



Ambassador's Activities

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Speech by *HE Bernard Emié*
Ambassador of France to the United Kingdom

G20 Conference on Climate Change

Résidence de France
London, 11th October 2011

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the last conference of our cycle. As this event concludes the series, let me first reiterate our heartfelt thanks to our partners.

At the Financial Times, Lionel Barber has expressed from the outset his interest in the project. His remarkable colleagues have given us invaluable support, as moderators, speakers and organizers. Without you, none of this would have been possible. Thank you.

I am also grateful to the LSE, which has allowed us today to have one of its star academics at the table, Professor Lord Stern. Let me also thank Chatham House, whose Director, Robin Niblett, has been supportive all along, and whose advice and contributions have been invaluable. Also, many thanks to the Institut Français and the Franco-British Council, which have provided critical resources when these have been lacking.

Hubert Védrine – a former French foreign minister – recently wrote that the war on terror had obscured the real revolution that was taking place in world affairs - that is, the rise of emerging powers. This rise and its consequences were the main thread of our four previous conferences.

We have focused in particular on how two key forums, the G8 and the G20, have adapted to the new world order and tried to ensure, against the odds, a sound future for multilateralism and international cooperation.

This was illustrated in specific policy areas, from financial regulation and the international monetary system to Internet development and commodity price volatility. We have also highlighted the consequences on global governance of this broad power shift.

London is a global stage, with world-class media, institutions and individuals. Your objections, suggestions, and encouragement throughout the cycle have been fed back to the French G8/G20 Presidency in Paris. They have been invaluable to us and, I believe, have informed policy.

With Cannes only weeks away, officials are now feverishly working on the summit's final communiqué. They are also grappling with current events. The G8 in Deauville was dominated by the Arab Spring and Fukushima; the economic crisis and the sovereign debt issue may well partly steal the show in Cannes.

Today we will try to step back from all this turmoil and look to the future. We will address climate change, an issue for ourselves and future generations, an issue so important that we are glad to conclude the cycle with it. I do not guarantee that you will leave this room beaming with confidence and hope, but at least we will have tried our best.

The Durban conference is approaching and national positions remain still far apart, even after the seven days negotiation session in Panama last week. Yesterday, the EU Environment Council adopted the conclusions defining its position for Durban, where we hope that the EU will continue to play a leading role. The US Congress is divided and China faces a leadership renewal in March 2013. So far, the G8 has played a limited role on climate change. Until recently, the G20 had played none, chiefly because of China's opposition. Only in late April did G20 sherpas agree that the group would address climate finance.

Is it enough? What is the state of play of negotiations? Is progress possible in Durban? What role should the G20, whose membership includes the major stakeholders, play? Does the current economic crisis change the picture? Can we afford to wait at all? ...and if we had to, what advice should we give the UK's G8 presidency in 2013?

To answer these questions, we are privileged today to have a distinguished panel from a range of professional backgrounds: academia, NGOs, business and negotiation. Let me thank Lord Stern, whose towering work is known to all, Tom Delay, a leading practitioner who heads an original organization, the Carbon Trust, David Nussbaum, who leads one of the main advocacy groups, the Worldwide Fund for Nature UK, and Paul Watkinson, head of the French climate negotiation team.

Before handing over to Lionel, a few final words of appreciation to our sponsors. Throughout the cycle, Eurostar has kindly transported our Parisian visitors in the greenest possible way. Moët Hennessy UK and La Cave à Fromage have brought you the magnificent products of the French countryside – all things that may disappear when Reims has a sub-Saharan climate and the Auvergne breeds camels! So another big “thank you” to our sponsors for their invaluable support.

With that, ladies and gentlemen, I wish you a very pleasant evening, and I hope you enjoy the discussion./.