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Ban: G20 nations must not forget plight of world's poorest at Seoul summit



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addresses journalists at the Seoul Foreign Correspondents Club

10 November 2010 – The world's richest nations must take into account the needs of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people in their plans for reinforcing the global economic recovery – that was one of the key messages from the [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon ahead of the two-day Group of 20 (G20) summit set to begin in Seoul on Thursday.

“The global economic recovery remains fragile; 64 million people have been pushed into extreme poverty this year. Everywhere there is economic insecurity and anxiety about jobs,” said the United Nations chief. “We cannot afford to think narrowly about development and economic growth.”

Mr. Ban made his [remarks](#) at the Seoul Foreign Correspondents Club, following meetings with leaders of the Republic of Korea, the hosts of the G20 gathering, which is taking place for the first time in a country that is not a member of the Group of Eight (G8) major economies. The G20 brings together industrialized and developing economies to discuss key issues in the global economy.

The Secretary-General highlighted three vital development messages that he is bringing to the summit, beginning with the need to keep the promise on the Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#)), a series of targets agreed to by all countries and leading development institutions to meet the needs of the world's poorest.

He also stressed the need for strategic investment, particularly the need to invest resources in areas that address the interconnections among problems, and the need to advance the fight against climate change.

“The more we delay, the more we pay,” Mr. Ban said. “But by acting together we can open the door to prosperity, to job creation, to economic growth. By preparing for the long term, we can prosper in the short term.”

Asked about the expected G20 discussions on currency matters and trade imbalances and the possibility of members reaching agreement on such issues given the range of disparate views, the Secretary-General noted that while he has concerns over these issues, he believes that “it is absolutely necessary that the G20 leaders are united and coordinate their policies. This is a time for unity and unity of purpose.”

“I am very hopeful that this G20 summit meeting will be a great success in addressing not only this imminent financial and economic crisis, but also addressing development issues and climate change issues and trade imbalance issues, which will [provide] a great sense of hope to many poor and most vulnerable countries,” he said.

He added that the Republic of Korea’s President Lee Myung-bak – the chair of the gathering – has been personally engaged in managing and addressing these concerns, telephoning many world leaders to address the issues.

During his meeting with President Lee today, the Secretary-General highlighted the Republic of Korea’s bridging role between developed and developing countries, and welcomed the Government’s initiative to place development on the G20 agenda. They also agreed that the role of the G20 and the UN are complementary and should be mutually reinforcing, and discussed matters including [climate change](#) and the situation on the Korean Peninsula.

Mr. Ban also met with the country’s Prime Minister, Kim Hwang-sik, with whom he discussed a wide range of topics on which the UN and the Republic of Korea could cooperate even more closely, including development and the MDGs. They also exchanged views on the situation on the Korean Peninsula and regional security in North-east Asia, as well as other issues, including Somalia and piracy, Sudan, and nuclear security.

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