of our founder, a true citizen of the world. It was his wish that the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, although a global foundation, focuses its philanthropic activities towards Greece, by directing at least 50 percent of its support towards his beloved country of origin.

Our grant-making has been global. 1.4 billion USD in more than 100 countries since 1996. But for obvious reasons our focus, especially in the last few years, has been in Greece. A country whose people are truly suffering, a country where the social fabric is disintegrating; a country easy to criticize, blame, patronize for all past mistakes, and unfortunately most times for good reason. But, at the same time, a country where many people are working very hard indeed to turn it around, a country which really needs everyone's support to get out of the abyss. A country, Greece, which, let us not forget, that at the end of the day has indeed contributed in so many ways to civilization in the last few thousands of years. In this respect, our Foundation has followed a somewhat multi-faceted approach with its grant-making activities, in addition to our so-called 'standard' philanthropic grant-making. We have focused our work on providing relief and alleviating suffering, as expressed through our 3 year initiative of 100 m Euros to help provide relief to society under the current socioeconomic crisis. At the same time, we have contributed towards providing opportunities and hope for the future through various projects. The highlight is the building of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center in Athens, a 42-acre urban park, which includes the new facilities for the National Library of Greece and the Greek National Opera, as well as the Stavros Niarchos Park. We will deliver the project to the Greek people towards the end of 2015.

Philanthropy cannot replace the state. No matter how big you may think you are, or others may think you are, you are not that big at all. Philanthropy can and should play a role, but it should not and it cannot replace the State. In a world, where as we are quickly learning today the Social Welfare State does not work, we need a Social Welfare Society instead: a Society where its members can experience decency, dignity, civility, hope; a

Society where a well-run State, an effective Private sector, and philanthropy, all work together. The issues we are facing in this 21<sup>st</sup> century are simply too large for anyone to solve by themselves, no matter how strong or big one might think they are. We need collaborations at all levels. In the area of philanthropy financial support is very important, but equally important are the volunteers who bring the projects to life. Don't be afraid to ask how you can help. In this respect, I always remember JFK's "it is not what the country can do for you it is what you can do for your country". But that assumes that you ask the questions and you are ready to respond to needs. Don't be afraid to make mistakes, avoid conflicts. Be open to collaborations, there is no antagonism, no 'crowding out' effect in the world of philanthropy. Share your expertise, don't let initiatives, no matter how good they are, to remain just initiatives for too long. Bring them to life as soon as possible as there is no time to waste!

With all of the above in mind, let us close on a happy note. Inspired by tonight's gathering, we are announcing a new 100m Euro Initiative for Greece, a multi-year project, to be named, **Recharging the Youth**. We see it as the logical evolution of our current on-going crisis relief effort, which continues unabated, as we have donated already 75m out of the 100m Euro. Our focus now turns to doing everything we can on our part to help 'recharge the youth'. It is simply unacceptable that currently the youth unemployment rate in Greece is higher than 60 pct, high jacking their future, and further diluting the social fabric of an already severely weakened society. This simply cannot go on. The young are our future, we have to recharge them, empower them, so that they are able to hope, to dream, to believe that their dreams can indeed become reality, believe that they can contribute from a position of strength to our world, to be able at the end of the day to help us all as we are getting older. We, the 'baby boomers', are becoming fast 'old boomers'. But, don't overestimate us. Yes we will commit the funds but we need help! We need the best possible intellectual capital from all around the world to help us determine how to most effectively and efficiently implement this new project. Our new effort needs partners of all sorts, needs collaborators, and it needs volunteers. But we have to move, and move fast we have! So we will host in NY in the next few months a global conference convening the best possible minds to help discuss and assess the best possible ways to move forward with our new project. In many ways we have been self-sufficient up to now. But, we are now saying clearly that the needs are such and that we have to be strong enough to invite others to join us, in order to be most effective in one of the most sensitive and important areas impacted by the crisis. Such efforts can only help strengthen our societies, and stronger societies are the ones that can then reject from the inside extreme views of all sorts that are detrimental to decency, dignity, civility, hope..... Not only in Greece but globally.

In closing, Aristotle once said that educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all. The time to act is now and all of you can and must help, Thank you!