

Inauguration of the Institute of International Relations
St. Augustine, Trinidad, February 1st, 1967.

Address by Professor F.T. Wahlen
Former President of the Swiss Confederation

It is a great pleasure for me to represent Switzerland at this happy occasion, and to bring the best wishes of the Swiss Government and the Swiss People for the future of the Institute of International Relations and of the countries of this region which I trust will all profit by its activities. My satisfaction is the more deeply felt as I had occasion to participate in the first discussions that led to the cooperation between Trinidad and Tobago and Switzerland of which the Institute is a fruit. They took place in June 1962 when Dr. The Right Honourable Eric Williams, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, visited Switzerland, and they were concluded in the summer of 1964 when we had the pleasure of a second visit by the Prime Minister. However, a great deal of work remained to be done in order to put the agreement reached into effect, both at Government and at University levels. It is impossible to mention all those to whom we are deeply indebted, so let me thank Dr. The Right Honourable Eric Williams in his double capacity as Prime Minister and as Pro-Chancellor of the University of the

West Indies, thus thanking all his collaborators on either side, and not forgetting those who did their best in Switzerland, both in the Government Services and in the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva.

Two days ago, at the Graduation Ceremony of your University, I had occasion to speak of some aspects of international cooperation for economic development. Switzerland has actively participated in these efforts from the very beginning, both bilaterally and multilaterally. Having regard to the very limited size of my country, with a little more than five million inhabitants, it is obvious that our contribution must be modest in relation to the needs of the developing countries which, as a group, count some two billion people. For this reason, we lay great stress on choosing projects for cooperation to which we can make a specific contribution based on our particular experience. Let me explain this in relation to the Institute.

Switzerland is not only a small country, but a country extremely poor in natural resources, and it has no direct access to the sea. It owes its prosperity mainly to two factors, viz. the quality of workmanship in transforming imported raw material into highly specialised products, and to its efforts to maintain good relations, both diplomatic and economic, with all countries of this

3.

world. In order to achieve this second aim, a country must be in a position to dispose of a staff of competent diplomats and economists well versed in international matters. This is the more important since relations with third countries have a tendency to shift more and more from the purely bilateral to multilateral levels of all kinds, and therefore become more and more complicated. One needs only to point to the efforts towards economic integration in many regions and continents, to the growing importance of international economic bodies, such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (Unctad) in order to underline the importance of what may be called the Diplomacy of Development. The aim of the Institute we are inaugurating today is the formation of the staff necessary to accomplish this task.

Speaking of international cooperation in development, I am particularly glad to point to the chain reaction the present project promises to ungear. If cooperation between Trinidad and Tobago on the one, Switzerland on the other hand is its immediate aim, the regional character of the Institute promises to foster cooperation among the countries of the Caribbean room as a whole. In this respect, personal relationships can play a very important role. The ties of friendship which

will be established between students of different countries in this region can become a constructive factor in striving for the common goal of country and regional development. In this way, the Institute can also make a valuable contribution towards the understanding of the interplay between Independence and Interdependence so necessary in our days of a world which grows constantly smaller.

It thus becomes clear that the Institute of International Relations harbours great possibilities of rendering vital services, not only to this lovely country of Trinidad and Tobago, but also to its friendly neighbours. I feel sure that all the partners in this cooperative venture of great promise will continue to do their best to make it a success. The Swiss Government is highly pleased that the Institute has started its activities so successfully. May it continue to work under the token of sincere international friendship and collaboration borne by the will of all concerned to render their best.

In the name of the Swiss Government and in my personal name, I wish the Institute of International Relations every success and a bright future.