

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

I would first like to thank Prime Minister Papandreou for his cordial welcome and praise the Summit organisers for their sense of responsibility. In a difficult situation, with a crisis that, beyond a single country, is shaking all of Europe, you chose not to cancel this meeting on renewable energy.

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Some people might have assumed that the issue was minor in comparison with the challenges facing Greece. I feel, for my part, that, despite their gravity, current developments should not keep us from addressing problems that are bound to affect the future of our societies in the long term.

In these times of doubt about our future, we often hear commentators and players on the international scene refer to *the* crisis. A simple look at the world shows, however, that there are too many challenges to reduce them to a single issue, however important it may be. There is not *one* crisis, but *several* crises.

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True, there is a financial crisis, and there is an economic crisis, too. But, since we are here to talk about the future, I aim to look beyond our immediate reality. There is also a humanitarian crisis, with daily subsistence a problem for tens of millions of human beings. And most of all, there is a major ecological crisis.

What lies at the confluence of these crises is the matter of energy and a mode of civilisation that remains strongly linked to the resources it exploits.

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Given the sheer magnitude of the challenges already facing us, we know we must do more than simply adjust our way of doing things on the margins. We must completely rethink our way of living, producing and travelling. We will have to invent a form of development which reduces consumption of raw materials, better respects the environment and is able to integrate the natural heritage in the wealth of people and nations. I firmly believe that this Year of Biodiversity should provide an opportunity to improve everyone's awareness to this issue. We must also learn to consume better and perhaps less.

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In short, we must learn to live more responsibly - in other words - more sustainably.

This will be no easy task. In just a few decades, we will have to alter an economic model that has long provided many countries with unprecedented comfort, well-being and easy living.

This is why it is our duty to promote profound changes in mentalities and habits, as well as devising new growth.

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Such growth must rely in particular on clean, sufficiently plentiful energy at an acceptable cost.

By clean energy, I mean that its use does not endanger our Planet's equilibrium. Faced with this threat, we must act quickly: mitigating climate change must remain our prime objective, despite the disillusion with Copenhagen.

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Energy at acceptable cost, too. I alluded to the inequalities that deprive large numbers of people of minimum amounts of energy to travel, heat their homes, feed their families or enjoy basic hygiene. This is yet another urgency since our world cannot persist in excluding hundreds of millions of men and women, most of them young. This is a matter of basic solidarity as well as interest.

To be sustainably accessible, this energy must also be easily available for a Planet with a population of nine or ten billion. Otherwise, it may become hopeless to launch into experiments that can, at best, only reproduce or exacerbate tomorrow the problems of scarcity we know today.

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Although these criteria may seem inaccessible, this is

untrue. Today, in business as in research, thousands of scientists are working towards this and their results are already extremely encouraging.

Energy from wind, water, marine turbines, tides, sunshine, geothermal sources, biomass or biofuels: many complementary solutions are being developed. All of them have the same target: reducing to a minimum the damage we inflict on our Planet.

Such efforts must be reinforced from a technical, economic and political standpoint. Researchers must devise the energy of the future; business leaders must also take the necessary risks to guarantee tomorrow's industrial successes and the political world must create favourable conditions for exploiting new energy sources, in particular through aid for improving their competitiveness in comparison with fossil energy.

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The fight against climate change is everybody's business. This observation is a constraint when it comes to obtaining unanimous support from the Community of Nations. But it is a strength when everyone, each at their level, can contribute to the overall objective.

This is what convinced me in 2006 to create my Foundation dedicated to the fight against climate change, along with preservation of the Planet's biodiversity and water resources.

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This Foundation participates in many projects aiming to develop alternative energy resources in association with local people. Whether by producing biofuel or enhancing solar energy, our purpose is to help people live better. This is why we are also working on the essential issue of the use of such energy. This involves in particular the stakes involved in clean vehicles and energy efficiency, around which we organised a Euro-Mediterranean forum a few weeks ago in Monaco. Specialists are fully aware that the best energy is that which is not consumed. In this sense, the margin of progression is considerable, with economically interesting conditions, too...

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In this regard, as the organisers of today's Summit clearly understand, I believe we must formulate the energy question beyond oil alone, especially in Mediterranean regions.

These regions may be more vulnerable than others to energy problems, which means they may also have more remarkable assets. Here, I would like to evoke the prospects for solar energy, which is so emblematic. I have been watching with great interest the Desertec concept, dedicated to the use of solar energy from desert zones. The principle is simple:

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just six hours of sunshine provide the Planet's deserts with energy that no one can appropriate and that could provide all humanity with sufficient energy for one year. By making the best use of this resource, Europe, especially southern Europe, could ensure 15% of its energy by 2050... For regions South of the Mediterranean, this project opens up considerable prospects for access to clean inexhaustible energy, as well as development.

We can see that, in the Mediterranean more than elsewhere, we can do a great deal to improve our situation with respect to energy and our impact on the environment.

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All these concerns are also on my Government's agenda; I have set out very clear goals in this area: financial support for creating solar thermal facilities to replace fossil sources, new possibilities for purchasing electricity produced by solar energy, development of pilot infrastructures on public buildings, support for clean mobility and respect for very strict criteria for vehicles bought by the State, communities and public services.

Ladies and gentlemen, Dear friends,

In the history of humankind, every energy revolution has been accompanied by changes that are economic, social and geographic, but also philosophical and moral. The mutation we are undergoing today is no exception. Ladies and Gentlemen, we are today in the process of writing a new page in our history.

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Such a moment is necessarily difficult. I also believe it is exciting. In the words of the former US Vice President and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Al Gore: “The climate crisis also offers us (...) the opportunity to rise. (...) This crisis is not really about politics at all. It is a moral and spiritual challenge.”

Thank you.