

**SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
SPRING CONVOCATION
OCTOBER 9 and 10, 2008**

Convocation Address

By Dr. Cary Fowler

Executive Director of the Global Crop Diversity Trust

An honorary doctor of laws was conferred on Dr. Cary Fowler during the Faculty of Applied Sciences and Science Ceremony on Thursday, October 9, 2008. The following is a transcription of Dr. Fowlers's convocation address.

Mr. Chancellor, Mr. President, distinguished guests, graduates. First, congratulations to the graduates, it's a special day for all of you and thanks to this university to which I owe so much myself.

I don't have to tell any of the graduates today that preparation is everything. The University's motto "Thinking of the World" really gives evidence to this. A fan once congratulated the golfing great Arnold Palmer on his good luck during one of the rounds of golf that he was playing, and Arnold Palmer said back to him, "You know it's funny, the more I practice, the luckier I get."

Many of us, and I think particularly those of us with formal education and higher incomes, take

we have had a food crisis, we have had an energy crisis, we have had a climate crisis, and we have had a financial crisis, and of course this adds to water and environmental crises. None of these crises went away, we just kept adding them. But agricultural crises, food crises, have a way of trumping all the others. There's never going to be a good time to secure the biological foundation of our agricultural system. But we know that if agriculture fails to adapt to climate change, so will we. We have to therefore fashion agricultural systems that produce more food more sustainably with less water, less energy. If we don't, the other crises in the world will simply spiral out of control.

So, let me be clear and scientific at the same time and say we can solve this crisis. We can do it without fancy technologies, we can do it without going back to the Stone Age, and we can do it