



FRANCE



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DEBAT GENERAL

**Intervention prononcée par Son Excellence Monsieur Michel Barnier
Ministre des Affaires étrangères de la République française**

A New York, le jeudi 23 septembre 2004

(Vérifier au prononcé)

(Unofficial Translation)

ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY MICHEL BARMIER
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AT THE 59TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY
New York, Thursday, 23 September, 2004

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Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Heads of State and Government,
Ministers,
Delegates,

I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election. We are pleased that a man of your ability, a Francophone representative of a friendly country, is directing our proceedings.

I also wish to warmly applaud our Secretary-General. We have heard his message on respect for the rule of law. Through him, I wish to commend the entire staff of this institution. Here, and everywhere in the world, their courage and commitment are a credit to the organizations they serve, sadly sometimes at the cost of their lives.

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How are we to meet the challenges facing the world? How are we to meet its expectations unless we all mobilize? More than ever, the UN remains the one irreplaceable, legitimate framework for harnessing this mobilization and translating it into collective action.

Conflicts are unresolved, others are breaking out; poverty is declining all too slowly; people are destroyed by wars, refugees torn from their land; the threat of terrorism is not fading. Yes! We have a duty to act, an obligation not to give up.

The UN is acting. On all fronts, in the front line. To resolve conflicts and prevent them from flaring up again, it is present everywhere, on all continents, deploying over 50,000 blue helmets in Haiti, Kosovo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Côte d'Ivoire, Afghanistan and many other fronts. It provides assistance to 17 million people protected by the High Commissioner for Refugees. Through the World Food Program, it feeds more than 100 million individuals. It helps, through UNDP especially, 170 states or territories to develop.

UN action continues to expand. The Organization also has a natural vocation to be at the center of the counter-terrorism measures that the international community is putting in place. This threat, now global, calls for a global response. That is why France committed itself here to this fight, and did so again recently by supporting the strengthening of the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

The tragedy of 11 September, which I refer to with emotion in New York City, was an attack on us all. Since then, terrorism has continued to strike: in Europe, in Madrid, six months ago; in Asia, in Bali and Jakarta. Cowardly attacks are mounted against the weakest. How can we not be appalled at the tragedy of the school in Beslan when children, the symbol of innocence, were violently massacred?

We wage a merciless fight against terrorism. Let us at the same time address its roots. This means: put an end to situations that terrorists exploit; give the world's excluded hope again; restore dignity to peoples deprived of it; see that dialogue and cooperation among civilizations, cultures and religions prevail rather than conflict and intolerance.

Global threats require a strong, and always collective, response. The threat of proliferation, which is liable to merge with terrorism, calls for resolute and sustained action. The non-proliferation regime has been seriously undermined by the combined action of certain states and non-state actors. That is why strengthening the existing instruments is essential. The NPT review conference in 2005 will be an opportunity to do so.

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen,

A safer and freer world is first a more just world.

That is why we must act relentlessly to resolve conflicts.

I am of course thinking of the Middle East where, after the hopes of Madrid, Oslo, Camp David and Taba, the absence of any prospect is today breeding despair, extremism, and violence of every kind. This central crisis will be resolved only through a negotiated settlement based on international law, enabling all the peoples of the region to live in dignity and security. The "road-map," which the parties have accepted and the Security Council has endorsed, must be implemented in full in good faith. France hopes that the withdrawal from Gaza is a first step. It ~~will make~~ will make every effort to get the peace process under way again. It will continue to act the elected and legitimate leaden—all the leaders—of this region.

Let us make no mistake: building peace in the Middle East is a historic responsibility for our generation. Europe, in partnership with the United States, Russia and the UN, has avocation to play a political role in order to stimulate this process.

In Iraq, violence is exploding. Only when the Iraqis themselves take control of their future and when the political process provided for by the Security Council continues will the country be able to escape the chaos which is destabilizing the entire region. France, as everyone knows, did not approve of the conditions in which the conflict was unleashed. Neither today, nor tomorrow will it commit itself militarily in Iraq. However, it reaffirms its willingness, with its European partners, to assist the Iraqi people in rebuilding their country and restoring their institutions.

In the Middle East, who can fail to see that everything is fragile and everything is interconnected? Who can fail to understand that the sole path, everywhere, is sovereignty and justice for peoples. Only then will they make progress towards peace and the economic and political modernization to which they are entitled.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Africa is also where we will win or lose the battle for justice. Without justice, there will be no peace. Without peace, there will be no lasting development. The future of the African continent, its stability and development, are a vital objective for us all.

Today, under United Nations impetus, long-standing crises have been or are being settled: Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Liberia. Others have broken out, and together we must prevent them from worsening or spreading: in Côte d'Ivoire, the Central African Republic and Darfur. The Great Lakes region is slow to find the path to peace, the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea slow to die, the Somali question to be resolved.

In a continent undergoing profound change, with real threats and also considerable potential, political leaders are today demonstrating a genuine determination to commit to working to resolve conflicts and crises. This can be seen from the implementation of NEPAD, the resolute commitment of the African Union on the political front and in the field, and the growing role of regional organizations. Let us resolutely support this commitment. For development, but also for peace-building, and let us bring about the conditions for an effective and coherent partnership between North and South.

Faced with the extent of the goals and needs, I believe in pooling the efforts of the Europeans alongside our African partners and under United Nations auspices, whenever necessary. I am convinced that our experience of European integration can be useful.

France has long been involved in strengthening African peace-keeping capacities. Today, by itself, the European Union means to make a commitment immediately, with determination. Operation Artemis, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is the proof. The European peace facility now provides major support to African organizations. We are willing, if the African Union so wishes, to assist its action for peace, as in Sudan.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Justice and conflict-prevention cannot be dissociated from collective action to promote development.

The Millennium goals, which commit the developing countries, donor states and multilateral institutions, are an overriding obligation for us all, especially the wealthiest countries.

Over \$50 billion a year is still needed to achieve these objectives. On Monday, more than a hundred countries endorsed the "New York Declaration on Action Against Hunger and Poverty." They ask that additional resources be provided for development, including through innovative mechanisms. This powerful movement, launched in this very forum of the United Nations, to generate the resources for justice and development is an important milestone. My country, through the voice of the President of the Republic, is proud to have contributed to it.

But in addition, France is also fighting for a more controlled, and therefore most just, globalization which gives everyone a chance. It advocates the establishment of a political body to improve coordination of multilateral action in the economic, social and environmental sphere, and provide the necessary impetus. The United Nations must have its due place in it. This is one of the major issues we must consider in coming months, especially on the basis of the proposals the panel on reform is expected to make.

A more just world is also a world that respects human dignity and freedom. The fundamental human rights are universal. Each man, woman and child has them inherently. It is up to us to see they thrive and are respected.

It is also up to us to fight uncompromisingly against all manifestations of violence and discrimination based on race, origin, gender and religion.

Our resolve in the area of human rights must remain constant. The time has therefore come to conclude the negotiation of a conventional instrument on forced disappearances, recognize rights to indigenous peoples and to mobilize against all forms of modern slavery.

Let us not rule out, in certain cases and on the appeal of victims, the use of force to prevent massive human rights violations and acts of violence against civilians. It is the honor of the Security Council to assume this responsibility, in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

Let us also continue putting in place mechanisms against impunity, often the prerequisite for a solid peace and lasting reconciliation. The establishment of the International Criminal Court meets this objective. We welcome the milestone reached with the entry into force of the Rome Statute.

The dignity of man and peoples also requires due respect for cultures, in their diversity. The sense of loss of identity contributes to the frustrations that breed conflicts. The unity of the international community cannot be synonymous with uniformity.

The negotiation of a convention on cultural diversity, which has just started at UNESCO, is therefore a key objective. It must produce a concrete result, as planned, before the 2005 general conference.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our planet is in danger! The earth is showing signs of strain, we are not maintaining it, we are plundering it, the climate is deteriorating. And yet, we should remember, the scarcity of resources has at all times been a factor in conflict. For the future of our children, we must act while there is still time.

Is there one single issue which more obviously ignores borders and requires coordinated, that is, multilateral action?

Time is running out if we are to prevent the irreparable. International governance in environmental matters is very inadequate today. The existing international regime on environmental issues must be strengthened and simplified, monitoring and expertise developed, and financing increased, especially for developing countries.

Let us be clear-sighted: for the environment, as for other issues, prevention costs less than cure.

We hope the establishment of a United Nations Organization for the Environment will be considered, based on UNEP's achievements. We propose that this great ambition, which is one of the Millennium goals, be on the agenda of the September 2005 summit.

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In a world where 800 million people do not have enough to eat, where more resources are devoted to weapons than development, where millions of men, women and children are forced to leave their land to escape destitution or massacres, the international community has a duty to act and show imagination. Here at the UN is where it can meet to take initiatives, fight misfortune and apportion the tasks, all of them urgent.

The United Nations system, which is unique and more indispensable than ever, also has an obligation to reform itself to meet new needs and new threats, and to make the most of new technologies. The Secretary-General tackled this problem at the start of his first mandate. Considerable work has already been done. The proposals of the high-level panel will be the basis for the next, still more ambitious, stages. On many issues—peace-keeping operations, human rights, development financing—France has made known its views.

We have also indicated, with Germany, how the representativeness and legitimacy of Security Council action might be improved. We advocate enlargement in both categories of members,

permanent and non-permanent; and we have expressed support for the aspirations of Germany, Japan, Brazil and India, which should be accompanied by a country from Africa.

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In a complex and unpredictable world, it is our common responsibility to maintain and strengthen the one institution where all nations can unite to shape and control their common destiny. The UN, through its legitimacy and ever-increasing effectiveness, must be the instrument of the universal conscience of which it remains the crucible

Thank you./.