



## **Speech by Mr Jacques CHIRAC, President of the French Republic, to the meeting on eradicating hunger and poverty.**

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PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC

TO THE MEETING ON ERADICATING  
HUNGER AND POVERTY

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NEW YORK

MONDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2004

President of the Federative Republic of Brazil,  
Heads of State and Government,  
Secretary-General of the United Nations,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Poverty and hunger are a prison in which over one billion men, women and children eke out their existence. One of the great scandals of our time is our inability to free them from this plight when we have the means to do so. In an era of wealth and progress, we cannot resign ourselves, either through neglect or contempt, to being party to the injustice done them.

Pulling down the walls of this prison would be much more than an act of generosity on our part. It would be an act of justice, intelligence and peace. Since dignity and the hope of a better life are the most effective antidotes to the poisons of violence and fanaticism. Since the whole world would benefit from the energy and capabilities of all those who would finally be freed from the constraints of merely surviving. The recent rise of China, Brazil, India and so many others bear witness to this today.

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The world's income stands at some forty trillion dollars per year. The value of international trade is eight trillion. These figures show the strength and interdependence of today's economy. They should be the measure of our mobilization.

Four years ago, the international community committed to taking decisive action against poverty, hunger, ignorance, disease, gender discrimination and environmental destruction to achieve concrete results by 2015.

The terms of the contract are clear. The poor countries have to put their houses in order, improve governance and conduct sound policies. Progress has



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been made in Asia, Latin America and Africa with NEPAD. In return, the rich countries have to assume their solidarity responsibilities. France, as it has announced, is increasing its ODA, which will account for 0.5 percent of its national wealth by 2007 with a view to 0.7 percent by 2012.

Despite the increase in Official Development Assistance decided on in Monterrey, which should be pursued, and despite the progress expected from growth in world trade, we know that we have no chance of reaching our goals at the current rate. We need to find at least an additional fifty billion dollars per year between now and 2015 if we are to hope to succeed. It would take just three billion dollars per year to provide primary education to all the children in sub-Saharan Africa; three billion per year to take decisive action, via the Global Fund, against AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria; and two billion to finance research for a vaccine against malaria.

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Forty trillion ●● Eight trillion ●● Fifty billion ●● It's so blatantly disproportionate. In one year's time, we will conduct the first review of the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Before our peoples, the most vulnerable, and future generations, the international community does not have the right to eschew its responsibilities. We have one year to put things straight.

I would like to thank President Lula, who took the initiative for our meeting. As a tireless campaigner for the most underprivileged, in his own country and worldwide, he brings, like France, a new vision of international solidarity.

Over and above the political differences and technical debates, there is now a broad consensus acknowledging the inadequacy of the current development funding system, the need for stable and predictable concessional resources, and the need to find new mechanisms to satisfy this necessity.

I wanted to make a new contribution to this vital debate. Since all the possible solutions should be considered in a balanced manner. Chile and Spain stepped forward to join with Brazil and France in this thinking. Our quadripartite group's report demonstrates the possibility of a joint approach.

Its conclusions are consistent with those of another group comprising, at my request, key figures with the widest range of expertise and sensibilities who considered the feasibility of new instruments. Not to replace Official Development Assistance or private action, but to round them out.

It has now been established that technically realistic and economically rational solutions exist. The use of new types of borrowing and the international or global introduction of voluntary or compulsory contributions to finance development. Such instruments could be designed in such a way as to guarantee the absence of economic imbalances, State sovereignty and the transparent management of funds in keeping with the Monterrey contract. Ideas deemed until recently to be utopian or irresponsible are now coming to the



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fore. A taboo is lifting.

Let us put the coming year to good use to develop our thinking in more detail and build the vital political consensus. I call for this issue to be considered by this General Assembly and by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank annual meetings. I will propose to the British Prime Minister that the next G8 take a clear and strong position on this subject.

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The billion men, women and children imprisoned in extreme poverty and hunger do not live on a far-off planet or in a far-off time. We cannot feign ignorance of them. Since, via the planetary communication screens and the gradual disappearance of borders, they are daily becoming closer neighbours and contemporaries.

To pull down the walls of their prison of poverty and famine is to ward off the threat of chaos and unify humanity on the one road of hope and progress.

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