



## Speech by Mr Jacques CHIRAC President of the Republic on the occasion of the UNITAID membership ceremony.

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Cannes, Alpes-Maritimes Department, friday 16 february 2007

Heads of State,  
Ministers,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The fight against infectious diseases is one of the most urgent and vital struggles of our times.

It embodies the essential duty to preserve human dignity, which must be our guiding principle in the age of globalization.

For many years now, we have been pointing to the scandalous persistence of diseases whose victims are in the South while drugs to treat them exist in the North.

In recent years, major progress has been made to mobilize funding, lower the cost of drugs and build health systems. But we must move much more swiftly and go even further if we are to save the millions of lives threatened by tuberculosis, malaria and AIDS.

I am delighted that our Summit is coming to a close with eighteen African countries joining UNITAID.

Their participation in this project demonstrates their conviction that both national action and international solidarity are the way forward to combat these pandemics. They are sending a message of hope to their peoples and to the world.

UNITAID gives poor people access to high-quality drugs, including generics, and diagnostics for AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria at the lowest prices.

UNITAID is a modern financing mechanism, based on sustainable, stable and multi-year contributions. It will raise 300 million in 2007 for projects in 50



## PRESIDENCE DE LA REPUBLIQUE

countries.

France already contributes the proceeds from the air-ticket levy it created last July to UNITAID. This is a precursor of the innovative financing mechanisms solidarity requires in the age of globalization, which entails allocating a very small portion of the immense wealth generated by the increase in trade to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

UNITAID ensures effective action, thanks to the support of WHO and partnerships with foundations such as the Clinton Foundation and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

I would like to thank the UNITAID Executive Board Chairman, Mr. Philippe Douste-Blazy, for all the work he has accomplished.

I express my deepest gratitude to all the countries that, each with its own means, have committed to becoming a UNITAID participant, donor and beneficiary.

For it is by joining forces that we will win this fight against the scourges devastating entire populations.

It is my wish that your decision should inspire the international community.

It is an act of solidarity and confidence.

It is a political act for a fairer world.

It is an act for humanity.

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