



## **Video Message from the President of the French Republic**

### **Summit of the Three Basins – Brazzaville, 28 October 2023**

President Sassou Nguesso, Denis,

Heads of State and Government,

Ministers,

Ambassadors,

Esteemed ladies and gentlemen,

I was honoured by your invitation to take part in the Summit of the Three Basins in Brazzaville.

Unfortunately I have not been able to attend because of international and national events, but you know how much of a priority the protection of tropical forests is for France. I therefore want to say a few words on this subject.

Less than 14% of the planet's surface holds 75% of irrecoverable carbon stocks and 91% of the ecosystems of vertebrate species. These carbon and biodiversity stocks, which are mostly concentrated in the world's three major forest basins, are treasures that humankind simply cannot do without.

The protection of these forests is therefore everybody's business.

At the Glasgow COP two years ago, we made a commitment: ending and reversing the process of deforestation by 2030. Today, everybody shares that commitment. But how should we proceed?

That is the question several of us asked in Libreville a few months ago, at the One Forest Summit in the heart of the Congo Basin. Our conclusion was clear: we cannot protect nature at the expense of populations. We reiterated that in Paris with more than 40 Heads of State and Government on 22 and 23 June. That is the first principle of the Paris Pact for People and the Planet, the "4P": nobody should have to choose between fighting poverty and fighting for the planet.

What we need therefore are just partnerships with forest countries which are home to the largest carbon and biodiversity stocks, and which also face major economic challenges.

I would like to commend the considerable progress that the major forest countries have made.

I have in mind the exemplary forest management policy of Gabon, which should be preserved at all costs. I have in mind President Sassou's personal commitment. I have in mind the impressive achievements of President Lula who, since the beginning of his new term, has reduced deforestation alerts in Brazil. I have in mind President Widodo: the rate of



disappearance in Indonesia has halved since 2015. I have in mind my friend Prime Minister Marape, and Papua New Guinea, with which we forged a historic agreement a few months ago.

What I now propose is that we go further, to create the conditions for a truly international partnership for the protection of the three basins.

It is an environmental partnership, but also an economic partnership. It is based on several simple principles, which are those of the Libreville Plan:

- The first is that the most vital carbon and biodiversity reserves, such as peat bogs, must receive high protection, as they are essential to the planet.
- The second is that the international community has a responsibility. We must remunerate this preservation. We cannot limit access to financing to countries that must reforest, and leave the countries that actively protect their forests without support.
- Thirdly, in addition to these vital reserves, a protected forest does not mean a forest closed to humans. It is a sustainably managed forest. There again, we need international cooperation, to ensure a worldwide bioeconomy can emerge, in which natural capital is both protected and can create added value locally.

That is the meaning of European action: instead of importing deforestation, we want to establish new sustainable forestry industries globally, in which we share, and will share even more in the future, their added value. We want to get away from a rent-based economy, which destroys forests and biodiversity, and enter into a bioeconomy.

I believe that this partnership on natural capital is one of the major priorities of the coming years if we want to stay on track with our climate and biodiversity objectives.

It is a “two-COP” agenda. France will participate fully.

In Libreville, we made a promise based on these principles to forge new, more equitable partnerships. That is what we are doing, with the support of all our partners. In six months, we launched a large-scale project with Papua New Guinea, and with Bangladesh in Asia, Congo Brazzaville, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ghana in Africa, and with Colombia and Brazil in Latin America.

We promised seed funding for countries that express this need, and this funding is now operational.

We promised to reform the carbon credit market, to better account for the value of biodiversity stores. An international taskforce was launched and we will submit the report at COP28.

On all these issues, France will be up to the task. Because we believe in the effectiveness of multilateralism to safeguard our common goods. But also because France itself is a forest country, on the mainland and in particular in the Amazon, with French Guiana, and it has everything to gain from these new partnerships.



So we will meet in Dubai, for COP28, to announce the progress made. We are also looking towards COP30, in Belem, in the heart of the Amazon. That COP should be the culmination of our work to build the foundations of a new economy, which places a focus on natural capital.

That is what I wanted to share with you. Thank you for this initiative, and good luck with all your work.

Thank you everyone for your attention.