



The Geneva Manifesto

**Issued by chamber
leaders on the occasion
of the 13th World
Chambers Congress**



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Global commerce, predicated on the rule of law, open markets and property rights, has raised standards of living for generations—while enabling new waves of competition, consumer choice and innovation the world over.

Chambers of commerce have been a critical facilitator and engine of this success.

Yet we know that views on globalisation are changing fast—driven by a complex mix of political and economic forces.

We meet in Geneva—the city in which the first pillars of multilateralism were built just over one-hundred years ago—at a time when questions abound about the future of international cooperation.

And, indeed, about the future of global commerce itself.

We are deeply conscious that growing geopolitical tensions have raised the prospect that globalisation may go from a period of uncertainty into hard reverse. Concepts such as “reshoring” and “friend shoring” have, quite understandably, gained much greater political potency in many economies in recent months.

But, based on our real-world experience, we are clear in the view that such a scenario would prove extremely damaging for the global economy—and, most worryingly, for the welfare of the millions of families whose livelihoods depend on international trade and investment.

Moreover, we are concerned that further fragmentation of the global economy will render essential cooperation on cross-border issues—such as climate change and international finance—even more difficult than it is today.

That is why we come together in Geneva this week at the 13th World Chambers Congress—representing local business communities in more than 170 nations—to call on all governments to renew their commitment to rules-based trade, effective international cooperation and respect for international law.

We recognise that this will require tough political decisions.

We acknowledge the painstaking work that will be required to make multilateral institutions fit-for-purpose in today’s world.

But we know—not least from the historical experience of our chambers—that this is the right path to take. The path of peace, prosperity and opportunity for all.

And it is one we stand behind—as one—with all our conviction.

For our part, we commit to speaking up and speaking out in support of renewed and real multilateralism with our respective governments—and to ensuring that the International Chamber of Commerce can effectively articulate the needs and realities of local business in global institutions.

We also recognise that there is more we can do, in our daily chamber operations, to make global commerce more dynamic, inclusive and sustainable.

That's why we pledge today to redouble our collective efforts to facilitate the deployment of chamber tools, services and networks that can make a real difference in the real economy, including:

- Scaling our support to help small businesses become more competitive by accessing global value chains.
- Expanding the use of digital tools to enhance the integrity and accessibility of origin systems—building on the key role ascribed to chambers in issuing certificates of origin under the Geneva Convention on the Simplification of Customs Formalities exactly one hundred years ago.
- Promoting the adoption of digital trade standards and interoperable trade technologies to lower transaction costs for small businesses.

- Delivering best-in-class capacity building and tools to help companies adopt sustainable business practices—regardless of their size, sector or location.
- Facilitating enhanced access to finance by small businesses to enable them to trade and power the green transition.
- Enabling a coordinated business response to crises and humanitarian disasters.
- Extending and scaling chamber initiatives to promote women's economic empowerment; and
- Catalysing business-to-business connections and partnerships with the power to deliver real impact where it is needed the most.

In doing so, we pledge to make our own operations—and, by extension, the ICC World Chambers Federation—beacons of sustainability and the economic empowerment of women.

Simply put, this is a vision for a modern chambers system—building on our networked strength—to serve as a driving force for economic inclusion, global cooperation and sustainable development. For everyone—and everywhere.

We commit to utilising the ICC World Chambers Federation to review our progress against these objectives on a periodic basis.

And, once again, we call on governments and other stakeholders to work with us to forge a new path for global cooperation. Our Geneva Manifesto is not a “business as usual” agenda: it is a call for a renewed multilateralism, collaborative action and a new spirit of cooperation to make global commerce truly work for people and our planet.

Together we can—and will—shape the future we want.