



Address by Mr. Jacques CHIRAC, President of the French Republic, for the creation of UNITAID.

New York, Tuesday, 19 september 2006

Heads of State and Government,
Secretary-General, my dear Kofi Annan,
Ministers,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Here in the forum of the United Nations, the symbol of the values of solidarity and fraternity between individuals and peoples, we are brought together by a common determination: to combat injustice, and in particular the scandal of a world in which sickness devastates the South while the medicines stay in the North.

A world in which AIDS leaves 3 million dead each year because most sufferers have no access to treatment. A world in which tuberculosis continues to kill 2 million people every year, despite the fact that we know how to prevent it and how to cure it. A world in which nearly 500 million cases of malaria must be treated and cared for.

Faced with these scourges, which decimate whole generations, destabilise societies and lay waste to nations, particularly in Africa, we had a duty to arrive at an effective response based on solidarity: that is why we are launching UNITAID today.

UNITAID is based on a simple principle: the allocation to the purchase or production of pharmaceutical drugs of a tiny part of the immense wealth generated by the acceleration of trade, to ensure that the globalisation of solidarity matches that of the economy.

UNITAID is, firstly, an international drug purchase facility based around the WHO. This facility will provide access for the poorest, at the lowest prices, to drugs of assured quality, including generics, and to the means for diagnostic testing for AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

As early as October, the Board will meet and the first projects will be launched, in partnership in every case, and notably with the Global Fund, UNICEF and foundations, especially that of President Clinton.



PRESIDENCE DE LA REPUBLIQUE

UNITAID is also a specific form of innovative financing based on multi-year, predictable and sustainable contributions. France will allocate the proceeds from the air-ticket solidarity levy put in place on 1 July last. Standing at 50 million in 2006, proceeds from this levy will rise to 200 million in a full year.

UNITAID is a major step forward towards meeting a need for solidarity essential to global balance. But it is no more than a first step: with runaway population growth, deepening inequality, growing disparities in wealth, the achievement of the Millennium Goals must necessarily involve innovative financing mechanisms.

We should take the example of UNITAID as our inspiration in meeting other major challenges such as the elimination of hunger, from which 850 million human beings still suffer; access to safe drinking water; and education for all, in accordance with the Dakar Declaration of 2000. This is in our collective interest. But it is also our moral duty and our responsibility.

Ladies and gentlemen,

With the Secretary-General of the United Nations, with the other founding countries - Brazil, Norway, Chile, the United Kingdom - , with the President of the African Union, with the Clinton Foundation, with the representatives of those who suffer from disease, whom I salute, along with all the States that are putting in place new financing mechanisms for development, we are uniting our efforts in this act of solidarity, which is also a political act.

I call upon all members of the United Nations to join us in this initiative, faithful as it is to the humanist values of progress and fraternity that form our shared ideal.

Thank you./.

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