

# “CREATING A SHARED FUTURE IN A FRACTURED WORLD”

## WEF 2018



**M**ari Carmen and I attended the 48th Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum. For us it is a great opportunity to learn, to meet people and to participate in meetings that hold extremely interesting discussions. It is a truly unique experience that we enjoy sharing with others.

The event itself consists of a multitude of over 3,000 participants, including 70 heads of state, plus over 400 meetings to choose from. In the words of Mexican Global Shaper Jesús Cepeda, “Davos makes your head spin.” Here are some of my notes and reflections on this meeting:

### The Central Theme of the Meeting

This Meeting’s central theme was “Creating a Shared Future in a Fractured World.”

The world is fractured by ideological, social and economic divisions. Although these differences have always existed, in ancient times the world was not as interconnected as it is now, and therefore, these fractures entail greater risks.

Since these ideological, social and economic disparities will continue to exist, the question is: how do we coexist with them while at the same time advancing toward a constructive agenda? We must answer this question with specific strategies for each different challenge (climate change, protectionism, pensions, inequality, food insecurity, urban planning, etc.) Fortunately, Davos is not only about what must be resolved, but also about making commitments and proposing strategies for change.

They include, for example, Partnership Against Corruption, Closing Gender Gap, Taking on fake news joint venture, Closing the Skills Gap and IT (Information Technology) skills Industry Initiative, among many others.



Al Gore; Vice-President of the United States (1993-2001).

## Cautious positivism

The prevailing mood during the World Economic Forum Meeting was one of cautious positivism. On one hand, in general, the global economy is doing well. Its expected growth for 2018 is 3.9 percent. However, there are still certain latent geopolitical, environmental and economic risks. For example, there is growing concern over the United States' enormous national debt. This situation cannot be sustained on a long term basis and could turn out to be an extremely hazardous venture.

By the same token, climate change continues to be a huge risk that constituted a major topic of discussion in Davos. In sum, there was a general consensus on the need for a true political change in all nations regarding the implementation of mechanisms that generate results and prevent global warming from increasing.



## Human dignity in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution



Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson is a Ghanaian cardinal.

Cardinal Turkson read a letter from Pope Francis extolling the inclusion of the Church's perspective during this meeting. His message centered on the importance of laying the foundations for restoring human dignity, particularly for the most underprivileged. He reminded us that blind ambition, whatever the cost, exacerbates social fragmentation. Furthermore, he exhorted the economic models, inspired by the desire to advance in the creation of the common good, to focus on human worth and dignity above all else and attain a truly ethical and sustainable development. He stressed that technology must be at the service of humanity rather than the other way around. He concluded by saying that it is our moral

responsibility to create development models whose conditions will dignify human beings and promote social justice instead of poverty and inequality.

Through the years I have come to realize that globalization and technology are absolutely unstoppable. They are extremely powerful forces. The vast majority of prime ministers and heads of state who attended Davos came out in favor of globalization and trade liberalization.

One characteristic of the Fourth Industrial Revolution is the extraordinary speed with which these changes have evolved. I wonder if we are riding the crest of the wave of this

change or if we are being thrashed around by its sheer power? Are we fighting back or are we using it for our own personal benefit and that of our organizations and governments?



Ethical by Design: Embedding Values in Technology

In the face of this accelerated change, one thing is certain: we need to be flexible. Our values should continue to be our principal, unwavering concern. However, everything else calls for dynamism and flexibility.

Mónica Flores, President of Manpower Group Foundation, who participated with us in a panel on our reflections regarding Davos, pointed out, "In the past, as chief executives, we gave the orders. However, now, if we want to attract and retain our most promising talent, we must inspire them." She also added that we need to adapt our organizations' policies, which I believe did not refer to today's reality, but rather to the accelerated pace of the changes we are experiencing. Because today's processes follow one path, it is quite probable that in five or ten years, they will be completely different.

**What role do we play in these extremely challenging times?**

The world takes its political, social and economic course, and although there are factors that surpass our scope of authority, we are fully aware that we have the responsibility to become those inspiring leaders that Monica described. What role do we play in these extremely challenging times? The answer depends on our convictions, on where we want to go and how we wish to transcend.

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