



# ALASSANE OUTTARA

President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire

Honourable guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends,

I would like to start by wholeheartedly thanking Thierry de Montbrial, President-Founder of the World Policy Conference, for honouring me with an invitation to speak before this gathering of eminent persons.

Mr de Montbrial suggested that I give you a few thoughts on the global situation and governance and then speak to you about Africa and my country, Côte d'Ivoire. A considerable task, I'm sure you'll agree! But fear not, for Mr de Montbrial has given me 20 minutes to perform this tour de force!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This conference is taking place at a time when the whole world has just learned the names of the leaders of the two super powers, with the re-election of His Excellency President Barack Obama in the United States of America and the appointment of His Excellency Xi Jinping to the post of General Secretary of the Communist Party of China. Two leaders whose future decisions taken on behalf of their countries, both in relation to the economy and international relations, will have a significant impact on the future of humanity.

Of course, we hope that the wisdom of these two great peoples will allow us to have a calmer world.

The world today is facing turbulence. Forecasts recently published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development expect "a hesitant and uneven recovery", with growth rates cut to 1.4% in 2013 instead of 2.2% as was initially forecast. Not to mention the "fiscal cliff" which could make the US lose 5% of growth in 2013 and anaemic growth in Europe.

Meanwhile, the Middle East is in crisis due to the contrasting consequences of the jasmine revolution. At the UN, Palestine has just been recognised as a non-member observer state by a majority of member countries of the United Nations General Assembly.

We must hope that a lasting peace agreement between Israel and Palestine can finally be reached in this region wounded by so much suffering.

In Africa, the economic take-off is growing stronger despite the consequences of the Libyan revolution in the Sahel.



Our planet's ecosystems are suffering the consequences of rampant pollution caused by huge energy consumption. This development leads to unprecedented climatic imbalance.

Poor management of public resources by some public and private multinational companies has contributed to the catastrophes which have struck several regions of the world, such as the Land of the Rising Sun, the Gulf of Mexico and the Sahel.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

These observations raise a number of questions:

- Is the economic model which has ruled the world since the Industrial Revolution showing cracks?
- Have the external effects of growth described by the famous British economist James Edward Meade, winner of the 1977 Nobel prize for economics, been sufficiently considered in our growth models?
- Has governance become a concept stripped of all substance, for the benefit of a few specific interest groups?
- Is growth in the world sustainable? Will we continue to damage the environment by consuming energy produced from non-renewable resources?

In this respect, it is interesting to highlight that one of the major directions of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China is to encourage the creation of an ecological civilisation. An example which is undoubtedly worth emulating, in line with the specific characteristics of each country.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The map of new balances of power which is being drawn up before our eyes requires us to thoroughly strengthen global governance. It must better reflect the reality of this new world and meet the aspirations of populations. We need improved representation in international organisations, including on the UN Security Council and the Board of Directors of the IMF and the World Bank. The major challenges of the 21st century make it a necessity.

For my part, I am convinced that globalisation of trade, the effects of economic growth, unlawful transactions and cross-border terrorism require increased cooperation between states. We also need to strengthen and adapt surveillance rules in a world which is being completely transformed. Lastly, unprecedented scientific discoveries require us to reinforce ethical rules internationally in order to safeguard integrity and human dignity.



Ladies and Gentlemen,

After this opening statement on global governance, I would like to take the opportunity which has been offered to me today to speak to you about the African continent.

As noted in a recent World Bank report, since 2000 Africa has had more than a decade of economic growth. This is the longest period of expansion in a half-century. Sub-Saharan Africa has maintained an average growth rate of between 5 and 6% in the last decade, despite the repeated crises experienced by the US and the European Union.

This growth rate places Africa behind Asia and in front of all other regions of the world. Several African countries are among the most dynamic in the world. According to the experts at the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, the medium-term prospects for our continent are positive.

Despite the risk of a deterioration of the situation in Europe, the overall picture for Sub-Saharan Africa is very encouraging. This is partly due to the specific features that numerous countries have in common with emerging countries. In other words:

- rapid urbanisation,
- the rise of a significant middle class,
- the rapid development of information and communication technologies,
- better governance and a better business environment,
- increasingly transparent elections and the emergence of the rule of law, with institutions growing stronger.

I also note that the rate of foreign investment has multiplied tenfold over the past decade, with huge investment, in particular from China, India, Brazil, Malaysia and Turkey. As was the case at the start of the Asian economic miracle 25 years ago, relatively low growth in the rate of investment in Africa can produce very high gains in productivity. The return on investment in Africa is one of the highest in the world. Africa attracts private capital flows which now exceed foreign aid.

So there can be no doubt that Africa is increasingly integrated in the global economy. Its increasingly diverse partners are opening up unprecedented new development opportunities. Having gained independence in the 1960s, African countries are today forging their economic independence. They are becoming less dependent on their traditional partners. Thus China is now overtaking the US as main partner.

Africa's trade with the rest of the world has increased by 200% since the year 2000. Trade with Brazil, China, South Korea, India and Turkey, which represented only 1%, is today estimated at more than 30%, and is expected to reach



50% by 2030. Regional trade between African countries is also booming, due to cuts in import tariffs and restrictions on trade.

In addition, the African continent could fully benefit from the "demographic dividend", just as Asia did 30 years ago. The African population today stands at around 1 billion people and should reach 2 billion people by 2050. The average age is 20, compared to 30 in Asia and 40 in Europe. According to the World Bank, poverty on the continent has fallen at a rate of more than 1 point per year.

This growing integration of Africa in the global economy could not have happened without increased political stability, good governance, democratic change of government and the gradual setting up of robust institutions. The majority of African countries today have elections deemed "satisfactory" by the international community. However, there is still a lot of work to be done before African countries become true democracies. Indeed, democracy cannot exist without strong institutions and checks and balances. Democracy is not something you decree. It is built out of respect for the rule of law.

Africa's established integration in the global economy is also due to the implementation of joint standards on the fight against climate change, international trade and international security.

Africa should not therefore be on the fringes of the Security Council and global governance. Indeed, international security and peace are now heavily reliant on the African continent.

Honourable guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would now like to talk to you about my country. The Côte d'Ivoire is in the process of writing a new page in its history. The Côte d'Ivoire has returned to peace, security and stability. After years of crisis, the Côte d'Ivoire is full of hope and resolutely faces the future. It is reviving its traditional warm welcome and hospitality.

Security has returned to the whole country. Our defence and security system is being reorganised. After the setting up of the National Security Council and the creation of the Authority for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration, Security Sector Reform will be accelerated with a view to ensuring the unity, modernisation and efficacy of our security apparatus. Particular attention is being paid to training our reunified forces, with a view to instilling in them the need to respect human rights when carrying out their duties.

National reconciliation is progressing thanks to the diligent work of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In addition, following free and transparent legislative elections, the new Parliament is currently legislating. Joint municipal and regional elections are scheduled for early 2013. A new government has just been set up with a precise roadmap. Each day, our democracy becomes more ingrained, calmer and more united with the gradual implementation of the rule of law and strong, impartial institutions.



This is an opportunity to once again thank all our partners, and particularly France, for their assistance during the post-election crisis.

The Côte d'Ivoire is also having a successful economic take-off. We have returned to macroeconomic stability and external debt, after reaching the completion point under the HIPC initiative in June 2012, is now only 18% of GDP.

Economic results in 2012 are far better than expected. For the second year in a row, the IMF has revised its growth forecasts for the Côte d'Ivoire upwards.

With a rate of 8.6% in 2012, the Côte d'Ivoire is now among the countries with the highest growth rates in Africa and the world.

We have adopted a National Development Plan for 2012-2015 which defines powerful engines of cross-cutting and horizontal growth. Its implementation will enable us to achieve high, steady growth based on solidarity. This growth will respect the environment and create jobs for young people in particular.

Our goal is to lay the foundations for Côte d'Ivoire to be an emerging country by 2020 and to halve the poverty rate by 2015.

The growth rate for the next three years should be around 9% in 2013 and 10% in 2014-2015. These results are due to the substantial increase in private and public investment, judiciously made in growth sectors.

The Consultation Group for financing the National Development Plan, held in Paris on 4-5 December, was a great success and our partners have decided to support our economic take-off by substantially increasing their aid. As such, bilateral and multilateral partners, sovereign funds and development NGOs have confirmed their commitment of some 7 billion euros (8.6 billion dollars), in other words, more than double the financing expected.

Moreover, priority public/private partnership projects of strategic importance in the infrastructure, mining, energy, petrol, telecommunications, education and healthcare sectors, among others, have drawn the interest of more than 300 private international investors.

Buoyed by this support, we will tirelessly continue our efforts to:

be one of the best-placed African countries in the UNDP Human Development Index;

to completely, or nearly, achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015;

to create one of the best business environments in Africa;

and lastly, to join those countries which are models of good governance and anti-corruption.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Côte d'Ivoire is once again finding its place in the subregion. Its growth rate has a significant impact on all of the countries in the subregion, in particular the landlocked countries of the Sahel.



As current ECOWAS President, I will do everything I can to consolidate our regional integration. I will continue to do my utmost, with the help of my peers, to prevent conflicts and ensure respect for the foundations of democracy. I am optimistic and I have faith in Africa, which is a continent of the future.

Honourable guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen, may your discussions be fruitful and, above all, may you reach conclusions which bring hope to humanity.

Thank you.