

Geneva, Maison de la Paix  
2 September 2024

**Opening Speech of the Chair of the Forum, Globethics Executive  
director, Professor Fadi Daou**

Excellency, Mr. Martin Chungong, Secretary General of the Inter-  
Parliamentary Union,

Excellence, Madame Nathalie Fontanet, President of the State Council of  
Republic and Canton of Geneva,

Excellency Ambassador Tovar Da Silva Nunes, Permanent Representative  
of Brazil, incumbent G20 Presidency,

Excellency Ambassador Julien Thöni, Permanent representative of  
Switzerland to the conference on disarmament,

Excellencies representatives of governments, intergovernmental  
organisations, private sector, civil society, and academic institutions,

Dear Partners and speakers,

Dear President, international board members and team of Globethics,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Globethics was born in 2004, in the midst of the Internet and social media  
revolution, inspired by the first World Summit on the Information Society  
(WSIS) in Geneva 2003, addressing the role of governments and all  
stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development. Therefore, the DNA  
of Globethics is to combine innovation and development, and to ensure that

both realities are thought, designed, and implemented, in an ethical and responsible way, leading for a more just, inclusive, and sustainable world.

For this purpose, the Global Ethics Forum (GEF) was launched in 2009, as a global, multisectoral and multistakeholder, solution-focused platform for dialogue, networking, and engagement, convening policymakers, senior experts, and practitioners from governments, multilateral, nongovernmental, private and civil society sectors, with educational and faith-based organizations, among others.

The Forum is an open framework for values-driven inspiration, exchange, reflection, networking, and action, coping with the current global agenda and related ethical challenges and solutions. Through in-depth discussions, shared experiences, case studies, and evidence-based documentation and policy recommendations, the Global Ethics Forum generates innovative ideas, groundbreaking initiatives, and impactful coalitions to put ethical leadership at the heart of the global and sectoral governance.

20 years after the creation of Globethics, we are witnessing a new turning point in the humankind history. Some have called this moment the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution. We may be at the beginning of a new civilizational era that is fundamentally changing the way we live, work, and relate to one another.

But there are more than the changes introduced by Artificial intelligence and related unprecedented technological advancements, that put our world today in a pivotal moment. The environmental and security challenges constitute more than ever a real sword of Damocles over our necks.

When I asked my colleagues what I shall say in my opening speech, I was told that we are suffering from the over-politicisation and polarisation (I would add militarisation) of everything, and we should tackle this. We need the courage that is essential to ethical leadership to say the truth, while staying inclusive and open to the diversity of opinions, cultures, and experiences. Indeed, at a time of celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Geneva conventions, the dramatic deterioration of the global stability and human security, is shocking and alarming. We have the ethical obligation to say the truth and stay able to contribute to peace.

The cost that civilians are paying is at a dangerous scale, in Israel-Gaza, Ukraine-Russia, Sudan, and in so many other places across the world. We have been recently reminded at the World Humanitarian Day that already 209 UN humanitarian employees were killed in Gaza, which represents the highest number of UN victims in a conflict, since the creation of the United Nations. When the boundaries set by international law to safeguard lives in times of conflict and wars are being so dangerously denigrated, it means that we are heading in a wrong and dangerous direction. However, there is still courage to face this dangerous impunity, which I see emerging within the global public opinion, especially through youth mobilisation, but also on the institutional level, when the judges of the International Court of Justice assume their role of guardians of the international law and human sanity.

The latest draft of the Pact for the Future, which will be endorsed and launched in New York, in three weeks, by the UN Summit of the Future, states that: “We are at a time of profound global transformation. We are confronted by rising catastrophic and existential risks, many caused by the choices we make. Fellow human beings are enduring terrible suffering. If we do not change course, we risk tipping into a future of persistent crisis and breakdown.” (2)

Yet, with this alarming call, the Pact ensures that this can also be “a moment of hope and opportunity. Global transformation is a chance for renewal and progress grounded in our common humanity. Advances in knowledge, science, technology, and innovation could deliver a breakthrough to a better and more sustainable future for all. The choice is ours” (3).

Indeed, we are gathered here, to ensure that this choice – that is also ours and does not only belong to the head of states – won’t be the lowest common denominator between competing shortsighted political agendas, but an ambitious, inclusive, and impactful roadmap for a better future for all.

Unfortunately, I shall say that there are zero mentions in the whole Pact for the future to ethics or values. We only read about ethical usage of technology, and the word value is used in its economic meaning. We tried and we are still trying to change this, if not in the text, at least in the mindset of decisionmakers.

The humanity is hunger not only for food and peace, but also for hope, the hope for a brighter future that we owe to the young and future generations. Only ethical leadership can guide us towards hope.

When we thought to organise the Forum this year under the title of: *Ethical leadership for a re-envisioned future*, we decided to launch with it an Award for Ethical Leadership; because only leaders whose thoughts, decisions, and acts are ethically rooted, can be the lighthouses we need to find the road for the future. However, after reflection, we transformed this initiative into a “Youth Leadership Award”, convinced that the ethical leadership we need, capable of making us dream and mobilize for a brighter future are the young people themselves. The Declaration on Future Generations, also to be adopted by the Summit of the Future, recognizes children and youth as agents of change (8). We will meet, hear, and celebrate three of them present among us, as the finalists for the first edition of this Award.

Hence, we want this Forum to be a safe space for intergenerational, intercultural, and intersectoral, engagement for solution-oriented thought leadership. It unfolds, during three days of promising discussions and creative recommendations, under three main thematic areas: Inclusive Peace and development, responsible governance, and trustworthy AI.

The collective thinking of 78 Speakers and 32 knowledge partners from 34 countries and 6 continents gathered here, with more than 1000 onsite and online participants can't be but groundbreaking engagement dynamic, searching for creative answers to the following challenging questions:

- How can ethical and spiritual leaders contribute to reconciliation and lives' saving?
- How can we revive ethics in international relations?
- What kind of new paradigm is needed in Philanthropy for sustainable development and peace?
- Is the ESG hype cycle over? And how the private sector can contribute to a sustainable and inclusive future?
- How to understand Ethics and Compliance, navigate their respective specificities, and integrate their application for better responsible governance?

- Can the fourth industrial revolution serve human dignity and unity?
- How can the higher education institutions move from fighting back to guiding the responsible innovation generated by AI?
- How can we foster Intergenerational Dialogue and Action on the Ethics of AI?

The discussions will be framed by an opening dialogue on Ethical leadership and a closing discussion on the 2050 visions. The Forum will also include the launch of many publications and policy reports, such as the *Global Survey on Business Ethics*, and the Report on: *Navigating the future of higher education with AI*.

After the intensive discussions, the Forum will conclude with a festive moment, celebrating together the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Globethics and the presidency handover.

Finally, I would like to say an immense gratitude to those who believed in this initiative and accepted to join us in diverse forms. Thank you, Martin, for being our Guest speaker for this year, bringing through you the voice of the world parliaments and the wisdom of Africa, the continent of hope. Thanks also to the Swiss and Brazilian Ambassadors, as well as to the President of the Canton of Geneva, and to all the speakers and moderators. Special thanks to the Musicians, Sogol and Nikolaos, whose performance is part of our expression of hope through the beauty and symphonic harmony of our different cultures. I would also like to thank our 32 knowledge partners (you see their logos on the screen), our sponsors: Fondation Pierre et Laura Zurcher, the city of Grand-Saconnex, and CAGI – Centre d'accueil de la Genève internationale, and our Strategic partners who substantially contributed to financing the Forum: our longstanding partner Linsi Foundation, and QingSong Health company.

My speech comes to an end, but before leaving the stage, I want to give you 2 Rendez-vous: the first, on Wednesday afternoon to present the conclusions of the Forum, which also will be published in a policy report that you will receive; and secondly, I give you another rendez-vous next year, for the following edition of the Global Ethics Forum, to continue our journey

together, because as the African proverb says: if you want to go fast, go alone; but if you want to go far, go together; and we want to go far!

Thank you

**Annex: List of the Knowledge Partners**

IPU, inter-parliamentary Union

Kofi Anan Foundation

ICAN, The International Campaign to Abolish nuclear weapons, Nobel Peace Prize laureate

Initiatives of change – Caux Foundation

Faith for Rights, at the office of the high commissioner for human rights

ICRS, Indonesian consortium for religious studies

Act Alliance

Arigatou international

Amani Communities Africa

PaRD, international partnership on religion and sustainable development

Graduate Institute

Summit of Minds and the Monthly Barometer

UNESCO-MOST BRIDGES Coalition

The Club of Rome

The Institute for Ethics in Artificial Intelligence at the Technical University of Munich

Chair on AI and Democracy, at the School of Transnational Governance, of the European University Institute

Institute of AI international governance at Tsinghua University

ICHEI UNESCO International Centre for Higher Education Innovation, Shenzhen

International association for education in Ethics

Online learning consortium

The Ethics Institute, South Africa

Ethics Institute at Baylor University, USA

CADEBI, centre for strategic studies in Bioethics, Mexico

Unesco chair in Bioethics and human rights

Consulus

CEEMAN, The International Association for Management Development in Dynamic Societies

The Centre for international business ethics, Beijing

Argentinian association for ethics and compliance

Faculty of Business and law at Saint Joseph university, Macau

Geneva Chamber of Commerce, Industry and services

Centre for social justice and ethics at The Catholic University of Eastern Africa