



**Speech by Jacques Chirac President of the French Republic – French Presidency  
of the Evian Summit**

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**Elysée Palace – Wednesday 21 may 2003**

Ministers,  
Ambassadors,  
Members of Parliament,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

If a few days, France will host the G8 Summit and an enlarged meeting of Heads of State and Government from the North and the South in Evian. The French authorities are preparing for these meetings in close collaboration with their partners and in a spirit of openness. I would like to express our special thanks to our friends and neighbours in Switzerland for their tremendous cooperation in the organisation of the Summit.

To those of you who represent your governments and international organisations in Paris, to those of you who represent the political community, civil society, business and organised labour, I would like to say how precious our direct discussions, and discussions through members of the Government or through my advisers have been. Your active participation in consultations has made the French position more specific and detailed, and contributed to the preparatory talks between representatives of the G8 countries.

I would also like to tell you how France sees this meeting and how the Evian Summit could contribute to renewed confidence.

The world has doubts. It is torn between hope and fear. It is awed by scientific and technical advances, which are unparalleled in history and hold out extraordinary prospects and stupendous potential. But the world is worried about the increased power that these advances bring.

It is reassured by the new links that world trade forges between economies. It has practical proof that development can lift millions of men and women out of poverty. But it is revolted by some of the harsh consequences of economic competition and the growing gap between rich and poor.

There is enthusiasm about the advances of freedom and democracy and unlimited access to other cultures. But there is fear of uncontrolled movements causing peoples to renounce their identity and raising the threat of growing uniformity.

These are the doubts the world has. They are why it is urgent to allay fears, prevent violence and open a way forward.

After the difficulties of the past months, the Evian Summit is an opportunity to show that nations can and will get along and act together for the good of humanity, through their economic growth and through the fulfilment of the commitments made at the Millennium Summit and at Johannesburg.

Of course, the G8 is not the world's board of directors. However, the members' economic strength and their responsibilities give this forum for free discussions between friends and allies a capacity for setting and mobilising on shared goals.

I would like us to deliver a message of resolve and confidence in Evian :

- ◆ Confidence in our ability to create the right conditions for strong economic growth. This is our responsibility.
- ◆ Confidence in our ability to achieve sustainable development. This is our duty of solidarity.
- ◆ Confidence in our ability to meet the threats of terrorism and proliferation. This is required for our security.

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There has been a substantial slowing of world economic growth over the last two years, which has been compounded by international uncertainties. It has affected all the major economic regions. In most of the developed countries, unemployment is rising again, fiscal deficits are growing, large corporations and small businesses have fallen on hard times and consumers are worried. CThis situation is

harmful for world growth and for development in the southern countries.

Yet, the conditions are now right for the economy to recover. We must not miss this opportunity. Uncertainty has cleared up. The stock market bubble has burst and financial instability has abated. Oil prices are back down to reasonable levels. Interest rates are low and may continue to fall. Businesses need to build up their inventories again. Consumption and investment should be able to take off again. Confidence can prevail once again.

It is up to all of the participants in Evian to send a message of confidence to the world. We are determined to do our utmost to get the world economy growing again. We are determined to press on with the structural reforms that will make our economies more efficient and more productive, and to adapt our social structures to demographic changes. We are determined to reduce taxes and charges to set creative forces free for the sake of growth and jobs. c'est démontrer que les politiques macro-économiques de l'Union européenne, de l'Amérique et du Japon convergent. C'est convaincre que les réformes en cours vont améliorer l'efficacité générale de l'économie dans le respect des droits sociaux fondamentaux et pour le bénéfice du plus grand nombre.

Yet, strong growth is only possible if confidence in our economic system is renewed. This confidence was shaken by recent financial and accounting scandals, which have taken a heavy toll. It was also shaken by the impression that globalisation is a pretext for social and environmental dumping, which is harmful for the welfare of present and future generations.

The G8 intends to answer these fears by upholding the principles of a responsible market economy. We shall confirm our confidence in the market economy, provided that financial, social and environmental safeguards are in place. Provided that all economic agents, meaning businesses big and small, of course, but also financial agents and governments themselves, act responsibly in keeping with these principles.

By upholding the principle of a responsible market economy, we shall uphold a conviction that I know—and your presence here is proof—that most business leaders and more and more financial investors share.

traitera donc de la bonne gouvernance et de la responsabilité sociale et environnementale des entreprises.

Renewing confidence will also require prevention and treatment for regional financial crises. Not enough has been said about the progress made since the Asian crisis. The situation has been consolidated considerably. La libéralisation des marchés de capitaux est mieux ordonnée, plus raisonnable. This was made possible by changes at the IMF, and, more particularly, through greater consideration of the social aspect of crises, the drafting of codes of conduct and prudential rules. We are now in a stronger position. Even though we cannot avert every crisis, we can prevent them from spreading. This remains a key priority for the G8.

Our message of confidence in the economy will ultimately come from what we have to say about the outlook for world trade. We take free trade so much for granted that we have forgotten about the ravages brought about by protectionism in past decades. The example of many Asian and Latin American countries has shown how economic growth can be boosted by the development of international trade.

But free trade does not mean no rules. Opening up trade, within the WTO framework, requires compliance with specific rules. We say yes to more open trade, with respect for human rights, social rights and the environment. We say yes to open trade in services, with respect for the cultural exception and the great public services, such as health and education. We say yes to more open agricultural trade, with respect for the Common Agricultural Policy and the objective of food security that developing countries are legitimately pursuing.

For the Doha Round to succeed, it must focus on access of poor countries' products to rich countries' markets. Hence the proposals in favour of Africa, notably on agriculture, that I put forward last February, which the European Commission has now endorsed.

Africa needs special international trade rules. It needs a harmonised preferential regime, predictable income from commodity exports and a moratorium on all destabilising forms of agricultural export supports.

Very dynamic macro-economic policies, consensus about the principles governing a responsible market economy, more stable international financial markets and more open and better regulated world trade are some of the prospects available to us. And they are what we shall work towards at Evian, for the sake of growth.

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Growth is critical to lift the half of world's population living below the poverty line out of need. Growth, along with an ecological revolution to put an end to the aberrant situation in which the world uses more natural resources than our planet is able to replenish.

At Evian, we shall announce decisions that testify to the industrialised countries' determination to fulfil the commitments made in Monterrey and Johannesburg.

I am thinking primarily of Africa. This continent is marginalised. But its leaders want to change the state of play. We have decided to take part in this change, to work in partnership with governments, but also in partnership between citizens. The Evian Summit will be the one that implements the plan of action for Africa adopted at Kananaskis. Important decisions will be made: fighting famine, preparations for an African peace-keeping force, market access, mobilisation of public and private funding for growth and infrastructure, fighting corruption and depletion of natural resources.

We shall then prove our solidarity on the issue of water. We have committed ourselves to the goal of halving the number of people without access to safe drinking water and sanitation by 2015. This is a very ambitious goal, particularly in Africa. But we can attain it by combining good national policies, democratic and decentralised management, funding and an ecological approach, while respecting the sovereign prerogatives of all countries. France supports the proposal of the President of the European Commission to allocate one billion euros for action in this area.

Human development cannot take place without a global response to the major pandemics. I mean AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, which affect entire populations. The Global Fund was created two years ago. In Evian, we shall set in motion the process that will sustain its resources. I welcome the scale of the American commitment to the Fund. We will strive to reach an agreement on the difficult issue of access to medicines for poor, non-producing countries. We shall intensify research on what are known as neglected diseases. We shall mobilise to stem the spread of SARS. This epidemic calls for urgent action and reinforced international discipline.

Economic development requires this solidarity effort and France is making it by increasing its official development assistance. But, above all, development depends on poor countries' ability to attract private investment, particularly in Africa. It is critical that their domestic savings are invested in their own countries and that businesses return. This will require good governance. These countries

also need sound finances. For the poorest countries, the debt forgiveness initiative needs to be implemented more rapidly and new and innovative financing mechanisms are required. I mean guarantee systems or such proposals as the international financial initiative put forward by the British government, which France supports.

The G8 has always been a forum for lively discussions about environmental protection. This has never been an easy task, since our approaches are so different, but the G8 is where the decisions were made that have enabled us to fight climate change. It is where awareness was raised at the highest levels about the threats of deforestation and declining biodiversity. It is where the issue of precaution was discussed.

France, which shall soon adopt its constitutional environmental charter, intends to be exemplary in this regard.

France and most of its partners are convinced that the surest and most effective way to deal with the urgent problem of global warming is to implement the Kyoto Protocol. I shall strongly reiterate this view.

But without waiting for this critical agreement to become universal and even while implementing its provisions, we must build up sustainable systems for cutting emissions of greenhouse gases. The Evian Summit will adopt a plan of action aimed at putting scientific and technological innovation to work in the fight against climate change.

This same desire to protect the environment underpins the decisions that we shall adopt at the initiative of the United Kingdom and Germany to manage fishery resources better and to increase protection for our coastlines against floating dustbins and to get these substandard ships off the seas more quickly.

France considers health, food, access to water and a healthy environment to be fundamental rights. By acting to achieve them on a worldwide scale, in partnership with the southern countries, the G8 is sending a message of confidence in our ability to build a united and caring world.

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Confidence also requires more security. The downside of globalisation is greater vulnerability to global menaces, such as

terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, drug trafficking and organised crime. We need effective police systems worldwide to back up national efforts to fight all kinds of crime.

The G8 has had long experience in this area. Back in Lyon, in 1996, it adopted an ambitious programme to fight organised crime, financial crime and terrorism. It has also provided the framework for preparing many joint initiatives that have led to the adoption of conventions and control regimes by the United Nations.

The day after the tragic attacks of 11 September, the G8 played its full role in fighting terrorism. The Kananaskis decisions were applied resolutely. But the headlines provide daily proof that the threat is still very real. This year, we shall improve our system, by offering institutional cooperation aimed at building up national capacities in countries that need it.

A great deal of work has been done in the same spirit to ensure implementation of the initiative to prevent terrorist from gaining access to weapons of mass destruction, particularly the weapons stored in the former Soviet Union. France, along with its partners, is preparing several projects with Russia.

More generally speaking, we shall discuss the critical issue of non-proliferation at Evian. Several countries are carrying out prohibited projects. We are not willing to accept this and we shall act within the legitimate framework of international law.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the heart of the discussions in Evian will be our determination to contribute to security, growth and stability. But there is also the conviction that we are part of a more ambitious undertaking to create a world governance, to assert universal values, which will be all the stronger for being proclaimed by all.

That is why I wanted close consultations with all stakeholders in globalisation. And I am counting on those who are going to express their hopes and their fears by gathering around Evian, in Switzerland and in France, to do so in the spirit of serenity and respect, that will lend legitimacy to their action.

Globalisation calls for dialogue. That is why I wanted to carry on the initiatives already undertaken by Japan, Italy and Canada and invite the leaders of emerging countries and poor countries to Evian on 1 June so that we can discuss the major issues of today's world together.

If we want globalisation to benefit everyone and everyone to approach it responsibly, it is critical for everyone to have a seat at the table and take part in the discussions needed to control globalisation and make it more human.

I have confidence in humanity's ability to use its determination, its intelligence and adaptability to find the answers to the challenges of the modern world. And I am convinced that our generation will be able to create the institutions and rules for a global democracy that is open and caring. Evian will mark one step towards completing this vast project.

Thank you.

Priorities of the French Presidency 

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