



Speech by Jacques CHIRAC, French President, to the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on HIV/AIDS

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 22, 2003

Heads of State and Government,
General Assembly President,
Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The spread of HIV/AIDS is no longer insuperable and inevitable. We now have the means to bring it under control. We owe it to the victims of HIV/AIDS, to those millions of children, men and women prematurely deprived of their lives, to the countless orphans, to future generations, to mobilize on an exceptional scale. That is why I have come here bearing the message of France, a message of determination, solidarity, and confidence.

I want to pay tribute to all those men and women who devote their lives to fighting this evil. To the sick, first of all, in their determination to fight for themselves, for their dignity, and their cure. To the nonprofit organizations, and to all those who, through their personal commitment, epitomize action and fraternity. To the physicians and scientists who are tirelessly progressing in their quest for treatments and a preventive vaccine. To the pharmaceutical firms, which have now grasped the ethical imperative that ought to govern their work. And, finally, to the international organizations, UNAIDS foremost among them, and to you, Mr. Secretary-General, whose commitment I applaud.

The United Nations embodies a universal conscience in the fight against HIV/AIDS, a political will on a global scale. In the recent years, the General Assembly and Security Council have made decisive strides through their decisions. Those decisions are rolling back taboos, prejudices, and stigmas. It is now an accepted fact that the fight against HIV/AIDS is not only a health and social imperative, but also a moral imperative and a vital challenge to global peace and security.

Today, there is no longer any excuse for inaction. After years of effort and struggle, not only do effective treatments exist, they are now becoming accessible at affordable prices to the poorest members of the community. The



PRESIDENCE DE LA REPUBLIQUE

recent decisions of the WTO mark a breakthrough and are a source of hope. Having fought relentlessly for this outcome for years, France now intends to ensure they are respected and applied generously.

And here is another advance: all governments now accept that access to medicines is inseparable from prevention. Contrary to common prejudice, it is now an established fact that treatments are being administered as effectively in the developing countries of the South as in the North, provided the proper health structures are in place.

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has emerged as a key instrument in the developing countries. We must provide it with the support it needs. We must ensure its long-term funding. We are committed to ensuring that three million AIDS sufferers receive treatment in 2005. For that, the Fund requires at least three billion dollars annually. I hereby reaffirm the objective advocated by France, namely that the European Union and the United States each provide one billion dollars a year, with the other donor countries providing the remaining billion, under a multi-year plan. The Paris Conference, in June of this year, raised half of this amount. We now need to take matters forward, and this will be one of the aims of the Fund's Board at its meeting next month.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United Nations must today declare a global health emergency in the fight against HIV/AIDS. I propose that the General Assembly devote a session to the subject each year. That will enable the Secretary-General to report on progress in the achievement of our common goals. Each country will report on its national and international efforts. And around the three poles -UNAIDS, WHO, and the Global Fund-, each international organization will report on its own efforts.

Thus united in a struggle on behalf of life, the international community will achieve a decisive victory, and give grounds for confidence in the future of humanity.

Thank you.

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