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RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

FRANCE

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des Nations Unies**

DEBAT GENERAL

**Intervention prononcée par M. Philippe Douste-Balzy
Ministre des Affaires étrangère de la France
auprès des Nations Unies**

New York, le 18 septembre 2003

(vérifier au prononcé)

(Unofficial translation)

Mr. President,

Speaking for the first time from this rostrum, I wish to reaffirm here the importance France gives to the multilateral system. Our common future cannot be envisaged without strengthening it.

The declaration adopted the day before yesterday is a milestone in this direction even if it does not meet all our expectations.

The text comprises significant advances. I am thinking in particular of innovative financing for development. I am also thinking of the decision to establish a peacebuilding commission at the Security Council. Lastly, I am thinking of the establishment of a human rights council and the endorsement of the principle of the "responsibility to protect." From this point on, it is up to us to implement these conceptual advances in practical ways. I wish to pay tribute here to the remarkable work which has been done under the authority of Mr. Jean Ping.

But let us not underestimate the extent of the task that still has to be accomplished, be it in counter-terrorism, non-proliferation, Security Council reform and development.

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The United Nations is founded on the rule of law and the promotion of universal standards. These reflect our common values and our conviction that there can be no security and development without scrupulous respect for human rights. This is not an ethical question but of respect for the identity of each one. It is not a matter of saying good or evil but of enabling all to live in greater freedom and in dignity.

Let us reject the impressment of children in armed conflicts, the systematic use of sexual violence against women and girls as a weapon of war, the recourse to threats, arbitrary detention to rture against opponents, journalists, labor leaders and defenders of human rights. Let us conclude at last the negotiations on the Convention against forced disappearances.

To this end, let us strengthen the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and quickly establish the human rights council.

From this point on, the international community has the necessary legitimacy to exercise effectively its "responsibility to protect" populations threatened with ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and genocide. France is particularly pleased about this. It welcomes the progress in the international criminal justice system, in particular through the action of the Security Council.

Those who believe they can count on the international community's inaction when committing their crimes should make no mistake: they will be held accountable.

Sixty years after the founding of the United Nations, terrorism is now in the first rank of human rights violations. Nothing, no cause, no religion, no moral order justifies attacks on the lives of innocents, of civilians. We must define acts of terrorism once and for all to enable us to better combat this barbarism which takes mankind backwards.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is another major threat for the planet against of which we must remain united and determined.

France, together with its British and German partners, proposed a constructive approach to Iran paving the way for a new relationship with that great country and the international community, a relationship that is currently compromised by the concerns over its nuclear program. We are asking Iran to build confidence by providing objective guarantees as to the exclusively peaceful nature of its program. The Iranian statements made from this rostrum compel the international community to meet its responsibilities. Referral to the Security Council is on the agenda to strengthen the authority of the IAEA. It is the integrity of the non-proliferation regime which is in question.

Regarding North Korea, France wholeheartedly supports the negotiations to dismantle the elements of the North Korean nuclear program leading to military developments.

But let us also work to reduce the proliferation of small arms and light weapons which fuel so many really deadly conflicts.

To better serve peace and ensure the security of populations, the Security Council has expanded its field of action--to the trafficking that finances conflicts, the impunity that covers them--having recourse in particular to sanctions and embargoes. The United Nations is resolutely committed in the field, in the very center of conflicts. Over 70,000 blue helmets, soldiers and police officers are now serving in 18 peacekeeping operations and thousands of others intervene under Security Council mandate.

The results are there to see: in East Timor, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Liberia and Sierra Leone in particular.

But to emerge from crisis, it is essential that these countries continue to benefit from our attention and full support. In this transition phase, it is up to the United Nations to take a central role, through the Peacebuilding Commission.

Other situations still demand great vigilance and a high level of mobilization.

Thus in Haiti, the presence of strong contingents of United Nations soldiers and police officers must lead to the strengthening of the political process as soon as possible involving, without exclusion, all peaceful forces. The preparation of elections must be accelerated. Like any other, the Haitian people, who have suffered too long, are entitled to respect and freedom.

In Cote d'Ivoire and Haiti, the presence of ONUCI and the establishment of a representative of the Secretary-General responsible for the elections must also help strengthen the implementation of the process defined at Marcoussis and Pretoria.

But in Cote d'Ivoire as in Haiti, the determined action of the international community together will not produce results unless all the parties cooperate in good faith and show a sense of responsibility. In Abidjan as in Bouake, each one must respect his commitments to that free and transparent elections can be held throughout the country. No other solution is possible. That is why it is essential to resolutely support the electoral process that is beginning as well as the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration programs. All the Ivorian parties must understand that they cannot block the peace efforts

with impunity by being obstructive, making hate speeches or challenging democratic rules. The Security Council will meet its responsibilities.

The situation in Lebanon shows what can come from resolute international mobilization, supported by the courageous will of the people. The main Syrian forces have now left Lebanon. Elections have been held. A representative government has been formed. Our organization must continue to support the Lebanese government's efforts to recover full sovereignty and exercise authority over the whole of its territory. At the same time, we must continue to support the proceedings of the commission of inquiry into Rafik Hariri's assassination. We are determined to see justice done.

Still in the Middle East, a dynamic of hope which could concern all the states in the region is emerging with Israel's withdrawal from Gaza. France, together with its European partners, stands with the Palestinians to reconstruct and develop this territory so that its inhabitants can move around freely, and have access to jobs and decent living conditions.

But we cannot rest there. It is important to raise a political perspective for relaunching the implementation of the road map by encouraging on one hand the Palestinian to redouble their efforts on the security front and on the other the Israelis to take the necessary measures to stop settlement activity and comply with international law in their struggle for security. Peace can only come with the existence of two peaceful and democratic states living side by side in peace and security.

In Iraq, lastly, France remains engaged so that with United Nations assistance in particular the Iraqi people can acquire democratic institutions in which all Iraqis might recognize themselves. It is clear that a policy focused exclusively on security leads to the retrenchment of a community endangering the cohesion of Iraqi society and the country's unity. There, too, the political process must not exclude any representative and peaceful force and must hold out the prospect for Iraq of the restoration of complete sovereignty.

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Throughout all these crises, the Security Council has gradually imposed the authority of the United Nations to promote international peace and security. Its action is legitimate. Its authority will be further strengthened once we reach an agreement on its enlargement that will take into account the emergence of new powers and give a more equitable place to all continents.

At the same time, it is important to proceed with the profound management reforms which our organization needs. In his report "In Larger Freedom," the Secretary-General proposed elements of an action plan and initiated the first reforms to permit our common organization to implement them.

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Mr. President,

We all know that security and development cannot be dissociated.

Five years on from the Millennium Summit, heads of state and government have just issued a troubling report on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

The final document which they adopted clearly sets out the priorities on which we must mobilize. The first of these alas is food security for, as the declaration adopted in 2004 on President Lula and President Chirac's initiative emphasized, hunger remains the worst weapon of mass destruction.

It still kills several hundred million men women and children across the globe. We can see it happening right now in the Sahel and southern Africa. This scourge of another age must and can be fought.

Of course, emergency humanitarian aid must be provided to people in distress. This implies greater coordination in United Nations intervention and the establishment of an international humanitarian force as France has proposed.

But beyond that, it is important to give all areas at risk the technical resources for prevention and early warning. Above all, it is essential to bring about the conditions for sustainable development which benefit all. That is the ambition of the Millennium Development Goals which can only be achieved with substantial long-term financing. In the first place, official development assistance will be needed for a long time. The final document at the summit recalls the international commitments in this regard, which France and the EU will respect.

It is urgent for the other developed countries to make the same commitments.

But as we well know this will not be enough. Additional long-term resources have to be found through innovative financing mechanisms.

France advocates the establishment of international solidarity contributions. Over 66 countries have given their support to the pilot project for a tax on airline tickets, and we are delighted. In February, France will host a ministerial conference on this initiative so that it can be implemented concretely and speedily.

By devoting three of the eight goals to health, the Millennium Declaration put public health back at the center of aid policies to the countries of the South.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic, because of its extent and economic and social consequences, is a matter of concern to us all. Only by working together will we face it, through taking action which integrates prevention, or treatment, care and the medical and social vulnerability of infected persons. France wishes to work on this integrated approach with its European partners. , the World Health Organization, UNAIDS and the Global Fund to Combat AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Everything must be done to achieve universal access to treatment by 2010 by implementing where necessary the flexibility in intellectual property rights provided for in the Doha international trade agreements.

The fight against AIDS demands the mobilization of all: France for its part has pledged to double its contribution to the Global Fund, increasing it to 300 million euros by 2007. .

At the same time, international cooperation must take into account the particular difficulties of hundred of categories of individuals: victims of extreme poverty who are excluded, young women who are denied the right to sexual and reproductive health, the disabled who are marginalized.

Mr. President

From the Indian Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico, from Japan to Antarctica, man is today confronted with an unprecedented rise in threats to the environment which he himself has caused.

Scientific proofs of the reality of climate change and its human origin are irrefutable. Urgent action is therefore essential. All initiatives must be compatible with the Kyoto Protocol; perspectives must be outlined for the future of the multilateral climate regime after 2012. France would like to see stronger commitments, especially regarding the transfers of technologies to emerging countries.

To respond to the threat and more effectively mobilize energies and resources, France and Europe have proposed the establishment of a specialized agency, based on the UN Environment Program, for the purpose of coordinating international action. This idea is mentioned in the summit_ final document; it must now be translated into reality.

Mr. President,

The United Nations is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year. The world has changed profoundly since 1945. Millions of men and women have accede to freedom and emerged from underdevelopment. Technological progress has been staggering and has radically changed the life of society and relations among states.

The challenges and threats have evolved. Today, they are on a global scale and endanger the whole of mankind.

Yet we must remain optimistic. It is not too late providing we understand the stakes and mobilize collectively. The UN is going back to the meaning the founding fathers gave it: to help in the peaceful resolution of conflicts, build international cooperation to advance development and promote human rights.

We need the UN more than ever; it offers us the sole framework for universal comprehensive action which is legitimate and recognized as such by all states. Let us give it our full support. France for its part makes this pledge./.