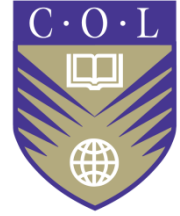


Remarks



Remarks on receiving the Sir Edmund Hillary Humanitarian Award, The Granite Club, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 14 November 2001

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Transcript

When William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, was asked to prepare a short inspirational message for his troops he used only one word: "others". Alas, I am no General Booth and you will have to accept a more wordy response from me. I am moved by this great honour that you are conferring on me - not only because it bears the name of one of the world's most illustrious citizens whose courage and heroism thrilled millions and will leave an imprint on history but also because Sir Edmund Hillary's life is a shining inspiration to us. I share the disappointment of all of us that his ill-health prevents his being here but we are delighted that his son, Peter, is with us. I would ask him to convey to his father our respects and our love. We hope that he will soon be restored to good health. I am honoured by this link with the splendid work of the Sir Edmund Hillary Foundation whose endeavours I have long admired.

At the outset let me say that I am enormously indebted to many colleagues and friends whose confidence, encouragement and help along the way has been a source of strength to me. This award is also a tribute to them. I know you will allow me to single out my wife, Nancy, whose love and understanding has supported all my endeavours.

I first met Sir Edmund and Zeke O'Connor when they came to see me while I was Vice President of the Canadian International Development Agency and they were seeking funds for the Foundation. They reminded me of the candidate for the public service examination who was asked whether he favoured the overthrow of the government by force, subversion or the advocacy of violence. The candidate thought it was a multiple choice question. Like that candidate I thought Sir Edmund and Zeke were asking me a question when in fact they were telling me what they expected from CIDA. They got their money, of course!

The Foundation's efforts to help Nepal in the fields of health, education and nature conservation have brought the promise of a better life for countless Nepalese. It has transformed their lives through better health, education and by responding to their reforestation needs. It is a wonderful record of human achievement that stands as an example to others. Much credit is due to the leadership of Sir Edmund, the superb management of Zeke O'Connor and the generous support of many who are here tonight. The Foundation is exemplary because it enables Canadians to reach out to the Nepalese people as equals,

friends and as collaborators. It teaches us to learn from them and about their culture and heritage. Most importantly, it is driven by a passionate desire to serve with them in their communities and in the mountainous regions of Nepal and not by self-interest. It is one of the wisest and most productive investments that Canadians and the Canadian International Development Agency have made and for which we are widely respected. I hope you will continue to give the Foundation your generous support because, while it serves Nepal, it also provides a model for development assistance to other developing countries and enhances Canada in the community of nations.

The Sir Edmund Hillary Foundation has become even more significant since September 11. The tragic events of that day have thrust our world into one of the most perilous periods in history. More importantly, they have made human security the central issue of our time. It has given new relevance and meaning to international development as a shield against the tyranny that terrorism manifests. It reminds us that terrorism is rooted in the abject poverty that engulfs vast masses of the human family. It is the fertile soil that breeds the followers and collaborators of terrorism. Unless we mobilise all our resources and strength to fight the greatest war of all - the battle against global poverty - we shall be vulnerable to the destructive forces that poverty and injustice release.

The challenge we face is to recognise that human security unites our world as no other event has done in human history. It is the new face of international development. Today the world's peoples are linked by a common danger and a common fate. Conventional approaches and attitudes cannot meet this new danger. This is where the non-governmental organisations such as The Sir Edmund Hillary Foundation come in. They provide the human edge to international development and in our common struggle against terrorism and in our efforts to build human security. They can fashion a new kind of global society based, not in terms of those who give and those who receive, but on how we can share the bounty of this earth that Providence has entrusted to our care. We may not succeed in all that we set out to achieve but let not future generations say of us that our generation lacked the courage or the vision to have made the effort. Sir Edmund Hillary has demonstrated what one person can accomplish. His example is a continuing inspiration to us to play our part, individually and collectively, in meeting one of history's most formidable challenges - building peace and security out of the ravages of terrorism and hatred.

In conclusion I wish to thank the Foundation for honouring me in this way. I shall do my best to be worthy of your confidence and trust.