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Mr. Mayor, Excellencies, Distinguished leadership of *The New York Times*,

I am proud to be here for this sixth consecutive Forum. Proud to have been a founding partner of this event. Proud to see it flourish from its first embryonic session of two hours in 2013 to what is now a rich and varied programme lasting several days.

Over these years, as we have come here to the birthplace of democracy and quoted Pericles to one another, we have also been inspired to see how modern Greece has turned the corner, how it has weathered the crisis, resisted the rise of right-wing extremism and xenophobia and received huge numbers of refugees and migrants. Thank you for welcoming us too.

But elsewhere, we have witnessed a different story. As UN Secretary-General António Guterres says in his message to you, on page one of your printed programme, democracy is showing greater strain than at any time in decades. We have heard a great deal at this Forum about how this strain is manifesting itself.

Some of this could have been predicted. And it was. Twenty years ago Kofi Annan, my former boss, warned that unless the benefits of globalization were shared more fairly, all the "isms" of the 20th century would come back -- the isms that exploit the insecurity and misery of people who feel victimized by the global market: protectionism; populism; authoritarianism; nationalism; ethnic chauvinism; fanaticism; and terrorism.

The more wretched people there are, he warned, the more those "isms" will continue to gain ground.

And this is where we are today. Prescient man, Kofi Annan. Today is an occasion to pay tribute to his memory.

Ladies and gentlemen, in other words, democracy dies when no one works at keeping it alive. Now, we need to look for new ways forward. We need to look beyond responses to today's news cycle. Beyond criticism of individual leaders, and rather, to what brings them to power. Beyond trying to solve today's problems with yesterday's solutions.

Almost a lifetime has passed since CP Snow declared that society was divided into two cultures -- humanities and science -- separated by a gulf of mutual incomprehension. It still is. We need to bridge this. We need futurists to think about a future that leaves no one behind. And we need better interaction and understanding between thinkers of technology and thinkers of democracy.

A better grasp of how we humans function -- how we trust, learn and cooperate, but also how we hate, fight and manipulate -- can help public policy-makers and citizens build better governance and better lives.

Tackling some of these issues is what this Forum so important. Thank you all for being part of it.

And now it is my pleasure to introduce a great supporter of this Forum, Mayor Giorgos Kaminis.