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## **Ban commits UN to harnessing support for African development needs**



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addresses opening of African Union Summit in Addis Ababa

31 January 2010 – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today pledged to mobilize support to tackle the critical challenges threatening peace and prosperity across Africa, including extreme poverty, economic and social well-being, and the ravages of climate change.

In **remarks** to the opening of the African Union Summit, Mr. Ban highlighted the United Nations gathering in September on the Millennium Development Goals (**MDGs**) – a set of internationally agreed targets to eradicate poverty and other social ills by 2015.

The September Summit on the MDGs will take place along with the opening of the General Assembly, where leaders of the 192 UN Member States meet each year at its Headquarters in New York.

“We have made great strides toward the Millennium Development Goals, but there is not much time to the 2015 deadline, and still much distance to travel,” Mr. Ban said in his message to the 14th AU Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The global recession, energy crisis, food insecurity and climate change have all made development more difficult and more urgent, he told more than 50 heads of State and Government attending the three-day meeting.

“Now is the critical time to mobilize action,” he stressed, adding that the September Summit will focus on harnessing support for the success of the MDGs, identifying gaps that need urgent attention, emphasizing priority areas for action and building a coalition capable of taking action.

"We have seen a sharp decrease in malaria and measles deaths across the continent, vital gains in primary school enrollment [and] marked improvements in child health," said Mr. Ban.

He noted, however, that too many "women still die in childbirth, too many children still never live to see their fifth birthday, and too many women are unable to realize their full potential," underscoring the need for donors to deliver on their promises.

Productive employment and decent work for all Africans, especially for women and young people, should be the development priority for the continent, said Mr. Ban.

"The most important employment sector remains agriculture, with more than half of the workforce," said Mr. Ban. "And of course, we must invest in women and girls. When we empower women, we empower Africa."

The Secretary-General also commended the African Union Summit for highlighting the potential of knowledge and Information and Communication technology (ICTs) in spurring development.

In addition, Mr. Ban announced the creation of the MDG Advocacy Group, consisting of eminent personalities from all walks of life who will "sound the global call for action" at the September Summit and put their influence to work for the cause.

Turning to global warming, Mr. Ban praised nations which signed the Copenhagen Accord at the Copenhagen Climate Change Summit in December and urged others to follow suite, stressing that nowhere are the linkages between sustainable development and climate clearer than in Africa.

"African nations are among the least responsible yet the most susceptible to climate change impacts," he said. "We must keep up the momentum towards achieving a binding global climate agreement as soon as possible."

Highlighting the need of developing countries to rapidly scale-up their clean energy programmes and their need for significant support to adapt to the consequences of climate change, Mr. Ban said some \$30 billion is slated for immediate circulation over the next three years.

"Looking forward, \$100 billion annually is to be mobilized per year by 2020 for developing countries," he added. "We hope to move quickly to secure these resources and implement programmes on the ground."

In a wide-ranging speech, Mr. Ban also promoted the effectiveness of conflict prevention over intervention between warring parties, pointing to the recent successful cooperation between the UN, AU and other partners in Guinea.

"I strongly urge our partners to support the transition, prepare for the elections and implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry that investigated the 28 September massacres in Conakry," he said, adding that of the 13 African nations scheduled to hold elections in the next two years, six are in countries with UN peacekeeping or peacebuilding operations.

Mr. Ban said that he attended a mini-summit earlier on Sunday on the future of Sudan, where time is of the essence," he stressed. "The elections are just three months away [and] the two referenda to determine the future shape of Sudan are in just under a year."

At the same time, millions continue to be displaced on the western flank of Sudan in the region of Darfur, noted Mr. Ban, expressing approval that African leaders supported UN efforts to secure a peaceful resolution to the Sudanese North-South and Darfurian conflicts.

At the mini-summit on Sudan, hosted by AU Commission Chairperson Jean Ping, Mr. Ban also announced his intention to appoint his Assistant-Secretary-General for Political Affairs

Haile Menkerios as the new head of the UN Mission in Sudan (**UNMIS**) to start at the end of February with a view to facilitate the political process.

Before leaving Addis Ababa, Mr. Ban told reporters that he also informed the AU Summit of his plans to name Vice-President of the European Commission Margot Wallström as his Special Representative to tackle sexual violence against women and children in conflict situations.

Meanwhile, the recently appointed Joint Special Representative for the UN-AU peacekeeping operation in Darfur (**UNAMID**) Ibrahim Gambari met with AU Commission leadership, as well as several diplomatic delegations on the sidelines of the AU Summit.

In meetings with advisors to Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir, Mr. Gambari **stressed** that enhancing the security of civilians and internally displaced people (IDPs) providing more proactive support for the ongoing peace process and assisting in the normalization of relations between Chad and the Sudan were among UNAMID's priorities.

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