

Dear Bertrand Piccard,
Dear André Borschberg,
Colonel Hervé de Saint-Exupéry,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear friends,
And of course, dear children,

It's an honor and a pleasure to be here this morning, beside this unique aircraft, the Solar Impulse, with its two pilots, Bertrand Piccard and André Borschberg who have just accomplished a remarkable feat. On board this dragonfly-like solar-powered aircraft, you flew, moved from one country to another, crossed an ocean... And now you've crossed an entire continent. I cannot adequately express the admiration we all have for your project. I imagine that 86 years ago the U.S. Consul in Paris, at Le Bourget airport, must have felt the same when he addressed Charles Lindberg and the Spirit of Saint Louis who had just crossed the Atlantic. This is an outstanding achievement on your part, and since it combines at the same time, adventure, intelligence and scientific challenges, it's like coming face to face with our childhood heroes. I want to applaud you.

I want to applaud you because you've changed the view that we've had of the world until now. We now know that solar energy can propel an aircraft across the world, both during the day and the night, without fuel or pollution. You've turned a dream into reality and, even more importantly, you've brought our most prestigious companies along with you – the European partners that came together to design the Solar Impulse. As you know, France has a very strong tradition in aeronautics, from Clément Ader who achieved the first powered flight in 1890, to the achievements of Aéropostale and the success of Airbus and Dassault Aviation. Our companies contributed to the design of this aircraft that was engineered to stand up to the harsh conditions associated with high altitude, while taking into consideration the complex requirements for strength and lightness. The pilots had a dream; this dream was presented to you, and to dozens of researchers, companies, providing you with an opportunity to excel, to invent new technology and to develop new materials.

The pioneers of aviation wanted to know how to fly in order to conquer the world, to control it. Today, it's in order to protect it that you ask yourself if it's possible to fly in a different way. And you do so for the children that are here, with the Antoine de Saint-Exupéry Youth

Foundation. (To the children): Take a good look at this aircraft. I don't know if you'll be able to fly in it one day, but it embodies the technological hopes of tomorrow.

And spend some time talking to these pilots, because they are the successors of the man that we all admire - Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the poet and aviator who had the courage to pursue his goals.

By flying for Aéropostale, he didn't just discover the world; he learned about it and thought about it. Lost in the desert in Libya, faced with the folly of men in time of war, he fought for freedom by using weapons, as well as words. And like Bertrand Piccard and André Borschberg, he knew that dreams are not illusions, that, on the contrary, they form the basis of our creativity. That they can push us to strive harder.

Dear Bertrand Piccard,

Dear André Borschberg,

Of all the continents, you chose to fly across the United States of America. It is a beautiful symbol, because it is here, in New York, that the little prince was born. It is here that Antoine de Saint Exupéry wrote his masterpiece, the story of the young boy from another planet he would sketch on the tablecloths of cafés around Central Park. The Little Prince was published in New York in 1943, during the war. We will be celebrating its 70th anniversary this year.

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry remains a role model for our children, and symbolizes the ties between France and the United States. After the 1940 armistice, he returned to this land of freedom to better serve his country. He used all of his persuasion skills to convince our American friends to enter the war. And when they did, he fought by their side, for the love of France, justice and freedom; but also because he never lost faith in the future. Antoine de Saint Exupéry never surrendered. His sense of duty caused him to push himself to the limit. He was one of those men who could sacrifice their life for a cause.

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's work offers us true environmental thinking. In *Wind, Sand and Stars*, he wrote "We believe that men are free. We do not see the rope that ties them to the well, like an umbilical cord, to the earth's depths." During the totalitarian regimes, the little prince took care of his planet by pulling up the baobab trees and sweeping out the volcanoes,

because they can wake up at anytime, even though they seem to be sleeping. Today, in a world profoundly affected by climate change, poets imagine planes powered by sunlight, and they make us look toward the future, with our eyes and our hearts.

Thank you for sharing your dream with us.