

Ladies and Gentlemen, Colleagues and Friends,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the Global Forum 2006 and to open this 15<sup>th</sup> edition of the Global Forum / Shaping the future which is convening for the very first time in my hometown Paris. As Victor Hugo said, "To breathe the air of Paris preserves the soul." Celebrating the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Global Forum in my hometown together with so many old friends is definitely a particular pleasure for me.

I would like to express my sincerest thanks to the City of Paris for hosting this year's Global Forum and allowing us to convene in this beautiful building that has been the scene of so many historical events. Probably all of you know Paris as the "City of Light" – but do you know that Paris is also the prime example of a "Digitally Enlightened City"? You certainly will know it after these two days of the Global Forum!

I also would like to express my very special thanks to the sponsors of the Global Forum 2006 - not only for having made this event possible with their valuable support but also for bringing with them the spirit partnership and cooperation that continues to make the Global Forum a unique networking event. My special thanks go to:

*[Include: List of sponsors and supporting organisations – either by alphabetical order or by importance]*

Digital convergence is finally happening and it is worth to dedicate this Global Forum to such a "hot" topic. We have some extraordinary panels ...

*[Include: Summary of the sessions]*

I am sure that it will be an interesting and valuable meeting and I am looking forward to two days of great talks and fascinating people.

*[Announcements related to the organisation of the GF, e.g. sessions, lunches, gala dinner etc]*