

2012

France's strategy for international health cooperation



The important pace of globalization has increased the cross-cutting nature of health threats and demonstrated the shared benefits of universal access to quality care. Addressing health as a *global public good* requires **coordinated worldwide mobilization of all actors engaged in international cooperation**. France plays a central role in this effort thanks to its significant financial commitments in health, a model domestic healthcare system and recognized expertise. This document outlines the new French international cooperation strategy tailored to global health challenges.

The strategy prioritizes the **achievement of the Millennium Development Goals** (MDGs), with particular focus on the goals related to maternal and child health (MDGs 4 & 5) and the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases (MDG 6). It also aims to **strengthen the fight against emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases** which could compromise international health security, such as

pandemic influenzas, zoonoses and multiresistant infections. Lastly, it takes into account the **growing pressure** on health system **from non-communicable diseases** (NCDs) and emphasizes the need for multi-sectoral prevention policies to address common risk factors and social and environmental determinants.

The strategy promotes **enhancing fragile health systems** (extreme poverty, crisis situations), particularly in French-speaking Africa, through support for sustainable health financing based on solidarity, training of competent and motivated personnel, and the development of reliable health information systems. It also encourages scientific and academic cooperation across all developing countries.



Sierra Leone Kids in Jembe village. © GAVI/Doune Porter



The major challenges of French cooperation in the health field

The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Health is mentioned explicitly in three of the eight MDGs which the international community pledged to meet in the 2000 Millennium Declaration. France's efforts to achieve the health MDGs are essential to the credibility of its development cooperation policy, as an expression of solidarity with the countries of the South and as an instrument of outreach.

THE HEALTH-RELATED MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

MDG 4 : reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate. This can be achieved through simple preventive measures: vaccination, access to drinking water, combating malnutrition, etc.

MDG 5 : reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio between 1990 and 2015. This involves restructuring or enhancing care of pregnant women, the promotion of sexual and reproductive rights, the education of girls and upping the age of marriage.

MDG 6 : combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other communicable diseases. A reversal of current trends can only be achieved with strengthening of the whole healthcare system, true political mobilization, and appropriate applied research programmes.

www.un.org/fr/millenniumgoals
www.huitfoisoui.fr

Apart from the three MDGs which are directly linked to health, achievement of the five other MDGs also contributes to improving health, and vice versa. Health is both a consequence and a source of progress in reducing extreme poverty and hunger (MDG 1), achieving universal primary education (MDG 2), promoting gender equality and empowering women (MDG 3), ensuring environmental sustainability (MDG 7), and developing a global partnership for development (MDG 8).

International health security

The risk of epidemics is increased in a globalized world: the recent increase in health crises linked to epidemic peaks (severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS); H5N1; H1N1) has highlighted the urgent need for **collective enhancement of international health security**. The re-emergence of infectious diseases may be of natural, accidental, or even criminal origin. It requires the creation of global surveillance systems and alert and response system. France contributes to this through its support to the Lyon office of the World Health Organization (WHO) for the implementation of international health regulations and epidemic preparedness.



Children of the Ambororo nomadic tribe in South Darfur (Sudan) are carrying water in plastic containers for their families.
© UN Photo/Tim McKulka

Coordinating health governance actors

Global health governance is characterized by a proliferation of initiatives and actors including international organizations, governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. **Coordination has become vital** to promoting synergies, effectiveness and joint action to support health development.

Within the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MAEE), **coordination of multilateral and bilateral assistance** involves continuous dialogue between the Directorate-General of Global Affairs, Development and Partnerships, and geographical political departments, the United Nations, International Organizations, Human Rights and Francophonie Directorate, as well as the AFD (the French agency for development). At the inter-ministerial level, the new challenges posed by factors external to health require multisectoral action, focused on improving public health. In terms of relations with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society, the MAEE seeks to build a relationship of confidence based on regular dialogue and additional cooperative actions.

At international, and particularly European level, **greater complementarity of the health cooperation strategies of donor States** is essential. Within the United Nations, coordination must allow the different UN agencies, programmes and funds for development and health to be "united in action". WHO must also assume its role as a steering and coordinating authority for international action.

SURVEILLANCE AND INVESTIGATION OF EPIDEMICS IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA (SISEA)

The SISEA project is carried out by the institutes of the Pasteur network in Shanghai, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Nha Trang, in Laos and Cambodia. It aims to put in place a programme for surveillance of epidemics, building up local capacities centred on three components: the capacities of reference laboratories and their networking, epidemiological alert on emerging viruses, and epidemic response. This project, supported by the AFD (the French agency for development) has already identified a certain number of health threats and contributed to surveillance of the H1N1 influenza epidemic in 2010.

Lastly, health assistance recipient countries must be central to efforts coordinating the different donors and development partners. The **International Partnership for Health and Related Initiatives** (IHP+) serves as a model for the coordination of health assistance actors in recipient countries.



Cambodian sisters. © Giulio Di Sturco/UNITAID Thank You Campaign, 2009



Values and advantages of French cooperation in the health field

Principles and values

- **Solidarity:** sharing medical progress, providing expertise and improving access to healthcare.
- **Human rights:** rejecting all forms of discrimination, respecting minorities, promoting gender equality.
- **Aid effectiveness:** country ownership, coordinating with national strategies and systems, coordinating with donors, harmonizing procedures, mutual responsibility, and developing management focused on performance.

Advantages

- Renowned **medical expertise**.
- A well established and developed health **cooperation network** (Pasteur Institutes).
- **Pioneering NGOs** in humanitarian medicine.
- Historic commitment to the **fight against HIV/AIDS**.
- Promotion of **innovative financing** for health.



THE FRENCH RED CROSS' OUTPATIENT TREATMENT CENTRES (CTAs): QUALITY CARE FOR AIDS PATIENTS IN AFRICA

Since 1998, the French Red Cross has opened 15 CTAs, in partnership with the Ministries of Health of 10 countries. Close to 170,000 patients have accessed care, and more than 40,000 have received antiretroviral treatment. These centres are recognized as reference centres in the organization of HIV management. Their activities include meeting patients, screening, medical treatment, biological follow-up, hospitalization, information systems, provision of condoms, nutritional support and management of medical waste.

www.croix-rouge.fr



Medical stock from a basic Health Unit in Mauritania. © European Commission/Carolina Martin Tirand

The priorities of the health strategy

Beyond the vertical approach by pathology or population, the strategy aims to strengthen approaches that are cross-cutting, so as to address the *structural* challenges which put pressure on health systems. The strategy also aims to promote universal access to safe, effective and affordable quality treatment.

Strengthening of health systems

Improving access to treatment

Nearly half of health spending is dedicated to the purchase of medical products.

France supports **research** and **innovation** for the treatment of HIV, malaria, tuberculosis and neglected diseases. It supports the WHO Prequalification programme and the use of essential medicines.

France promotes the **availability of high-quality safe, effective and affordable medicines**, by developing purchasing centres in French-speaking African countries, fighting counterfeit medicines, and implementing regional and global regulation.

France also supports the work of the **Pierre Fabre Foundation** for university training of pharmacists and dispensers, and the network of French-speaking pharmacists (REMEDI, Réseau Médicaments et Développement).

Health financing

Sustainable financing for health is essential to guarantee equality of access to care in the long term. France supports the framing of health financing plans through mixed mechanisms, including a tax on the general budget, direct contributions from the formal sector, subsidized contributions for the informal sector and exemptions for the poorest people or for lifetime treatments (active support for Providing for Health (P4H) and the action of the public interest group Santé protection sociale internationale).

THE COTONOU APPEAL FOR THE FIGHT AGAINST COUNTERFEIT MEDICATION

France supports the Cotonou Appeal launched by the Fondation Chirac, which aims to raise the awareness of all governments to the public health risks of counterfeit medicines, which are currently increasing fast. Counterfeit medicines currently represent up to 50% of medicines in circulation in some countries of sub-Saharan Africa.



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Health human resources

Human resources are one of the pillars of health systems. France supports medical, paramedical, pharmaceutical, midwifery, biomedical maintenance and hospital management **training programmes**, with a focus on building local capacity. France supports continuous training and the use of new information technologies in developing countries (French language virtual medical university in Africa).



French hospital cooperation, a partnership founded on voluntary cooperation between hospitals in the North and South, covers various types of organizations: university and general hospitals, regional and local authorities, and the AFD, which manages the hospital partnerships fund with the FHF (the Hospital Federation of France) and the Ministry of Health.

Beyond university-hospital cooperation, such as university medicine programme in Cambodia and Madagascar which has been operating for 20 years, France supports the **development of support for hospital teams in the field** through twinnings of the ESTHER public interest grouping (*cf. embedded text*), the network of the hospitals in Africa, the Indian Ocean and the Caribbean (RESHAOC), and training decision-makers and public health administrators at the French school of public health (EHESP, École des hautes études en santé publique).

France focuses on long-term training courses covered by agreements involving hospitals, universities and country partners through reciprocal commitments. These partnerships include hosting students for training in French institutions and field trainings.



ESTHER, A MODEL FOR NORTH-SOUTH HOSPITAL TWINNINGS

ESTHER (Network for Therapeutic Solidarity in Hospitals) was created in 2002 and is financed by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and the Ministry of Health. It has developed hospital partnerships in 18 countries and includes more than 170 treatment centres for people living with HIV. Further, approximately 50 French hospitals are twinned with 78 reference centre hospitals and 100 decentralized treatment centres to improve the quality of HIV, tuberculosis and opportunistic infection treatment as well as hospital hygiene.

www.esther.fr



A baby receives a check-up at Awsard Refugee Camp, Western Sahara. © UN Photo/Evan Schneider

THE NGO SANTÉ SUD (HEALTH SOUTH) AND LOCAL GENERAL MEDICINE

For more than 20 years, the NGO Santé Sud has been developing a scheme to support young doctors in rural areas: training in general community medicine, feasibility studies on potential sites for clinics, negotiation with community representatives and local health authorities, assistance for acquisition of appropriate equipment, and networking with professional associations.

This strategy, which began in Mali, is also being carried out in Madagascar and Benin. The Mali Association of Rural Doctors, which participates in the programme, received the Award for Excellence at the Second Global Forum on Human Resources for Health organized by the Global Health Workforce Alliance and WHO.

www.santesud.org

Enhancing health information systems

Health information systems are major components of surveillance of infectious and emerging diseases and are critical decision making. Alongside data collection systems, the updating of diagnostic processes (laboratories) for infectious diseases (work of the Fondation Mérieux) and cancers is included in this area of support, as is the surveillance of resistances to medicines.

The French health cooperation strategy focuses on the fight against certain pathologies which obstruct development, threaten collective health security, and undermine the balance of health systems.



THE GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR VACCINES AND IMMUNIZATION (GAVI)

Created in 1999, the GAVI Alliance is a public-private partnership bringing together Unicef, WHO, the World Bank, donor and recipient States, NGOs and Foundations (Bill and Melinda Gates), as well as representatives from industry and finance, to save children's lives and protect people's health by providing access to immunizations. France funds GAVI through the International Finance Facility for Immunization (IFFIm) to the sum of €1.3 billion and recently pledged an additional €100 million for the 2011-2015 period. GAVI invests in the purchase of vaccines at affordable prices, in improving the performance of immunization programmes, and in health systems strengthening.

www.gavialliance.org



Babies await vaccinations in a refugee camp in Thailand.
© European Commission/International Rescue Committee

The health of women and children

France's commitment to child and maternal health (MDGs 4 and 5) includes: malnutrition, water and sanitation, girls' education, reproductive and perinatal health, infrastructure, **vaccination and primary healthcare.**

France has made a considerable financial commitment through the **Muskoka Initiative** on Maternal, Newborn and Under-Five Child Health (in June 2010, France announced a pledge of an additional 500 million euros over 5 years), and through our contributions to the **Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization** (GAVI, *see embedded text*), **UNITAID**, the **Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria** (GFATM), and the **UN agencies** (WHO, UNAIDS, the United Nations Population Fund, (UNFPA), Unicef, and UN Women).



In addition to institutional capacity-building (improvement of public sector care quality and development of reliable information systems) and human resources assistance (access to qualified personnel, emergency obstetric care with caesarean sections, and safe blood transfusions), France's strategy for child and maternal health focuses in particular on the fields mentioned above.

Promoting health, sexual rights, and access to family planning

France's action targets access to different contraceptive methods and family planning. France also supports research into new methods of contraception to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

Actions spanning MDGs 4, 5 and 6

France promotes actions spanning MDGs 4, 5 and 6, such as the prevention of mother-child transmission of HIV within integrated treatment centres and the development of new techniques for the prevention of sexually transmitted infections.

Fighting malnutrition

Malnutrition results from the interaction of various factors and requires a multisectoral approach tackling all determinants. France allocates financial resources and expertise and supports partnerships to prevent, detect and treat malnutrition among women of childbearing age and children under five.

France also supports **convergence of world action frameworks for nutrition** (Scaling-Up Nutrition, Framework for Action) and reform of the United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCP).



A mother and her child in Tanzania. © GAVI/Doune Porter

OUAGADOUGOU DECLARATION ON POPULATION, DEVELOPMENT, AND FAMILY PLANNING IN FRANCOPHONE WEST AFRICA (10 FEBRUARY 2011)

With the support of France and the United States, Burkina Faso and eight other French-speaking West African countries have committed to integrating reproductive health and family planning into national plans, raising population awareness of the importance of birth intervals, increasing the number of family planning and reproductive health professionals and gradually funding contraceptive products through national budgets.

Communicable diseases

Fighting HIV/AIDS

Fighting HIV/AIDS is one of France's major priorities.

France's commitment to this disease areas is amongst the highest in the world and includes a strong political commitment to the rights of people infected with the virus.

France favours financing of the fight against HIV/AIDS through the **multilateral channels**, with more than €360 million per year of contributions to the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, €110 million euros per year to the UNITAID international medicines purchasing facility, and several million euros via contributions to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and its co-sponsors. France allocates close to €45 million per year in **bilateral aid** to combat HIV/AIDS, through hospital cooperation (ESTHER, *described above*) and other projects financed by the AFD.

The health strategy also promotes protection of HIV-positive people from discrimination and stigmatization, and aims guarantees, for example, universal access to quality healthcare, respect for patients, freedom of movement and domicile, and advancement of women. For prevention to be effective, populations at risk need targeted protection. In particular, France contributes



UNITAID, AN INNOVATIVE FINANCING MODEL COMBATING THE THREE PANDEMICS

Launched in 2006 by Brazil, Chile, France, Norway and the United Kingdom, UNITAID is an international purchasing facility for medicines, which aims to reduce costs and increase the accessibility of treatments for HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

The price of paediatric antiretroviral treatment thus fell by 49% between 2008 and 2010 thanks to the intervention of UNITAID. France finances more than 50% of the organization's budget, thanks to the international solidarity levy on air tickets.

www.unitaid.eu/fr

actively to protecting young women from harassment, sexual exploitation, rape and all forms of sexual abuse and violence, including customary forms.



Cambodian children. © Giulio Di Sturco/UNITAID Thank You Campaign, 2009



Fighting malaria

France contributes to fighting malaria through its action under the Roll Back Malaria partnership, with a total investment of €437 million between 1998 and 2007. It also supports making available new compounds for the treatment of malaria.

Fighting tuberculosis

In the field of tuberculosis, the French section of the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease conducts critical works. France focuses its efforts on improving diagnosis and the treatment of cases of TB/HIV co-infection. It also promotes the work of WHO in the fight against resistant forms of tuberculosis.

Fighting neglected tropical diseases

France has played a pioneering role in international mobilization regarding neglected tropical diseases by investing in research and prevention and treatment of these diseases through WHO and the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi).



THE GLOBAL FUND TO FIGHT AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS AND MALARIA (GFATM)

Since its creation in 2003, this fund, which is dedicated to treatment of the three pandemics, has received active political and financial support from France.

Since 2002, GFATM programmes have been providing 3.3 million people with access to antiretrovirals, 8.6 million people with treatment for tuberculosis, and the distribution of 230 million insecticide-treated nets (ITNs).

As the second largest contributor after the United States, France provides the Global Fund with €360 million per year, and reserves up to 5% of that sum to develop technical support and programmes facilitating the use of these funds in French-speaking countries.

www.theglobalfund.org/fr



An epidemiological survey of malaria at Comé Health Centre, Benin © IRD/Justine Montmarche

(Re)emerging diseases and the "One Health" approach

Fighting (re)emerging infectious diseases

The emergence and re-emergence of infectious diseases is a growing threat to collective health security.

Recent outbreaks have demonstrated the **importance of developing international health surveillance networks**, as well as **building capacities at border entry points** (ports, airports, border posts) in all countries. France supports WHO in implementing the International Health Regulations and, promotes the coherence of "emergency alert" networks. French experts also play a critical role in coordinating preparatory work to combat pandemic influenza.

Lastly, the (re)emergence of infectious diseases comes with the development of antimicrobial resistance. France promotes preventive actions and the rational use of essential, high-quality medicines internationally in order to limit the spread of multi- and/or ultra-resistant pathogens.

Fighting zoonoses under the One Health approach

Three quarters of emerging infectious diseases are of animal origin. France supports the One Health concept to manage health risks at the human-animal-ecosystem interface (c.f. the strategy document *French Position on the One Health Concept*, 2011, which is available on www.diplomatie.gouv.fr, under Le ministère/Publications).



Non-communicable diseases (NCDs)

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) – primarily cardiovascular conditions, cancers, diabetes and chronic respiratory conditions –, whose weight is growing in both the North and the South, already represent more than **two thirds of mortality worldwide**. This was recently recognized in the Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases, adopted at the UN General Assembly on 16 September 2011. **Better accountability for the role of behavioural, social** (education, gender equality, housing, etc.) **and environmental** (urbanization, agriculture, climate change, etc.) factors is essential for the greatest impact in the prevention of NCDs.



Mothers with their babies in Rwanda © GAVI/Doune Porter

France emphasizes **research, promotion of health and prevention**, and targeting the main risk factors for these diseases, such as tobacco, alcohol abuse, poor diet and a sedentary lifestyle. It supports the WHO strategy to help countries in framing comprehensive multisectoral policies for the prevention and control of NCDs. In addition, France supports the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), which is based in Lyon. The treating NCDs still represents a major challenge for the balance of health systems.



Priority geographical areas

Cooperation in French-speaking Africa

In accordance with the framework strategy document for development cooperation, the “health” sector strategy **prioritizes low income countries in French-speaking Africa**: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo.

Particular attention is paid to other French-speaking countries which maintain special ties with France, such as Haiti and countries in South-East Asia.

Cooperation in crisis and post-crisis areas

The health strategy continues the emergency action led by the Crisis Centre through **long-term cooperation**

in post-crisis areas, including Afghanistan, Palestine, Haiti and Côte d’Ivoire.

Cooperation in the Mediterranean area

The **Mediterranean area** is central to the new strategy and includes expectations of modernization of social protection systems, taking into account NCDs, creating epidemiological surveillance and health security systems, and creating systems to handle emergencies, transplants, cancers and hospital accreditation. In French-speaking countries, there is strong demand for university level speciality training, in particular related to hospitals and health security and epidemiological surveillance agencies.



In Malawi, mothers are queuing up with their babies to receive life-saving vaccines. © GAVI/Tormod Simensen

International cooperation in overseas France

Through its presence **overseas**, France mobilizes resources for international cooperation. Beyond university and research cooperation, international relationships contribute to the creation of quality healthcare in neighbouring countries, organizing the hosting of students in health profession careers, and identifying the reasons for their choice of the French offer.

Scientific and academic health cooperation in developing countries

Academic scientific health cooperation is offered to all developing countries, from priority low income countries to emerging countries (BRICS: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa). In these countries, the French strategy aims to address increasing demand for scientific and academic partnerships. It also seeks to export a French model, based notably on mutual financing of health coverage, excellence in health professionals, equitable access to healthcare and the right to health.



THE FRENCH NATIONAL AGENCY FOR RESEARCH ON AIDS AND VIRAL HEPATITIS (ANRS) IN SOUTHERN COUNTRIES: A MODEL OF COOPERATION FOR RESEARCH

Since 1992, eight ANRS research centres have been set up between French teams and Southern countries and their national programmes to combat HIV/AIDS and viral hepatitis. ANRS dedicates a quarter of its budget to the countries of the South and represents the second research institution on HIV/AIDS in the world. About 20 projects are funded each year concerning clinical research, in social sciences, health economics and operational research.

www.anrs.fr



Scenes from the maternity clinic in Gabarin town, Nigeria. © GAVI/Christine Nesbitt

8 OBJECTIVES FOR THE HEALTH STRATEGY

- 1. Continue the financial effort** for health to the sum of €1 billion per year, notably to support the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), the GAVI Alliance and UNITAID. Support UN organizations (WHO, UNAIDS, UNFPA, Unicef, UN Women) involved in the health of women and children through projects also involving French NGOs, and make the health of women and children the priority of the French Development Agency's health programmes, particularly regarding family planning.
- 2. Improve coordination of bilateral and multilateral assistance, creating a health centre at France Expertise Internationale (FEI)** to mobilize French-speaking expertise in support of beneficiary countries of the GFATM in combating the three pandemics. Manage platforms covering all of the French priorities: health financing, human resources, medicines, epidemiological supervision, non-communicable diseases. Mobilize the French regional health advisers network to serve as the interface between bilateral and multilateral action.
- 3. Contribute to on-the-ground synergies among different research institutions** including universities, the Institut Pasteur network, the INSERM (French national institute of health and medical research, the IRD (French research institute for development, and the CNRS (French national centre for scientific research).
- 4. Build national capacities by supporting the training of health professionals**, the management of health systems, and projects supporting employee retention and improved working conditions. Support academic cooperation and training in France by promoting inter-university cooperation and university public health training.
- 5. Support hospital cooperation** through hospital partnerships and twinings, through ESTHER, the hospital partnerships fund and the Ministry of Health's hospital cooperation scheme.
- 6. Enhance health diplomacy** with partners in favour of better coordination of international health initiatives (IHP+) and through better incorporation of health in the different European aid instruments. **Lobby for new innovative financing mechanisms**, of which part should go to health.
- 7. Ensure that gender and gender inequality are taken into account in health programmes**, including conducting analysis of gender inequality in the different programmes France supports and raising gender equality in the various international bodies.
- 8. Improve communication on France's engagement**, with both French and foreign partners.



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Directorate-General of Global Affairs, Development and Partnerships

Global Public Goods Directorate

Health and Human Development Department

Directorate-General of Global Affairs, Development and Partnerships of the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs

The missions of the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs are:

- summarize information on the changing global economy and put it into perspective, prepare decisions on the French government's foreign policy;
- draft France's foreign policy;
- coordinate France's international relations;
- protect French interests abroad and assist French nationals outside France.

The creation of the Directorate-General of Global Affairs, Development and Partnerships (DGM) in April 2009, as part of the reform of the Ministry, enables diplomacy to anticipate, identify and respond to the challenges of globalisation more effectively.

Confronted with global issues that have a direct impact on the lives of our citizens and multiple actors, the Ministry intends to emphasise the need to tackle global issues, in the firm belief that every major economic, cultural and societal issue calls for collective action with more outward focus, anticipation, interministerial coordination, responsiveness, interdisciplinarity and a resolutely European approach.



Directorate for Communication and Press

www.diplomatie.gouv.fr

