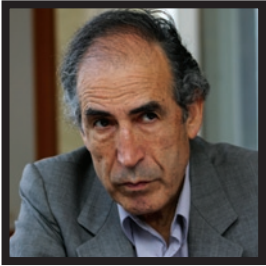


Caux, 18 July 2008



**Mohamed Sahnoun**, President, *Initiatives of Change International*, formerly Special Advisor to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and initiator of the Forum speaking at the opening session.

It is with a feeling of great encouragement and a real hope together with a sense of gratitude that I share with my colleagues the pleasure of welcoming you all to Caux as we begin our conversation on human security.

Encouragement because you are coming from the four corners of the world, demonstrating your keen interest in exploring further the underlying causes of human insecurity.

Hope because this keen interest leads us to believe that we are all here to see what kind of changes can be made in ourselves and around us to build human security.

Finally, gratitude because you decided to join us in a period when you should be enjoying some vacation with your families. This gratitude is shared by all of us in Caux but I also believe by many others who look forward to benefiting from our exchanges in many ways.

As we began planning for this meeting, we became witnesses of the tragic events in Myanmar and China, the continuation of long-lasting tragedies in Iraq, Afghanistan, Darfur, Somalia and Palestine due largely to weak, uncertain or altogether bad governance both nationally and internationally.

It is this bad governance, as well as selfishness and greed and consequently mistrust at the individual level which allow for two-thirds of humanity to have no access to the rule of law and living therefore in total insecurity. More than 2.6 billion people have to subsist with a daily income of US\$2 or less. We spend close to US\$1,500 billion a year on armament and defence, and less than US\$100 billion per year on development assistance. So in a sense, we spend 15 times more to eventually fight each other than to help each other.

Recent insecurity about food supplies have led protectionist agricultural lobbies in the developed world to argue that their high-tariff policies against foreign food imports have been well justified. Many development economists are worried and have, on the contrary, argued that the best way the developed world can help the developing world to prosper and help itself in the long term would be to permit the uninterrupted import of food stuffs and thus boost the livelihood of millions of people who eventually would become potential consumers of developed-world goods.

According to OECD estimates, a reduction of 50% of custom tariffs and subsidies in agriculture and manufactured goods will generate gains of over US\$40 billion a year. Consequently, developing countries will see the per capita GDP growth increase by 2% per year.

The unpleasant truth nowadays is that things are getting tougher rather than better. We are turning our back on the advice of OECD experts, and others. So as we go through our agenda, addressing the root causes of human insecurity, we will not be short of sad examples of the short term and long-term consequences of our current human mismanagement.

Mismanagement of the economy, mismanagement of political and social governance, mismanagement of the environment, mismanagement of our cultural differences – which we quickly labeled a clash of civilization

– and mismanagement of the lessons learned from our history with both sociological and psychological consequences, awaking the wounds of our memories instead of healing them.

This multifaceted mismanagement can only increase our feeling of insecurity.

We are of course naturally insecure, and we have to cope with that. We have a biological legacy which may make us vulnerable. But most of us manage to check this vulnerability. It is, however, much more difficult if the stress of our environment becomes unbearable.

- When parents are *unable to feed* their children. Malnutrition is the main cause of death of about 10 million children under five years each year.
- When *discrimination* distills fear and uncertainty among communities because of their ethnic origin, their cultural background or some historical prejudices.
- When *intolerance* leads people to spread hate propaganda and fanaticism.
- When *greed* intensifies drilling for oil, the destruction of our forests, the erosion of the land and scarcity of water.

These are among the questions that motivate this first Caux Forum for Human Security. Following in the steps of Buchman\* and his colleagues, we thought that a gathering of wise people like this one would help the international community to look for ways and means to make the necessary changes. And Caux is about change. Change for the better in ourselves. Change for the better around us. Thank you.

\*Frank Buchman, originator of *Initiatives of Change*

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### **Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun**

Mohamed Sahnoun is President of *Initiatives of Change International*. He served as Deputy Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity and the League of Arab States and as Algeria's Ambassador to the United States, France, Germany and Morocco. He was a Special Advisor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has represented the UN in various capacities since 1992. Among his assignments were Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Somalia and in the Great Lakes. He served on the International Council of the Earth Charter Initiative and on the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission) and remains a strong advocate of sustainable development. He is a member of the boards of the University for Peace, the International Crisis Group and Interpeace.