

Paul Collier's *The Bottom Billion* wins 2008 Lionel Gelber Prize

Tuesday, March 4, 2008 (Toronto and Washington, D.C.) — Oxford University economist **Paul Collier** has won the 2008 Lionel Gelber Prize for his book *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It* (Oxford University Press).

Judith Gelber, Chair of the Lionel Gelber Prize Board and niece of Lionel Gelber, announced the winner today in Toronto. Presented annually by The Lionel Gelber Foundation in partnership with the Munk Centre for International Studies at the University of Toronto and FOREIGN POLICY magazine, the Lionel Gelber Prize is awarded to the author of the world's best book on international affairs. The *Economist* has called it "the world's most important award for non-fiction."

Paul Collier will accept the \$15,000 award in **Toronto on Tuesday, April 1, 2008**, at the Munk Centre, where he will also deliver the Lionel Gelber Lecture. The event begins at 6 p.m. People wishing to attend can register online at www.utoronto.ca/mcis/gelber. FOREIGN POLICY magazine hosts an event in Washington later in April.

Jury Chair Barbara McDougall, Canada's former Secretary of State for External Affairs, says *The Bottom Billion* "provides a penetrating reassessment of why vast populations remain trapped in poverty, despite endless debate over foreign aid policy among wealthy countries and institutions."

Born in Yorkshire, England, Collier is Professor of Economics and Director of the Centre for the Study of African Economies at Oxford University. He formerly served as Director of Research at the World Bank and as an advisor to the British government's commission on Africa.

In *The Bottom Billion*, Collier sees 980 million people around the globe living in "trapped countries clearly heading towards a black hole." Many of these people are in Africa, but there are large pockets of severe poverty in such places as Bolivia, Cambodia, East Timor, Haiti, Laos, North Korea, Myanmar, Yemen, and elsewhere.

Collier asserts the challenge of lifting them out of poverty is akin to rebuilding Europe after World War II, requiring not only immediate aid but also trade and security effectively promoted by such multilateral institutions as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. The sad fact of the new millennium, Collier writes, is that, even as rich countries are getting richer, the bottom billion is sinking into intractable poverty that will have disastrous consequences for future generations. Solving the poverty puzzle, Collier contends, will require practical—and sometimes controversial—policies, including the use of selective military interventions to resolve costly civil wars and corrupt governance.

Niall Ferguson, in the *New York Times*, calls the *Bottom Billion* an “elegant edifice,” standing on a “foundation of painstaking quantitative research.” *Financial Times* columnist Tim Hartford describes it as “an arresting, provocative book, written by an expert in plain English.”

The Lionel Gelber Prize was established in 1989 by Canadian diplomat Lionel Gelber.

Other finalists for the 2008 Lionel Gelber Prize included:

Will Kymlicka -- *Multicultural Odysseys: Navigating the New International Politics of Diversity* (Oxford University Press)

Erez Manela -- *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford University Press)

Richard J. Samuels -- *Securing Japan: Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia* (Cornell University Press)

Tim Weiner -- *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA* (Doubleday)

Members of the Lionel Gelber Prize Jury:

The Honourable Barbara McDougall, Jury Chair, was Canada's former Secretary of State for External Affairs and Member of Parliament for nine years. She is an advisor to Toronto-based law firm Aird and Berlis, LLP and a director of the Ottawa-based International Development Research Centre.

Paul Blustein is Journalist in Residence in the Global Economy and Development Program at The Brookings Institution. He was with the Washington Post from 1987 to 2006 where he served as both the Asian Economics Correspondent and International Economics Correspondent.

G. John Ikenberry is the Albert G. Milbank Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs.

William W. Keller is Professor of International Security and Political Science at the University of Pittsburgh, where he holds the Wesley W. Posvar chair at the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs and is director of the Matthew B. Ridgway Center for International Security.

David M. Malone is Canada's High Commissioner to India and author of *The International Struggle over Iraq: Politics in the UN Security Council, 1980-2005* (Oxford University Press), a finalist for the 2007 Lionel Gelber Prize.

For further information on the Lionel Gelber Prize: contact
Diana Crosbie, Crosbie Communications, 416-360-6625 diana@crosbie.on.ca

Munk Centre is located at 1 Devonshire Place, University of Toronto. The Lionel Gelber Prize website is www.utoronto.ca/mcis/gelber. The website contains an illustration of this year's winning book cover as well as background information on the Prize, previous winners and a biography of Lionel Gelber.