

THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM: WORKING TOGETHER, RESTORING TRUST



From May 22 to 26, I attended the World Economic Forum, which was held under the theme “Working Together, Restoring Trust”. I have been attending the event for 25 years, which probably makes me the dean of Mexico. On this occasion, 2,500 participants assisted, including 300 government leaders and 50 heads of state.

I had the opportunity to meet with diverse personalities such as the United States special envoy for climate change, John Kerry; the president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen; the managing director of the International Monetary Fund, Kristalina Georgieva; Mexican journalists’ Carlos Mota and Sergio Sarmiento; and of course, with the Forum’s president, Klaus Schwab, and his son, Olivier. Mexican businessmen Guillermo Romo, Diego Coppel and Héctor Grisi also attended. There is much to comment on the more than 25 conferences I attended with Mari Carmen, whose intellectual capacity I have always admired.

Here are ten ideas that stick with me:

1.The future of Latin America: The presidents of Colombia, Iván Duque; the Dominican Republic, Luis Abinader; Costa Rica, Rodrigo Chaves; and the vice president of Peru, Dina Boluarte, attended. We are entering a dangerous period due to social discontent with high inflation rates and disappointment with democracy. Usually, the rise in interest rates in the United States implies an economic crisis in our region. But all crises are opportunities and this is no exception, inviting us to unite and participate more actively in global affairs.

2.Spain stands out: The Spanish Prime Minister, Pedro Sánchez, defended the strength of his country's economy, stating three reasons: the implementation of a 70-billion-euro recovery plan; promotion of public-private partnerships; and structural reforms. He is decisively fomenting energy transition, digital transformation and education.

3.The war in Ukraine: There is no easy way out. There was a clash between Henry Kissinger and George Soros: the first advocated the cession of territory to Russia, arguing the European balance of power; the second stated that Russia must be punished, since overlooking the invasion will only cause further conflict.

4.The future of globalization: Ignazio Cassis, President of Switzerland, presented three scenarios. The first is a sectoral globalization, which implies closed commercial circuits and a risk of growing polarization.

The second is a retreat from the so-called hyper-globalization, with a reduction in interdependence. The third is the strengthening of multilateralism, promoting the international liberal order.

5.The energy transition will define the global future: Global warming and world geopolitics will depend on the energy transition. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz spoke of his country's efforts to wean itself off Russian energy. However, if prices rise, there could be a negative reaction against renewable energies.

6.Avoid a food crisis at all costs: According to CNN's Julia Chatterley, every year we waste a third of the food produced, and about 800 million people sleep hungry. Innovation and collaboration are required.

7.More companies adopt ESG metrics: To measure social, economic and environmental impact. Brian T. Moynihan, of Bank of American, commented that governments do not have the fiscal capacity to face all challenges, so companies have a fundamental role in development.

8.Rethinking infrastructure: In the next twenty years we will need twice the infrastructure globally and public-private partnerships will be essential to achieve this. For example, India will invest \$1.5 trillion in infrastructure over the next five years, and the United States \$1.2 trillion.

9.Rebuild trust: this will only be possible if value is co-created with all stakeholders. It is necessary to achieve unity in diversity.

10. The future of democracy: According to various indicators, such as Freedom House, during the last 17 years the number of authoritarian countries has increased. According to Egils Levits, president of Latvia, the decline of democracy has three causes: lack of understanding of social problems; migration crises and cultural clashes, and social networks.

Finally, I would add that the gathering we had with the *Family Business Community* was of particular pleasure to me, as I met numerous families who have been able to maintain their businesses for generations through their values.

We have various structural and systemic problems, which are very complex and require the intervention of multiple actors. Each of us can do something in our sphere of influence. We require a positive, collaborative attitude that encourages us to innovate and to think and implement possible solutions.

