

Sir,

Although globalization has created new wealth in unprecedented proportions, the growing inequalities between the populations in developed and developing countries are more unacceptable than ever before. This situation cannot go on from either a political or economical standpoint. A proactive response from the entire international community is needed so as to offer the most vulnerable populations a genuine alternative to resignation and despair.

The idea of using new mechanisms as an essential supplement to traditional Official Development Assistance to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 has gradually been making headway. This issue has been placed high on the agenda of major international fora including the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the G8 and the European Union, in which further discussion should take place.

On 14 September 2005, 79 countries meeting at the United Nations Millennium +5 Summit in New York signed a declaration on innovative sources of financing for development co-sponsored by the group of six (Algeria, Brazil, Chile, France, Germany and Spain). Underpinning the relevance of these new mechanisms, this declaration proposed that we consider together the implementation of international solidarity contributions, including an air-ticket contribution, aimed at mobilizing substantial revenues for the major causes of development.

In line with the President of the Republic's commitments, France decided to introduce an air-ticket solidarity contribution in 2006 thereby proving its feasibility. Several countries are likely to follow suit in the near future. France has also proposed that part of the revenues from this air-ticket solidarity contribution be allocated to the fight against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria and more specifically to the access to treatments, for which sustainable and predictable funding is needed to supply developing countries concerned with satisfactory amounts.

Moreover, as you know, discussions are taking place on other mechanisms aiming at providing more resources to poor countries, and more specifically on facilitating and reducing the cost of remittances, combating tax evasion and taxing international financial transactions.

All of these topics should be discussed further so as to broaden the consensus born from the need to turn to innovative financing mechanisms for development which aim to better respond to poor countries' needs. This is a considerable challenge. It involves both enabling the international community to fulfil its commitments to the neediest populations and helping redistribute new wealth generated by globalization equitably, which for the most part escapes traditional economic and financial channels. For this wealth should contribute to the international solidarity that we all are seeking to build.

It is with this in mind that a ministerial conference will be held in Paris on **28 February and 1 March 2006** at the initiative and under the high patronage of the French President of the Republic Jacques Chirac to which we have the pleasure and the honour of inviting a representative from your government. It is entitled **“Solidarity and globalization: innovative financing for development and combating pandemics”** and will bring together all countries sharing this same ambition. We believe this conference constitutes a new step in mobilizing the international community around the theme of innovative financing for development.

This conference will provide an opportunity to further develop the international air-ticket solidarity contribution project, especially with regards to allocating a part of its revenue to combating pandemics, but also to pursue our exchanges on other innovative sources of financing for development so that together we can launch new projects and decide on upcoming stages. The detailed programme of this conference will be sent to you at a later date.

We would again like to express our wish that you or one of your colleagues join us to exchange ideas and take action together so that we can build on the momentum begun in New York last September.

We have honour to be, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

**Philippe Douste-Blazy**

**Thierry Breton**