

Mesdames et Messieurs les Ambassadeurs, mes chers collègues, mes chers amis de l'OEA et de Washington, permettez-moi de vous souhaiter la bienvenue à cette réception en l'honneur de la fête nationale française.

Je sais que les francophones et hispanophones sont nombreux dans l'assistance qui reflète le multilinguisme de l'OEA dont le français est une des langues officielles au même titre que l'anglais, l'espagnol et le portugais. Je les prie de bien vouloir m'excuser si je poursuis en anglais pour nos invités américains.

Señoras y señores Embajadores, distinguidos colegas y queridos amigos de la OEA y de Washington, permítanme darles la bienvenida a esta recepción en honor del Día Nacional de Francia.

Sé que en nuestra Asamblea esta noche, hay muchas personas de habla francesa o española, lo que refleja el multilingüismo de la OEA que tiene el francés como idioma oficial al igual que el inglés, el español y el portugués. Le ruego me disculpen si continúo en inglés para nuestros invitados estadounidenses.

Your Excellencies and dear colleagues, friends from the OAS and from Washington, Ladies & Gentlemen

Welcome to the French National Day and thank you for joining this celebration.

It is the opportunity to celebrate the relationship between France, the Americas and the Caribbean through the OAS, a relationship which has been flourishing since France decided, nearly thirty years ago, to be represented to this Organization by an Ambassador and a specific Permanent Mission, embracing the important changes on the continent at that time.

Although today is July 10, we are indeed celebrating the 14th of July.

If you allow me, I would like to return briefly on what means the 14th of July chosen in 1880 to become the French National Day.

Whereas in United States, our national holiday is often called "Bastille day", it is not the storming of the Bastille in 1789 which is celebrated but indeed the big ceremony that took place one year later, on July 14, 1790, the "Fête de la Fédération" and a renewed or restored unity. As was explained in 1880, this political choice answered the objective which was to celebrate and perpetuate a day that was meant to be one of unity and not one of blood and tears. The introduction of the 1880 bill specifies that the 14th of July is to be " the symbol

of the fraternal union of all parts of France, of all French citizens in freedom and equality ... It was on July 14, 1790, that national unity was accomplished, prepared by the efforts of so many generations. » Even if we know, now, that the Unity celebrated in 1790 proved to be short-lived, the message was there and still is. This message has a universal appeal, calling for transcending differences for the common good. That could be the goal of any multilateral organization, let alone the Organization of American States.

France is indeed proud to be an active Permanent Observer to the OAS. Proud to be the only non-American country to be American as well, as we are geographically present on the American continent beyond our rich common heritage. This presence in North America, South America and the West Indies is the result of a long history stretching from the very north to the very south of the continent. It remains a shared legacy that we more or less take for granted but that we must foster.

It was the dream expressed by General de Gaulle sixty years ago, when in 1959, he wished to tighten the bonds between both sides of the Atlantic, to create what he was calling a third force based on a close cooperation between these countries belonging to the same family of shared culture and human values, so important in a world continually shaken by new challenges and threats.

These values that France defends on the international scene and promotes through multilateralism are also at the heart of the priorities of the Organization of American States which has made the defence of human rights, democracy, peace and security, the main pillars of its action.

Our hemispherical presence means that we are directly concerned by the OAS programs and the decisions taken by the organization, particularly with regard to multidimensional security; the environment; human, social and economic development, let alone health through the excellent work carried out by PAHO, the PanAmerican Health Organization to which France is a participating state. Throughout the 20th century, PAHO has significantly contributed to the improvement of public health on the American continent and the Caribbean, with a gain in life expectancy of more than 35 years, considerable reduction of child mortality, eradication of smallpox and polio and so on.

The Organization of American States has just held its 49th General Assembly in Medellin. It was the first one for me. I was struck not only by the professionalism and candidness of the debates during the preparatory meetings and the Assembly itself, allowing the adoption of important decisions for the continent but also by the emphasis attached to the role of civil society which

allows for healthy interaction with policy makers and the diplomatic community.

The chosen subject of this GA, innovation and multilateralism, are at the heart of my country's international agenda.

Innovation will be at the heart of the second edition of the "**Paris Peace Forum**" this coming November. The important number of projects submitted and selected coming from the American continent pays tribute to the dynamism of its countries. Around one hundred projects have been selected by an international jury and almost a quarter come directly from American countries, Brazil, Colombia, Honduras, Peru, Mexico, the United States, in all five themes: Environment, New Technologies, Inclusive Economy, Culture and Education, Development, Peace and Security. I hope the OAS will be represented at this important event.

Multilateralism, as I mentioned in my remarks during the dialogue with Permanent Observers at the General Assembly, may appear weakened, sometimes challenged when it had never been so relevant with the numerous cross-border issues and regional challenges, political crises or threats to the protection of common goods such as peace, environment, climate or health. Multilateral issues call for multilateral solutions.

I would like to mention very quickly some of the areas of excellence of the organization which are also essential for France as reflected in the goals and priorities set by France **for its G7 Presidency in 2019**

In 2019, in order to reduce inequality, to give everyone the same opportunities in life, and to ensure global stability and peace, France has set a number of goals and priorities for its G7 Presidency:

- fighting inequality of opportunity, promoting in particular gender equality, access to education and high-quality health services;
- reducing environmental inequality by protecting our planet through climate finance and a fair ecological transition, based on preserving biodiversity and the oceans;
- promoting more fair and equitable trade, tax and development policies;
- taking action for peace, against security threats and terrorism which weaken the foundations of our societies;
- tapping into the opportunities created by digital technology and artificial intelligence in an ethical and human-oriented way.

The G7 Leaders' Summit will be held in Biarritz at the end of August 2019.

In this context, France remains committed to working with the OAS and supporting its programs in the fields of

1- **Human rights, specifically in gender equality**, women empowerment and fighting discrimination and violence against women and girls. I'd like to recognize the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights which is celebrating its sixtieth anniversary

2- The OAS expertise in **democratic strengthening and electoral observation** is another of the strengths of the organization on which France and OAS have a close cooperation.

3- I would also like to welcome the OAS's commitment to providing an integrated and coordinated response to **international security issues**. Beyond addressing current political crises and their regional effects, the Organization plays an important role in preventing and combating organized crime in all its forms, terrorism and corruption.

- Our country has long made **world health** a priority of its international development policy. During the G7 Summit, the French presidency will also emphasize the need to equality regarding access to quality health services. Since the creation of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Fund, France, a founding member, has been one of its main political and financial supporters and remains the second largest contributor with an annual contribution of 400 million \$, representing more than 5 billion \$ since its creation. The Global Fund has been involved since its creation in more than 140 countries, contributing to the reduction of one third of the deaths due to the three pandemics equivalent to 27 million lives saved.

- It is important to mention the impact of **environmental issues** and climate change on economic and human development. These challenges are of a particularly great relevance today, from the Amazon and deforestation to ocean pollution. A conference has just been held in Mexico on the problem of Sargasso algae which are creating a real coastal crisis in the Caribbean. Another international conference will be held in October in French Guadeloupe, to pool and share best practices from countries such as Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago and France.

From this PM's point of view, it is a good example of an inclusive issue where all stakeholders could efficiently work together.

We are looking forward to engaging next year on these issues with the Organisation of American States, Member States, academics, international financial institutions and other partners.