

A Celebration of the Life of /
Une célébration de la vie de
The Honourable / L'honorable

Maurice F. Strong

PC, CC, OM, FRSC, FRS, FRAIC

1929 - 2015

Special thanks to:

A large group of people were involved in organizing this celebration.

Many thanks are due to Hanne Marstrand Strong, Fred Strong, Ken Strong, Mary Anne Strong, Maureen Strong, and Alice Szojka.

The Honourable George J. Furey, Speaker of the Senate, the Honourable Geoff Regan, Speaker of the House of Commons, and the Office of Parliamentary Protocol with very special thanks to Lynn Pigeon and Elizabeth Rody.

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January 27th, 2016 / le 27 janvier 2016
15:45

Sir John A. MacDonald Building
144 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Canada

A few words by / Quelques mots de...

Maurice Strong

Opening Statement, Stockholm Conference – 5 June 1972

Surely our sense of a larger realism must lead us to believe that because we can change, because we must change, we shall change. We must not allow the frustrations of our past failures to prevent us from finding a new basis for international cooperation. The world desperately needs hope; and we must build on this hope.

Opening Statement, Rio Earth Summit – 3 June 1992

No place on the planet can remain an island of affluence in a sea of misery. We're either going to save the whole world or no one will be saved. We must from here on in all go down the same path. One country cannot stabilize its climate in isolation. No country can unilaterally preserve its biodiversity. One part of the world cannot live an orgy of unrestrained consumption while the rest destroys its environment just to survive. Neither is immune from the effects of the other.

Like it or not, from here on in, we're in this together: rich, poor, North, South, East and West. It is an exhilarating challenge to erase the barriers that have separated us in the past, to join in the global partnership that will enable us to survive in a more secure and hospitable world. The industrialized world cannot escape its primary responsibility to lead the way in establishing this partnership and making it work. Up to now, the damage inflicted on our planet has been done largely inadvertently. We now know what we are doing. We have lost our innocence. It would be more than irresponsible to continue down this path.

Closing Statement, Rio Earth Summit – 14 June 1992

The carrying capacity of our Earth can only sustain present and future generations if it is matched by the caring capacity of its people and its leaders. We must bring our species under control, for our own survival, for that of all life on our precious planet. We now have a unique opportunity to do this. We have a basis for doing it in the decisions you have taken. We have the responsibility to start down this road now.

Asia Education Forum, Chengdu, China – 25 October 2013

We are the first generation ever to have the responsibility for our own future. What we do, or fail to do, will determine the future of life on Earth. This requires unprecedented levels of cooperation both within and amongst nations. But it does not require homogeneity in our lifestyles or cultures.

We can learn from nature that the healthiest and more sustainable natural ecological systems are those which maintain the highest degree of diversity and variety. This is not just a technical issue. Everybody's actions are motivated by their inner life, their moral, spiritual and ethical values. Global agreements will be effective when they are rooted in the individual commitment of people, which arises from their own inner life.

Under the Patronage of
The Honourable George J. Furey, Q.C.
Speaker of the Senate
and
The Honourable Geoff Regan, P.C., M.P.
Speaker of the House of Commons

Sous le patronage de
L'honorable George J. Furey, c.r.
Président du Sénat
et
L'honorable Geoff Regan, C.P., député
Président de la Chambre des communes

Welcome / Bienvenue

John Ralston Saul

Vidéo

Special thanks to the International Institute for Sustainable Development

Tributes

The Right Honourable / Le très honorable
Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister / Premier ministre

James Wolfensohn
President of the World Bank / Président de la Banque mondiale
(1995 – 2005)

Achim Steiner
UNEP Executive Director / Directeur général du Programme PNUE
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations /
le Secrétaire général adjoint des Nations Unies

The Honourable / L'honorable
Catherine McKenna
Minister of the Environment and Climate Change /
Ministre de l'environnement et du changement climatique

Martin Lees
Rector, University for Peace of the UN / Recteur, Université de la Paix de l'ONU
(2001 – 2005)

Désirée McGraw
President of Pearson College / Présidente du Collège Pearson

The Right Honourable / Le très honorable
Paul Martin
Prime Minister / Premier ministre
(2003 – 2006)

The Right Honourable / La très honorable
Adrienne Clarkson
26th Governor General / 26^e Gouverneure générale

Reception

Maurice Strong can fairly be regarded as the father of the world environmental movement, and it was naturally to him that the UN turned to lead the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. As Achim Steiner has said, he did more than anyone to place the environment on the international agenda, and at the heart of development.

Maurice took on a succession of challenging assignments for the UN and the world, not only in the environmental sphere but also in the humanitarian field. I also called on him in 1997 to assist me in preparing major reform plans for the UN.

He was a visionary, but also a consummate diplomat – one of very few who won the confidence of leaders in both South and North Korea, and who also played an important part in helping China to take on global responsibilities.

Today Maurice is no more and he leaves a great void, not just for Hanne and the family but for Canada and the world. For Maurice had a large family and impacted on many lives around the world, including mine. I do not know if this void can ever be filled for Maurice was larger than life.

**– Kofi Annan
Secretary-General, United Nations (1997 – 2006)**

As a young politician, I admired his role at the Stockholm Conference in 1972. As I was challenged to take on the Commission on Environment and Development in 1983, Maurice Strong was one of the first people I contacted to seek advice. I remember he was surprisingly humble when I also asked him to become a member of my commission.

During our more than three years of seeking knowledge and analyzing the complexity of the issues, Maurice was a great force for good. His sharp mind and broad grasp of all key issues involved was of course of the essence. But, more than anything, his personality, integrity, the inspiration he gave to all of us, was impressive.

**– Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland
Former Prime Minister of Norway
Chair, World Commission on Environment and Development (1983 – 1987)**

Unfortunately due to health problems I am not able to join you today at this Celebration of Life of my dear friend Maurice Strong. However I would like to share with you some thoughts about Maurice Strong and Future World.

Such people are rare. Few even among those who have accomplished great many things, have invested all their lives and thoughts into the Future. This is precisely this rare “breed” of people that my friend Maurice Strong has belonged to. And I don’t think I am misled in believing that our future to a great extent depends on the presence of precisely such people in our world.

In this sense Maurice has demonstrated with all his life vision, values, and the sense of purpose. He was quick to realize the threats to humanity posed by our civilization's reckless disregard for environment. Since that time he has been a tireless warrior for sustainable development playing a unique and critical role is globalizing the environmental movement. His passion and drive to help others and make this world a better place to live has been truly inspiring.

When I founded Green Cross more than 20 years and met Maurice, with whom we launched the Earth Charter, we both knew we had a long battle ahead to influence a change in the values of people, business and government, to turn sustainability into a development pillar.

This is taking hold but much slower than needed. Growing number of nations are committing to fight climate change. Europe is championing green energy. China has de-facto recognized its development must be sustainable. The UN adopted the right to water as a human right. Oil multinationals, car manufacturers and chemical companies are parading their environmental credentials. Pollution, climate change and the depletion of natural resources have replaced nuclear weapons as the existential threats keeping voters awake.

There is awareness, and there are many examples of what is needed, being undertaken by companies, governments and individuals. But this has to be stepped up, and Maurice's commitment and everlasting support of our common goal of fostering new values remains a vital and indispensable legacy the future world will be build on.

Concluding I would like to say that Maurice had lots of talents that made him successful in all his endeavours. But above all, he will be remembered for his great vision, the wealth of experience and the positive approach that will continue having their imprint on the transition of the world into the future.

In Russia they say, “living a life is not like crossing a meadow”. Indeed, life is too complicated to notice a rock or a ditch on your path, it’s not easy sometimes to tell good from evil... Only the strong and kind ones go through the life with dignity, without loosing or wasting the spiritual treasures of kindness and love, dignity and honour. And Maurice's life amply demonstrates this. If everyone approached life with the same attitude and passion as he did, the world would have already been a much better place to live.

**– Mikhail Gorbachev
former President of the Soviet Union**