

Discours du Recteur Vassalli
à l'occasion du lancement du *Global Challenges Forum*
au Château de Coppet
mardi 16 novembre 2010 (dès 18h45)

Horaire:

18h45 début du "Historical Tour of the Château de Coppet"

19h30 "Welcoming Remarks by Professor Jean-Dominique Vassalli, Rector, University of Geneva"

Cadre: cette manifestation s'inscrit dans le cadre de la "Letter of Accord" du 22 septembre 2009 signée entre le Recteur et le Président Daniel OLIVER de la U.S. Naval Postgraduate School

Your excellencies, dear Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to be here at the Château de Coppet to greet you at the University of Geneva

I am especially pleased to thank our host for this evening's dinner and the **Chairman of the UN Global Alliance on ICT and Development, Mr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh.**

During the cocktail period, you have learned of the Chateau's history and relevance to your program.

Let me tell you that the University has cooperated closely with the Château de Coppet which hosted many colloquia and seminars, especially under the leadership of our **European Institute**

Last year, a group of experts gathered together in our city to explore whether the emerging shared global risks to peace and prosperity were being adequately addressed and concluded that a special "forum of forums" might help better link ongoing efforts.

As they gathered on **21 September 2009, the UN International Day of Peace**, and commenced discussions in the **Salle de l'Alabama** of the Geneva City Hall, the birthplace of international humanitarian law and historic venue for **Red Cross** movement leading to the **Geneva conventions**.

Many of you participated in that event. **As part of the proceedings, I was pleased to sign a cooperation agreement with the US Naval Postgraduate School President, Admiral Daniel Oliver, to join as a partner in exploring a variety of joint research and educational possibilities.**

In joining with the University of Geneva's Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences, you have also engaged a faculty from whose

ranks other notable initiatives have come before you. All of you know or have heard of Professor Klaus Schwab, founder of the World Economic Forum. Well, he started teaching "Business Strategy" in the early 1970s, while he was developing the WEF.

We understand that among your ideals is to create a public partnership complement that might also be a membership organization, but not only for Universities, Think-tanks, International governmental Organizations and Non-governmental organizations.

The aim would be to research and develop inter-disciplinary academic research and novel global public policy approaches to address emerging shared global risks at the nexus of globalization and security.

We wish you success and believe you have “come to the right place.”

It is worth noting that Harvard University Professor Joseph Nye, who coined the famous distinction between “hard power” of the military and the “soft power” of security collaboration, has called Geneva “the soft power capital of the world.” I couldn’t agree more.

We are pleased to host you in that Geneva.

This endeavor is not the only one in which we have partnered with the US Naval Postgraduate School

I am pleased that **Dr. Leonard Ferrari, the Provost**, has been a strong backer and partner in the development of the **Geneva Forum on Social Change**, a joint endeavor to explore media, film, and new communications strategies as part of our **International Organizations Masters in Business Administration (IOMBA) program**.

The Geneva Forum on Social Change and it commenced last year in celebration of the **University of Geneva's 450th Anniversary** and also as part of the **US Naval Postgraduate School's 100th Anniversary**.

The keynote speaker, Nobel Peace Prize winner Reverend **Desmond Tutu** joined with over 1,000 members of the international community of Geneva to help foster a spirit of peace and security cooperation.

We are pleased to see that these energies are alive and well and gathering steam in the **establishment the Global Challenges Forum**, and as suggested by the Co-Chairman Mr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh to serve as a **“Forum of Forums.”**

We wish you all success and want to thank you for inviting the University of Geneva to be a partner in the endeavor.