



DISCOURS DE MADAME NATHALIE FONTANET CONSEILLERE D'ÉTAT

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« Reimagining the Third Sector –
Making Space for a Fourth Sector »,
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Seul le texte prononcé fait foi

*Madame la Rectrice,
Monsieur l'Ambassadeur,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is an honour to speak to you here in Davos — a place where different sectors meet because global challenges are too complex for any one actor to solve alone.

For over a century, Geneva has been at the forefront of innovation in international cooperation. In the late 19th century, Henry Dunant's vision led to the establishment International Committee of the Red Cross, transforming the world's response to human suffering. Today, that spirit continues in the everyday actions of thousands of experts.

Geneva's ecosystem is remarkable. In a canton of just half a million people, 42 international organisations, nearly 500 NGOs, 2 300 multinational companies, and more than 1 300 private foundations — collectively managing over CHF 25 billion in assets — coexist in a concentration of global actors found in few places anywhere in the world. This density of expertise, networks, and resources creates fertile ground for the emergence of a strong fourth sector: mission-driven organisations that combine social purpose with sustainable models alongside public and civil society efforts.

In our community, the Fondation pour l'adaptation de la Genève internationale (FAGI) exemplifies this: a partnership between government and private philanthropy helping Geneva-based international organisations and NGOs adapt quickly to change.

Private actors also play a central role. The Building Bridges initiative brings together banks, investors, multinationals, and international organisations to channel capital toward measurable social and environmental impact, showing how Geneva's financial sector drives systemic change.

It is this mix — heritage and pragmatism, diplomacy and innovation — that makes Geneva a place to test new models of collaboration. This is also the reason why the Canton of Geneva recently launched a new strategy to support the philanthropic system and improve framework conditions.

We are keen on creating an environment where ideas can be piloted, partnerships forged, and solutions scaled for global impact.

Let us see this moment not as a challenge to multilateralism, but as an opportunity to renew it — with the fourth sector as a partner in shaping a fairer, more resilient future.

I wish you a very productive lunch.

Thank you.