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## Foreword by Stephen Lewis

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I want to say that I don't pretend to know anything profound or substantial about the basic subject matter of career counselling. Therefore, I'm going to approach the theme in a rather more eclectic and generic way—weaving together a number of global and domestic strands and attempting to fashion some kind of symmetrical whole by the time I've reached the end.

Let me begin in this fashion. Later this week [January 2001], two remarkable international gatherings are taking place, which are directly linked even though they are continents apart. The first is called the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. All of the representatives of the major multinational corporations, the head of the International Monetary Fund, the head of the World Bank, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the head of the World Trade organization will be there to etch an economic agenda for the next several years.

On precisely the same day, for the same purpose, there is gathering in Porto Allegre, Brazil at the World Social Forum, all of the social activists who were part of the anti-globalization protest movements. They represent vigorous critiques of democratic capitalist society and the processes they see unfolding.

What we really have then are two competing views of the way in which the world works. The one vision that is rooted in Davos, Switzerland is highly uncritical and romanticized. It is a vision which says that free market liberalization, private sector hegemony, dismantling of the public sector, trade liberalization, imposition of good governance on countries (particularly in the developing world), the

fashioning of a financial architecture by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank—that taken all together, these irresistible trends will mean a kind of panacea for humankind.

In *Porte Allegro* there is a quite different, somewhat inchoate view. These are people who look at the state of world poverty, who look at the state of environmental degradation, who see the social sectors atrophying, who watch human rights being abridged, who see that labour rights are nowhere prominently in place and feel that there has to be an alternative mandate for humankind.

Now, at the heart of this extraordinary debate are a number of bitter and brutal ironies. If globalization is so positive, then why are there so many identifiable and palpable global obscenities? Why are we dealing with a series of global problems for which there seems to be no global response?

Let me remind you, first, that the reality of contemporary and international poverty is deepening both within and among nations. The absolute numbers of people living in poverty in this world are growing annually. There are now 1.3 billion people living on less than \$1.00 a day. There are 3 billion people living on less than \$750.00 a year. And the world seems absolutely unable to intervene in a way which will do anything about it.

Number two, the HIV AIDS pandemic obviously cries out for global solution. I don't want to drive statistics through the wall but may I remind you that last year alone, there were 5.3 million new infections, 3.8 million of them in sub-Saharan Africa. Last year the number of people living with AIDS had risen to over 36 million world wide, 25 million of them living in sub-Saharan Africa. The number of deaths since the early 1980s when the pandemic began has now risen to over 21 million, 80 percent of them in sub-Saharan Africa.

Thirdly. Conflict is seizing the world in so many areas, from East Timor to Kosovo to the African continent. And let me remind you, it was seven years ago in Rwanda that 800,000 people were slaughtered in full view of the world. What kind of globalization is it that can't handle global imperatives like war and genocide? How can you talk about globalization in reasonable ways if the world can't gather itself to deal with identifiable obscenities of that kind?

I want to make mention of the environment. I picked up the *Globe and Mail* today and the headline states, "Scientists raise alarm of climate catastrophe." In Toronto in June of 1988, I chaired the first international conference on climate change where academics and social scientists and politicians from all around the world gathered to look at what was then an early and emerging phenomenon. The recommendations that flowed from that conference are exactly the recommendations which the world still embraces. And yet, no one adheres to them even though the International Panel on Climate Change recently released a report suggesting we are dooming humankind to perils we've not yet approximated.

And finally, in terms of these globalized problems for which we never seem to have global solutions, I want to mention in passing, the reality of the digital divide. There is an assumption that the technolog-

ical and communications revolution of computers and the Internet are somehow going to alter the nature of international social justice, overcome disparity and make life livable for all of the developing world. Well, that assumption tends to forget that in countries like Ethiopia there are two telephone lines per thousand people and that more than half of the world's entire population has never made a phone call. So, until there are wireless and satellite systems in place absolutely everywhere, the assumptions we make about bringing developing countries on stream is so much intellectual claptrap.

All of these various themes which agitate internationalists constantly, came together at the Millennium Summit of the United Nations General Assembly in the fall of the year 2000 when, for the first time, the Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Anan, started speaking openly about globalization. He said:

“Few people, groups or governments oppose globalization as such. They protest against its disparities. First the benefits and opportunities of globalization remain highly concentrated among a relatively small number of countries and are spread unevenly within them. Second, in recent decades, an imbalance has emerged between successful efforts to craft strong and well-enforced rules facilitating the expansion of global markets while support for equally valid objectives, be they labour standards, the environment, human rights or poverty reduction has lagged behind. More broadly, for many people, globalization has come to mean greater vulnerability to unfamiliar and unpredictable forces that can bring on economic instability and social dislocation, sometimes at lightning speed. There is mounting anxiety that the integrity of cultures and the sovereignty of states may be at stake. Even in the most powerful countries, people wonder who is in charge, worry for their jobs and fear that their voices are drowned out in globalization's sweep.”

It's quite fascinating how a number of leaders who mounted the platform of the General Assembly began to focus on the world of work and, of course, there is an organization in the international system which deals with the world of work, the International Labour Organization. The new head of the ILO, Juan Samovia, is for the first time from the developing world and someone who understands something about the class struggle. At a speech Juan made to the staff of the World Bank last year, he said:

“We know enough about market fundamentals. It's time to pay attention to the fundamentals in people's lives.

“At the beginning of the 1990s, I travelled widely preparing the agenda of the World Summit for Social Development. In multiple dialogues with civil society organizations, trade unions, business and governments, I inquired as to their country's principal social problems. In different formulations and styles, and equally valid in developed and developing countries, the answer was crisp and targeted. The problems were poverty and social exclusion. That is, poverty on the one hand and the exclusion from the main stream of so many of the minority and vulnerable groups in various societies.

“When I asked what was the solution, the answer was simple. Jobs.

“Yet the hard reality is that the benefits of globalization as it is currently unfolding are not reaching enough people. We know that the global economy is not creating enough jobs, and especially not enough jobs that meet peoples' aspirations for a decent life. The failure to improve both the quantity and quality of employment world wide is making working families afraid of a race to the bottom.”

This is so very interesting. All of you are in a professional discipline where you focus inevitably on individual clients and on an effort to match individual capacities with the job market to fulfill people's work lives appropriately. And what I want to show you is that you're part, as it were, of an international movement.

Juan Samovia has been in his job barely a year. When he looked at the emphasis on employment, on career counselling, on the requirements, skills and otherwise for the world of work, he actually fashioned an alternative vision statement for the International Labour Organization. He called it simply “Decent Work.” At a recent conference in Bangkok, this is how he defined it:

“Decent Work is not an intellectual idea. It is not merely a concept or notion. It is the most deeply felt aspiration of people in all societies, developed and developing. It's the way ordinary women and men express their needs.

“If you go out on the streets or in the fields and ask people what they want in the midst of the new uncertainties globalization has brought upon all of us, the answer is ‘work.’ Work on which to meet the needs of their families and safety and health, educate their children and offer them income security after retirement. Work in which they are treated decently and their basic rights are respected. That is what decent work is about and it's about reaching everyone. If you think about it, everybody works. Some of that work is done in large firms. Some of it is informal and a lot because it is done in the home, usually by women, and it is not even recognized as work. But all of those people have the right to decent work.

“To move in that direction, we must acknowledge that we share some basic values. So there is a universal social floor, one which we believe should apply everywhere because it is a question of basic human rights. Freedom from oppression and discrimination. Freedom of association. The right of children to learn and develop rather than to work. But decent work is more than that. Because it captures the aspirations, and possibilities of each society, reflecting different cultures, visions and development choices.”

In Canada, we worry about putting people in the right jobs but you seldom hear cries of alarm about employment at large. We're kind of sanguine about these issues. And as a result, we're failing to understand some very tough imperatives about the eventual world of work.

Number one, Canada is way behind almost every other developed nation in its indifference to early childhood care and development even though we know that's when the best cognitive skills are being developed and when a child's emotional capacities are being reinforced. We have people like Fraser Mustard who provide whole agendas for early childhood care and development. But we don't have governments who

pay any attention to it.

Second, we're doing almost nothing in this country about childcare, the centrepiece of an appropriate employment policy. Unless you're lucky enough to live in Quebec, your access to affordable childcare simply doesn't exist. Every single promise which has been made politically has resulted in a delinquent political implementation. And yet, how can you talk about a policy of decent work if you don't have childcare throughout the country?

Number three, education cutbacks are doing terrible damage to the kinds of people we want to emerge for the world of work, the kinds of people we want to be able to counsel. We're cutting back on music, on art, on heritage languages, on English as a Second Language and on Special Education. We are even abandoning libraries. We celebrate the triumphalism of computer technology at the expense of a broad liberal arts education. In your context, this gradually erodes any emphasis on multiculturalism, on diversity, on aboriginal rights, on the reality of dealing with people with disabilities and the way in which the work force can embrace such people. All of these things get undermined when your educational system is profoundly skewed by the cutbacks in education.

This leads me to my next point — that the cutbacks, generally through society and the social sectors are reaping havoc. We have such a twisted ideological rigidity of those who now run the political establishment. There's a kind of obsessive, compulsive support for debt reduction and then deficit reduction and then tax reduction but what of the human dimension? What about the social sectors? Why are we so absolutely obsessed with embracing this constant refrain that we are never able to find the money to invest in the social and human priorities?

We live in a profoundly altered environment. The economic culture is capricious. Jobs come and jobs go. It's really important to have life-long learning. It's really important, I know, to understand the frailty of the manufacturing sector and the often disabling short-term jobs in the service industry. It's necessary to recognize that we've lost a lot of jobs to NAFTA and will continue to do so.

So, before your career counselling is authentic, it seems to me that we have to secure our approach. We have to focus on the economy as a whole—social sectors—as well as the economic and financial and corporate architecture. We have to understand that training and retraining is a legitimate pursuit of society. We have to recognize the value of early education and what it means down the years. We have to assess the global impacts that are occurring in terms of the job market in Canada.

We have to recognize, in the process, two fundamentals. One: Jobs that are rooted in and often originate from the community level are the jobs that are increasingly making sense internationally. I am fascinated by the way in which local community imperatives are taking prominence as a response to general economic trends everywhere. All over the world there is recognition that community-based work is work that is tremendously valuable and extremely well-rooted.

And the second thing, is advocacy. It isn't enough simply to counsel people into jobs. It's equally important to have entire disciplines, entire professions, entire career lines understand that there is an obligation to speak out against injustice. To take a stand on behalf of those you represent. Indeed, all of you who are attending this conference collectively, have a pretty strong position in this world and when you state your opinions, go to the barricades. Take up a cause. It has an impact on society.

And isn't that essentially what you are attempting to achieve—to make this world a more humane, just, civilized, decent environment? There is no objective, in human terms, in individual terms, more worthy of your notable commitment. I salute you.