

**Signature of a Memorandum of Understanding
between the Field Museum and
the Prince Albert II Foundation**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

Firstly, let me tell you how pleased I am to be here with you today in this place steeped in history and especially full of meaning, this place which is the pride of Chicago and contributes to its international reputation.

At a time when the financial crisis is shaking the very foundations of our world, it may seem odd to dedicate this moment to Nature.

Yet, I cannot help but draw a parallel between the subject that brings us and the anxiety

affecting world financial institutions in recent weeks...

However, there is, in the looming crisis that arose from practices dictated by short-sighted appetites, something that foreshadows far more serious perils threatening our planet and our very existence, if we persist obstinately in the blind recklessness that all too often sums up our concern for natural resources.

Nevertheless, I remain optimistic and confident. To all of you, I convey my deepest respect for the essential work that you are doing.

Scientific work, of course, which is vital to the success of the fight to save our planet as well as discovering how it works.

But a work that I would also describe as political, a work of opening up to the great majority, of awareness and of knowledge sharing. On these subjects that obviously fascinate the large number people, you provide the collective intelligence essential to progress.

In this area more than in any other, we know that in fact nothing fundamental can be done if the concerns which drive us remain confined to a small number of people, whether they are politicians, scientists or campaigners.

We will only succeed in getting things moving if we manage to get people moving.

I know that in this respect your Museum is a model. I also know the wonderful, philanthropic capacity of American citizens, in the tradition of the extraordinary work of Marshall Field, and I am eager to pay tribute to this sense of common good which is one of the great things about your country.

Unfortunately, in this area Europe is still lagging behind. Happily, things are changing, more and more initiatives from civil society are today usefully and effectively complementing government efforts.

This is the purpose of the Foundation that I created just over ten years ago, this foundation

which bears my name and today is honoured to work with your venerable institution.

In three key areas, the protection of biodiversity, the fight against climate change and sustainable management of water resources, my Foundation's objective is to set up practical partnerships with public and private institutions, connecting civil society across all continents.

Indeed, we know that our duty is to be united, beyond territorial or administrative borders and beyond oceans.

This is why I am particularly delighted to be here with you today, three weeks after launching the American branch of my foundation in New York. Far beyond the very strong personal ties that connect me to your country, I know that action by the United States on all levels, Federal government, States, institutions and citizens is vital to our common fight.

This is why today's event, with all the potential that it possesses, for me, is full of meaning and hope.

This is why I will follow its achievements with the greatest attention.

And above all, this is why I would like to thank you warmly and sincerely for all that you have done and all that we are now going to do together.

Thank you.