

Address by Frédéric DUNHAM, President of the International Commission of Rotary Club Bruxelles Sud, to the audience of the Brussels International Singers' Christmas Carols Concert, Brussels Conservatory, 7 December 2019

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Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends, Chers Amis,

I'm quite surprised to find myself here in front of you as I am a very, very poor singer; I am going to do my duty and give you some information about our Rotary Club, the Brussels South Rotary Club.

As you know, as last year, a part of this evening's ticket sales will help us to continue supporting our charities.

But what really is the Rotary Club?

Le premier Rotary Club fut créé en 1905 par Paul Harris à Chicago.

Le but principal était de faciliter l'amitié entre des personnes de professions et de religions différentes, de développer l'idée d'une bonne éthique dans les affaires, de comprendre l'évolution du monde et par ailleurs d'aider ceux qui étaient en difficulté.

The Brussels South Rotary Club was founded in 1956.

During its 115 years' existence, the Rotary International has become an important network with 1,200,000 members; the Rotary foundation was created, allowing very important international actions; for example the Rotary International, in association with the Bill Gates Foundation, has been carrying out a global polio vaccination campaign for some years, and polio is nearly eradicated, with the exception of war zones such as Afghanistan and some zones in Pakistan where some medical team members were killed by anti-westerners.

Another global challenge is to bring drinkable water to everybody.

And our club is involved in that with four other Belgian clubs and the club of Kankan in Guinea; the local club of Kankan is checking the drillings locally, creating water wells for schools and hospitals.

And at home?

Localement et comme souvent, nos actions sont souvent destinées aux jeunes en difficulté soit socialement, soit atteints par des handicaps :

C'est ainsi que nous soutenons l'Institut IRSA à Uccle, l'école Chanterelle, l'école Magellan, la Châtaigneraie et nous aidons chaque année les enfants du home Juliette Herman à partir en vacances pour plusieurs semaines en vélo.

Every year we organise a student exchange programme for students reaching the end of high school; every year our club receives three students coming from all over the world and sends abroad three Belgian teenagers; again, this is done with the help of the local Rotary clubs of the countries involved.

To end this message, I think that Christmas is a good period to remind ourselves of the four questions of the Rotary Club, which are used by every Rotarian but can also be useful for each of you, every day:

Of the things we say or do:

First: is it the truth?

Second: Is it fair for all concerned?

Third: Will it build goodwill?

Fourth: Will it build better friendship?

Merci beaucoup pour votre attention ; Place aux Carols

Thank you for your attention and thank you again for your help.

On behalf of my Rotarian friends, I wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year, et de très bonnes fêtes de fin d'année.

Frederic Dunham