

Speech

## **Inauguration of new UNAIDS/WHO building**

**Geneva, 20 November 2006**

**Transcript of speech by  
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Mr le Secrétaire-Général, Madame la Ministre, Excellences, Mesdames, Messieurs, Chers Amis

C'est avec une immense joie, avec beaucoup de fierté, et aussi quand-même avec une certaine émotion, que je vous souhaite la bienvenue dans ce nouveau bâtiment conjoint ONUSIDA/OMS.

Je voudrais remercier ici, en premier lieu, la Confédération Helvétique, ainsi que le Canton de Genève pour votre générosité et votre hospitalité.

Je voudrais aussi rendre hommage à la persévérance de beaucoup de personnes dans la salle, sans qui nous ne serions pas ici.

Ce n'est peut-être pas tout-à-fait une coïncidence que l'ONUSIDA ait enfin une maison mère dans la même année où nous célébrons nos 10 ans. En ces 10 ans, nous avons vu une véritable explosion de l'épidémie du SIDA, qui est maintenant un des défis principaux de notre époque. Mais nous vivons aussi de véritables progrès sur presque tous les continents.

If the world is now increasingly acting against AIDS, it is in no small way because of the leadership of the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. And without your support of 10 years, I would not have survived the atrocities of UN coordination and the Joint Programme on AIDS would not be the force it is today and the hallmark for UN reform in action it has become. Now that your mandate is nearly over, I can say it: I couldn't have dreamt of a better boss. And I trust you will remain an AIDS activist as I know your commitment is a passion, way beyond your duty as Secretary-General.

I'm very honored you accepted that our conference room will carry your name.

I'm also thrilled that we will co-habitate with WHO's AIDS programme – a critical cosponsor of UNAIDS. I'm confident this proximity will make us better partners. If we will ever stop this epidemic, we must far more join forces and put aside our institutional entrenchments which unfortunately often prevail. So I'm looking forward to a stellar collaboration with my good friend Margaret Chan, just as we've been having with Anders Nordstrom and Dr Lee.

I always wanted this building to be more than a roof over offices, a workplace. It will be a centre for dialogue on AIDS –un lieu de rencontre – for all those engaged in the fight against AIDS from any walk of life.

Let me also thank Architect Baumschlager & Eberle. You have so well understood our needs and our aesthetic and working vision. I feel very privileged.

Finally, a special thanks to the generous artists, collectors and sponsors, who are making this building a unique house in the United Nations. Art can often express what so-called rational thinking can't, that's probably why from the very beginning, art and artists have played such a central role in the response to AIDS.

So I hope this building will also be a centre on Art for AIDS exhibiting museum quality art that provoke thought and dialogue.

My thanks go in particular to Mr MF Hussain from India, Prof El Antsui from Ghana, Leo Copers from Belgium and Photographer Jonathan Torgovnik and Gideon Mendel for their incredible art work. Special thanks also to Jean Pegozzi who has loaned a significant part of his Contemporary African Art Collection now at the Guggenheim in Bilbao, Han Nefkens from Art Aids, Corbin and Johnson & Johnson.

Thank you all for your support – we'll work hard here and we'll be happy!