

ANDRE DANG'S KEYNOTE ADDRESS TO THE SPECIAL CELEBRATION OF THE NORTH PLANT'S FIRST NICKEL'S MELTING

In 1966, General de Gaulle has expressed the need for the construction of a plant in the North, that would earmark the end of SLN's industrial monopoly. Several private and public investors have tried to achieve this vision, but all of them have defeated, failing to have access to sufficient mineral resources. Although, New Caledonia possesses 25% of global nickel mining resource, the historical economic player SLN, monopolized ¾ of the New Caledonia's conceded mining areas.

In the early 90s, no one believed any further in the Northern project!
Initially the idea was generous in itself, but then was disillusionment, even suspicion or insults ...

For that reason, you can probably imagine all my joy today, my happiness and emotion to attend this ceremony, which celebrates the first metal casting of Koniambo nickel's ore, a massif which has deeply affected my life.

This massif would have witnessed my birth! It is the location where my parents worked for SLN, engaged under contract as Chan Dang, extracting at the peak with shovel and pickaxe, sorting ore bare hands, carrying it on their own backs. My father wore the registration number 10 206 and my mother A 649. She gave me birth there, while my father lost his own life at his working place, as I was 17 months old.

We have come a long way since then!

The bad memories and the dark future that Koniambo Mountain has reserved me disappeared to give way to accomplishment of a duty. The Koniambo massif has witnessed the darkest periods of my life as well as its brightest.

60 years later, I was negotiating and signing the Bercy Protocol retrieving this deposit to SMSP's assets.

For years, I have waited for this moment! My feeling is similar to that of a father attending his child's birth. Yes, because this plant, I carried it at arm's length, sometimes au creux des reins, for it to be brought to life, to become one day a genuine development tool for New Caledonia's economic rebalancing.

This plant is one of my biggest struggles in my life!

With only 4% of New Caledonia's conceded mining areas covers by Koniambo massif, SMSP and its Xstrata Nickel's partner constructed the world greatest pyro metallurgical nickel's plant, for more than a century's operational duration, with an annual capacity production of 60,000 tons of nickel.

However what could we learn from this great human and industrial adventure? Surely, no one should be afraid to see things in big, provided that one fights for a righteous case, integrated into a sustainable development approach. We must be persistent and be ready to serve a legitimate ambition for the country's sake, for New Caledonia's benefits.

Intuition and fairness allowed me to overcome difficulties.

Intuition is the link between intelligence and instinct that has allowed me to make the most of a mineral resource where others have deserted.

Fairness is this deep willingness to go beyond injustice and to desire sharing the wealth with those less fortunate and in needs. We must not forget that, right from the beginning, the project has been designed as an essential tool for rebalancing and peace processes.

The Northern Province has developed itself rapidly thanks to the construction of this plant. Our youth are on the way to emancipation and self-fulfillment. As the career prospects, offered by the Northern Plant allow them to have faith in future.

Through will, everything is possible! The fulfillment of the individual is a guarantee of peace and I see that our youth are confident. This is what pleases me most!

But our mission does not stop here, since we must continue to work to secure the future generations' well-being. It is our wish to ensure the sustainability of the mining wealth for future generations, by stopping the non-friendly mining practices in contrast to sustainable and mastered development.

I wish to raise awareness among policy makers regarding the fact that they have to be cautious and be careful in the management of this mineral resource, ought to be upgraded for New Caledonia's benefits instead of being squandered for the benefit of foreign companies, exporting ore without returned value added on the sale of metal!

That resource is not inexhaustible, while our dedication to this country is visceral. Therefore, we must prepare ourselves for the future and the post-nickel period.

Maximizing the mining wealth will allow the nickel sector to be an economic lever for others sectors' economic development. We must be aware of this reality and generate maximum revenue today to ensure the economic development sustainability, during and after the nickel era. The magnificent plant in front of us is a real example.

I wish to thank a number of individuals without whom this project would have remained a dream.

This was, above all, a political project! Without the strong support of FLNKS, USTKE and Unions, past and present SOFINOR and SMSP's administrators, as well as our entire staff who has been mobilized, without the trust and active participation of the President of the Northern Province, without Alain Christnacht's assistance, this project would not have come into being.

This project was also a technical and economic challenge! Without our Xstrata Nickel partner's funding and industrial expertise, the Northern Plant could have never been built. Without the KNS management, staff and subcontractors, we would have never coped with this great challenge. May you receive my respect and gratitude for achieving these goals!

This project was important for France and New Caledonia! May I thank the State's Representative, the President of the Northern Provincial Assembly Paul Néaoutyine, the Member of Parliament Philippe Gomes, the New Caledonian Government President, Harold Martin, the former UC President, Bernard Lepeu, the customary authorities present here Jean Poitchily, Henri Fuange, and the great district high chiefs, to all, men and women, young and old, who have been mobilized themselves to support SMSP into carrying out this project.

This project was a real human adventure! Thank you Tom Purksley, Sandy Allen, Philippe Essig, Christian Colin, Peter Fiedman, Frederic Wapler, Dominique Lille, Aaron Regent, Oyvind Hushovd, Derek Job, Derreck Pannell, Bruce Dumville, Michel Rioux, Denis Lachance, Peter Hancock, all my colleagues who

have followed me in this arduous journey, fraught with pitfalls. Thank you Ian Pearce and Shaun Usmar for having given everything to this project and have supervising the entire construction of the steel cathedral.

Finally, may I express gratitude with deep emotion and sincere thoughts to all those, who like Chan Dang, have worked under inhumane conditions on New Caledonian land mines, and to those who have struggled for this project, but are no longer here today, Raphaël and Charlie Pidjot, Cézelin Tchoeaoua and Kalépo Wabete, great Chief Andrew Thien Hiouen and SMSP people who have perished in the crash of helicopter: Jean-Pierre Lapous, Jean-Pierre Gastaldi, Regis Vivier, Jean-Marc Dalmasso. They carried out an ambition that each of you must now fulfill with pride, at the country level, so that the mining resource would finally be considered as a common heritage and that its good management becomes a unifying factor for all Caledonians.