



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS TO THE PARTICIPANTS OF UFI GLOBAL CEO SUMMIT

*Clementine Hall
Thursday, 6 February 2020*

[Multimedia]

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to greet you on the occasion of your world Summit. This meeting is taking place in Rome, a city of faith and culture, a place of encounter of peoples and ideas through the ages. As leaders in the exhibition and trade fair industry, you are gathering here not merely as professional organizers, but because you seek through your work to contribute to a more just and humane global economy.

In our ever-shrinking world, we are increasingly conscious that the different aspects of our lives and activities – including the social, cultural and ecological – are closely interrelated (cf. *Laudato Si'*, 137). This interconnectedness has inspired, in the business setting, the establishment of environmental, social and governance frameworks that can guide and assess the overall impact of economic and business activities. In the case of your professional domain, it has been shown then that fairs and exhibitions not only have positive effects on regional economies and labour markets, but also offer significant opportunities for showcasing to the wider world the rich diversity and beauty of local cultures and ecosystems.

In a particular way, too, global exhibitions contribute to the growth of a culture of encounter, that strengthens bonds of solidarity and fosters mutual enrichment between the members of our human family (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 220). Your work thus has a transcendent dimension. As a service to the common good, it should promote inclusion, care for our common home, and the integral development of individuals and peoples. These ethical concerns are not secondary, but essential to forging an economy in which financial returns do not represent the only variable for

measuring success.

Experience has taught you that, in the preparation and implementation of fairs, all the constitutive elements need to come together in a harmonious way, from human actors to construction materials and lighting, to plants and waste management. The greater the cooperation at both local and international levels, the greater their chance of broad success, both economically and humanly speaking. Exhibitions that help the local economy, engage its labour force, give value and prominence to its culture and reverently respect its human and natural ecology, will ultimately be more successful and memorable. They will have an impact and appeal both local and worldwide.

By the very nature of a largescale exhibition, complex networks of human actors are needed, drawing on a wide range of organizers, local authorities, workers, trade industries, civic organizations, and so on. Despite the many potential difficulties that can arise in the course of preparing and realizing the fairs and exhibitions that are your specific competence, these events can create a network of just human relations that can endure well beyond the event itself. You can be rightly proud of your initiatives when they generate a stronger awareness at the service of the common good and integral development.

Dear friends, I offer you my prayerful good wishes for your efforts to promote inventiveness and innovation in your industry. I invoke God's blessings upon your deliberations in these days, on each of you and your families. I pray for you. May God bless you all. And I ask you please to pray for me. Thank you.