

Max Schmidheiny Foundation

at the University of St. Gallen

PRESS RELEASE

Issued on: Saturday, May 24, 2003, 09:30 a.m.

MAX SCHMIDHEINY FOUNDATION FREEDOM PRIZE FOR 2003 GOES TO KOFI ANNAN

Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations, is the recipient of the 2003 Max Schmidheiny Foundation Freedom Prize. At the 33rd ISC-Symposium, an audience of more than 800 guests from all over the world were gathered in the great hall of the University of St. Gallen to hear Prof. Dr. Peter Gomez, President of the University and the new Chairman of the Max Schmidheiny Foundation, praise the services and achievements of the prizewinner in absentia.

Due to persistent laryngitis, the Secretary General was sadly forced to cancel his participation in the award ceremony at short notice. The Max Schmidheiny Foundation is nevertheless pleased to announce that he will come to St. Gallen at a later date in order to accept the prize in person.

Every year, the Max Schmidheiny Foundation honours persons and institutions who have contributed to the maintenance and further development of a free social and economic order. It thereby promotes outstanding scientific, political and entrepreneurial initiatives and achievements that safeguard individual freedom and responsibility. This year, the prize, which is being awarded for the 25th time, is valued at USD 100,000.–.

Kofi Annan has been honoured as a diplomat, whose shining example has caused the work of the United Nations to be associated with steadfastness, trustworthiness and propriety, who with unique flair has pushed through reforms to dismantle bureaucracy and simplify internal structures, bolster the openness of the United Nations towards non-government organisations and in the final analysis increase the efficiency of peacekeeping missions, and who has also inspired his countless diplomatic, peacekeeping and welfare staff with renewed **confidence** in their common cause. Patiently yet tenaciously, Kofi Annan, the world citizen of exceptional quality, calls for responsible action from the power-wielding states and corporations of this earth, reminds them of their commitment not only to their own citizens but also to the health of the global soul and, as a standard bearer of human rights dedicated to the idea that "humanity is indivisible", accepts the challenges of the U.N. as a world organisation in order to place the protection of individual human **dignity** at centre stage regardless of race, religion or gender. Kofi Annan is seen as a beacon of hope to a battered world who, in the light of

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contagious diseases, persistent famine, unprecedented ethnic hotspots and the clash of entire civilisations, endeavours to raise the awareness of those who live in relative affluence and peace about the plight of the poor and war-ravaged and, through perseverance, **courage** and **compassion** combined with a deep-rooted **faith** in the concept of a moral world order, motivates governments and interest groups with inexhaustible energy to seek pro-active answers to harrowing conflicts and thus make a meaningful contribution to the freedom of each and every human being, a freedom that extends beyond all geopolitical boundaries.

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