

## **Proceedings of a press conference following a meeting between African Heads of State and President Chirac to discuss Nepad: Paris 8 February 2002.**

### **Initial comments by President Chirac**

I would like to welcome you here at the Elysée Palace and to thank you for coming. We are meeting today in order to discuss NEPAD. I would like to start by telling you why I have wanted to convene this meeting and then I will share with you some thoughts on the work we are going to do together.

At a time when we are seeing an unacceptable decline in international aid and a widening gap with the rest of the world, a new approach to Africa's development is emerging. This approach is arousing high hopes. From the political concept of the African Renaissance, followed by the initial versions of the Millennium Africa Plan (MAP) - the initiative of Presidents Mbeki, Bouteflika, Obasanjo, with which President Mubarak associated himself - and the OMEGA Plan - prepared by President Abdoulaye Wade - we came, through gestation and the merger of the MAP and OMEGA Plans, to the New African Initiative (NAI) adopted by the Lusaka OAU Summit in June 2001. It was renamed the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) last October in Abuja.

As far as I am concerned, and on France's behalf, I hailed this initiative at the Yaounde France/Africa Summit in January 2001 and called for it to become a reference. It was an answer to the trust in Africa's future, which I have always defended and to repeated calls aimed at supporting, through financial programmes, Africa's efforts in favour of peace and progress on the continent.

At the Genoa G8 Summit in July 2001, following the very convincing presentation made by President Wade on behalf of his African counterparts, the G8 countries committed themselves to supporting the new partnership proposed by Africa. They decided then that they would give concrete answers within the framework of their meeting in June 2002 in Kananaskis, Canada, based on the proposals made by the High Representatives, especially appointed by the Heads of G8 countries, to this end. Michel Camdessus, who is here today with us, has been appointed for France.

Since then, things have progressed. A mechanism has been implemented, with steering and co-ordination structures, and committees have been set up to examine the various fields covered by NEPAD. The G8 representatives participated in working meetings organised to this end.

Since we are now halfway between the Genoa G8 Summit and the G8 Summit in Canada in June, the time has come to assess orientations, in order to prop up or modify the proposals which will be presented in Kananaskis and which will constitute the starting point of this new partnership. Such is the

objective of our informal meeting today. Other G8 members have also had similar consultations. With a view to informing all members of our work, I asked my friend the Prime Minister of Canada, Jean Chrétien, who is the current G8 chairman, to be represented here today by his adviser in this field, Ambassador Fowler. The British Prime Minister also expressed the same wish and will be represented by Baroness Amos.

Before giving the floor to Michel Camdessus who is going to share with us the first thoughts of the High representatives, I would like to speak about issues which we could debate, while each one of you can, of course, broach other issues of interest.

The first issue I wanted to talk about is the will by African countries to appropriate the notions of good governance, civil peace and democracy. This is one of the new aspects to be found in NEPAD. It is also one of the most promising. It highlights the will by Africans to be committed to the strengthening of the values, principles and rules needed by Africa because they are acknowledged as keys to stability, without which there can be no lasting development. We shall take into consideration the responses planned by your governments in order to promote peace, democracy and good governance, as well as those aimed at sanctioning deviations, as the OAU has already done it.

The questions therefore are as follows:

- How can clear and objective signs on the respect for or the breach of principles on which African countries' commitments are based be given to Africa's partners?
- How can criticism on the misuse or inefficiency of international aid be defused since this criticism can lead to a reduction in aid?

The second issue deals with institutional aspects:

- How is NEPAD going to work?
- How is this partnership going to be materialised?
- How is NEPAD going to be integrated into the new African Unity?
- How is NEPAD taking into account the diversity of situations?
- How can NEPAD operate at the continental level?
- Is it not better to privilege the regional level?

The third issue is:

- How is NEPAD going to articulate with the other mechanisms and organisations supporting Africa's development?
- What will NEPAD's effects be on the relations with international financial bodies?
- How will it interact with initiatives such as those concerning external debt or preferential tariffs granted to the least advanced countries?

- How can NEPAD be harmonised with the agreements signed with the European Union, the Cotonou Convention which includes a political consultation mechanism and the process of dialogue between Europe and Africa initiated at the Cairo Summit?

Even without thoroughly examining these issues, it is necessary to have a vision highlighting all the advantages of NEPAD in order to give, as we all wish, more consistency and efficiency, as well as more means, to the actions which have already been undertaken.

The last issue will be the operational aspects of NEPAD aimed at helping materialise its fundamental objective which is to enable Africa to catch up economically in order to be better integrated into the global economy, to uplift the people's living conditions and to trigger a lasting development. Priorities have already been established: infrastructures, agriculture, water, energy, modernity, new technologies, human development, training, education, the protection of the environment and, of course, health care. Ad hoc technical committees have been set up in order to make studies and assessments, and to formalise projects while taking into account the regional dimension.

The reasons for the shaping of NEPAD are clear to understand: NEPAD is a response aimed at catching up and filling in gaps. All fields are covered in the progress wanted by NEPAD. Expectations are very high. African people want to have rapid and visible spin-offs. It is therefore essential to clearly define priorities. What are the latter? How can the G8 help? Is it, for example, by recommending actions and efforts that concentrate on priority issues?

Another important aspect of NEPAD, and this is clearly underlined in NEPAD, is the necessary involvement of the private sector. In return, African governments must commit themselves to transparency in order for companies to work well in a climate conducive to the development of private investment. What axes of efforts must be privileged and how can the G8 support them?

These are some of the questions that could be debated this morning. I hope that the responses which will be brought will be powerful reasons for going ahead by removing obstacles and highlighting the strengths of this mutual agreement aimed at supporting the necessary development for the XXIst century.

### **Joint Press Conference**

Mr Jacques Chirac  
President of the French Republic

Mr Olusegun Obasanjo  
President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Mr Hosni Mubarak

President of the Arabic Republic of Egypt

Mr Abdulaye Wade  
President of the Republic of Senegal

Mr. Abdelaziz Bouteflika  
President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Me Levy Mwanawasa  
President of the Republic of Zambia  
President of the African Unity Organisation

### **Comments of President Chirac**

We have called this intermediary meeting on the new partnership between Africa and the developed countries with a view to the forthcoming G8 meeting, which is due to take place in Canada in the middle of the year. The objective of this meeting was to implement a development plan for Africa. This plan has been conceived by Africans, owned by Africans and it must be implemented with the countries that have the necessary financial means. It is in these countries' interest to in do so first of all for moral reasons that everybody understands.

It is not acceptable today that the international community should endorse a system where some countries get richer and richer and some countries are left aside. It is, from a moral point of view, unacceptable. To tell the truth, it is not politically and economically acceptable for the industrialized countries. First of all, from an economical point of view, the African countries represent an enormous potential in terms of consumption, raw materials, production and culture. It is therefore necessary to be aware of the need to work together on modern bases, in mutual respect.

In this context, we have set up this intermediary reporting session in order to avoid any ambiguity, to make sure that we are working hand in hand. This was clearly indicated to us by the representatives of the concerned countries, by Mr Camdessus, representative for France, who reported on behalf of his colleagues and who underlined to what extent these partnership initiatives have generated hope in Africa but also the difficulties that have yet to be overcome. Both the hope and the difficulties are considerable.

The main Heads of State concerned are here to participate in this intermediary meeting. I say the main Heads of State, because we did not make a choice between Heads of State. They have come here for reasons equilibrium; those participating today are those who were at the origin of this NEPAD project, i.e. President Bouteflika, President Mubarak, President Obasanjo, and President Wade who initiated the OMEGA Plan. Eventually, the OAU merged all these plans to a single plan, from which NEPAD emerged. I take this opportunity to greet the Zambian President, who is chairing the Organization of African Unity. This meeting has underlined a

clear will from the African Heads of State to support a development policy which, I repeat, can only emerge from the hearts and minds of Africans and which demands the support of the developed countries – since it is, I repeat, in the political interest of the latter and should be a moral obligation for them.

We must give a strong impetus to the process in order to allow the Nepad plan to “take off”, as several speakers indicated. It is therefore essential to prepare the G8 meeting properly, Canada being a starting point and not the end point – I would say the take off point, to pursue the aeronautical metaphor, and not the landing point. It would be a disaster to come to the G8 meeting with a motion that would outline a few main perspectives but that would not elaborate the means to implement them. We must, at the Kananaskis G8 meeting in Canada, have a strong starting point, a powerful impetus for a concerted initiative. By the same token, I strongly advised our African partners to be present at the international meeting at Monterey, planned for the end of March. This will be an important international meeting in terms of development funding. Africa must be massively present in order to show that, compared to other regions of the world, it has taken an advanced position in its conception of a dynamic and shared development.

Those are the initial remarks I wanted to make, but perhaps some of the Presidents present at this forum would like to add a few words.

### **Comments of President Obasanjo**

I would like to thank President Chirac on the behalf of all of us for the opportunity he has given us to be together today to discuss a very important matter. I would like as well to underline the importance of what we have been discussing today.

President Chirac stressed the moral element of the plan. I, personally, would like to underline an element that I would call “common security and prosperity”. As a matter of fact, I believe that the way we envisaged matters of security and property before the event of 11 September must change.

Before 11 September, we thought that we could protect our borders with arms, that insecurity lay beyond our borders and that as long as we were armed we had all the answers. As long as we have raw materials, components and the possibility to sell what we produce, we think that our prosperity is ensured. That is what we used to think. But now? After what happened on that horrible day, we realize that security cannot be guaranteed even when all the above-mentioned elements are present. This is why I am now talking about common security and prosperity.

If people think they have a correct way of living, they will not do anything. But poverty reduction is the responsibility of all the world leaders. This responsibility is not limited to the countries where endemic poverty is raging. We must work together with the leaders of poor countries, we must reduce

and eliminate poverty. This is why I am talking about common security and prosperity. This is one of the reasons why we must work together.

### **Comments of President Chirac**

I should like to quote President Obasanjo, who, together with President Mbeki and President Buteflika, was at the origin of the first plan which, along with President Wade's plan and the contribution of President Mubarak, gave birth to the current plan. This morning, when he very passionately defended the cause of African development, he quoted Mahatma Gandhi, according to whom poverty is the worst form of violence and insecurity. He is quite right. I thank him for this beautiful quotation from Gandhi.

**Question:** You mentioned giving impetus to development in Africa. What are the priorities of this impetus?

**President Chirac:** The priorities are, first and foremost, a coherent plan and, within this coherent plan, as President Wade indicated before, regional infrastructures must have an important part. Naturally, it goes without saying, we need a plan that deals with economical and social problems – especially the problem of disease, of course, as President Bouteflika indicated in a very interestingly manner when he sketched general perspectives, while defining the terms of reference of the plan.

The second priority is that public opinion and governments from the industrialized countries, G8 countries and others, take part in this development effort. They must understand that we cannot wait anymore before starting a process of rapid development in Africa, and that Africa is today psychologically prepared to assume its part in the development plan, that is to say the conception and implementation of the plan within the framework of a partnership with the countries that can afford to support this enterprise.

**Question:** I would like to ask President Chirac and President Mubarak the same question. President Chirac, what are the chances that the plan will be adopted at the next G8 summit? President Mubarak, do you really think that this new partnership will be adopted at the next summit?

**President Chirac:** I would like to tell you that a very strong, modern, open and coherent will has been expressed by the Africans. A positive and favourable reaction has been publicly and officially expressed by the countries which are party to this development partnership. A work structure is in place that embraces both an African organization and high representatives of the concerned countries. You have here are Mr Fowler, the high representative of the Canadian presidency; Mr Camdessus, the French representative; Baroness Amos, the British delegate. They are doing their utmost to bring about a synthesis of these different positive forces. Therefore, I think that we will arrive at the G8 meeting with the capacity to implement all the means to enable the plane to take off, that is to say to launch this partnership process.

You know, for my part, I have for many years had the impression that I was a voice crying in the wilderness as far as co-operation between the G7 and Africa was concerned. I saw the obvious goodwill and the intelligence Africa was using to understand and solve her problems. I had the impression that I was very much alone in a world where, G7 summit after G7 summit, starting with the 1996 Lyons summit, interest in such matters was waning rapidly. I was deeply shocked when, both on the human, moral level and on the political intelligence level of rebuilding tomorrow's world, I had had to put up a fight. And, for the first time, at the Genoa summit, I saw a glimmer of hope.

The Genoa summit was much criticized. I shall make no comment on that. As always, people judge the appearances and not the reality. At the Genoa summit, for the first time in a very long while, we once more discussed, in a very positive and responsible way, development in general and African development in particular. For the first time in Genoa, African Heads of State were invited, and in particular the initiators of this partnership. President Obasanjo, President Bouteflika, President Wade and of course President Mbeki were there. President Mubarak was not able to come. For the first time, there was a dialogue, in an important work session, between the G7 and the main promoters of this partnership for development in Africa. We even went further. We earnestly spoke about development assistance.

For six years, at every G7 meeting, I had been the only one to mention this problem, amid the general indifference. As I had good relations with my partners, they let me talk, but nothing happened. For the first time in Genoa, we were able to discuss the question of the totally unacceptable reduction of public assistance for development, even in the presence of President Bush. Therefore, something happened in Genoa and this was the starting point of the commitment of the Canadian Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien. He is in favour of a genuine modern partnership with Africa that breaks with the old rules. This is mobilizing people to act – under the supervision of those who mobilize people to act.

### **Comments of President Mubarak**

Regarding the saying that poverty is the worst form of violence, I should like to add that it is the worst form of terrorism. This is why rich countries must encourage genuine development in African countries and alleviate the debt burden of those countries or, at least, use that debt to rebuild the infrastructure – apart from direct aid, whether bilateral or not. If the rich countries postpone their assistance and support for African development, I am convinced that the war against terrorism will become an international war. No place in the world will be safe from terrorism. This is a reality that rich and industrialized countries should recognize.

**Questions:** President Chirac, many Africans are delighted that this meeting is taking place. I would like to know how far the project will go. So many projects never achieved their goal. Could this plan mean a true subregional

economic integration of all the African countries? Can this plan integrate all our economies in order that the African continent can really develop and take responsibility for itself? What guarantee can you provide?

My second question is for President Wade, of Senegal. Mister President, you have fought very hard for this project to see the light of day. How, in fact, do you view the economic co-operation between your neighbours (*translator's note: presumably those seated with President Wade in the room*) and the African countries?

**President Chirac:** I will try to be brief. A lot of people have questions to ask. Economic integration is one of the ways we must go. I have the impression that the participants to this meeting share this point of view. President Bongo, the most senior among the Heads of State present, underlined the importance of that factor. I leave the floor to President Wade so that he can answer the second question.

**President Wade:** Let me first answer the questions that, I guess, are going to be asked. Some are going to say: "How much did you get from President Chirac?" To those people, I say that we did not come to ask for money and that we are not touring the G8 countries to beg.

Secondly, the originality of Nepad is that it is a regional plan. The basis is the region and no longer the States. The basis is therefore larger and industries can enter a larger market.

Finally, I would like to say that the spirit which inspired the Omega Plan, itself a component of the Nepad Plan, is the idea that this partnership is in the interest of the global economy and the developed countries. Africa has a lot of natural and human resources. However, it only gets 1% of the international investment and represents 1,74% of the world market. If Africa develops it will become an interesting partner. The world economy will benefit from Africa's development; everybody will benefit. This is exactly what we propose. For sure, there is an important funding component, but there is also a lot of hard work to do on our side. The funding effort must be taken over by the private sector. The latter must play the role it played in Europe and the United States. But it is for us Africans to create the proper conditions for the development of the private sector. The private sector will come to Africa if we create the right conditions.

**Question:** President Mubarak, I would like to know if you have taken concrete measures to solve crises and poverty in Africa?

**President Mubarak:** President Chirac spoke very clearly. There will be for that matter other meetings where ideas will be expressed as frankly as they were expressed today.



**Question:** We have taken note of your common will to implement a new partnership. However, there were so many conditions in the past to development aid and private investment in Africa that we wonder, as Africans, what you expect from us in order to implement this new partnership?

**President Chirac:** What do we expect from Africa? I do not think that the problem must be put that way. If we really want the process to take off there must be a real political and psychological commitment from Africa. There must be, at the same time, a determined will from the African countries and from the donors. Everybody must assume their responsibilities. The donors, of course, have the right to know what is going to be done and in which context and, when private funds are involved, what guarantees there are. The African countries, on their side, must show their capacity to give provide these guarantees and start working out the terms of this development.

**Question:** President Bouteflika, following your discussion with President Chirac and your African counterparts, what do you think of Nepad and what do you think the G8 summit can do for Nepad?

**President Bouteflika:** I am not quite sure I understand your question, Madam, but I take this opportunity to thank our brother President Chirac for his initiative. He has done a fine job. He has always shown a true interest in the African continent. This interest was confirmed in Cairo, in Yaounde and at every other possible occasion, especially in Genoa where consensus on aid to Africa was reached by the eight members. Since Genoa, several initiatives have been taken, to which we must pay tribute.

Today we listened to different speeches, which enlivened the debate, broadened our horizons and heralded new stages. Soon, there will be a meeting in Senegal, then in Monterey. We would like the African continent to be truly represented at this Monterey meeting. We hope to see Africa on that occasion regaining the position it held vis-à-vis Latin America, for instance. Africa must not be marginalized.

**President Chirac:** President Buteflika, together with President Mbeki and President Obasanjo, played, from the start, an essential role in the elaboration of the Nepad plan. They were joined by President Mubarak whose contribution was essential. I shall never forget his absolutely remarkable intervention during a working dinner in Genoa. President Bush was sitting next to me. Two or three times during President Bouteflika's speech, he told me "He is right, he is right". I said to myself, one must be very convincing indeed to impress President Bush on development aid to poor countries!

**Question:** Mister President, you spoke about impetus, about Monterey and about means, but you must be aware that Monterey seems set to be a damp squib.

**President Chirac:** I am optimistic by nature. I never go to a conference with the idea that it is going to be a failure. Because if one goes there in that spirit, why go at all?

**Question:** This is a question for both President Chirac and President Bouteflika. What do you say, Mister President, to those who stress that this meeting is redolent of animated Franco-African relations, since you are once again the patron of this partnership. President Buteflika, who, for many years, has criticized these relations, must be shocked.

**President Chirac:** That is a complicated question. I am going to tell you something. For my part, I have always had a kind of brotherly feeling towards Africa. I still have this feeling. I do not know whether President Buteflika wishes to add something.

**President Bouteflika:** Madam, if you are alluding to the passionate nature of Franco-Algerian relations, I would like to remind you of the saying "spare the rod and spoil the child", which characterizes the way our two countries feel about each other. I add that the passionate aspect of the Franco-Algerian relations shows that we have a lot in common, a common destiny, common historical and cultural links and, soon, common economical links. You have also spoken to me, Buteflika, as a representative of the African group. I would like to say to you, and with all due respect to my friend President Chirac, that it is not an exaggeration to talk of "Chirac, the African", to paraphrase Amin Maalouf. It is not an exaggeration for one simple reason. Many French politicians have dealt with African matters. Very few have concerned themselves with Franco-African or Afro-International co-operation as unselfishly, with such generosity and perseverance, as President Chirac has.

**President Chirac:** Sir, I believe you did not finish your question just now?

**Question:** You explained to us that France has always been the engine, among the G7 and G8 countries in particular, of African development. Should France not now set the example, before Monterey, by committing itself once more, but in a very real and concrete way to the 0,7% priority given to poor countries?

**President Chirac:** You are quite right to mention that question. It is a moral and political duty to remind all the industrialized countries of the 0,7% objective. Currently only five countries implement the 0,7% policy. These are small countries like Luxembourg, to which I pay homage here, and Denmark and Norway, as well as two other small countries whose slice is a relatively modest part of the whole. We must stick to this goal. It is one of my concerns.

**Question:** This is a question for President Mwanawasa in his capacity as President of the OAU. What role will the OAU play in ensuring the success of this programme?

**President Mwanawasa:** The OAU has endorsed Nepad, considering that it is the only real engine possible for genuine African development. We have

endorsed it as an OAU programme. We support Nepad and call upon all the member States to support this initiative.