

Keynote speech

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The Paris conference is scheduled in 9 months' time, from 30 November to 11 December 2015. Our overall intention is to achieve the adoption of a new Paris Agreement – be it an alliance, an agreement, a package, a protocol – by the end of the conference.

The decision was made in Durban in 2011 to adopt, within 4 years' time an international legal agreement that would help us establish a framework that will allow us to remain below the 2°C level. The aim is to have a universal agreement for the 195 parties involved, which represent a wide range of energy users. It must be an ambitious and long-term agreement rather than a short-term agreement that must be renegotiated in a few years' time. It must have legal force but also remain flexible and dynamic.

Conference Organisation

Organising such a major conference that will involve 30,000-40,000 persons is a huge challenge. It should also be noted that many parallel events will be taking place, involving civil society, business, NGOs, trade unions, municipalities etc. As well as the negotiation of the actual text, these parallel actions will also play an important role in finding a solution.

The French Foreign Minister, Laurent Fabius, will preside the conference, as was the practice at the Cancún and Durban conferences. In addition, the entire French government will be mobilised, in particular Ségolène Royal (Minister for the Environment), and Michel Sapin (Finance Minister). President Hollande will also be highly involved and has expressed his hopes that the conference will be a success. During his recent visit to the Philippines, he spoke almost exclusively about climate and related issues. Nicholas Hulot and a number of other highly placed officials are also fully committed to this conference.

Two teams are involved in preparing the conference. First, a logistics team led by Pierre-Henri Guignard, which is responsible for transport, accommodation, security, food and other conditions. France wants to be exemplary in this, notably in environmental terms. Second, an Agreement team, led by Laurence Tubiana, and which includes representatives from the Ecology, Agriculture, and many other ministries.

We are also working with a number of crucial partners that include Peru (which chaired the Lima conference a few months ago), the Secretariat of the Climate Commission, and our 2 co-chairs (from the US and from Algeria). They are responsible for negotiating the actual text of the Agreement. All the other states are also our partners in finding an Agreement that obtains consensus. This is therefore necessarily a collective process from which a consensus will emerge.

Conference Outcomes: The Paris Alliance

The term “Paris Alliance” is increasingly being used to describe the outcome of the conference. The aim is to bring together the entire international community in the battle against climate change and for sustainable development. It will make it possible for us to achieve shared objectives and to achieve a result that will allow us to reduce greenhouse gases. It will make it possible for us to mitigate the existing conditions. This concept is inherently one of joint work with shared goals.

There are 4 components of this Alliance.

- ▶ First, the instrument to be adopted in Paris. We do not yet know what form that instrument will take: a protocol, an agreement. However, it will be a legally binding instrument that will be universal and applicable at the international level. It must also be a dynamic instrument that will evolve with time. It will include rules on transparency and accountability. It is also important to be transparent with respect to follow up on the instrument. This has to be a dynamic agreement that will continue to change as the world evolves. As such, it will be necessary to review the text every 5 or 10 years. The text cannot be frozen in time and simply replaced in 5 or 10 years' time. Finally the text must make it possible for us to respect the 2°C limit. That is a crucial question for me.
- ▶ Second, what actions will be included in the Alliance? Here we speak of national “contributions” or “commitments”. Countries will set certain objectives at the national level. To do that, they will carry out consultations and establish partnerships. By June 2015 at the latest, all of those commitments should be on the table, showing in concrete terms what they intend to do and what their contributions will be to achieving our very ambitious goals. It is important that all countries – and not only those that represent the bulk of emissions – make a contribution. That is, certain developing countries that have relatively low emissions must also participate in the conference and make a contribution. What is the legal status of these contributions? How will they be anchored in the instrument? Will they form part of the instrument itself, as was the case with the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, or will it be annexed to the instrument? The level of ambitions is also an issue: if each country sets its own targets, it is unlikely that, when totalled up, we will reach the 2°C target. We therefore have to look very closely at the link between the contributions and the Agreement.
- ▶ Third, finance and investment. How will we mobilise the necessary finance to achieve what the agreement sets forth, and how will we mobilise the investments needed to transform our energy systems? At Copenhagen and Cancún, developed countries agreed to mobilise certain amounts per year for climate change in developing countries. A first priority will therefore be to ensure that that commitment is respected. The French Development Agency will be organising a conference next week with multinational donor banks to explore these questions of finance. A second meeting in May will explore the mobilisation of public-private finance. All of this must be done according to clear and transparent criteria and rules. The Green Climate Fund is now operational, and is also key to the success of the Paris Conference. How can the Paris Agreement send a sufficiently clear signal to investors, encouraging them to invest in the climate?
- ▶ Fourth, cooperation. We are very aware that the relevant decisions are taken by companies, municipalities and sub-national bodies, as well as at the national level. How can we ensure that all of these players are involved in the process? How can we restructure the transformation in the key sectors? How can we integrate the role of these actors into the structure of the Agreement? Various initiatives have been launched by the Secretary General of the United Nations with respect to energy, access to energy, and renewable energy, and such initiatives are just as important as the formal agreement. We are also working with Peru on the Lima-Paris Action Plan. Generally speaking, we have to structure the Paris Agreement to allow countries to facilitate their actions through cooperation. That will be a key element of the negotiations.

In conclusion, we have 9 very busy months ahead of us. We have a 90-page document under consideration that forms a solid basis for the negotiations. A clearly defined process has been set up to deal with formal and informal consultations in the lead-up to the conference. The aim is to find a consensus not on the last day of the conference but upstream of that date. Many questions remain open but I hope that we will see an international agreement in Paris in 9 months' time – one that will be legally binding and in which all actors have a role to play.