

Speech by Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy
At the Dinner on Global Health Governance
Quai d'Orsay, March 12, 2006

Mr. Minister,
Members of Parliament,
Ambassadors,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Friends,

I am very pleased to welcome you to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the colloquium on strengthening the partnership between the United States and Europe on global health governance, organized in conjunction with the Center for Strategic and International Studies. The stakes are important. Events remind us so every day. As a doctor and cabinet minister, I am aware how urgent the needs are and the central place health takes in development issues and the international political agenda.

As the secretary-general said, much has been done to develop new international partnership arrangements to promote health in the world, in particular in 2002 when the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria was founded. France, along with many other countries, provides staunch support to the Global fund, the G8 commitments on universal access to health care and, as you'll have noted, to innovative sources of development financing which are an indispensable complement to traditional official development assistance. All this goes in the right direction, but you will agree with me that it is not enough. I believe it is imperative to respond to three key questions in order to move to a global scale in fighting the three pandemics and developing our capacities to anticipate crises.

1 - How do we advance the concept of "global public assets" in regard to access to health in the world?

2 - How do we reconcile the "vertical approach" of programs financed by the main donors (Global Fund, PEPFAR) with the urgent need to structure health systems and mobilize human resources in countries?

3 - How do we give the sick in the developing countries access to the widest possible range of drugs they need at affordable prices or even in the context of free treatment?

While these questions are often included on the international agenda, it is difficult to come up with concrete answers. The existing tools do not always meet the needs. We have to show more imagination. Ten years ago, who would have bet on a global fund to fight the three pandemics in the form all our countries have been able to set up? I am convinced that your free discussions, enriched by the diversity of your experiences, will lead to concrete proposals to improve the

dialogue between Europe and the United States, and through this strengthened partnership, you will come up with elements of answers to these questions which I believe are essential./.