

**Introductory Remarks by Mr. Olivier Coutau**  
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Republic and State of Geneva

**GENEVA POLICY OUTLOOK LAUNCH**  
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Monsieur le Conseiller aux Etats,  
Madame la Directrice,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear friends,

Wars, pandemics, weapons of mass destruction, cyberattacks, technological disruption, crisis, climate crisis, institutional crisis, multiple crisis, existential threats, polarization, decline, urgency, radical uncertainty... We have heard these words more and more loudly during the last few years.

These words are violent. They could lead to paralysis and inaction. But this is not an option, of course. We need and can, without falling into angelism, give room to a more optimistic and constructive discourse.

Here, in Geneva, we do have assets. We do not start from scratch. We have, this year, in 2023, a 160-year history. We can be proud of the achievements. We can be proud of our contribution to a rules-based world order. We can be proud of the millions of lives saved. We have also demonstrated that we can adapt.

I am thinking about all the new institutions that we have hosted during the last 20 years, in the health sector in particular, but not only. In a more recent past, we have also shown that, in spite of a complex and tense environment, we can participate in impactful solutions. The Black Sea Grain Initiative is a good example in this respect.

In addition, there is an appetite to join this collective effort. The best indicator of it is the number of people working for international Geneva. If we add up the staff of the permanent missions, international organizations and NGOs, we are close to 36'000.

The figure has never been so high. This is quite remarkable when you take into consideration COVID-19 and the budgetary situation for many donors.

We cannot deny however that our world faces unprecedented challenges. The need for a better understanding, for clarity, for a compass to navigate uncharted waters, is pressing. Hence the Geneva Policy Outlook initiative.

GPO tells us what is going on, what is ahead, what works and how. I see it as a practical guide for the 36'000 people making international Geneva. And, beyond, for all those involved in international cooperation activities.

When Achim Wennmann and the Institute approached us with the idea a few months ago, we immediately said yes. I would like also to warmly thank all the people who have made today's outcome possible.

I start with the group of senior civil servants, diplomats and academics who participated in the series of discussions that provided a general background to the Geneva Policy Outlook. They generously and candidly shared their experience, knowledge and views. The exchanges were rich and enlightening. Achim's skills to moderate them are not unrelated to it.

Thank you also to the small and dynamic team at the Institute, which made all the meetings, discussions and today's publication possible.

Thank you to all the people who wrote a piece for the Outlook.

And finally, a special thank you to you, Achim, for launching the initiative and having been able to transform it in a concrete result, in record-breaking times.

The Swiss Confederation, the State of Geneva and the City of Geneva, as well as the Fondation pour Genève, support Geneva Policy Outlook. They see it as a contribution to the international Geneva of the future. They wish it every success, and long live.

Thank you for your attention.

Now I give the floor to Achim Wennmann, Director for Strategic Partnerships, who will present in more detail the GPO.