

Speech by Mr Nicolas Boël
Chairman of the Board of Directors
at the General Meeting of May 8, 2011

Dear Family, dear Friends,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I take the floor at the end of this *General Meeting* that marks an important turning in the history of Solvay.

Today we say goodbye to Aloïs Michielsens and Christian Jourquin and we thank them: together, they have devoted more than 84 years of their lives to Solvay. Such resilience is extremely rare in these days and reflects the quality of the links that unite us, as colleagues and friends.

Aloïs and Christian, you have both marked the history of Solvay.

First of all by your careers but in particular by the fundamental decisions you have taken and which have helped carry the company forward. The list is obviously too long to mention all of them. In Aloïs's case I will limit myself to recalling the exit from polyethylene and polypropylene and the purchase of BP's

specialty polymers and of Ausimont to position Solvay as the undisputed leader in Specialty Polymers.

For Christian I would mention the sale of Pharma and the ensuing acquisition of Rhodia. The integration of Rhodia has given birth to a new ensemble that is now one of the world's top 10 chemical companies.

In addition to these structural changes, you have shaped the Group and helped it evolve, bringing it closer to its markets and customers and fighting to develop a spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship.

The acquisition of Rhodia is also part of this evolution.

Alois and Christian, on behalf of the Board, the founding families and of all the shareholders of the Group, thank you for all your efforts over all these years.

I also want to welcome Jean-Pierre Clamadieu, whom you elected as director a few moments ago and who will lead the company when Christian Jourquin will leave on the 11th of May. I look forward to working with him to strengthen the Group and want to ensure him already of my full support. He possesses, I know, the qualities required to keep on repositioning our Group.

As for myself, I want to thank you for the confidence you have are showing me in asking me to assume the responsibilities of Chairman of the Board. Rest assured that I will do everything to be worthy of that trust.

There are many different emotions gathering in me today. First a deep humility in front of the task ahead of me. Then a deep and unfaltering attachment to this family company which has managed to cross a century and a half, developing and becoming stronger all the time, without ever abandoning the intrinsic values of its founders. Finally, a deep respect for all those who have contributed to this development.

But I would be untruthful in failing to mention a certain lucidity, because the succession is a heavy one to carry and brings with it major challenges.

The ever faster changing global environment will require us to be more alert and vigilant.

At the same time, I have an unwavering confidence in Solvay and in its ability to evolve to expand and consolidate its position as undisputed leader, while retaining and enhancing its values of performance, humanism and progress. These are the values and culture on which we found our perennity. The integration of Rhodia will enable us to further anchor these values by bringing its recognized agility to strengthen the Group's solidity.

I am confident that, with the support of the Board, with Jean-Pierre and the entire management structure, all our employees and all our shareholders, together we will overcome the obstacles.

I again thank Alois and Christian who have made this evolution possible and, on behalf of the Board, I propose that you bestow on them the titles of Honorary Chairman of the Board and Honorary Chairman of the Executive Committee respectively. I propose that you show your agreement to this with your applause. On their behalf, I thank you.

Thank you your confidence and your support.