

QUOTES ON INTERNATIONAL GENEVA

Achim Steiner

*Executive Director of
the United Nations
Environment Programme*
UNEP

“ Many of our partners are here and this is where the world’s expertise on environment and the wider sustainability agenda often and regularly gathers. Here is where international initiatives frequently start and are nurtured. Geneva is one of the hubs where global programs can be often most effectively managed. ”

Andrew Clapham

*Director,
Geneva Academy of
International Humanitarian
Law and Human Rights
(2006-2013)*

“ It is important for IDMC to be in Geneva because of the access to key decision makers, and also to key discussions and debates that take place here. There is a critical mass of humanitarian and development actors in Geneva. The ability to have quick access to many partners in various fields increases our impact and ability to influence. ”

Alfredo Zamudio

*Director,
Internal Displacement
Monitoring Centre*
IDMC

“ Geneva is reinforcing its position as the capital of human rights. This is thanks to the Human Rights Council but also because human rights treaty bodies are meeting here more often. There is now less of the split between New York and Geneva. In addition, with the fact that there are more and more Masters degrees, trainings and academic work on human rights in Geneva, it is becoming clearer that it is the place to be for human rights. ”

“ GCSP’s location in the heart of International Geneva is a valuable asset for the success of our work. Geneva’s wealth of expertise is a rich resource for GCSP’s executive education programmes. GCSP also capitalises on the dynamics in Geneva to provide a recognised platform for dialogue on topical issues related to building and maintaining peace, security and stability in the world. GCSP strives to serve talented professionals from various sectors, and Geneva – as a microcosm of the global community – provides the best possible setting for this purpose. ”

“ It is here in Geneva that the international community comes together to seek concrete solutions to the major problems of the world today. ”

Betty E. King

*Former Ambassador,
U.S. Permanent Representative
to the United Nations
in Geneva*

Christian Dussey

*Director,
Geneva Centre for
Security Policy*
GCSP

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The spirit of International Geneva is not only a catchword. It stands for Switzerland's commitment to advance international cooperation and dialogue – and we make every effort to ensure that the dynamics of the Geneva spirit are real.

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Didier Burkhalter

*Federal councillor
Head of
the Federal Department of
Foreign Affairs,
Swiss Confederation*

Laura E. Kennedy

*Former US Ambassador
to the Conference
on Disarmament
(2010-2013)*

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Beyond the historical reasons that are behind the location of our headquarters in Geneva, the city has become, over the years, the world capital of humanitarian affairs. It brings together a network of International Organizations, nongovernmental organizations and diplomatic representations offering an extraordinary platform for humanitarian diplomacy.

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Geneva is home to an impressive array of national and international academic institutions, think tanks, foundations and other non-governmental bodies that constitute a “critical mass” to sustain the chain reaction of intellectual and policy work on disarmament here and around the globe. Together we are pursuing that vision of a world without nuclear weapons.

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Jakob Kellenberger

*Former President of
the International Committee of
the Red Cross*

ICRC

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev

*Former Director-General,
United Nations
Office at Geneva*

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Based in Switzerland since 1961, IUCN belongs to the large family of International Organizations headquartered in Geneva. IUCN works closely with many of these. This fosters linkages between different fields of action: between environmental and humanitarian issues, as well as between trade and sustainable development. IUCN also benefits from the generous support of Switzerland, a State Member of IUCN, to the implementation of our programme of work. On a practical level, our location at the heart of Europe with easy access to the rest of the world enables us to be a truly global environmental network.

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Geneva has unique convening power. The multilateral machinery available and the variety of actors present enable Geneva to bring all the relevant partners together. This city is the chosen home of several non-governmental organizations working in the field of prevention and mediation, such as the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Interpeace – among many others. The rich civil society presence is particularly valuable, combined with the research capacity that we often label “Intellectual Geneva”.

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Julia Marton-Lefèvre

*Former Director-General
of the International Union for
Conservation of Nature*

IUCN

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Geneva does not only regulate globalization, it humanizes it. In Geneva, one deals with substantive issues affecting the daily lives of people. For multilateral diplomacy, it is a centre as important as New York.”

Jean-Baptiste Mattéi
Former Ambassador and Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations in Geneva

Mariangela Zappia
Former Ambassador & Head of the European Union Delegation to the UN and other International Organizations in Geneva

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Geneva, the world's capital of international diplomacy, has become a location of choice to address issues related to weather, climate and the environment. Governments and various players in the international community can meet easily in Geneva. They appreciate the city's tradition of hospitality and the quality of its infrastructure - including an excellent local public transportation network and international airport, which makes it easier for our delegates to travel. Free access to the international conference centre ICCG is also an important feature.”

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One of EU's priorities is to engage into an efficient multilateralism to serve the peoples. Thanks to the presence of the United Nations, specialized agencies, NGOs, and think tanks, Geneva is one of the main centres for multilateral governance, together with New York. Being present in Geneva makes us able to pursue this priority.”

Michel Jarraud
Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization
WMO

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Geneva brings together in a canton the size of a pocket handkerchief the whole range of organizations necessary to foster an effective dialogue on sustainable development today.”

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I am happy to be in Geneva for the second time, to be able to participate in this prestigious forum, the International Labour Conference of the ILO. It is wonderful to see that we, cooks, domestic workers or nannies, can give our opinion, testify our sufferings and speak out in a room where government officials and employers are listening. In Geneva, one assists to a true global dialogue.”

Luis Alfonso de Alba
Ambassador of Mexico in Austria & Permanent Representative of Mexico to the International Organizations based in Vienna

Maria Ernestina Ochoa Luján
Vice President, The International Domestic Workers' Network
IDWN

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Geneva is a city where the living conditions and hospitality provided by both the population and authorities of Geneva - at all levels - are exemplary and greatly facilitate the work and daily life of WHO employees.

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Micheline Calmy-Rey

President of the Swiss Confederation, Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (2003-2011)

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Geneva provides the world with a centre of global governance, a network among networks. It's a way for the Canton of Geneva and for our country to contribute actively to the finding of solutions to global issues that affect all humankind.

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Dr. Margaret Chan

Director-General of the World Health Organization
WHO

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Geneva is to humanitarian diplomacy what New York is to multilateral diplomacy: a hub for an infinite combination of connections between States, NGOs, UN agencies and experts on humanitarian affairs. It is only natural that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) should have its headquarters here for, in addition to its historical links with the “city of Calvin”, it can benefit from the density of this unique network. Nevertheless, for this network to be continuously nurtured and maintained, there must exist a framework of conditions that affords Geneva a clear advantage in the globalized and increasingly competitive world in which humanitarian organizations now operate.

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The WTO advocates for a progressive and regulated trade liberalization. To achieve this mission, we are working with other organizations or UN specialized agencies, such as the International Labour Organization, UNCTAD, the World Intellectual Property Organization, the International Telecommunication Union, or the World Health Organization. It is therefore crucial that the WTO is and remains based in Geneva, which is an important crossroad for exchanges, creating a network effect.

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Peter Maurer

President, International Committee of the Red Cross

Pascal Lamy

Former Director-General of the World Trade Organization
WTO

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Geneva is an epicenter for leadership. This is where some of the world's most visionary ideas are hatched and launched, with the potential to change humanity's course. Given the global challenges we want to tackle at Global Footprint Network, this is exactly where we need to be.

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Susan Burns

Co-Founder and Senior Vice president, Global Footprint Network

“ This spirit of Geneva, still intermittent, local, and displayed by but a few persons, is a spirit which comprises a desire for liberty and universality, a confidence in man, provided he submit to rules, an inexhaustible curiosity as to ideas and people, a compassion for all miseries combined with an urge to invent, to ameliorate, to administer with method; this spirit, I say, escaping suddenly from its natural representatives, grows gigantic, adopts new significance even at the risk of weakening itself, and becomes the ideal of innumerable foreigners of all races who, scattered over the world, are often ignorant of Geneva’s past history. It ceases thus to be the exclusive attribute of the Genevans, and is invoked by most nations on earth. The very name, ‘Geneva’, comes thus to transcend any local or particular significance, and is transformed by a strange experience into a symbol. ”

Robert de Traz
Essay on the Spirit of Geneva, 1929

Rolf Heuer
Former Director-General of the European Organization for Nuclear Research
CERN

“ Geneva has a long history of hosting International Organizations, which is part of the reason why CERN is here. CERN has signed agreements with the ITU, WIPO and the WMO. At first sight, there may not seem to be much common ground between CERN and, say, the World Meteorological Organization, but scratch the surface, and you’ll soon find a common thread. All of these organizations have a vocation to stimulate technological innovation, and together we’re stronger. ”

“ Geneva is by far the world capital of governance. Its influence on issues as diverse as human rights, health, international trade, and also peace, is recognized by all. This is also why we have based our headquarters there. As an international peacebuilding organization with programs in more than 20 fragile states, we have a strategic partnership with the United Nations and we associate frequently with its European headquarters. In general, the extremely dense fabric of International Organizations, of NGOs as well as multinational companies and the financial sector, is an important asset for the successful implementation of our mission. ”

Scott M. Weber
Director-General, Interpeace