

Max Schmidheiny Foundation

at the University of St. Gallen

PRESS RELEASE

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FORMAL PRESENTATION OF THE MAX SCHMIDHEINY FOUNDATION FREEDOM PRIZE TO KOFI ANNAN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. GALLEN

His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, today accepted the Max Schmidheiny Foundation Freedom Prize in person. At a formal ceremony at the University of St. Gallen attended by several hundred guests from business and politics as well as students, Prof. Dr. Peter Gomez, Chairman of the Max Schmidheiny Foundation, paid tribute to the prizewinner as a guiding light in the daily struggle for freedom and as an exceptional figure who has given a human face to the idea of a world community, a concept which often appears an illusion.

Since 1979, the Max Schmidheiny Foundation has awarded its Freedom Prize to individuals and institutions that have contributed to the preservation and further development of a free economic and social order. In so doing, it promotes exceptional scientific, political and entrepreneurial initiatives as well as achievements that safeguard individual freedom and responsibility. On May 24, 2003, at the 33rd St. Gallen Symposium, the Max Schmidheiny Foundation Freedom Prize was awarded to Kofi Annan in absentia; acute laryngitis had prevented the prizewinner from travelling to Europe. However, the Secretary-General announced his intention to visit the University of St. Gallen at a later date, during his term of office, in order to accept the prize in person.

It is for this reason that the Secretary-General of the United Nations visited the University of St. Gallen on Saturday, November 18, 2006, and thereby also honoured the traditional role of the University of St. Gallen as a meeting place between decision-makers and academic youth. At a formal ceremony attended by more than 600 invited guests – international leaders from business, politics and society as well as students from the University of St. Gallen – Kofi Annan has been presented with the Max Schmidheiny Freedom prize, which is valued at USD 100,000.–; Kofi Annan will donate this prize money to the United Nations Refugee Agency.

Kofi Annan has been honoured as a diplomat, whose shining example has caused the work of the United Nations to be associated with steadfastness,

Further information:

<http://www.ms-foundation.org> and

<http://www.stgallen-symposium.org>

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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 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.