



Message from M. Jacques CHIRAC, President of the Republic, at the Eleventh session of the Conference of the parties to the Climate Change Convention.

(Montreal, 7 December 2005)

Climate change has become a brutal and urgent reality. It has become the greatest threat hanging over the future of humankind. Even if scientific uncertainties remain, the accumulation of evidence, visible environmental transformations and the increasing number of extreme events bear witness to a phenomenon that no one can seriously continue to contest.

In the face of such urgency, the world expects us, here in Montreal, to embody a collective determination to serve the general interests of humankind, to make courageous decisions that measure up to the challenge.

The entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, consecrated by the adoption of the Marrakech agreements, marked a turning point. This is the foundation on which we must build. France has taken all the necessary measures and will fully respect her obligations.

But the commitments made up to 2012 by the developed countries are only a first step. We must now prepare ourselves to go much further. In order to hope to contain global warming and limit the resulting serious disruption it entails, we must stabilize and then halve world emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050. In order to take into account growth in developing countries, this goal requires increased efforts on the part of industrialized countries. They will have to reduce their emissions to 25% of current levels over this period.

The cost of action – however considerable it appears – remains significantly lower than that of doing nothing. Devastating natural disasters, conflicts over energy resources, climate refugees... the bill could quickly become too high a price to pay.

Let us be realistic. States will not build the response to climate change by relying solely on ad hoc measures, regional or private initiatives, informal dialogue or partial agreements. All these things are necessary, and complement a multilateral approach, but they are not enough. And it would be irresponsible to claim that humankind will simply have to adapt to the changes.

Let us not be seduced by the illusion of technology! Scientific cooperation is indispensable if we are to develop new energy sources and cleaner technologies. But these technological leaps will not provide a miracle solution, and the hope of future progress must not excuse us from our present responsibilities.



PRESIDENCE DE LA REPUBLIQUE

One of the major challenges of this century is to start the inevitable revolution in our lifestyles, production methods and consumption habits as soon as possible. This means integrating the concerns related to climate change and ecological responsibility into all our economic activities. Our fellow citizens are already aware of what is at stake. Our responsibility is to build a framework allowing everyone's efforts to be a meaningful part of a determined collective commitment.

The scale of the task requires exemplary international cooperation within a strengthened long-term multilateral framework.

The time has come to go beyond the false opposition between growth and the fight against climate change, as the Kyoto Protocol has begun to do, with its quantified commitments, incentives for cooperation and market mechanisms. This necessary alliance of political, economic and ecological concerns must be at the heart of your work on the international system to fight climate change beyond 2012.

Set reduction commitments that measure up to the challenge. Agree on the respective efforts to be made by wealthy and emerging countries. Improve the incentives for technology transfer. Help with the adoption of low-energy development strategies. Stimulate innovation. Help poor countries cope with the consequences of climate change. This is what the world expects of us. This is what has to be achieved within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the sole forum with the necessary legitimacy for this task.

The international community must join together in commitment and in action against climate change, while there is still time. This is a historic responsibility for all of us. We shall have to undertake immense efforts. France and Europe are ready to do so. Because, beyond our own concerns, we are dealing with a world we will bequeath to our children, the very future of our planet. Thank you.

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