



Message from M. Jacques CHIRAC, President of the Republic, to the Euro-African Conference on Migration and Development in Rabat (Morocco)

Rabat, 10 July 2006

Emigration is at the heart of the relations between Europe and Africa. It's an economic issue, given the wealth differential between our two continents. It's a demographic issue, given the explosion of the African population, scheduled by 2050 to more than double from 900 million inhabitants today to almost two billion. It's a political and security issue, and everyone appreciates its serious implications.

We must take up this challenge together, in a spirit of partnership and shared responsibility. Everyone, Europeans and Africans, has to do their bit in today's effort to take control of the situation and remedy its deep-seated causes.

Addressing it means first of all confirming Europe's commitment to work alongside Africa in a partnership for development.

No one very happily leaves home, family and friends. So long as Africa has millions of men and women ready to risk everything in the hope of a better life as we have seen with horror in Ceuta, Melilla, the Canaries and Lampedusa we will not resolve the problem.

Let us offer Africa's young people a future of dignity. Then they will not risk succumbing to violence and extremism, or choose, in droves, the path of exile.

AU-EU PARTNERSHIP

Let us take advantage of Africa's dynamism, of Africans' talents and spirit of enterprise. If we help Africa defeat the pandemics, like AIDS, which sap its strength, give a basic education to all its children and acquire the essential transport, water, energy and telecommunications infrastructure, then it will become the equal of the major emerging "poles". This is the motivation for our partnership with the African Union and NEPAD.

Already, we are seeing its first results with the speeding-up of the continent's growth, which should reach nearly 6% this year. This encouraging figure has to spur Europe to increase its effort, as the EU member countries pledged last year by deciding, on France's initiative, to increase their aid to the continent by 16 billion a year by 2010. This is also what lies behind France's commitment in favour of innovative financing, of which the solidarity



contribution on plane tickets is the promising example.

CODEVELOPMENT

We must also build this partnership by drawing more heavily on the African diasporas in Europe, hence the idea of codevelopment. These Africans often want to contribute to the development of their regions of origin. Through their savings, skills and talents, they have the ability to do this, but still often encounter too many obstacles to the realization of their projects. International institutions, fund providers, banking and microcredit organizations must take greater account of this and afford them more support in their action.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

At the same time, the Rabat conference must set us on the path of stronger and more effective cooperation between the countries of origin, transit and destination in order to combat illegal immigration.

We are determined to fight this battle with due regard for human dignity, but firmly. It is in the interests of the men and women who, by coming under such conditions, risk their lives and at the end of the road very often find only bitterness and disillusionment. This is in the interests of all the Africans legally resident in Europe and aspiring to integrate, as well as of those who, because of their jobs, have to be able to move freely from one continent to another. Finally, it is necessary for Europeans who, with globalization, are facing very rapid changes, sources of concern and tension.

This cooperation has to take several forms: an energetic fight against Mafia-type rings carrying out a shameful trade in human misery; police, judicial and technical cooperation to improve border surveillance; and smooth application of effective readmission agreements. Your discussions must also lead to concrete decisions on all these subjects.

Ladies and gentlemen,

France immediately supported this Rabat conference, stemming from an initiative of His Majesty the King of Morocco and President Zapatero, because it testifies to a new public recognition of the need to place the emigration debate in the broader perspective of a genuine partnership serving African and European societies. Here the aim will not be to condemn, gloss over difficulties or propose off-the-shelf solutions far from it: your discussions will contribute to finding balanced and fair responses, safeguarding our mutual interests, to the most sensitive questions of our times. Thank you.

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