

**Address of Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of Algeria at the International Congress of Allergology and Clinical Immunology, Algiers, 13-15 June 2007**

Mr. President,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and privilege for my country to host this International Congress of Asthma, Allergy and Clinical Immunology in Algiers. We are pleased to welcome the many renowned speakers from Africa and Europe.

The organizing of this international conference has enabled Algeria to affirm its commitment to participating in the collective effort towards the fight against all different types of disease and in particular the allergic and chronic respiratory diseases that present a major public health problem.

These new afflictions are striking our countries hard and present a challenge for our health systems. Despite all efforts, we are unable to keep up with the increasing rate of population growth. It is also proving difficult to meet the health needs of a population which is becoming increasingly demanding.

I would like to greet the Directors of the World Health Organization who have travelled from Geneva and who give so much time and effort in the promotion of this fight against disease as well as the protection of respiratory health.

I would like to confirm that Algeria will, as in the past, continue to support this work to fight against respiratory diseases which represents a health priority for the whole of the African Continent. I am delighted to recall that during the Fifty-third World Health Assembly, priority was given to the prevention and control of allergic and chronic respiratory diseases.

The fight against tobacco smoking has given rise to important action plans. Algeria has become a member of a major project against tobacco smoking. We hope that the other African countries will agree with this convention, will undertake appropriate education steps and implement legislative measures in order to participate in the fight against tobacco smoking.

Our countries are so frequently passive victims of the aggressive marketing strategies adopted by multinational tobacco companies that do not hesitate in using economic pressure and smuggling procedures to distribute merchandise to young people, sportsmen and women as well as to the more fragile sectors within our population. We need to resist these pressures as an individual country but also we need to help implement concerted actions within the Continent of Africa. The population of each country requires the establishment of a veritable national anti tobacco programme.

We must also realize that atmospheric pollution is beginning to invade our towns and industrial suburbs. We strongly confirm that Africa has absolutely no desire to become a "bin" for industrial or atomic waste from rich countries.

Furthermore, on a national level, the reduction of atmospheric pollution must become one of our priorities in the development of our territory, also in the choice of elimination techniques for waste products and industrial sites as well as in the choice of industrial technologies with decreased pollution factors.

We must also survey the development of technology and of raw materials in order to keep up with the legislation which aims to prevent and control occupational respiratory diseases. This should be carried out in close collaboration with qualified and independent experts as well as with employee representatives.

In the fight against all diseases in general and against allergic and chronic respiratory diseases in particular, we call upon the rulers, the health professionals and society as a whole. We are striving to find the best solutions to the given problems. We are working with open minds and in close collaboration with health services, health professionals and patient associations, and we are considering the human and material resources available on a long term basis in each country.

We have to first of all rely on our own efforts and means and join the international partnership with a perspective of developing national human resources.

I am convinced that this international Congress is going to provide a new landmark in the scientific cooperation between different Southern and Northern Mediterranean countries thanks to the exchange of knowledge and expertise within our respective countries.

I wish for total success in your work and thank you all very much for your attention.