

President Obama's message to Islamic world draws praise from UN chief



US President Barack Obama (left) welcomes Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to the White House on 10 March 2009 (file)

4 June 2009 – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon strongly welcomed the speech delivered today in Cairo by President Barack Obama, voicing hope that it will herald the opening of a new chapter in relations between the United States and the Islamic world.

“The Secretary-General believes that President Obama’s speech is a crucial step in bridging divides and promoting intercultural understanding, which is a major objective of the United Nations,” Mr. Ban’s spokesperson said in a [statement](#).

Strongly welcoming the speech’s message of peace, understanding and reconciliation, Mr. Ban hopes this will have “a positive impact on the peace process in the Middle East and the resolution of a number of conflicts in the Middle East and beyond.”

The Secretary-General is on his way to Washington D.C., where he is scheduled to meet with US Vice-President Joseph Biden this afternoon. Tonight, he plans to take part in a dialogue on international affairs at the Brookings Institution, spokesperson Michele Montas told reporters.

Mr. Ban is slated to meet with US Secretary of Energy Steven Chu tomorrow morning before returning to New York, she added.

=====

STATEMENT:

New York, 4 June 2009 - Statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the

Secretary-General on US President Obama's speech in Cairo

The Secretary-General is strongly encouraged by the speech delivered today in Cairo by President Barack Obama of the United States of America. He strongly welcomes its message of peace, understanding and reconciliation.

The Secretary-General believes that President Obama's speech is a crucial step in bridging divides and promoting intercultural understanding, which is a major objective of the United Nations. His message reaffirms our shared commitment "to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours", as enshrined in the Preamble of the United Nations Charter.

The Secretary-General hopes that President Obama's message will herald the opening of a new chapter in relations between the United States and the Islamic world. He hopes that this will have a positive impact on the peace process in the Middle East and the resolution of a number of conflicts in the Middle East and beyond.