

IVORY COAST

PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY ASSESSES PROSPECTS FOR 1980

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[New Year address to the nation by Ivory Coast President Felix Houphouet-Boigny--live]

[Excerpts] Fellow countrymen, here we are again at the traditional rendezvous to give our wishes for the new year. It is a traditional rendezvous, but one which is not a mere routine for me, for you know the affection I have for you. In this festive period, I would have liked to wish you nothing but a bright future. But you already know, as I explained in my speech of 7 December, the problems that are delaying our development, the dangers which threaten it, and those which threaten our freedom: The energy crisis, the monetary crisis, rising violence, stagnation and gloominess in the industrialized countries, the persistence of the arms race, famine and misery in the Third World, institutionalized or spontaneous racism. These things are always there to remind us of how [word indistinct] the human condition is on our planet, what slight progress there has been toward achieving a better understanding between nations and between individuals, and making us fully aware of the immeasurable needs of hundreds and millions of our contemporaries for whom living means barely surviving.

How can we sleep and neglect so much suffering? Even if the Ivory Coast can justly boast of having done all in its power for peace and solidarity, she still forms part of an international community that has, up till now, proven to be incapable of overcoming the problems of peaceful coexistence and a harmonious and balanced development. The Ivory Coast cannot remain indifferent to the general repercussions of the situation, even if it is spared the most detestable aspects of it.

More than ever, the new year will require lucidity, objectivity and calm--lucidity to study the problems we know and the new ones that are likely to crop up; objectivity to understand the efforts that will be made to solve them and not to insist on going beyond what is rational; and calm to remain deaf to rumors and false news that is most likely to be considered true but which always happens to be false and sterile.

To be aware of the difficulties is the first necessary step in arming oneself to overcome them. It is in our power to overcome them. On my part, I will work with all my strength. But you must understand that the success within our reach cannot come from me alone. Each Ivoirian, from all walks of life, must feel involved in the struggle. Everyone must work harder and more effectively for himself, which is human, but also for others, for the Ivorian nation.

Fellow countrymen, this collective and permanent effort, which surpasses all selfish interests and which I appeal for, will be fully expressed in the seventh congress of the PDCI-RDA [Democratic Party of the Ivory Coast-African Democratic Rally], which will also be the prelude to the presidential and legislative elections and will mark the end of the year. I hope the elections will be prepared and carried out in the greatest dignity. Our people in power must never forget that they work for the people and they are accountable to them.

Dear brothers and sisters of the Ivory Coast, dear friends of the Ivory Coast who partake in our joy and our sorrow, let us work together in unity so that the year 1980 will be a year of success and prosperity for each one of us and for the nation as a whole. Let us help ourselves so that God will help us. I wish you a Happy New Year.