



2nd Retreat of the “Friends of Monterrey” Group Mexico City

Welcome Remarks by Ambassador Michael Gerber (SWI)

Mexico City, 23 April 2016

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Colleagues

What a great pleasure it is to be here with all of you in Mexico! I would like to particularly thank the Mexican organizers for hosting us and for the great work they have done in putting together this event – muchisimas gracias! I would also like to thank our fellow co-organizers from all regions of the world for working so hard these past days and weeks to make sure this retreat is a success. It is a tremendous delight to see that we have representation here from all key actors in the FfD process and that we have a good balance between the different groups of the negotiations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
We are in year two of the implementation of the SDGs and its accompanying implementation framework, the AAAA. This means that the honeymoon is over and we need to make sure that we stick with what we committed in Addis Ababa two years ago. This is particularly important given that current political and economic news aren't always very good, meaning that those of us who believe in a better future for all have to fight even harder to make sure the resources for sustainable development are there, and that they are used wisely.

As we will discuss in these coming days, the report of the IATF shows that progress is on the way. Despite headwinds, the global economy is doing ok and prospects point to slight improvements; many countries, especially those that lag furthest behind, are making important progress generating domestic resources; the private sector has stepped up its effort to contribute in a meaningful way to sustainable

development; and the international community is decisively tackling such key issues as illicit financial flows, including the important topic of returning stolen assets.

Together with our Mexican friends, Switzerland has been instrumental in shaping the follow-up and review of the AAAA and in creating the forum on financing for development follow-up under the auspices of the ECOSOC. We are more convinced than ever that this forum constitutes an important piece of the discussion on how to finance the SDGs. When I look around the room here I can see many of the “founding fathers and mothers” who negotiated the structure of the forum and I am sure that they all agree with me in that the idea that was born back in the very late hours of the negotiations in New York and Addis was to have an evidence-based, substantive discussion around the key issues of the implementation of the AAAA – it was not the idea then, nor should it be now, to repeat the Addis negotiations each year in the spring in New York. That would be a tremendous waste of resources and I sincerely hope that this retreat will help us get some of the controversial issues out of the way so we can focus on the substance.

Last year’s forum showed the spirit of the AAAA – for example in the inclusive discussion with other stakeholders from academia, civil society, the private sector and the Bretton Woods Institutions which we had on Day One. The other days of the inaugural forum, however, were somewhat disappointing as most delegations were outside the room, negotiating the outcome document instead of participating in the substantive discussions. I urge all of us to make sure that this year the outcome document is finalized before the forum, so we can use the space to discuss the substance of the IATF report.

In short, let’s get to work! Let’s use this opportunity provided by our Mexican colleagues to prepare the FfD Forum in a manner so we can have the substantial discussions mandated in the AAAA.

We have no time to lose! As I said in the beginning, it is now more important than ever that we show the world that we can pull together and live up to the promises we made in New York and Addis.

I look forward to a very productive and stimulating retreat! Thank you!