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Looking back, Ban calls 2010 ‘a big year for the United Nations’



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon briefs journalists at end-of-year press conference

17 December 2010 – In his end-of-year “state of the world” news conference, [Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon](#) today [called](#) 2010 “a big year for the United Nations,” with progress on issues from biodiversity to electoral support in Iraq and Afghanistan, but warned of challenges ahead in Sudan, the Middle East and other world flashpoints.

“Looking ahead, our challenge is to carry our progress forward,” he said of the agenda for 2011, which he will lay out more fully next month. “Resources are tighter. Demands on the UN are growing. This requires us to focus more on prevention, preparedness, being proactive, being persistent, all within a framework that is transparent and accountable.”

Dealing with potential crises looming on the eve of the New Year, Mr. Ban focused on Côte d’Ivoire, where outgoing President Laurent Gbagbo’s refusal to step down despite opposition leader Alassane Ouattara’s clear victory in November elections has led to renewed violence in the divided country, and Sudan where the South is to hold a referendum on independence next month.

He stressed that Mr. Gbagbo’s efforts to flout the public will cannot be allowed to stand, and pledged UN assistance to help the northern and southern Sudanese address common challenges following the 9 January vote.

Turning to the Middle East, he once again urged Israelis and Palestinians to engage seriously and be forthcoming on substance and reiterated Israel's obligation to freeze all settlement activity, including in East Jerusalem.

On Myanmar, he called the elections, despite serious shortcomings, and the release of democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi significant developments, and said that the Government can and should build on them, and pledged continued long-term comprehensive engagement.

The UN will also seek progress on many of the longer-term challenges, Mr. Ban said, including peace on the Korean Peninsula, the Iranian nuclear issue, bringing a stable government to war-ravaged Somalia, and helping to reunify Cyprus in a bi-zonal, bi-communal country with a Turkish Cypriot Constituent State and a Greek Cypriot Constituent State of equal status.

On Haiti, he voiced concern at allegations of fraud in the recent first round of elections and pledged continued UN support to ensure that they reflect the will of the Haitian people.

Looking back on 2010, Mr. Ban cited progress made on the UN anti-poverty Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#)), which seek to slash a host of social ills by 2015, the \$40 billion mobilized for the new Global Strategy on Women's and Children's Health and advances in Nagoya, Japan, on conserving biodiversity and in Cancun, Mexico, on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, forest protection, climate finance, adaptation and technology.

He also mentioned UN preventive diplomacy with support for 34 different mediation, facilitation and dialogue efforts, citing the easing of the political crisis in Kyrgyzstan and keeping the transition to democracy on track in Guinea.

The UN was also very active on the humanitarian front in the face of natural disasters, responding to the devastating earthquakes in Haiti and Chile, as well as the floods in Pakistan, Mr. Ban stressed.

“Looking back and looking ahead, I want to reiterate a point that I believe defines today's complex and connected world,” he concluded. “Truly global action requires mobilizing support, creating broad alliances and building coalitions. In the search for solutions, progress does not come with big bangs but with steady, determined steps.

“It is the accumulation of these small steps, these steady elements of progress that set the stage for larger changes – the breakthroughs of tomorrow. We live in a unique multilateral moment, a world changing in the most dramatic ways since the end of World War II.

“The United Nations must keep pace. We have made progress this year. But we can and must continue.”

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