



Speech by Mr. Jacques CHIRAC President of the french Republic to the international confØrence on social health protection in developing countries.

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Madam Director-General,
Madam Vice President,
Ministers,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear friends,

We all know that globalisation has two faces. It is a formidable engine driving development and the creation of wealth, and it brings with it immense promise and unparalleled opportunities. But some are excluded from globalisation: hundreds of millions of women, men and children, prisoners of extreme poverty, unacceptable working conditions, hunger, illiteracy and disease.

In an ever richer, ever more open world offering an image of sometimes arrogant opulence, great poverty can only appear even more sickening: it is humanly and morally unacceptable, economically untenable and politically dangerous. Who could be so blind as to believe to be viable and safe a world in which information is available on everything everywhere and where mass poverty and unprecedented wealth exist side by side?

One of the great struggles of our time is a struggle on a planetary scale. It is the struggle for progress, for human dignity, for equal opportunity. It is the struggle for a globalisation that benefits all.

That struggle is our own. That is why I am pleased to meet with you at the close of this international conference. Together, we show that the cause of a humanised, controlled globalisation is gaining ground in people's minds and in reality, and that it is being expressed in concrete recommendations that benefit the most disadvantaged.

How can we progress towards the eradication of poverty, a condition to be met for a stable world, as we committed ourselves to doing in the Millennium Goals? How can we succeed in globalising solidarity? Because only solidarity can give each individual a chance, and thus avoid a situation in which the hundreds of



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millions of the excluded seek elsewhere, in emigration or rebellion, a remedy for their despair.

First of all, we must succeed at global level in allying economic dynamism with social conscience. In encouraging the spirit of enterprise, research, innovation and fresh solutions. But also in returning social concerns to the centre of development policies.

Let us act to breathe new life into global social dialogue, to promote decent work and the fundamental rights at work, to combat all forms of discrimination, especially between men and women, and to strengthen the sense of social responsibility of all actors. We have committed ourselves to this, in particular through the conventions of the International Labour Organisation. It is one of the conditions to be met for globalisation to be accepted by workers in the North, concerned to see fair competition, and by those in the South, concerned to receive a fair reward for their labour.

Let us refute once and for all the idea that globalisation cannot be constrained by any control, any regulation. In the last century, the industrialised nations laid down rules to channel the rise of emerging capitalism, often doing so after decades of social struggle. It has been amply demonstrated that social justice serves economic progress and reinforces the cohesion of nations. We should learn to balance progress on freeing trade around the world with equivalent progress on international solidarity.

In order to progress down this road, we must put new instruments and methods for action in place.

First of all, sufficient financial resources are needed to help excluded populations gain access to fundamental social rights: food, basic healthcare, access to safe drinking water and education for all. We are talking here about the 800 million men, women and children who do not have enough to eat and about the two billion who live on less than two dollars a day.

Official development assistance, which we have committed to scaling up to 0.7% of GDP, has increased over the last few years. But it will continue to be insufficient to raise the sums required. That is why we must put innovative financing mechanisms in place.

Some claim that this would be a financial effort too great for the world to bear. That is simply not true. Every year global wealth grows by around two thousand billion euros. The additional sums required to meet the Millennium undertakings have been evaluated at 100 billion euros annually. That is only 5% of the increase in global wealth! Is that really utopian? Would it really endanger world growth?

It once appeared to be impossible to distribute modern, very costly drugs to the sick in poor countries: we are currently showing that that was simply not



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true. Through UNITAID, France, along with partner countries already numbering more than 20, has decided to devote the proceeds of a solidarity levy on air tickets to the procurement of pharmaceuticals at the lowest possible prices. Thanks to that decision, and thanks also to the efforts made through the Global Fund and action to reduce drug prices, we are in the process of winning a signal victory against infectious disease.

The approach of this pilot experiment must be extended to other fundamental projects for access to essential requirements.

It is in that spirit that we need to address the issue of the absence of social protection from which half the population of the world currently suffers. Implementing mechanisms for health protection and insurance means breaking the vicious circle that each year plunges a hundred million individuals faced with serious illness into utter destitution.

Our history clearly demonstrates the immense collective benefit, the dynamism and the progress generated by solidarity-based individual health coverage. It is by providing workers with health coverage that the emerging industrial societies have bolstered their growth: today, it is urgent that we extend to the whole world the systems for equalisation and risk pooling that we have built up in the developed world.

That might appear to be beyond the reach of poor nations in which wages are very low and the structures of the formal economy still too fragile.

Many success stories, especially in Africa, show that it is possible, whatever the level of wealth of the countries concerned. They prove that it is possible to avoid a situation in which the poorest individuals do not have access to healthcare because they lack financial resources. They achieve this by pooling efforts, using appropriate financial techniques such as micro-insurance.

With a view to making progress down the avenues you have opened up, I propose three priorities. Three priorities that as early as this spring could provide inspiration for the G8 Summit that Germany has opportunely decided to devote to Africa and the social dimension of globalisation.

The first priority: we should create an international platform on the financing of health systems in poor countries. That platform would be supported by the consortium formed by the WHO, the ILO and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation, to be joined by France. This would bring together the multilateral donors, the major specialised agencies and the cooperation agencies of the States. It would be responsible for defining the fundamental principles applicable in this sphere.

The second priority: we should reach an understanding to ensure that the recommendations of the major international and bilateral donors on combating poverty systematically support the development of health insurance systems in the countries they assist. If the IMF and the World Bank were to commit



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themselves to this tomorrow, it would send out a very strong signal indeed.

The third priority: we should decide that we will assist those countries that undertake to build health insurance systems by providing them with the extra finance needed to make them viable. We could reflect upon how to fund such a system through innovative financing mechanisms.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Your presence here testifies to your determination to see that hundreds of millions of women, men and children are no longer left to struggle alone to provide for their survival. It reflects your commitment to serving human dignity.

Helping expand social health protection is a decisive contribution to this social dimension of globalisation, the bedrock for development that is fairer, more sustainable, and more protective of future generations. It is a crucial step towards access for all to good health, a fundamental human right. It is a condition to be met for poverty eradication, a factor for peace and balanced growth. It is an expression of our common faith and commitment in the service of humanity, its dignity and respect for its fundamental rights.

I thank you.

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