

Mark Malloch Brown's Speech

Nadine, President Cardoso, fellow award winners of his tonight, friends from Brazil and friends from all over the world who have joined us here this evening, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I think in development one of the things we struggle with is what are the things that we as a development agency can do to make a difference. Quite early into a career in development you learn the ultimate modesty: that the size of your check-book isn't going to make a difference; that there is no way you can buy development, whether you run the UNDP or are former chief Jim Wolfensohn running the World Bank, the check-book is never big enough.

There is a sense that it's other things that change countries and you suddenly discover the obvious, that it's *ideas*. It's ideas in action, and the extraordinary thing about these Human Development Report Awards and the Human Development Reports that lie behind them is of groups of people - civil society leaders, government leaders, labour leaders, UN officials - coming together in countries and combining around a single powerful analysis of why there is poverty and what is needed to attack it and address it.

When the right people have come together, the power of what they come up with is truly transforming for those countries - much more so than that external aid check could ever be - because you see a dramatic realignment of domestic policy priorities and domestic resources and political will trying and achieving the goals of human development and poverty reduction.

That only happens when the right people have come together; the quality of the analysis is first class (and we'll see a lot of such reports tonight); where the advocacy is strong and powerful and brave (you will see some of that in the discussion of the Arab regional report). But above all, you will only see it happen when there are national political leaders willing to pick it up and run with it.

Tonight our central story is of an extraordinary president of one of the world's largest countries, a country with huge inequality within it, both rich and poor, a president who in an extraordinary way picked up the challenge of human development. Few men will leave office with quite such a dramatic quantitative record, together with a qualitative one of how the lives of ordinary Brazilians have changed in the last few years. That is what we celebrate tonight.

Let me just say a word about the awards themselves. The central one, which we will be having the great honour to present to President Cardoso later on this evening, is the Mahbub ul-Haq Award for Outstanding Contribution to Human Development. This is a new award and it goes to the political leader who the judges deem has done most to change his country or her country in the direction of human development. I can't tell you how personally and how all of us in the UNDP are honoured that you, Mr President, are our first awardee.

The other awards you've already heard described, so I was asked just to thank the judges who made these awards. I think this group of remarkable individuals is in a sense testament to the success of everyone tonight as they held these awardees to a high standard and were quick to find fault.

The judges were:

- Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Bint Talal of Jordan who has been involved with the human development movement for many years.
- Professor Kwesi Botchwey of Columbia University, who since he made this award has taken it so seriously that he's announced that he's going back to Ghana to be a presidential candidate. I'm told he wants to win it himself one day.
- Moises Naim of Foreign Policy Magazine.
- Professor Gita Sen of the Indian Institute of management.
- My old friend and colleague, and current colleague again I should add, Professor Joe Stiglitz of Columbia University.

I think, Mr. President, your ears would turn red if you could have been there at lunch when they decided this award. There was an overwhelming endorsement, only one dissenting vote, and I'll only tell you much later in the evening who that was. There was tremendous enthusiasm from people of very different political views but a common analysis of the extraordinary change which you have made in Brazil.