

Current global crises call for fresh thinking and new ideas from UN – Ban



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and UNDP Administrator Helen Clark at the launch of "UN Ideas that Changed the World"

14 September 2009 – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today stressed the need for fresh thinking on a range of global crises currently facing the world – including food, fuel, flu, finance and climate change – the likes of which, he emphasized, have not been seen in generations.

"We are at a pivotal moment in world affairs... More than ever before, we need new ideas that will be able to steer our multilateral ship into calmer seas," Mr. Ban **said** at the launch in New York of "UN Ideas that Changed the World," published by the UN Intellectual History Project.

The publication is the 17th volume in a series published by the Indiana University Press, and is a culmination of a 10-year research effort to trace the intellectual history of the UN.

"It shows that ideas have been an important part of the UN's contributions at every stage of the Organization's work, since its very founding," said Mr. Ban, who paid tribute to the project's three directors and authors of the latest volume – Sir Richard Jolly, Louis Emmerij, and Professor Thomas G. Weiss.

"The French writer Victor Hugo rightly wrote that nothing is stronger than an idea whose time has come," stated the Secretary-General. "Finding those ideas and making them work for the benefit of all humankind, has been and should continue to be a central mission of the United Nations."

Throughout its history, great ideas have emanated from the UN, including human rights for all, sustainable development, women's empowerment and the responsibility to protect, he said.

"The United Nations has provided a home for the genesis of these and other ideas that have been crucial in shaping the way the international community has sought to address the challenges of our time."

He said he wanted the UN to be a "powerhouse of ideas, a platform for debating them, and a safe haven for honest exchanges.

"I look forward to encouraging this process and building on this important UN tradition."

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