

Ladies and gentleman,

Dear friends,

My words could deal with the action I am undertaking, as Head of State and on behalf of my own personal commitment at the head of my Foundation in favour of the protection of our planet: the fight against global warming, the defence of biodiversity and water conservation. I could also focus my speech on our environment in jeopardy, the landscapes I traversed in my expeditions and the endangered species I was able to see on these occasions.

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What I came here to say this evening essentially concerns human beings, the children and grandchildren to whom we will bequeath a more fragile planet.

In other regions, on other continents, some people already suffer every day from the effects of major climatic or ecological dysfunctions.

Together, we are confronted with the same problems, the same challenge. And as inhabitants of the same world, we must show solidarity in the face of the same threat.

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This truth has not always been perceived as evident. It has taken time, courage and perseverance for such an important fact to be recognized, accepted and, especially, understood.

And yet, the facts are there. Rivers with excessive flooding, unprecedented drought, ice caps disappearing in summer, formerly abundant plant and animal species that are now gone forever: all this can be observed. We know their impact and every day we can see their consequences on people.

We know that the entire population of villages engulfed by the melting of glaciers can be displaced because of this phenomenon. .../...

We have all seen images of refugee camps for those who are torn from their land by thirst, hunger and war.

These tragedies are perpetrated by the same culprit: Man. This means us, our insatiable appetite and short-sightedness.

I would like to pay very special tribute to the determinant work of scientists who, for years, have played an exceptional role in conducting studies, explaining and warning. In the past few decades, we have accomplished unique progress in understanding our climate and ecosystems. This we owe to scientific mobilization unprecedented in the history of mankind.

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Seeing such researchers coming together across borders and continents gives us cause for hope. Since the first intuitions on global warming, barely fifty years ago, a new science has developed, which enables us today to meet these challenges with effective means.

The work of scientists has also led - and this is a major achievement - to raising awareness considerably. We can see the emergence on all continents of this new awareness, unthinkable just ten years ago, when the very reality of climate change was still subject to controversy.

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We should not be lulled by these initial victories into believing the war is won.

What will be most difficult in the coming weeks will be to obtain genuine agreement at the Copenhagen Summit, to transform mobilization into decision and decision into action.

Now the urgency is known, it is time for us to act.

We have entered the decisive phase where scientific certainties have reached their goal and open the way to political and moral choices. This moment is crucial.

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The stakes are clear: within the next twenty years, the world will change radically. Time is short and we must choose the nature of this change: either our inaction gives rise to unparalleled, irreversible climatic and ecological upheaval with incalculable consequences; or we make the courageous decision to alter the way we behave with respect to our environment.

To respond to the menace of climate change, the threats to biodiversity and to oceans through the dangerous phenomenon of their acidification, we will have to break with a model of growth that, for two centuries, has offered us constant progress that we thought would never end. This implies that each of us must call into question our very way of life. .../...

The countries with the highest emissions must find new ways to produce and consume.

Emerging powers will have to alter the conditions for their development and question their ambitions, however natural and legitimate.

And the poorest will have to be made aware of their responsibility and empowered, far more and better than is the case today, to help them achieve true sustainable development.

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Indeed, we cannot accept that the requisite efforts weigh only on those who are most fragile, tolerate the persistence of the same inequalities on the planet.

Given this major hazard, it is our duty today to renew with the principles of humanism, the foundation on which our societies were built and that allowed them to prosper. These principles are simple, yet universal: human dignity as a principle, justice as an objective, and dialogue as the means.

This is how we can create new economic growth that is more sustainable, more respectful of our environment's resources and, especially, better shared.

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This is obviously a vast and ambitious agenda, but in any case it has become inevitable because of the current crisis, as well as the rarefaction of the fossil fuel which enabled our industrial societies to flourish for two centuries. The fact that we must anticipate the disappearance of oil within fifty or a hundred years is no regression. On the contrary, it provides an opportunity to break with the short-term ideology and frenetic consumption to which we have succumbed too often.

How could we hope to be able to feed nine billion human beings in 2030, if we do not make profound changes in our means of production, if we do not rise above a vain alternative between overfishing that threatens our seas and aquaculture?

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This raises profound contradictions we must address.

The danger would be to believe that, without any effort or questioning, new “green” growth can supplant our present systems. We have the duty to seize the opportunity for radical change that is open to us. This means our task is to invent.

Invent a way of calculating wealth that does not value the destruction of our common heritage; invent industry that does not live from looting our natural resources; invent farming that does not create needs that are impossible to satisfy; invent finance that is not disconnected from the realities and needs of people. And especially invent global social bonds around common stakes.

In the face of hazards without borders, we can no longer rely on the traditional way of managing the world. All good wills are necessary; all States must mobilize, regardless of

their size or wealth; all public opinions must make themselves heard.

This is why we must institute a new global governance under UN guidance, able to reconcile the interests of countries and continents with very different situations.

We must all understand that this is in the interest of all of us.

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To that end, we must develop sincere dialogue. This is one of the challenges of Copenhagen.

As Lord Nicholas Stern recently wrote: “the response to climate risk is the adoption by all of a new growth model, a wager for creativity and innovation as opposed to conservatism.”

I would now like to say a word about the images you are going to see. I would like you to watch this film as a human story.

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This report is first a window on the life and work of the scientists we met there. These people from all horizons converge toward this hostile land, around common objectives. The men and women whose faces you will see and whose grueling working conditions you will discover are dedicated scientists who spend long months in these stations with the most Spartan comfort; they are ready to give up everything for a cause that surpasses them, that surpasses us. It is for them, above all else, that we undertook this expedition.

But this film, Ladies and gentleman, is something I would like to consider as the story of all of us, the story of the century that awaits us, the challenge of a generation that is about to meet its destiny.

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Ladies and gentleman, Dear friends,

In what is already a classic, *Collapse*, Jared

M. Diamond analyses the disappearance of several civilizations before our own. The Sumerians, the Maya and the Vikings all succumbed to the combination of four errors: the inability to foresee problems, then identify them, and subsequently make the right decisions and finally implement them.

We had not foreseen our ecological mistakes. We have had immense difficulty in identifying them. Now we are confronted with the third step in the fatal process described by Professor Diamond.

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Yet, unlike the ancient Sumerians or the Vikings, we have an immense opportunity. That of being able to count on the powerful weapons of the intelligence of scientists, the achievements of technology, the mobilization of public opinion and the awareness of policymakers.

Most of all, we can rely on a radically new phenomenon, which explains some of the positive changes I just described: States, international organizations and corporations now see their interests converging around this common mobilization.

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It was difficult to hope for any sweeping change as long as it was only a matter of complying with a system of values, which, however generous, was far from being unanimously shared. Conversely, when it becomes a matter of preserving the interests of States, avoiding the shortages, wars and population displacements to which we would be condemned by inaction, then we can hope that humankind, for once, will show itself to be reasonable and clairvoyant.

This is why I want to be optimistic.

Thank you