



# THIERRY DE MONTBRIAL

## President and founder of the WPC

Ladies and gentlemen, as you know, we are working here with a Canadian rule, that is, we use both languages, English and French. I am sure that some of you would have preferred me to say, French and English, but in mathematics we would say that these two terms are commutative.

It is a great pleasure and honour to have Laurent Fabius with us today. Everyone knows Laurent Fabius, but I would like to remind you of his brilliant career so far. To begin with, he has a formidable intellect and has earned the utmost respect of anyone in this room from France, especially alumni from the Ecole Normal Supérieure. Laurent, you graduated with a degree in what, Modern Languages? And his breakneck political career rose him to the rank of Prime Minister in his thirties. He was also involved in regional politics in unprecedented times of opposition. He was President of the French National Assembly and I will not go through the entire list because he has served in just about every high office that are the stuff of dreams. He is currently France's Minister of Foreign Affairs and he has already played a crucial role since taking office. I will stop there, but thank you, Laurent, especially since you have had an exhausting week travelling to South Africa to attend the commemoration events for Nelson Mandela. You then returned to Paris and left again for Brazil, where you arrived from this morning. I am sure you are the envy of many in this room because we have had a good look at you and cannot detect the slightest sign of fatigue. And with that, it is with great pleasure that I give you the floor.