

FRANÇOIS HOLLANDE

President of the French Republic

Ladies, Gentlemen, Heads of State and Government,

Mr President,

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I want to thank you for choosing Cannes as the location of the fifth World Policy Conference, where issues essential to our joint future are discussed. You have decided to tackle four subjects, four urgent issues of our times. The first is international economic governance - indispensable if we are to leave behind several decades of instability born out of a demand for hyper-profitability and speculation. This is the purpose of the action led by France to strengthen the role of the G20, to introduce regulatory mechanisms for the markets, to fight against tax havens and to act for better coordination of economic policies worldwide. It is also the approach we are adopting to reach a climate agreement at the conference taking place in 2015.

The second subject you are discussing is the future of the eurozone. There has been considerable progress in terms of cohesion and trust in recent months. The message from France is simple: debt reduction is, of course, essential, but it is not enough on its own. We need growth: that is the aim of the pact adopted in June. At the same time, we also need greater solidarity: that is the aim of the proposed banking union and budgetary union within the framework of deeper political union in Europe.

The third subject is the Middle East. Day after day, a tragedy is unfolding in Syria, where a bloodthirsty regime is killing its own people. France, along with others, has chosen to recognise the coalition of opposition forces as the representative of the Syrian people. I repeat: only the departure of Bashar al-Assad will make it possible to end a conflict which affects the security of the entire region. We also urgently need to get Iran to comply with its international obligations, that is, to renounce its nuclear ambitions, and to achieve this through dialogue and peaceful sanctions. Lastly, we urgently need to find a solution for Israel and Palestine which is recognised by all.

The last subject you are dealing with is Africa, and one aspect in particular: the unavoidable fight against the establishment in Mali of terrorist groups whose ideology and behaviour are challenges to the universal conscience. You know how important this cause is to France and how determined it is to see the solution driven by local actors, with the support of regional and international organisations.

These challenges cannot be separated from each other. And they cannot be considered in relation to one country alone. In response to so many challenges, uncertainties and hopes, we need collective answers. I hope that your debates at Cannes contribute to defining these responses.