

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

I would like to thank you for your presence to this Round Table on Philanthropy that I have great pleasure to host for the third consecutive year.

Such constancy proves our commitment to all those involved in this initiative from a practical, intellectual and benevolent point of view. We are gathered today to share, reflect and move forward together.

Philanthropy is more than ever at the heart of the questions of our time. Even if the economic crisis has sadly not yet abated, even if many of our contemporaries live with uncertainty, even if the general trend of our society tends towards individualism and self-preservation, our world is imbued with profound generosity.

This has been proved at every level, from the individual donations, sometimes modest, to the extremely significant donations made by few major benefactors.

Such generosity is evolving, both in form and purpose. The development of new technology has fostered the emergence of new forms of donations, while mobilisation around global issues, such as the environment, a cause with which I am well familiar, has strengthened.

It also demonstrates, I believe, a significant evolution with regard to the very nature of the crisis we are experiencing.

Contrary to previous crisis, this one is indeed global, not only financial or even economic.

It is a crisis that covers many aspects all at once: social, ecological, food, health and more broadly speaking, moral.

Our global civilization has become aware of its unity through the tragedies it must endure. And this is all the more distressing in that, although the crisis is global, the tools needed to address the situation are fragmented, contradictory and incomplete.

Consequently, donation is an obvious, instinctive and imperative answer. However it is inevitably an incomplete answer.

Although donation provides resources, it does not always provide the solution.

This is the reason behind our meeting today - to look beyond the mere act of donation, and to understand how it interacts with the key issue emanating from this world in crisis: the implementation of appropriate global governance.

Donation raises the question of the relationship between philanthropy and politics, the primary expression of public interest.

It raises the question of the sustainability of funding and the construction of long-term action. It raises the question of coordination between the various, possibly competing, initiatives. Finally, it raises the question of monitoring the effectiveness of action and the actual use made of the donated funds.

Although philanthropy helps us to care for the world and make it a better place, it also prompts us to question ourselves over a key issue: public interest. A new type of public interest, which is yet to be invented and brought to life by multiple means and at different levels.

But a public interest whereby everyone, I believe, will understand the imperative.

This type of public interest that needs to be, more than ever, the core value of our troubled world.

I experience this situation in my capacity as Head of State, confronted on a daily basis with the need to advance in a coordinated manner with our neighbours, allies and partners in a multilateral environment, often still incomplete.

I also see it as a non-governmental player, through my Foundation.

The essence of all my actions is always to reconcile the needs of some with the interests of others; to enable action to be projected further; to see despite everyday uncertainties, what determines the deep-rooted value and intrinsic unity of any action.

It is a difficult task, but more than ever it is a necessary task.

That is why I am pleased to be able to share this moment with you, to shed light together on these many questions and to allow us to continue to act, to move forward, to hope.

As the French philosopher Ernest Renan said "Life is only of value by devotion to what is true and good. It is this truth and this good that we are also pursuing today, by progressing thanks to philanthropy".

Thank you.