



## Article by M. Jacques CHIRAC, President of the Republic, published in "The Independent" newspaper

Paris, 13 July 2006

A similar article was published on 13 July in the French newspaper "Les Echos".

At the G8 Summit in St Petersburg, the first chaired by Russia, we must seize the opportunities of globalisation in this extraordinary period of global growth that is transforming the future of mankind, while correcting its unacceptable social and ecological excesses.

The G8's method, based on personal contacts between leaders, is to seek consensus in a spirit of shared responsibility. This is why it has opened up to emerging countries such as India, China, Brazil and Mexico, without which we can no longer address any major global issues, and to the representatives of poor countries.

Energy must not be a political instrument. In this phase of rapid economic growth, we must deal with it in the framework of a global partnership for sustainable development. If we continue on our current course, increased consumption of fossil fuels will be disastrous for the environment and climate.

In St Petersburg this weekend, I would like us to find ways to improve the functioning of oil and gas markets, promote dialogue between producers, consumers and transit countries, accelerate the transition towards the post-oil era and help emerging countries to plan ecologically-responsible growth. We must strongly promote renewable and alternative energies - including nuclear energy, ensuring we have the strictest safety and non-proliferation guarantees - and energy-saving policies. Each of our countries should set ambitious national goals in these areas by the end of this year.

Global threats require global responses. We shall not solve the problem of global warming if we each go our own way or increase the number of unilateral or partial solutions. I am concerned at the weakening of the international regime for climate change. We must reverse this trend. Here, the seven G8 members party to the Kyoto protocol have a particular responsibility. They must set an example by respecting their commitments, as Europe and France are doing. It is up to them to show the way forward for the post-2012 period. We seek an ambitious agreement commensurate with the threat posed to humanity, one committing all the G8 countries, including the United States, as well as emerging countries.

The current ecological crisis demands effective and co-ordinated global responses. I will call upon my counterparts to commit to the rapid



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establishment of a United Nations Environment Organisation.

Every year Aids, tuberculosis and malaria cause more than five million deaths, the vast majority in Africa. We can overcome these diseases. The G8 is committed to this and must keep its promises: universal access to Aids treatments by 2010, compliance with the WTO agreement on generics, and funding for the Global Fund, to which France is to allocate 300m in 2007 to fight these pandemics.

We need new sources of financing to fight poverty, taking advantage of the exceptional growth in global wealth. France, with other countries, has introduced a solidarity contribution on airline tickets, with the revenue going, through Unitaid, to purchasing medicines. This is a first experiment. It will have to be extended, for example, to finance education for all. I would like to convince the other G8 countries of the effectiveness of this modern approach.

To fight pandemics we must strengthen health systems in the South. In Europe, health insurance was designed a century ago when incomes were comparable to current levels in Africa. In St Petersburg, I will propose an initiative to help create such systems in poor countries.

The world remains under threat from avian flu. To prevent and, if necessary, react to a human pandemic, we must intensify preparations by strengthening monitoring resources and accelerating the release of the \$2bn in aid pledged by the international community.

I shall impress on my G8 colleagues the imperative of a partnership with Africa. Things are moving forward: progress in peace, democracy, and growth, currently more than 5 per cent a year. Solidarity with Africa is a moral obligation. It is also clearly in the interest of Europe and the rest of the world, given demographic trends. With a future of dignity, young people in Africa will be diverted from the temptation of violence and extremism and have an alternative to immigration. The Euro-African partnership decided this week at the Rabat Conference to work together on this issue of common concern.

The Summit will also deal with security issues. Iran's nuclear ambitions are a cause for concern. Europe, with the support of Russia, the US and China, has taken the diplomatic approach. We have made a generous offer to Iran which respects its right to civilian nuclear energy, provided it complies with its commitments to non-proliferation. I would like Iran's leaders to accept our outstretched hand for Iran's sake and for peace and stability worldwide. The St Petersburg Summit will send them a message of unity and steadfastness.

Finally, this first G8 Summit chaired by Russia, the result of a process begun in 1996 on France's initiative, has symbolic importance. Responding to President Putin's invitation means putting aside out-of-date Cold War arguments and moving towards a future together based on peace and co-operation. It means recognising Russia's progress and its place in Europe. Hosting the G8 in St



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Petersburg also commits Russia, since a common future implies shared values: democracy, the rule of law, human rights, freedom - everything which contributes to progress and dignity for mankind.

The writer is President of France

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