



24th confØrence of heads of state of Africa and France statements made by M. Jacques CHIRAC, President of the Republic, during his joint press confØrence with M. Amadou Toumani TOURE, President of Mali, and Mr John KUFUOR, President of Ghana, Chairman of the African Union - excerpts -

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Cannes, 16 February 2007

THE PRESIDENT (•••) This 24th summit brought together, as you know, around 40 heads of State and government. (•••)

It has been a good summit. President Amadou Toumani TourØ said a moment ago that it was a success. Indeed, it reflects the vitality of the special relations between France and Africa and, once again, it encourages us to work together. The way the summits have evolved mirrors the way Africa and relations between Africa and France have evolved. The dialogue between French-speaking countries has gradually broadened to include the whole continent. A hallmark has been the increasing importance we've all had to attach to addressing the imperatives of development. This summit has been run in a new way in that you've been able to follow part of our discussions live.

AFRIQUE AVENIR FORUM/AFRICAN ACHIEVEMENTS/AMPA

The summit was preceded by a forum on African successes. People always forget to talk about them. Yet they are spectacular. All these successes, particularly those achieved by young people, fall within the framework of the initiative President TourØ took at the Bamako summit, geared to and aimed at young people. This year we saw a number of young people come here with some spectacular success stories.

In particular, I consider the creation of the Association of African [professional] Musicians [AMPA] announced by Youssou N'Dour and Rokia TraorØ, to support the development of African culture, based on the richness of its music, extremely positive. The objective, approved by all the heads of State and government, was to give young African musicians the professional capacity



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they still lack they are talented and well known, but still lack the technical skills, professional capacity and modern technology to make their music heard they have to import this either from the United States or Europe in order to put on their concerts. My grateful thanks go to everyone involved, and especially Youssou N'Dour and Rokia TraorØ, for setting it up and convincing us of the need to give this boost to an essential element of African culture: music.

FRENCH POSITION VIS-A-VIS AFRICAN CRISES

In Cannes, we talked about the crises, particularly that of Darfur, and the problems of Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and Somalia. You know France's position: to support the process of national dialogue. To support intervention in the framework of the regional organizations, i.e. the African Union and UN. To honour the agreements we have with a number of African countries.

SUMMIT ROUND TABLES

During the round tables, our discussions have enabled progress on three major issues: Africa's place and influence in the world and particularly the problems relating to the necessity of establishing new ways of obtaining the necessary resources for development aid; commodities; and Africa and the information society. (•••)

GLOBALIZATION/COMMODITIES/WTO

We have to give Africa the means to participate in the current globalization movement. Africa has very many assets thanks to the multiplicity of ties it has forged with the other continents. The new communication technologies can enable it swiftly and fully to participate in the most growth-enhancing trade flows, provided it's given the means.

Commodities remain a focus of our attention and international discussions. I laid particular emphasis on cotton. Here we've had extremely detailed and interesting discussions very expertly led by M. Erik Orsenna of the AcadØmie française who, as you know, has written a book on the subject. He is one of the great specialists on, among other things, the problems of cotton in Africa. He talked about them very authoritatively, showing that they were close to his heart. We also stressed that the WTO was fine, provided that the natural trend to seek agreements to the detriment of the least advanced countries wasn't confirmed. Since, as things stand at the moment, the power ratios, especially between the rich and emerging countries, tend to steer the whole process to the detriment of the developing countries. We have to pay extremely close attention to this. France is doing so.

No country can seriously plan its development or organize its public expenditure in the face of the current uncertainties, particularly on commodity rates, affected sometimes by overproduction, sometimes by shortages, and sometimes more simply because of speculative practices we have to fight against



and which, alas, are increasing in many places all over the world. We need to deal with this, even if at the cost of upsetting powerful interests. I'm thinking particularly of cotton, but also of other commodities. Because it's in the collective interest, in the long run, for every country in the world to be able to gain the greatest benefit from its resources. Personally, I'm not discouraged and will never be discouraged. I have been well aware for a long time from the first debates on the debt situation, when in 1996 at the Lyon summit France proposed the cancellation of the poorest countries' debts through to the establishment of the first innovative sources of development funding and today's decision by 18 African countries to support the process of taxing plane tickets that in these spheres progress takes time, that it's a matter of will, that this will has to be publicly displayed and it's necessary to keep on and on repeating things until people are convinced. But where good causes are concerned, and this is the case here, you always end up convincing people.

GUINEA

Finally, this summit was useful because it discussed the problems relating to peace. First of all the problems of Guinea. We adopted a resolution firmly calling the Guinean authorities to end the deadlock, protect civilians and start a political process. We agree on the African Union, ECOWAS, and the relevant States committing to resolve this problem which greatly concerns us. You know today there are some 2,000 French nationals, 4,000 Lebanese, 500 or 600 Americans and others in Guinea, that they are very worried because of the way the situation is developing. France has taken steps to ready ships and planes at these countries' request and for herself, in order, if necessary and hoping it won't be to provide the relief these people might need. The Lebanese government in particular has expressed a very strong desire for us to be very vigilant about the relief we could provide the some 4,000 Lebanese currently living in Guinea. I hope we won't get to that point, of course, and that, with the wisdom of ECOWAS and the African Union, we'll succeed in finding a way of resolving the country's crisis.

DARFUR

We also but I think you are aware of this since you heard President al-Bashir's comments talked about peace in Darfur, at the instigation and under the chairmanship of President Kufuor, who chaired a two-hour meeting yesterday evening, attended by both the countries involved Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic and also Egypt, with Mr Hosni Mubarak who will host the next summit, the former African Union Chairman, M. Sassou-Nguesso, and the most senior leader present, Mr Omar Bongo. The agreement obtained yesterday evening under the African Union's auspices will, we hope, allow the resumption of the dialogue between Chad, the Central African Republic and Sudan. There must be respect for sovereignties and an end to the support for armed movements, which bring only tragedies and problems.

I call on all the parties to put an end to a humanitarian disaster which is destabilizing the whole region, deeply worrying the whole international



community and has reached a point where a number of humanitarian organizations, whose courage and competence are known to all, have been forced to leave. France has acted in this matter in accordance with her responsibilities.

BAMAKO SUMMIT

That, in short, is what happened at this summit. I'm going first to give the floor to the Mali President, who chaired the preceding summit, to whom I'd like to pay a special tribute. The Bamako summit was a success, especially as regards the initiatives geared to the young. President Tourø ran them until the Cannes summit. (•••) Mali is a fine example of African success.

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DEVELOPMENT AID/PLANE TICKET LEVY

Q. Thank you, President Chirac, for France's organization of the 24th France-Africa summit. How has your approach to development aid really changed attitudes at the Africa-France summits, and particularly that of Cannes? What conclusions should be drawn from this?

THE PRESIDENT The truth is that today Africa has 900 million inhabitants, 35% of whom are under 18. In less than 50 years, there will be 1 billion 900 million of them. So there are political, economic and moral reasons for demanding another approach to development. Obviously the whole cost of development aid, vital for moral reasons and political stability, can't come out of the rich countries' budgets. We saw this with the pledges made for the millennium in 2000. They won't be honoured. Consequently, something else will have to be found. Hence the idea of finding innovative sources of funding. The truth is that there are no solutions other than taxing, in one way or another, the annual increase in global wealth or increase in global trade. There are no other ways of releasing the around \$150 billion which must annually be allocated to official development assistance.

It was with this in mind that I proposed trialling a scheme useful both on the health front and as an example for putting a tax on plane tickets, with the yield going to developing the resources and necessary medicines to fight malaria, tuberculosis and AIDS. I see a result of this change in international thinking in today's decision of 18 African countries to join in this initiative, I repeat, because it allows us to fight the major pandemics, but far more than that, it allows us to demonstrate that only with innovative funding will Africa's essential development be possible in the next 50 years.

FRENCH MILITARY INTERVENTION IN AFRICA

Q. In the past few months, France has intervened militarily in Chad and the Central African Republic, notably through her air force, but not only, with ground troops too. Isn't it worrying that Africans aren't themselves taking responsibility for their security and that France is still compelled to act as



Africa's policeman?

THE PRESIDENT I think your comment is a bit out of date. France doesn't act proprio motu in Darfur, the Central African Republic or Cote d'Ivoire. She acts with the agreement or at the request of both the UN and African Union. There are no inopportune initiatives here allowing us to justify the inappropriate description of "Africa's policeman". France acts at the relevant African or international authorities' request, and will continue to do so.

AFRICA/EUROPE

Q. You've given this summit a European dimension by inviting the current EU President, Mrs Angela Merkel, and [relevant] European Commissioner. (●●●) Do you agree with the idea of France passing the baton for African issues to Europe? (●●●)

THE PRESIDENT As regards passing the baton to Europe, I'm totally against talking in those terms. I've been fighting for a very long time to galvanize Europe to help Africa. I've been doing it for a very long time. Particularly since there's been a commissioner for African affairs, I'm talking about Louis Michel who, what's more, is a friend. I'm constantly asking him to deal either with specific problems or general problems concerning help for Africa and its development. So it isn't a matter of passing the baton, but simply that I consider that the whole of Europe has to be concerned about Africa and Africa's development. Let me add that there's a European budget for this and that France, on her own, pays 16% of the EU budget and contributes 25% of this European Development Fund budget. This is a decision I took at Cannes [EU] summit when some countries wanted to reduce the European Development Fund. I agreed to take responsibility for what the others wanted to limit. So France isn't passing the baton but shouldering the bulk of the effort, for the moment. And she has never asked for this effort to be called into question.

This is the spirit in which I invited Mrs Angela Merkel; everything allowing us to strengthen the ties between Europe and Africa is, by definition, desirable for Europe and for Africa, from the stability point of view and morally and economically. And this is why I welcomed this.

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AFRICA/SETTING COMMODITY PRICES

Q. There's a lot of talk about helping Africa. When are the Africans themselves going to succeed in setting commodity prices instead of these being decided elsewhere?

THE PRESIDENT A pivotal case is that of cotton. The situation, which everyone knows about, which I won't expand on, is deeply shocking, morally and financially. The price of cotton, which is one of Africa's essential resources and provides a livelihood for a lot of people, is totally distorted by



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scandalous, totally unjustified, wholly immoral subsidies given to a number of rich country cotton producers. Europe, which was among them, has resolved its problem. The United States hasn't yet done so. I urge it very strongly, in the name of morality, to take the necessary measures, i.e. to abolish these scandalous subsidies.

CHINA/AFRICA

Q. In France there's been a lot of talk about President Hu Jintao's visit to Africa, to ten countries last year, eight this year. It's been said that China is penetrating the African continent at every level politically, economically and culturally. We'd like your opinion on the subject. Tomorrow is Chinese New Year. I'd very much like to ask you to say a friendly "hello" to all the Chinese throughout the world.

THE PRESIDENT First of all, I greatly welcome China's efforts in Africa. In my eyes they are positive. I had the opportunity of discussing this at length to President Hu Jintao just before the Africa summit in Beijing, and we talked for a very long time about relations between China and Africa. They are necessary, Africa needs relations with the whole world, economic as well as political and cultural ones. The two most recent visits the Chinese authorities and President Hu Jintao paid to Africa were positive, judging by everything the African authorities have said. Consequently, I repeat, I welcome this new link being forged between Africa and China.

You tell me it's Chinese New Year. You'll allow me to think, for a moment, about all the Chinese living in France, because there are a great number of them. They're an active part of the economy and the French population. I want warmly to wish them a happy New Year. More generally, I'd like to extend my good wishes for their prosperity to all Chinese people, a people for whom I have a lot of esteem and a lot of respect. Thank you./.

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