

Traduction de courtoisie

Address by Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian, French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, at the General Debate of the 76th General Assembly of the United Nations – Monday, 27 September 2021 (video message)

President of the General Assembly,

Secretary-General,

Heads of State and Government,

Heads of Delegation,

By reminding us of the extent to which our destinies are linked – for better and for worse – the pandemic crisis has reminded us of the value of what has united us at this organization for over 75 years. The will to cooperate, the primacy of law over force, unconditional respect for the human person: the principles of our Charter have not lost any of their meaning. In fact, quite the opposite. Today's crises and challenges have made them even more essential.

Our security, our health and our planet are now common goods, which together we must strive to preserve. This imperative is not abstract, it is not an ideal.

It is, in very concrete terms, the perspective of each of our choices.

And just as definitively, it is our punishment each time we are divided, each time we give up, each time we are powerless.

Because in a world of exchanges and interdependencies, a world with environmental emergencies, a world facing worrying attitudes of brutalization and the constant temptation of unilateralism, everything that we do together – and conversely, everything that we fail to do – involves us all. We must be aware of this and learn lessons from it. Together.

Although the foundations of the multilateral system have remained solid in the face of attacks in recent years, too many uncontrolled risks are building up. On behalf of France, my first message to you today is thus one of responsibility.

Our first shared responsibility is to maintain international peace and security.

And it is in danger when power games are heightened, when bloc mentalities reappear, when our regulatory frameworks collapse, when attempts at fait accompli policies increase.

That is why France is calling for a P5 Summit to set out a joint action programme.

To enable the Security Council to fully exercise its mandate.

And to start dialogue on the key issues of arms control and our collective security.

And that is why we are taking action and will continue to do so for peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific with our willing partners in the region and other Europeans alongside us. As an Indo-Pacific

nation, France has major interests in the region, as does Europe which has just set out a strategy in this area.

International peace and security is thus at risk each time a crisis breaks out or reaches a new level. In Afghanistan, our duty is to provide the people with necessary humanitarian assistance and it is in our common interest to have clear political and security requirements with regard to the regime in Kabul: all links with terrorist organizations must be severed.

Twenty years after the events of September 11, we know what a rebuilt haven for terrorists would mean for us.

In the Levant and the Sahel, we must, for the same reason, continue to fight the terrorist threat, work to restore dialogue where it has broken down and give the people new prospects for the future by working towards stability and development.

Recently, the President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron, travelled to Baghdad to support the Iraqis' determined efforts to come together and restore their sovereignty.

In the Sahel, we are adapting our military structure to retain our long-term action capabilities, to meet the expectations of our regional partners and to remain fully available to our international partners, those from the Coalition for the Sahel and those serving within MINUSMA. These efforts, which are producing real results, as can be seen by the recent killing of Abu Walid Al-Sahrawi, are not sustainable without political stability and respect for the democratic process. I particularly have in mind the timetable for elections in Mali, which must be strictly observed.

In Libya, there is now a credible path to restore unity and sovereignty in the country, provided that all parties fulfil their obligations, the foreign mercenaries withdraw, the ceasefire remains in place and elections are held as planned on 24 December.

France hopes that the Security Council, Libya's neighbours and those which have influence over the country can collaborate to achieve our shared objective of completing the ongoing transition.

This is the aim of the international conference to support the political process and restore sovereignty in Libya, which we will host in Paris on 12 November.

Whether in the divided Middle East, along the contact line in Ukraine, in Nagorno-Karabakh or the South Caucasus, where the risk of conflict still cannot be ruled out, we must prevent tensions, uphold international law and collectively support the implementation of concrete political solutions.

With regard to the Iranian nuclear programme, we must be absolutely unequivocal. Iran cannot be allowed to think time is on its side, because the more dangerous its nuclear programme becomes, the greater the risk of a major crisis.

The positions taken by the United States yesterday cannot justify Iran's continued violation of its JCPOA commitments.

France will take all necessary action to encourage dialogue. But the only possible path remains an agreement to establish that Iran is once again fulfilling its obligations. It is therefore essential that negotiations resume very quickly.

Violations of international humanitarian law also constitute a serious threat to international peace and security.

Particularly when humanitarian and medical personnel are targeted, even as they are providing emergency relief to populations. We must therefore equip ourselves with the means to better prevent these crimes and punish those who are guilty of committing them – in Syria, Yemen, Niger, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia and everywhere else.

Our responsibility – ladies and gentlemen – is also to build pragmatic and inclusive responses to the major global challenges that determine our shared future.

Starting with the COVID-19 challenge which is not yet behind us.

We need to be very clear: the health of some depends on the health of all. We must therefore pursue efforts that, through the ACT-A initiative, have already provided 255 million vaccine doses to 141 countries. We cannot allow the vaccine divide between the North and the South to widen any further.

Because the very meaning and credibility of multilateralism is at stake.

And because we know that if immunity is not global, there will be no immunity.

There is an urgent need to accelerate deliveries to ensure that each vaccine delivered is administered properly and to strengthen our production capacities on all continents.

France will continue to work in close cooperation with its partners, especially those in Africa.

Our commitment to provide 60 million doses will be achieved by the end of the year.

And we are proud to contribute to the financing of a project to transfer technology to South Africa, which should help Africa develop autonomous production capacities of mRNA vaccines.

International solidarity must also prevail when it comes to the other challenge of the pandemic crisis: the challenge of economic recovery.

A response to the emergency was provided with the debt deferment initiative that we took at the G20 and the establishment of a common framework that can now be used for its implementation.

But we must go further by building a new pact with Africa that President Macron called for at the Summit on the Financing of African Economies in May 2021.

The G20 must commit to ensuring that the allocation of special drawing rights we decided upon in the IMF is swiftly supplemented by the reallocation of a portion of them to countries which need them most.

France is ready to transfer 20% of its SDR allocation to African economies to strengthen the resilience of societies and support the transition to a sustainable development model and meet our objectives for the climate and the environment.

The environmental emergency must be at the heart of each of our future choices.

Without succumbing to fatalism, because the IPCC experts have told us that if we swiftly lower our emissions, we can still limit warming to 2° or even 1.5°C. We must act urgently, but it is not too late! However when we act it must be with no half measures, because - as the Secretary-General has firmly stated – we are now on a catastrophic pathway due to insufficient commitments that are leading us to global heating of 2.7°C for which we will all, without exception, pay a heavy price. COP26 which will begin on 1 November will therefore be a moment of truth.

Each of us must shoulder our responsibility and provide a contribution that is commensurate with what is at stake. Namely human lives, international stability, and the future of the generations to come. We must rally around the objective of climate neutrality by 2050 before it is too late. Here again, France will show its solidarity by providing €6 billion a year and devoting more than a third of its financing to climate adaptation.

This fight for the climate must go hand in hand with the fight for biodiversity. In Marseille at the IUCN World Conservation Congress, held in early September, we made strong commitments, that we must now implement, particularly the symbolic project of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel.

We must also put climate finance to work for biodiversity, as the connections between the two topics are now well recognized.

During this time of global economy recovery, we must lastly ensure that our trade practices are fully compatible with our international solidarity efforts and our climate and environmental objectives.

By providing new levers in accordance with WTO law, such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism that we wish to establish in Europe to fight carbon leakage, in the same way that we wish to fight imported deforestation and violations of social rights across our value chains.

And by working, at the same time, on a tangible “greening” of the multilateral trade framework at the WTO ministerial meeting this year, starting with an ambitious agreement for regulating fisheries subsidies. The future of our oceans depend on it.

We also have a responsibility with regard to the very principles of multilateralism, of which we are the guardians.

The responsibility, first of all, to preserve our ability to act in the name of these principles and promote a truly multilateral order.

In this regard, Secretary-General, I would like to commend your action and your efforts to inject new impetus into the United Nations system. We will work by your side throughout your second term.

While supporting our collective institutions, including in their reform efforts, we must also continue to develop project multilateralism.

That of the Alliance for Multilateralism, which we launched two years ago with my German colleague and which was able to play its full role from the start of the pandemic.

And the International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas, which is doing an outstanding job in Iraq, Syria, Mali and Afghanistan, in cooperation with UNESCO.

We have the responsibility to defend these principles where they are wavering.

In Afghanistan, where the achievements of the last 20 years cannot be erased. Particularly when it comes to the access to education and the rights of women and girls.

And everywhere where the universal scope of human rights is being challenged.

Because universal human rights are the first political and legal translation of the unity of humankind, without which this organization, our organization, would have no foundation. This is a commitment – I would like to recall – that the United Nations Member States freely consented to sign and respect. These principles that unite us, we have the responsibility to keep them alive today, by upholding them up to and including the digital realm.

We have seen increasingly irresponsible behaviours flourish, without managing, unfortunately, to provide an international normative response to regulate them and to ensure that the rights and freedoms of all are respected.

The introduction of a minimum universal 15% tax for multinational companies will help achieve this. We therefore call on all States to support this vital measure.

France and its European partners even intend to adopt actual legislation on digital markets. We encourage our international partners to follow us down this path, and we invite them to work with us to establish a new digital public order in the wake of the Paris Call and the Christchurch Call to Action, which, since 2019, has enabled us to take decisive action to remove terrorist content from the Internet.

Collective responsibility in international peacekeeping and security; shared responsibility in tackling today's major challenges; responsibility of each of us with regard to what unites us: for France this is what the historic turning point we are experiencing calls for. We must all rise to the challenge.

While our country is preparing to take over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2022, you can – ladies and gentlemen – count on our determination to fully assume our share of this three-pronged responsibility.

Engaging us in all the security, solidarity and equality combats.

To rebuild, with you, our shared world.

Thank you.