

Thank you, Mr. President. It's an honor to have you back to our campus. You have honored us before, and we're always delighted when you return.

And to all of you here today, welcome to The University of Texas. We are very excited about hosting this meeting of the Clinton Global Initiative University. I am reminded of what Margaret Mead once said: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Imagine, then, what this group of a thousand active, passionate young people can do when you commit yourselves to making a difference.

I have been a professor and university administrator for thirty-five years, and I have attended my share of meetings. Most meetings lead to more meetings. And to follow-up phone calls, the creation of commissions and task forces, the writing of reports and dissenting opinions, and to more meetings to explain why you said what you said. In short, we talk the talk.

What is so attractive about the Clinton Global Initiative is that President Clinton insists that we not simply talk about the world's greatest challenges, but that we make a commitment to do something about them. He asks us to walk the walk. To turn ideas into action. To look for meaningful and measureable results, so we can improve our own communities, our country, and the world.

CGI U is engaging this generation of college students in the serious issues of our day – and supporting the next generation of leaders who will find solutions to our challenges. I am proud to say that for many decades UT has encouraged the spirit of volunteerism on our own campus. In 1992, we gave a home to that energy by creating the UT Volunteer Center. Since then, the UT Student Volunteer Board has recruited more than 3,000 UT students every year for service to our community. "The Project," as we call it, is a very popular event that has become UT's traditional day of service. And now our Volunteer and Service Learning Center is working hard to give every UT student the opportunity to serve our community by the time they graduate.

We volunteer not because it's fashionable, but because it's good. It builds a personal relationship with our community. It brings us face to face with hunger, and poverty, and homelessness, and the health of our planet. When we volunteer, we see the need for mercy and kindness in all things.

And so I commend you all for coming together here in Austin to discuss the pressing issues of the day and to commit yourselves to action. In the weeks and months ahead, I look forward to seeing the results of your hard work for the greater good.

There are many people to thank for making these two days of meetings possible. Too many to name here. On our side of the collaboration – my thanks to Soncia Reagins-Lilly, Dean of Students, and Keshav Rajagopalan, President of Student Government. And thanks to all the CGI U staff and UT people who made this happen.

So again, Mr. President, thank you for your leadership in bringing together this outstanding group of university students who are the bright hope of our future. And thank you, students, for your commitment to action. The world needs you right now.