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Ban focuses on the fight against poverty at start of visit to Brazil



[A favela in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil](#)

27 May 2010 – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has arrived in Rio de Janeiro for an official visit to Brazil during which he will see first-hand the country's efforts to combat poverty and address a key global conference on overcoming prejudice among nations, cultures and religions.

Today, Mr. Ban will meet with youth living in favelas, or slums, from around Rio de Janeiro and hear about their lives, as he sees up close the South American nation's progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the eight anti-poverty targets with a 2015 deadline.

Later in the day, he will visit with families of Brazilian peacekeepers who lost their lives in January's devastating earthquake in Haiti. Nearly 100 blue helmets died in the 12 January quake, which measured 7.0 on the Richter scale. The Secretary-General will also unveil a commemorative plaque for the fallen Brazilian peacekeepers.

Tomorrow, he will attend the third forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, set up under UN auspices in 2005 at the initiative of Spain and Turkey.

"Support for the Alliance keeps growing," Mr. Ban declared at a Security Council meeting yesterday on intercultural dialogue.

"We just welcomed the 100th member, the United States. I hope its membership and work will expand further still. It is the right initiative at the right time. Our world is changing rapidly. And it is changing in unpredictable ways," he added.

From Brazil, the Secretary-General will travel to Malawi to address the country's Parliament and meet President Bingu wa Mutarika, who also serves as the current President of the African Union (AU).

He is also scheduled to visit a so-called Millennium Village, where UN agencies work with governments, aid organizations and civil society groups to try to lift residents out of extreme poverty and attain the MDGs.

Mr. Ban will then go to Uganda's capital, Kampala, to convene the first review conference of the International Criminal Court (ICC), set up as a permanent tribunal to try people accused of the worst war crimes.

"We have come a long way. A decade ago, few would have believed that the International Criminal Court would now be fully operational, investigating and trying perpetrators of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity across a growing geography of countries," Mr. Ban told reporters at his monthly press conference earlier this week.

"The Kampala review conference is an important opportunity – not only to take stock of our progress, but to strengthen our collective determination that international crimes cannot go unpunished."

The final leg of the first trip will be in Nice for the Africa-France summit, where Mr. Ban said he would meet with many African leaders and participate in discussions on climate change and economic development.

Early next month, he will return to Africa, starting with South Africa, where his visit will coincide with the opening of the World Cup soccer championships – what he called "a fabulous tribute to Africa's prowess and potential."

Later he will travel to Burundi, Cameroon, Nigeria, Benin and Sierra Leone for talks with national leaders, UN staff and civil society groups, much of it focused on the MDGs.

The Secretary-General's third visit to Africa in June will be to Gabon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where a UN peacekeeping mission – known as MONUC – has been in operation for 11 years.

The Congolese leadership has said recently that it wants the mission to withdraw by August 2011, but UN officials including Mr. Ban have warned that the security situation in the vast and troubled country may not have stabilized sufficiently by then to warrant a departure.

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