



**UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION IN CANADA
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2018**

**MR. LOUIS AUDET
2018 GLOBAL CITIZEN LAUREATE**

Madame Chair,

Distinguished Head Table Guest,

Dear Friends and Supporters of the United Nations Organization,

Good evening!

First of all, I would like to thank you for the honor you are bestowing upon me tonight, I am very touched that you have chosen me this year.

The fact is that now more than ever, we need the leadership of the United Nations Organization. Indeed, our planetary stakes have multiplied to new heights. Whether we think of peace and security, climate change, sustainable development, equitable trade, human rights, disarmament, terrorism, humanitarian and sanitary crises, equality between women and men, governance, food supply, the stakes are global and we are dependent upon one another.

On the United Nations Organization internet site, I counted 16 programs, 15 entities and 6 related organizations. Clearly, the issues are complex and numerous. To further complicate things, many countries among the largest do not subscribe to all United Nations Organization mandates. Some nations do not believe that they are part of a global community which must work in a cooperative mode. Let us consider the International Court of Justice in The Hague for example. Many countries, while officially recognizing its authority, will not submit to its judgement for certain aspects of their behavior.



This refusal to submit to the collective good and natural justice sets the tone and has repercussions throughout society, as these countries effectively declare themselves untouchable.

And it is this tendency to preserve individual interests that explains the incapacity of rich nations to understand that immigration, whether on an economic or refugee bases, is unavoidable. Closing borders is not a realistic option. We must find new mechanisms to manage the phenomenon and rich nations must become more welcoming.

But let us carry on. During a conference I gave on October 17th at the CORIM, I mentioned that the rise of populism, nurtured by manipulative politicians, originates from a feeling of exclusion experienced by at least 42% of the population here in Canada and certainly more in some other countries. Their inability to improve their situation in the context of growing economic disparities morphs into a global rejection of the values of our liberal democracies.

What can we do? We have no other choice but to forge a new social pact built on concrete measures to reduce income inequalities, as distinct from income tax transfers. Here are some of the measures that would likely help to correct the situation:

- 1) First, elevate education to become the number one priority to increase the standard of living, incorporating along the way general culture and citizen training. We also need to raise social media literacy to limit the power of demagogues. By the way, the United Nations Organization has created and offers such a program;
- 2) With regards to financial actors:
 - a) We must regulate those actors in the financial markets who abuse their power to create artificial wealth based on speculation;
 - b) We must foster a long-term investment culture, repositioning finance at the service of industry;



- 3) At the government level, we must reposition the action of governments on their fundamental role, that of creating, through congruent policy, a favorable environment for economic actors;
- 4) With regards to competition, we must put an end to economic hyper concentration whether vertical or horizontal of the AT&T and Time Warner variety so that competition plays to the advantage of consumers as well as give teeth to the Bodies in charge of overseeing healthy competition.

These are just a few of the measures which could help. As you can see, this presupposes that collective interest takes precedence over strict individual freedom.

We, in the business community, are called upon to exert moral leadership by enhancing the value of work at all levels of the enterprise. We must look for new means to reduce income disparities. Together, we must build a new social pact.

Harmony in our communities depends on our capacity to allow each person to grow in an inclusive way.

I thank you for your presence here tonight. I thank you for supporting the United Nations Organization the way you do. Thank you for your encouragement and enjoy the evening.