Mr Rector,
Mr President of the Grand Council,
Mr Councillor of State,
Distinguished Deans and Professors,
Dear students,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

By conferring on me the title of doctor honoris causa, at this place and on this day of celebration, the University of Geneva does me a great honour.

By associating my name with those, more illustrious than myself, with whom you wanted me to share this distinction, you have given a lustre to your award that touches me deeply.

By assigning me the task of joining my own view of human rights in the globalizing world with that of Bishop Desmond Tutu, you betray a boldness befitting a university, by daring to set up a dialogue between the man I have looked upon since my earliest years as a hero of modern times and the caretaker of the international system that I have now become.

Perhaps your boldness was inspired by the legacy of William Rappard, who was twice Rector of your University, and whose name the headquarters of the World Trade Organization now bears in recognition of his life's work in favour of peace.

Notwithstanding the illustrious patronage, your boldness verges on the reckless! Is not the World Trade Organization for so many people the symbol of a globalization in which mercantile pursuits have precedence over human beings, the market over individuals, and might over right?

It is for me, then, to try and show that you are right: yes, globalization and the opening up of trade, which is one of its features, can work in favour of universal human rights, by which I mean civil and political rights as well as economic and social rights.

And I say "can" advisedly, because in my view this is true only in certain conditions that need to be specified and that are far from being fulfilled everywhere.

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First, globalization.

Globalization understood as a historical phase in the evolution of market capitalism whose development is essentially technological in nature. Similar to
what was witnessed in the nineteenth century at the time of the industrial revolution. Janus globalization: with a pleasant, smiling face, betraying economic dynamism, innovation, connection, proximity, from the perspective of the universal city. And the forbidding, grimacing face, that of fracture, imbalance, contagion. The face of environmental degradation, which dispossesses, uproots and tramples underfoot the identities and cultures that compose human dignity.

I believe that the good of globalization can outweigh the bad.

Provided each of us recognizes that we need to belong as much as we need our freedom.

Provided we accept that such belonging and such freedom are exercised in a universal and collective framework, a globalization which is harnessed and regulated by policy and law.

Provided we endorse the idea that the democratic principle needs renewal if it is to go beyond the local and penetrate the global - this is what we call global governance.

Provided we acknowledge that this implies fundamental changes to the "Westphalian" principle whereby international governance remains the monopoly of Nation States, including in the area of human rights, which know no borders.

Provided we forge a global governance that blends political drive, democratic legitimacy and technical excellence. Perhaps we are seeing this emerge in the triangle now taking form in pursuit of a solution to the current economic crisis, the first truly global crisis. Between the "G-20" pole, the United Nations General Assembly pole, and pole of the specialized international agencies including the World Trade Organization, the International Labour Organization, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, to name but a few.

Provided all these conditions are met - and they will have to be worked on - globalization can embody the promise of a universal set of values common to so many philosophies or religions, and to which human rights belong as they now belong to "jus cogens" - those standards which cannot be transgressed and are accepted on that basis by the entire international community.

It is in such a universal framework that the contribution of trade liberalization to the promotion of human rights can and must find its place both in law and in practice.

The place of human rights in international trade law: even though I know that jurists contribute to the debate on whether the WTO is bound to respect human rights, in my eyes the answer is a clear yes. First, because these rights are incumbent on the States that are Members of the Organization and because they themselves are bound to fulfil the obligations incumbent on them at international level. Next, because the case law of the WTO dispute settlement mechanism acknowledged that international trade law could not be interpreted
"in clinical isolation" from international law in general. And, incidentally, how could the WTO, created in 1994 by an international legal instrument - be immune to the rules of the general international law from which it derives its mission and its very existence?

The place of international trade law in promoting human rights in practice: because the liberalization of international trade, which creates efficiency for bettering standards and conditions of living, can contribute to implementing rights which we all know need more than mere proclamation in order to exist, in particular for the good of those whom Amnesty International calls the "prisoners of poverty". As an example, I shall cite Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which concerns the right to food and advocates "taking into account the problems of both food-importing and food-exporting countries, to ensure an equitable distribution of world food supplies in relation to need". Here again, the benefit of trade liberalization for human rights is not automatic.

It presupposes rules that are both global and just. Of the kind that prompted Lacordaire to say that "between the weak and the strong, poor and the rich ... , liberty is the oppressor and the law is freedom". Negotiating and implementing such rules is the WTO's basic mission, and its primary vocation in so doing is to regulate and not to deregulate as is often thought.

It also presupposes the existence of social policies, whether to secure redistribution or provide safeguards for the men and women whose living conditions are disrupted by changes in the international division of labour.

This is what I have called, in a context somewhat different from the heart of Protestant Rome where we have been received this morning, the "Geneva Consensus", under which the opening up of trade is necessary to our collective well-being, but does not suffice in itself.

It does not suffice unless it is accompanied by policies designed to correct the imbalances between winners and losers; and the greater the vulnerability of economies, societies or individuals, the more dangerous the imbalances.

It does not suffice unless it goes hand in hand with a sustained international effort to help the developing countries to build the capacity they need to take advantage of open markets.

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If by way of conclusion I had to pinpoint one principle governing the conditions in which globalization and the opening up of trade must help to promote and ensure respect for human rights, I would say that it is coherence:

Coherence in the political commitment of citizens, of civil society, of trade unions, between the local and the global;

Coherence in the organization of governments between national and global;
Coherence between the different islands making up the archipelago of international governance.

I would add that much of this coherence remains to be built, and I see this as a vocation for the University of Geneva, whose ambition, as in centuries past, is perhaps to add a stone to the intellectual edifice and contribute to the dialogue on which our understanding of this world depends, to ensure greater harmony, and to give greater meaning to the notion of global public good.

By cultivating the fruit of this interdisciplinary approach, which unites you in the search for a truth that is common to the science of matter, of the body and of the mind;

By working to build the bridge that etymology inspires us to build between the universitas magistrorum et scolarium and the universus mundus;

By honouring the tradition of international Geneva, of the city that has taken in so many great minds, that has hosted so many institutions engaged in the common pursuit of peace.

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By awarding me this distinction today, dear friends, you have added to my responsibilities. It is for me, now, to propose that in future, we share this responsibility by working to build an international order in which, to quote Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "The stronger is never strong enough to be forever master, unless he transforms his force into right, and obedience into duty". To which Simone Weil added, on a more personal and meditative note: "It is a duty for every man to uproot himself in order to attain the universal, but it is always a crime to uproot others."

Thank you for your attention.