

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

**THE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**REMARKS AT THE EXCELLENCE IN CORPORATE  
PHILANTHROPY LUNCHEON  
New York, 27 February 2006**

[Thank you, Mr. McGraw, for your kind words of introduction]

I am delighted to join all of you today to celebrate the very best of corporate philanthropy.

As someone who has always believed in the power – and the responsibility – of the private sector in helping to address the most pressing needs of our day, I am truly gratified to be amongst so many distinguished corporate leaders who embrace this ideal.

I would particularly like to thank our host, the Committee to Encourage Corporate Philanthropy. Under the leadership of Sanford Weill and Charles Moore, the Committee is helping to raise both the level and quality of corporate giving. Ever since it was founded by Paul Newman and Ken Derr, it has done tremendous work to advance some of the most pressing social issues of our time.

In that sense, you are all partners of the United Nations in the struggle towards a better, more equitably prosperous world. We turn to you for your expertise in such fundamental areas as health, agriculture and technology. We count on your support in our efforts to reduce poverty, combat HIV/AIDS and promote gender equality. And we rely on you to set the tone for your employees, for your colleagues and for your local and global communities.

For us, you have come to represent the conscience of a corporate community which increasingly epitomizes the notion that much is required of those to whom much has been given.

A great deal has been required of you — indeed, of all of us — during this past year. The Indian Ocean tsunami, North American hurricanes, Central American mudslides, and the South Asian earthquake touched people everywhere and necessitated an unprecedented global response. You responded not only by opening your pocketbooks, but also by leading your companies in a truly remarkable relief effort. Your generosity helped save lives, and is now helping to rebuild them.

Nowhere was your involvement more needed, and corporate philanthropy more welcome, than in the instance of the devastating South Asian earthquake, occurring as it did at the end of a period of unprecedented natural disasters which had sapped many relief funds. Let me on this occasion acknowledge the significant contribution made by Jeffrey Immelt, Chairman and CEO of General Electric; James Kelly, former Chairman and CEO of UPS; Henry McKinnell, Chairman and CEO of Pfizer; Anne Mulcahy, Chairman and CEO of Xerox; and Sanford Weill, Chairman of Citigroup, in leading the South Asian Earthquake Relief Fund.

The Committee to Encourage Corporate Philanthropy, through an Advisory Committee of corporate leaders, embarked on an ambitious \$100 million fundraising drive, and I understand the full amount has been raised. This crucial contribution to the earthquake relief effort is a heartening example of how the private sector can make a measurable difference in the lives of those most in need.

As many of you are aware, over the years and particularly under the leadership of the current Secretary-General, the United Nations has developed a profound appreciation for the role of the private sector. We know we need its expertise, its innovative spirit, its unparalleled ability to create jobs and wealth, and its generosity in times of need.

As a result, we have made a real effort to open doors to more partners, and to more innovative partnerships. One example is the UN Global Compact, which promotes the practical application of universal principles in the areas of human rights, labour and the environment. Today, more than 1,400 companies from over 70 countries are part of the Compact — including many that are represented here today. So are dozens of civil society organizations and global trade union federations.

Simultaneously, the UN Office for International Partnerships, UNFIP, established in 1997 as a result of Ted Turner's billion-dollar pledge to the UN, is working as a gateway to engage corporations, foundations and other civil society actors in concrete projects on the ground covering issues as diverse as education, biodiversity, information technology and health.

There are many more areas where the business community and the UN can work together. Here I would like to mention especially the new Central Emergency Relief Fund, approved by the UN General Assembly late last year.

The Fund addresses a crucial need: for far too long, humanitarian assistance for disaster victims has been a reactive process. Relief funds have been sought only after disaster has struck. This has meant that, despite the best of intentions, lives which could have been saved were lost.

The CERF is designed to provide a ready pool of resources to fund relief work in the immediate aftermath of disasters. Of course, its success will depend on the support it receives from Governments and the philanthropic community. In 10 days time the UN plans to officially launch this new Fund. I encourage all of you to consider being among its founding members.

Like you, I hope we never again have to experience disasters on the scale of those we have seen in the past year. But whatever the coming years may bring, we need to be ready.

Which is why I am glad we can count on leaders like you.

It is now my distinct pleasure to introduce a titan of corporate philanthropy. He has been at the forefront of efforts to raise funds for South Asian earthquake victims; his leadership in the fight against HIV/AIDS has earned him the United Nations Association's Global Leadership Award; he is your friend and colleague, the CEO of Pfizer, Hank McKinnell.

Thank you very much.