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## Opening Remarks for the Inauguration of the IMF Center

### “Working Toward a Common Future”

By Horst Köhler

Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund

IMF Gallery, November 30, 2000

Good evening Mayor Williams, honored guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Tonight marks the official opening of the IMF Center, a space designed with the needs of the public uppermost in mind as we go about the task of making the International Monetary Fund more open, transparent, and responsive. The Center attempts to meet this challenge through exhibits, publications, videos, economic forums, and briefings. Through these means, it is my hope that our guests will acquire a better, richer understanding of the IMF’s work and the major force for good that it has come to represent for its 182 member countries and publics, including the citizens of Washington, D.C.

A good starting point is the Center’s new exhibit, *Money Matters: The Importance of Global Cooperation*, which provides a quick snapshot of how the international monetary system—from the industrial revolution to the dawn of the new millennium—has evolved and adapted to the tumultuous events of the last 100 years. Going through the exhibit, I was impressed by how clearly it explains the role and function of the Fund in this process. I was also interested by the mini-theater and its *Millennium* video which provides a detailed series of case studies of how the Fund works with its members on a day-to-day basis. But the Center’s activities go far beyond exhibits. The Center hosts its well-known *Economic Forum* series that routinely draw overflow audiences from the local community; it also offers regular briefings on the IMF, as well as interactive lesson-plans for elementary and high school students.

The Center is also home to the IMF's Civic & Community Relations Office, which since 1994 has worked closely with local schools and nonprofit charitable organizations and the government of the District of Columbia to enrich, as best we can, the lives of this city's less fortunate citizens. Under its auspices, close relations with the local community have been forged with such nonprofit groups as the Fishing School in Northeast D.C. and the Calvary Women's Shelter. We are also very proud of having been the recipient of an award presented to us by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments in recognition of IMF staff support for the D.C. Child Care Education Scholarships Project. In this spirit, Mayor Williams, it is certainly worth mentioning that my predecessor, Michel Camdessus, had the honor of joining with you last year when the IMF donated computers to the Thomson Elementary School.

We care about Washington and its population. Washington is not only the official home of the IMF, it is also a city which many Fund staff have chosen to call home because of the many amenities and convenience it offers. We, my wife and I, have just moved to Washington, and we are already delighted to be able to enjoy its cosmopolitan feel, its world-class museums and arts centers, not to mention its great diversity of restaurants. Washington gives us a lot; it is only fitting that we, the IMF, give something in return. This Center is evidence of our strong commitment to participate actively in the life of Washington, D.C.

All of which is to say that we take special pleasure in welcoming Washington D.C.'s Mayor Anthony Williams who, in the two short years since he took office, has already made a large difference in helping transform this unique capital city into a beacon of hope and progress for everyone.

Mr. Mayor, on behalf of all of the Executive Board and the IMF staff, I thank you for being with us tonight. It is a true honor and a great pleasure to have you participate in this inauguration.