



Reception for the former Secretary-General of the UN Kofi Annan in Muraltengut

Welcome speech by City Councillor
Kathrin Martelli

Dear guest of honour, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan
Dear guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

It's a great honour for me, along with my fellow City Councillor Martin Vollenwyder, to welcome you here tonight on behalf of the Zurich City Council. Unfortunately our Mayor, Elmar Ledergerber, could not be here, but he also sends his best wishes. So a very warm welcome to Zurich!

Mr Annan, you have a long list of achievements to your name – and not only as former Secretary-General of the United Nations. You have also received a long list of awards and honours, including the Nobel Peace Prize.

You are particularly admired for your *integrity* – a rare commodity among world leaders in the limelight – and for your tireless efforts to eradicate war, famine and disease in our world, particularly in Africa. During your forty year of service to the United Nations, you helped calm violence in many of the worst flashpoints around the globe.

Today, at the age of seventy, you would have every reason and every right to say “I have done my share, it's time younger people took over the fight for a better world.” Fortunately for us, you are an incorrigible optimist who is still deeply unsatisfied with the state of the world today, not least because of the ecological problems we are all facing. It is to fight this particular problem that you recently founded the Global Humanitarian Forum together with the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs and the City of Geneva. You are also the Chairman of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, AGRA, an organisation dedicated to social and ecological sustainability.

Sustainability is what has brought you to Zurich today, where you held a insightful speech on “the university and the challenge of climate change”.

Climate change is something the City of Zurich is also very concerned about. We are naturally very proud that Zurich is such a wonderful place to live. But we are also acutely aware that we must act fast to ensure that our high living standards are not achieved at the expense of future generations.

We at the City of Zurich have made sustainability a top priority not only on our current political agenda but also in our long-term strategy until 2025. Zurich wants to become a sustainable city.

This vision includes strengthening Zurich as a knowledge hub, because we need to develop innovative technology that is environmentally friendly and we need to gain enough knowledge about cause and effect for us to identify climate change, understand its consequences and do something about it.

At first glance, our mini-metropolis, Zurich, has a small voice on the world stage. But cities set examples and can influence other cities, and even other countries. It is our duty in Switzerland, in Europe, in the wealthy continents to set a good example for continents such as Africa, so that they may develop without making climate change worse than it already is. Zurich must play a leading role in this special responsibility.

Before I wrap up, I would like to quote from an interview Kofi Annan gave with Credit Suisse's magazine *bulletin* in which he said: “the greater the challenge, the greater the opportunity to prove we are creative and innovative.”

Should we ever tire in our efforts to achieve sustainability, or should the task ever seem to difficult, we need only remember these words!

Dear Mr Annan, we would like to take this opportunity to wish you continued strength and energy so that you may follow your path for the good of humanity and our planet for many years to come. We also wish you inspiration and time to rest, so that you and your wife may continue to enjoy the peace and serenity of the mountains you have come to love so much in your second home, Switzerland.

It is my pleasure to present you with some walking guidebooks as a small token of our appreciation. This box, designed and published by the City of Zurich, contains a fascinating city walk through the up-and-coming new neighbourhood Zurich West, a former industrial zone in the city. We will also be happy to provide you with an English-speaking tour guide.

Thank-you for your attention, ladies and gentlemen. Now let's turn to one of the more simple pleasures in life. Enjoy your meal! En Guete!