

My priorities as Secretary-General ~ A Stronger United Nations for a Better World

The spirit and vision that infused world leaders in 1945 inspire me every day... The promise and values of those early years in the UN's history are as relevant today in our considerably more complex and interdependent world as they were over 60 years ago...

In the last 60 years, the UN has shown it can:

- Serve as a forum to set a global agenda;
- Build consensus on contentious issues;
- Set standards for nations to live by;
- Play the role of honest broker;
- Keep fighting parties apart;
- Help bring justice to those discriminated against;
- Deliver humanitarian assistance and ensure access to food, medicine, education and health care;
- Improve living conditions and alleviate poverty;
- Pursue a vigorous development agenda.

The challenges we face today are many, and my resolve is strong. I am determined to make progress on the pressing issues of our time, step by step, by building on achievements along the way, working with Member States and civil society.

As Secretary-General, I resolve to:

- Lead by example;
- Seek excellence with humility;
- Set the highest ethical standard;
- Pursue dialogue and engagement;
- Play the role of harmonizer and bridge-builder;
- Make transparency and accountability the cornerstone of my tenure;
- Be animated by both passion and compassion in achieving our goals;
- Be sensitive to the concerns of all Member States, big and small.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

CLIMATE CHANGE



Secretary-General travels to the Arctic ice rim in his ongoing efforts to mobilize action to address the impact of climate change.

Climate change remains a top priority. It affects everything from the health of the world economy to the health of our citizens, from energy security to international security. Climate change is a global challenge requiring a global solution. Prompt, effective action is needed to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions, protect the world's most vulnerable populations, and catalyze low-carbon prosperity for all.

Copenhagen helped build broad political consensus on climate change and marked an essential beginning in the process leading to a comprehensive global agreement. The challenge now is to build on this consensus within the global, dual-track negotiating process under the UNFCCC. We must also continue to press for higher levels of ambition to minimize the risks of runaway climate change.

There is still much work ahead of us. Every year of delay is estimated to cost \$500 billion according to the International Energy Agency. Scientists warn that if the world continues business as usual, emissions will soar and global temperatures could rise upward of four degrees Celsius by the end of the century.

In 2010, I will continue to work closely with world leaders to ensure climate change remains at the top of their agenda. In addition, I have launched an advisory group on Climate Change Financing to recommend potential funding sources to support mitigation and adaptation in developing countries. I will soon establish a high-level panel to address the interconnected issues of climate change and sustainable development.

DISARMAMENT



This is a cause that has lain dormant for too long. Yet now we have vital momentum on our side. Let us be the ones who agree to banish the bomb. The historic Security Council meeting chaired by United States President Barack Obama in September 2009 shows that the will exists to change. Both the US and Russia have already pledged to cut their nuclear arsenals.

We need to obtain the ratifications to bring the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) into force. And next May, when we review the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), we have the opportunity to make real progress.

I remain committed to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and I share the desire of the international community to resolve the situation involving Iran. I also reaffirm the need for a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East.

COMBATING THE FINANCIAL CRISIS AND POVERTY



National leaders manage the global economy. My job is to help manage the impact and the consequences of the global economic crisis, especially on the most vulnerable countries. It is a sad fact that the people least responsible for the global economic turmoil have been hit hardest by its effects. They are not seeing the so-called "green shoots" of recovery. Jobs and incomes remain scarce, even if some markets are rebounding.

Just six years before the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the danger is growing that many countries will not achieve them. As many as 100 million people have fallen below the poverty line since the financial crisis began.

That is why the UN has already taken action. We have put forward a Global Jobs Pact to encourage balanced and sustainable growth. We are creating a Global Impact Vulnerability Alert System to give us real-time data and analysis on who is being hurt, and where, so we can help them. And we will review the MDGs at a special summit next year.

But the crisis cannot be solved by the UN alone. Collective leadership is required. At the G-20 summit in London, \$1 trillion was promised to help the poor. Those pledges of aid and debt relief must be followed through. Trade barriers must be removed to ensure all countries have genuinely equal access to markets.

GLOBAL HEALTH



The H1N1 pandemic has been a test of our preparedness. I am proud of how the components of the UN system have worked together to deal with the crisis. My role is to safeguard the interests of the poorest and, following talks with major pharmaceutical companies, we now have hundreds of millions of vaccines on hand for people who could otherwise not afford them.

H1N1 is not the only health front where the UN is making progress. We continue our efforts to roll out millions of insecticide-treated bed nets to protect people against malaria, we remain vigilant in our efforts to ensure the widest possible access to affordable drugs for HIV sufferers, and we press ahead in our endeavour to rid the world of polio.

PEACE AND SECURITY



We must strengthen the UN's ability to play its role to the fullest extent in conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding – these are all part of a continuum, and our approach must be integrated, coordinated and comprehensive. By enhancing our capacity for preventive diplomacy and supporting sustainable peace processes, we will build long-term solutions and respond more effectively to conflict.

Sudan

Sudan requires our special attention. The pace of implementing the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) ending the civil war between north and south must be accelerated, and we cannot be deterred by inter-ethnic violence or any other potential threats to the pact.

In 2010 the country is preparing for critical national elections, to be followed a referendum on whether the south becomes independent. The UN stands ready to ensure the people of Sudan are able to stage those votes successfully.

In Darfur, the joint African Union-United Nations peacekeeping force has already had results, reducing the level of violence and helping stabilize the region. By the end of the year almost all of the mandated blue helmets should be in place.

But the tragedy has not ended. We have to tackle the causes of the conflict as well. All the parties – the Sudanese Government, the rebel movements, civil society and countries in the region – must come together for comprehensive peace talks and make serious efforts to reach an agreement.

Middle East

The region is as complex, fragile and dangerous as it has ever been, and yet there are opportunities for reconciliation to be grasped. The deep mistrust between Palestinians and Israelis has forestalled a meaningful peace process. But a constructive UN role within the Quartet and in support of the Arab Peace Initiative will hopefully encourage movement towards a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. We must press for a two-State solution that allows both sides to live in peace.

Iraq

Iraq remains the whole world's problem. We are all aware of the road that brought us to this point, but the UN can be instrumental in developing an inclusive political process to promote national reconciliation, in cultivating a regional environment that is more stable and in providing humanitarian assistance to innocent civilians, including the almost 4 million refugees and internally displaced Iraqis.

Haiti

Haiti today enjoys a historic opportunity for progress. Five years into the stabilization process, there is substantial reason to believe that the country is moving away from a past of conflict, towards a brighter future of peaceful development. However, the progress that has been made remains extremely fragile, and is susceptible to setbacks or reversal. Continued commitment by the Haitian leadership and people, by the United Nations and the international community more generally is critical for the consolidation of stability.

WOMEN



Gender equality is central to all of our work at the UN. But for far too many people today, the issue is still seen as “women’s concern.” We must make sure the international community is united in the struggle for women’s rights because the world will only achieve its full potential when women are empowered.

A critical element to that fight is stopping the epidemic of violence against women worldwide – whether in the home, the workplace or elsewhere. It goes against everything the UN stands for, and we have to end the culture of silence that serves only to protect the perpetrators.

This year the General Assembly endorsed my recommendation to establish one new agency to deal with all gender issues. I look forward to setting up this body and to appointing a very powerful female leader to run it.

RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT



In September 2009, the UN General Assembly adopted, by consensus, its first resolution on the Responsibility to Protect – a major advance as the international community seeks to strengthen its efforts to protect the world’s peoples from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. The expression “never again” must hold real meaning. I will strive to translate the concept of the Responsibility to Protect from words to deeds.

UN REFORM AND ACCOUNTABILITY



Effectiveness and rationalization have to be the touchstone of how the Organization measures up to new challenges. We must simplify and streamline our rules, policies and processes, and align our practices with the best from both private and public sectors.

We created the new Department of Field Support to ensure our peacekeeping missions are better served – against much scepticism, this has proved a smart choice. We’ve established a UN-wide Ethics Office and we’ve set up a new system of internal justice. We are pushing through new budget mechanisms. We are demanding full financial disclosure from senior managers.

More women have been appointed to senior posts in the Organization than ever before; in the past three years, the number of female in such posts has more than doubled.

Change inevitably brings resistance. But a stronger and more effective UN is in all our interests. That’s why we are working so hard towards it.