

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

Let me start with a question. How many times have you used Google today? How many times have you faced this short moment of interrogation followed by an immediate answer? This reflex has become so natural that it even has its own name. We can nowadays google this and google that. Every second there are about 65'000 searches done on Google, which, to give you an order of magnitude, adds up to 5.5 billion searches per day. And we haven't even taken into account other search engines.

In the age of digitalization and big data, the issue of collecting and finding the right information is more important than ever before for international politics and global governance. As diplomats - and I believe it must be the same for journalists, teachers and other professions - how many times do we say to ourselves, "I would like to have the time to read this article, to understand this region, this culture, these countries". There are so many articles, magazines, newspapers that one can easily feel overwhelmed by the abundance of information, not to mention the required concentration and mental focus.

In this torrent of newsfeeds, breaking news and tweets, I believe Patrick Chappatte's cartoons offer a form of cure for the 21st century. After all, French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte is often attributed this famous quote: «Un bon croquis vaut mieux qu'un long discours», "A good sketch is better than a long speech", which one may also render as "A picture is worth a thousand words".

I think this expression captures particularly well the work of our guest of honour, Mr. Patrick Chappatte, who joined us to celebrate the Francophonie in India. Mr. Chappatte is surely what one could call in French 'la crème de la crème' of Swiss cartooning. He works for top Swiss newspapers, the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* and *Le Temps*, and American newspapers such as the famous *New York Times*. He is the only non-American to have won the prestigious Overseas Press Club's Thomas Nast Award for the best cartoons on international affairs.

What fascinated me when I randomly went through the compilation of Chappatte's work published during the years 2011-2012 (*Stress Test Chappatte*), is how much the world has changed in these few years, but also and especially how easy it was for me to rediscover the international politics of the period. With an apparently simple pencil stroke, Chappatte conveys ideas that do not need many words to be understood. Unlike journalistic or academic articles, cartoons speak to everyone and make us *feel* the context rather than explaining it through analysis. With cartoons, we are immersed in a world where

simplicity meets humour and satire, to give birth to a new form of information, leaving us space for our own interpretation.

As we celebrate 70 years of Swiss-Indian diplomatic relations, the Embassy of Switzerland, in close collaboration with the Swiss Consulates General in Mumbai and Bangalore, launched a public diplomacy campaign baptized “70 years of Swiss-Indian Friendship: Connecting Minds – Inspiring the Future”. In this spirit, I am convinced the series of talks and exchanges Chappatte will have in Delhi, Ahmedabad, Bangalore and Mumbai with Indian cartoonists will be a valuable addition to the long standing relations between the two countries and their citizens.

I strongly believe these exchanges and discussions will be a source of inspiration for cartoon creators and lovers of both countries. They will reveal interesting differences and similarities between our countries’ culture of cartooning. And indeed instil the dose of humour and satire indispensable to any friendship.