



## **Vigne des Nations 2009**

### **Address by Mr Robert Cramer**

*State Councillor of the Republic and canton of Geneva  
in charge of the Department of the Territory*

Friday 5 June 2009, at the Signal de Bernex

On the occasion of the consecration ceremony of the 2008 vintage, dedicated to the IPCC, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

Dear Mr Stocker, co-chairman of working group 1 of the IPCC,

Dear Mrs and Mr General Secretaries and General Directors of the International Organizations in Geneva,

Excellencies,

Dear Madam and Messrs Members of Parliament,

Dear Mayor and Administrative Councillors of Bernex,

Dear Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to express my pleasure in welcoming you today, on behalf of the State Council of the Republic and canton of Geneva, to the magnificent hillside of Lully, on the occasion of the ceremony of thinning out the leaves of the "Vigne des Nations". My pleasure is all the greater since the 2008 vintage is dedicated to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the IPCC, presided over by Mr Rajendra Pachauri and represented today by Mr Thomas Stocker, co-chairman of group 1 of the IPCC.

Since the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Organization, in 1995, it is the tradition to honour an international organization by dedicating to it one of the vines from the domain of the Republic and canton of Geneva. This allows us to welcome the members of the international community to the heart of our beautiful countryside. This tradition also allows the Geneva government to pay homage to the international organizations, by making clear to them our recognition of their eminent contributions to the Geneva community.

It will soon be forty years since the Republic and canton of Geneva benefitted from a gift from Mr Louis-Frédéric Eckert, Citizen of the commune of Bernex. We are here in a vineyard of 6 hectares particularly well situated on the hillside of Lully. On this land, the State viticulture station has the task of carrying out oenological research and the application of methods that are exemplary, particularly concerning the protection of the environment, for the whole profession. Geneva wines have experienced a considerable resurgence in terms of quality and the numerous vines cultivated on the hillsides of this canton produce exceptional wines, whose qualities are regularly singled out in national and international contests.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is the 15<sup>th</sup> organization to be honoured in the Vigne des Nations. The IPCC is part of the "Geneva Environment Network", hosted by the Regional Office of the United Nations Environment Programme.

Traditional capital of peace and human rights, with close to 232 missions or diplomatic delegations representing 162 States, Geneva is also at the centre of the largest "green network" on the planet. Composed of more than 75 intergovernmental institutions, non-governmental organizations and academic institutes, this network constitutes a real pole of environmental excellence. International Geneva of the Environment is thus an integral part of International Geneva.

Brought to the attention of the public through its reports, which each time constitute a reference that it is no longer possible to ignore, the work of the IPCC enables us better to understand the scientific foundations of the risks linked to climate change of human origin. While a veritable mobilization of societies and policy makers on climate change has finally begun at the global level, allow me to point out that the First World Climate Conference took place under the auspices of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), in 1979, in Geneva. Some years later, the WMO and the United Nations Environment Programme - UNEP – launched, again in Geneva, this tremendous initiative – the IPCC – which in 2007 had the honour of receiving the Nobel Peace Prize.

It was also in Geneva that the Second World Climate Conference, in 1990, set out the bases of the United Nations outline convention on climate changes, from which the Kyoto Protocol resulted. This year, Geneva will have the great privilege of hosting, on the 31st of August, the Third World Climate Conference. And we are especially honoured by the presence today, in Bernex, of the members of the Executive Council of the WMO, currently in session. On behalf of the Government, I am pleased to wish you a very cordial welcome to Geneva.

Today - World Environment Day - it is especially meaningful that this ceremony is placed under the sign of our commitment to the fight against global warming. As far as the reduction of the effect of greenhouse gas emissions is concerned, Switzerland has made the Kyoto objectives its own. At the local level, the Republic and canton of Geneva has adopted the principles of the "2000 watts society without nuclear energy", that aims notably to divide its annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by five. Moreover, the State of Geneva has planned a "Carbon Balance Sheet" covering the whole of its activities. In this context, I am delighted with the initiative of the UNEP in associating the canton of Geneva in the establishment of an energy balance sheet of UNO buildings in Geneva, within the framework of its "climate neutral UN", a programme which concerns every UNO facility throughout the world. In the field of innovating techniques, allow me to mention "Lake Geneva Nations", a pilot project that uses the water of Lake Geneva as a thermal regulator, allowing companies and international organizations which benefit from it to considerably reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

A dynamic is being launched today. The combined efforts of Governments, NGOs and the general public are starting to bear fruit. Indeed, in 2007, a net reduction in greenhouse gas emissions was recorded in Switzerland (51.3 million tons in total, that is -1.9 million tons compared to 2006).

This reduction is in part linked to economic factors, notably favourable meteorological conditions and a rise in the price of oil. But two thirds of the decrease in fuel consumption derives from other factors, in particular increased recourse to alternative energies: wood, the sun and geothermics. This appreciable reduction in

greenhouse gas emissions also demonstrates that it is possible to consume less fossil fuel resources, without sacrificing our comfort.

Today's meeting is an opportunity to recall that, for Governments, the priorities are to preserve economic efficiency and social solidarity and to cultivate the ecological responsibility of each and every one of us. The values of the international community that inspire us are based on solidarity. The willingness to co-exist in order to maintain the cohesion of our societies, and to guarantee the conditions of their durability, is indispensable. It represents the strongest base on which to build the future together.

I thank you. I now invite Mr. Thomas Stocker, co-chairman of group 1 of the IPCC, to take the floor.

The spoken text is authentic.