

Thank you very much. Pardonnez-moi de parler Anglais.

Monsieur le Recteur, Professor Bélanger, colleagues, graduates, families and friends.

This is really a great honor. I grew up not far from here, in a small town in New York State. I remember coming to Quebec with the Boy Scouts, to camp together with some local Scouts – this would have been around 1958, and we were wet and freezing the entire time! I never imagined then that I'd be here today.

As you've just heard, I've spent my career studying how we govern ourselves on a global scale – in other words, how we do, and how we could, make decisions and take actions to achieve our goals as a global society, or as national or regional societies, or as peoples, in a globalized world. It's extremely interesting, but if you follow the news you'll know that no sensible person would go into this field hoping for quick successes. It's a complex, incremental, often frustrating business.

But I think this is the overriding challenge of our age. We often hear that the “challenge of our age” is a specific problem, such as climate change, or terrorism. But to me, the real challenge is deeper: to develop new ways to govern ourselves globally (and since I'm from the US, I would add, even nationally), so that we have the ability to address these specific problems.

And of course climate change and terrorism aren't the only problems. You can all name others: migration, human rights, indigenous rights, war, economic development, inequality, disease. The United Nations just recently adopted what it calls the Sustainable Development Goals, 17 broad and ambitious goals – such as eliminating all poverty world-wide – with 169 specific targets, covering all these areas and many more – all to be achieved in the next 15 years!

Goals like these are inspiring, but realistically, what are our chances of achieving them? If we want to transform our world for the better, we desperately need to find new ways to:

- make meaningful collective decisions, with all voices participating;
- take effective collective actions, where we know what policies will work; and
- experiment, learn and share knowledge, where we don't know what will work.

I don't have any magical solutions. But I do know that we won't be successful if we work only in the narrow "silos" of traditional academic disciplines. We need to mobilize every discipline in the social sciences, and the natural sciences and humanities as well, all working together, to develop workable governance for our small planet.

And this is another reason I'm honored to be here: because so many colleagues at Laval, in the social sciences and especially in the Institute for Advanced International Studies, share these goals, and are working with dedication to advance them.

I hope many of the graduates here will do the same. The most remarkable governance innovations of the past 20 years involve opening up global decision-making and action to direct participation by people in business, non-governmental organizations, local governments, foundations and universities, as well as in foreign ministries. Your opportunities to contribute are literally endless.

So thank you once again, and I look forward to working with you on these daunting but exciting challenges.