

## HSBC Group head office Opening ceremony

Speech by Sir John Bond  
Group Chairman, HSBC Holdings plc

April 2 2003

My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen. Good evening.

Let me thank you all for coming here in an uncertain world to celebrate this important occasion with us. It is a pleasure to see so many old friends of HSBC here this evening.

HSBC is composed of a family of banks with very different origins in different parts of the world. But wherever we are, customers are at the heart of our business. And it's wonderful that so many of you have travelled long distances to be with us today, some from as far away as Hong Kong.

On behalf of my colleagues I'd like to welcome you to the official opening of HSBC's Group new headquarters building. This is HSBC's sixth head office building. And when we started thinking about what we wanted, we came up with a challenge for our architects. We wanted the building to reflect HSBC's character.

Simple. Straightforward – and reasonably big!

On the inside, the design was to encourage the teamwork that is so important to HSBC, by enabling our people to interact easily and well with each other.

And the external façade – the face we show to the world – is indeed simple and straightforward. I hope you'll agree that it's also elegant, functional and strong.

But of course, a building is made by the people who inhabit it. It's my colleagues who work here in this building that make HSBC what it is and their colleagues around the world. We hope that we've given them here an environment in which they can flourish.

For that I must thank a number of people:

Willie Purves who had the vision of a consolidated head office.

John Breen and Mike Smith who turned that vision into reality.

Wilfrid Newton who oversaw the project for our board.

And Keith Whitson who led the project to completion and within budget.

The architects, Foster & Partners, for fulfilling our brief so admirably.

Ove Arup, our structural, electrical and mechanical engineers; Canary Wharf who did the shell and the core

construction, and the fit-out; and our quantity surveyors Davis, Langdon and Everest.

Moving 8,000 people is a herculean task. And I thank all my colleagues who worked so hard and well to make the move here as painless as it was.

Especially the new headquarters project team, which was led by Nic Boyde, and the Information Technology team, which was led by Roy Culligan, they worked weekend after weekend to get us in.

And the many thousands of others who contributed. I'd like to thank them all.

The building is now home to 8,000 of our colleagues. And I should stress that the head office function is the smallest part of this building. I'd like to re-assure those of you who are shareholders that the vast majority of my colleagues here look after our clients and they produce profits for our business. Something like 6 per cent of the world's foreign exchange turnover comes through HSBC, and most of that is conducted in this building.

**encourage the  
teamwork**

Like HSBC all around the world, we are determined to be good neighbours.

We want the local community to benefit from our arrival, over and above the day-to-day economic impact of 8,000 people. And to do this we've made a conscious effort to support our neighbouring communities.

When we vacated our old buildings, we were left with 3,000 tons of redundant office furniture. In what we believe may be the biggest recycling of its kind ever undertaken in Britain, we've arranged for it to go to Green-Works in East London who will refurbish and redistribute it for the benefit of community organisations, schools, charities and business start-ups.

This also has the added bonus of creating new jobs at Green-Works for the homeless, the long-term unemployed or people who are disadvantaged locally.

We have also made significant donations to Richard House Children's Hospice, to Mile End park, to an E-skills4industry scheme in Tower Hamlets and to a number of different educational projects in the area.

Those of you who know HSBC well, will know how much we do to support education around the world.

To celebrate this evening I am delighted to announce a new project. HSBC will donate half-a-million pounds to the Outward Bound Trust to create a five-year programme which will send 150 children every year from five local schools on Outward Bound residential courses. The schools are St Michael's School in Bermondsey; St Ursula's in Greenwich; St

Paul's Way and Stepney Green Secondary in Tower Hamlets; and the Royal Docks Community School in Newham.

We support Outward Bound because we see the importance of giving young people the opportunity to build their confidence by testing themselves in a new environment.

And being HSBC, we're always keen to see that our money is well spent. So we will be commissioning and publishing research as a guide for others on the programme's effectiveness in lifting children's aspirations and improving their academic achievements.

This building is at the beginning of its life and we thought it appropriate that we should

mark its opening by reflecting on the international character of HSBC and the importance we attach to young people around the world who represent our future.

So I am delighted that we've invited five HSBC Scholars

from around the world who will perform the opening ceremony for us:

Dwight Harrison from the UK; Tiona Lawson-Turner from the USA; Anais Roucroy from France; Jadde Jaqueline Souza Santos from Brazil; and Wong Wing Hung from Hong Kong.

So it is now my very great pleasure to ask our HSBC Scholars to cut the ribbon.

Are you ready?

On the count of three. One, two three...

[Ribbon cutting]

Thank you all for coming. We look forward to having a celebratory glass with you.

**international  
character of HSBC**