

18 mars 1999 - Seul le prononcé fait foi

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# Déclaration à la presse de MM. Jacques Chirac, Président de la République et Olusegun Obasanjo, Président du Nigéria, sur l'opportunité de nouvelles relations économiques et culturelles entre la France et le Nigéria, Paris le 18 mars 1999.

M. le Président OBASANJO.- Before you ask your questions let me take this opportunity to thank the President for this wonderful opportunity to be received by him and to have the opportunity to also be able to go over issues of bilateral relations and issues that concern particularly our sub-region and our region of Africa. There is no doubt in my mind about the President's abiding interest in Africa, his very intimate knowledge of the situation in this part of the world which of course made our discussions very lucid and very comprehensive too.

I personally see this as a new beginning in the relationship between our two countries, particularly since we are substituting cooperation for what I call seeming competition of the past. And I have no doubt that this will go well for the relationship between our two countries and for the good of our two countries but as well also for the good of west-African sub-region and for Africa region. I believe that this beginning of a new relationship can be built upon as we move on in his presidency and in my presidency.

Thank you.

QUESTION.- Mr President, why did you choose Paris as the first stage of your European trip ?

M. le Président OBASANJO.- I guess one of those things, it's just happened and it happens very well.

QUESTION.- Monsieur le Président, est-ce que l'élection de Monsieur Obasanjo offre de nouvelles opportunités pour les relations entre la France et le Nigéria ?

LE PRESIDENT.- Oui, sans aucun doute. Nous avons été très heureux de l'élection du Président Obasanjo, et nous avons la claire volonté de développer nos relations qui sont déjà très bonnes sur le plan économique et qui vont se développer sur le plan politique et aussi sur le plan culturel. Le Nigéria est une terre de très vieille culture et de civilisation et nous voulons développer aussi nos relations sur le plan culturel.

QUESTION.- M. President, what do you think of M. Clinton's policy towards the African countries, about the economical situation ?

M. le Président OBASANJO.- The latest policy about debts forgiveness for Africa has particularly happened because those countries in Africa like Nigeria who are struggling, who are determined to make a success of democracy can only do so if the burden of debt is lifted from their shoulders. Thank you.\