

**CLOSING SPEECH BY BERNARD BLED  
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**WORLD BUSINESS DISTRICTS SUMMIT FOR SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT**

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If you will allow me, I am going to sum up the work of the past two days that we have spent together and that have been so rich. I am encouraged to tell you how much we, as the organisers, have been pleased by the presence of several cities and business districts from all five continents. This encourages us to carry on with our initiative .

In fact, we have fallen in the fatal trap of a changing world that appears to be a handicap race in which we are all forced to compete . And, accordingly, in my view, this means that all other events have to take second place .

The competition in which enterprises, business districts, cities and States are involved is being played out on an international scale . This competitive world is doubtless indispensable, but it has its limits, quite simply those of existence and survival . This should provide us with a certain philosophy and ability to distance ourselves which has to go far beyond problems of competition, while not excluding them.

Now we have an absolute obligation to pool our expertise, our knowledge, our will and our resources to shelter ourselves from this future fatality.

We have addressed these various aspects during these past two days by swapping the experience gained by cities and business districts from very different corners of the world, and notably from China whose representatives have played a very active role throughout this Summit. And I would like us to continue working together by overcoming the desire to compete with one another .

During these two days, we have addressed a certain number of issues that I am going to recap. Generally, we have developed a proper appreciation of the material aspects, the share of the environment and finally the place of the human being in this environment as, for me this is by far the most important aspect .

Our first day kicked off with two major plenary meetings where we debated the place of the business district in the city. During this plenary session, we defined a new framework for the business district integrated in the city, or being an integral part of the new city. Our conclusion: we need to reposition living at the heart of the business district or position the new business district in the city.

The overarching role of the architect enabled us to debate the presence of the architect within the city, a subject close to my heart . The President of the Republic talked about this at length on the occasion of the inauguration of the Cité de l'Architecture in Paris just recently. The architect is indispensable for the city. Not everything is architecture but nothing can be achieved without an architect.

The architect is the one capable of coordinating the building itself with the quality of life and the human being inside .

During the themed sessions, exchanges focused on two key notions for business districts. For resources management and security it has been interesting to observe that, irrespective of everyone's culture or level of economic development, we all agree on the need to make business districts place of safety. Crisis prevention and management are indispensable tools for making business district, as places for strategic decision-making, safe for both visitors and residents.

Tomorrow's buildings have to be adaptable and upgradeable. Yesterday's technology is being replaced by today's ecology.

Finally, we addressed two other interesting problems: How to combine work and leisure in business districts – tomorrow 70% of the planet's population will find itself in major urban centres. Business districts must be as attractive as possible and the most pleasant places to live.

The problem of international assessment systems was debated at length. Should we define in detail a certain number of international standards? To achieve equality between the major business districts, the rules of the game must be the same. However, as of today, no rules exist. An international vision on standards is indispensable. Accordingly, we have to review and arbitrate between BREEAM, LEEDS, HQE and RIE. Perhaps we need to set up a high international authority to take charge of this problem.

It is now up to us to conclude our work by launching new initiatives for the future. We have expressed the view that everyone benefits from other people's experience, naturally while respecting differing attitudes, cultures and levels of development. We are prisoners of time. We have to create the movement and move forward together. I suggest that you join together in an international movement. In fact, among the plethora of international organisations, none of them bring together business districts or cities in which business districts are located. Therefore, today I am proposing to you that we create an international structure regrouping all business districts that wish to become members. You will shortly receive a letter containing full details of the proposal.

We will hold a meeting before the summer, during June, organised by EPAD, here at La Défense, and we will work together to mutually define a more elaborate structure with resources, objectives and operating procedures.

This structure will be tasked with making progress in carefully defined areas as that we have laid out in a document that we have called the La Défense Declaration.

Here are ten subjects that basically constitute the principles of sustainable development and to which we could subscribe in order to progress with this structure which naturally I invite you to join as soon as you wish.

This would be a fitting conclusion to our debates today and the work of this Summit that I trust will have a long lasting impact on our future.

Thank you ladies,  
Thank you gentlemen.