

## **Delegation from the French Republic Position Paper for the General Assembly**

The topics before the United Nations (UN) General Assembly (GA) are: Nuclear Disarmament and International Security; Ensuring Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All; and Combating Human Trafficking. The French Republic is determined to intensify its efforts on all the issues mentioned above and expresses hope to find extensive solutions through collaborative action.

### **I. Nuclear Disarmament and International Security**

As a longstanding member of the *North Atlantic Treaty Organization* (NATO), a permanent member of the UN Security Council (SC), and a Nuclear Weapons State (NWS) as defined by the *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons* (NPT), the French Republic recognizes that it has a special responsibility for maintaining and strengthening international peace and security. In an effort to work towards a safer world and forestall threats to peace, all while respecting the right of legitimate self-defense, we remain among the world's top suppliers of peaceful nuclear facilities and expertise. Constantly alert to any changes to the international security situation, the French Republic adheres to the idea that nuclear disarmament must be done in the context of general and complete disarmament.

As a committed State Party to the NPT, the French Republic has taken significant steps toward nuclear disarmament since the end of the Cold War, by not only halving its nuclear arsenal, but showing complete transparency regarding its extent and composition. We were the first NWS to cease the production of fissile material in 1996, and our nuclear weapons policy adheres to the principle of "strict sufficiency", keeping the nuclear arsenal at the lowest possible level in accordance with a strategic context. Our actions are carried out in accordance with the *UN Charter* and the natural right to individual or collective self-defense which it consecrates. In 2011, we became one of the first countries to criminalize proliferation financing by passing the national *Act on Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Means of Delivery*. Through the adoption of the 2013 *White Paper on Defense and National Security*, we have declared our deterrence strategy as strictly defensive. The French Republic reaffirms this commitment internationally by supporting SC resolution 984, and by ratifying multiple treaty protocols establishing Nuclear Weapons Free Zones around the world, declaring not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-NWS and State Parties to the NPT. The French Republic is voicing its support of the 1996 *Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty* (CTBT) and stands behind GA resolution 72/70, urging necessary State Parties to ratify the treaty for it to enter into force immediately. Recalling GA resolution 65/65, we are convinced of the urgent need to negotiate a verifiable *Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty* (FMCT) and have thus formally submitted a FMCT draft to the *Conference on Disarmament* (CD) in 2015.

The French Republic is urging all Member States (MS) to refrain from any further testing of nuclear weapons, and to ratify the CTBT as soon as possible. Furthermore, building on our previously submitted FMCT draft, we are advocating for an international verification mechanism for fissile material stockpiles, carried out under consideration of the standards established in the *International Atomic Energy Agency's* (IAEA) *Additional Protocol on Comprehensive Safeguards*. Keeping in mind the limited capacities of the CD and the IAEA, the inspection should be limited to existing stockpiles. Emphasizing the *French Support Programme for IAEA Safeguards*, we are willing and able to provide expertise and technical assistance in order to facilitate inspection and verification mechanisms, and we invite other MS to do so as well. Aiming to improve the base for negotiations on this topic within the CD, we are also advocating for the resumption of meetings of the group of Governmental Experts to the FMCT, originally established in GA resolution 67/53.

### **II. Ensuring Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All**

As one of the first industrialized countries to ratify the *Paris Agreement*, the French Republic is working hard to accelerate clean energy innovation in a European framework. In the process of transitioning our economy to become low-carbon and energy efficient, we are nonetheless faced with over 5,000 energy-vulnerable households in metropolitan France. The energy supply in some of our overseas territory, notably on islands not interconnected to mainland electricity such as Réunion or Martinique, remains an issue yet to be resolved. Convinced that implementing the *Agenda 2030* calls for international solidarity and collective action, the French Republic has been at the forefront of promoting and investing in international measures to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

Determined to be an active contributor to the implementation of *Sustainable Development Goal* (SDG) Number 7, the French Republic adopted the national *Energy Transition for Green Growth Act* in 2015, setting targets to increase the share of renewable energy sources in final energy consumption from 15% in 2014 to 32% in 2030. A wide range of public policies have been put in place to encourage energy savings and efficiency in the French energy sector. In 2015, we were honored to host and chair the 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of Parties (COP21), which resulted in the *Paris Agreement*, promoting global energy efficiency and the use of more environmentally friendly energy sources. Highlighting GA resolution

72/244, the French Republic is emphasizing the importance of access to sustainable energy for poverty eradication and sees a strong connection between SDG 7 and SDG 1. Within the French Presidency of the COP21, we thus promoted an *Action Agenda*, generating major international cooperative initiatives on energy which we helped launch and continue to be an active part of. Such initiatives include the *Africa Renewable Energy Initiative*, the *Global Geothermal Alliance*, or the *Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Lighthouse Initiative*, dedicated to raise financing and rapidly deploy renewable energy to SIDS. To help implement projects, we founded the *French Agency for Development*, through which we are effectively collaborating with local governments around the globe to promote decentralized off-grid solutions and contribute technical expertise in support of rural electrification. Through such projects, the French Republic has contributed over three billion euros to the development of renewable energies on the African continent between 2016 and 2020. Determined to show transparency, we submitted a voluntary review to the *High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development* in 2016. Emphasizing the concerns expressed in GA resolution 69/225, we are convinced that the successful implementation of SDG 7 requires increased collective action.

Acknowledging the immense lack of collaborative financing and the inherent responsibility as a highly industrialized country, the French Republic invites other MS, especially developed countries, to strive for increased collaboration, notably with Least Developed Countries, in order to promote electrification in the most vulnerable areas. This includes sharing knowledge, technology and financial means through existing platforms and funds by accompanying concrete projects, such as the *Africa Electrification Initiative (AEI)*. As we are convinced that setting the right incentives will promote the use of more environmentally friendly energy sources, promote energy efficiency, encourage innovation, and empower local communities, MS should especially promote public-private partnerships, enabling local businesses to provide off-grid solutions for rural electrification themselves.

### **III. Combating Human Trafficking**

Human trafficking (HT) is one of the most lucrative forms of trafficking in the world. Every year, an estimated 2,5 million people worldwide are recruited and exploited by sex traffickers, most of them being women and children. The French Republic strongly condemns HT as one of the most serious violations of human rights and human dignity and makes it a priority to fight against this especially cruel form of organized crime. As a destination country for Europe-bound HT, mostly of migrants from West Africa and from the Balkan region, the French Republic is highly affected and sees an urgent need to increase efforts to combat this inhumane practice on a global level.

Emphasizing GA resolution 72/185, the French Republic notes with concern that HT is one of the most critical challenges faced by the international community today and reaffirms the need for cooperation between all MS. We thus welcome the *UN Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons* and foster an active partnership with the *UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)* and the European Union, which enabled us to launch the *Global Action to Prevent and Address Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants (GLO.ACT)*. Reaffirming that the work of the UNODC is indispensable to successfully combat HT and protect victims, the French Republic is a leading contributor to the UNODC's *Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons*. We have also been actively working to universalize and effectively implement the *Additional Protocol to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*, which to this day is the only legally binding instrument for combatting HT. On a regional level, the French Republic is actively cooperating with a "Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings" (GRETA), created by the Council of Europe, working to improve the legal prosecution of perpetrators. In 2013, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs set up a strategy to combat HT in West Africa, launching a *Priority Solidarity Fund* to support the fight against the trafficking of human beings in the Gulf of Guinea States. The French *Inter-ministerial Mission of the Protection of Women Against Violence and the Fight Against Human Trafficking (MIPROF)* aims to provide greater protection for trafficking victims. MIPROF oversees two national action plans against HT, both adopted between 2014 and 2019 with the main priorities of protecting victims, dismantling networks linked to trafficking, and implementing effective national policies to combat HT.

Recognizing the disproportionate vulnerability of marginalized groups to fall victim to HT, the French Republic sees an urgent need to raise awareness in vulnerable communities, notably among migrants and refugees. Key to preventing potential victims of traffickers from being tricked or pressured into forced labor or sexual exploitation are enhanced reporting and educational measures on all levels of society, including civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), businesses, media, governments and UN-entities. To achieve this, we strongly recommend the GA to create a group of experts, modeled after GRETA in its composition, but with a precise focus on prevention and the empowerment of marginalized groups through means of education and reporting on the threats of HT. The group should foster close cooperation with CSOs, NGOs and civil society. Furthermore, we encourage existing mechanisms such as GLO.ACT to strengthen their media presence and enhance their focus on informational campaigns in order to reach victims and potential victims of HT more effectively.