

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

For the months and years we have been preparing the post-Kyoto summit, we have all known, I think, what we are expecting from the Copenhagen meeting – the broad lines at least: the urgency is to put an end to the destructive spiral in which humanity finds itself.

The environmental requirements are clear and scientists sufficiently unanimous for the debate about the objectives to be achieved to have virtually ended, at least among the converted.

The main issue now is a question of will.

It is not about lecturing, or doubting the determination of the powers involved in the Copenhagen negotiations. But I am convinced that the difficult choices we will have to make will only be achieved with the support, even pressure, of civil society.

Yet, we are in a situation today in which fear appears too often to be the only driving force behind our action. The fear of an increasingly alarming climatic cataclysm is counterbalanced only by the apprehension of an inevitably painful upheaval of our way of life.

I know these feelings and they are not unfounded. The threat is real, the prospects complex and the future uncertain.

However, I believe that the efforts we have to make can also be the opportunity for enormous progress. Environmental progress, of course, but political, economic and social too.

Political progress: this is the unity we are witnessing around the world in the fight against climate change. Unthinkable even yesterday, this joint mobilisation of states, businesses and men and women across the continents paves the way for bold, new international action.

Because climate change is a challenge that concerns the rich countries as much as the poor countries – and even if the responsibility of some is greater than that of others – we can hope that this crisis will be the opportunity to reinvent world governance. Indeed, we can hope – I hope in any case – that the foundations will be laid in Copenhagen for a globalisation that brings citizens closer together and is more respectful, more equitable and fairer – in a word, more sustainable.

The progress opening up to us is also economic. For a weakened world economy, the prospect of an environmental industrial revolution is not the catastrophe that some fear. Of course it

will be necessary to adapt. Of course whole sections of our economies will have to be reinvented, which will not be easy and will require time.

But these changes had been made inevitable anyway by the growing shortage of fossil fuels, on which our industrial societies have been built for two centuries. The fact that we are having to predict the depletion of oil in 50 or 100 years' time is not a regression; on the contrary, it is a tremendous opportunity to rethink the way we produce and consume.

The unprecedented mobilisation of the international scientific community on environmental issues has already enabled un hoped-for progress to be achieved. With a level of effort that is unique in peacetime, humanity has made essential technological advances in just 15 or so years. Of course, a huge amount is still to be done and it will be difficult. But whether it is with alternative energies, waste treatment or clean vehicles, we are seeing the foundations of new growth take shape.

This new growth must also be the opportunity to rethink certain failings of financial capitalism, whose impasses were recently revealed by the subprime crisis, and which the environmental crisis can only accentuate.

We know well that the climate threat hangs over people very unequally, making the poorest and those living in the most exposed conditions and most precarious places vulnerable, and showing more mercy to those who have the means to adapt their way of life.

And yet, to be effective in the fight against climate change, we will need to mobilise all energies. Including of the people already hit by poverty, disease and unemployment, and to whom the environmental threat currently seems very far away.

It is with them that we will have to act. And above all for them: by making sure that our efforts for a more sustainable world are also beneficial to them, in very concrete terms, in their everyday lives.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

Political progress, economic progress and social progress: the hopes we can pin on the Copenhagen summit and on the action it will inspire are great and many. Yet they are within our reach, I think.

Because I believe in humanity's strength; I know its ability to surpass itself in exceptional circumstances. After all, didn't the tragedy of the Second World War lead to an outstanding age of progress and the construction of the UN in the post-war boom?

Will the Copenhagen objectives be easy to achieve? Certainly not. But it is the only way we will make progress. You who experience economic competition every day, you know better than anyone that innovation is always born out of constraint, not comfort. In this domain as in others, the difficulty of our task will force us to show courage and inventiveness. Which is why we must be confident and determined.

Thank you.