

Massive challenges highlight key role of global governance, says Ban



16 October 2010 – The world is facing challenges transcending borders like no other time in history, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told an international conference in Morocco today, underlining the pivotal role played by global governance.

“As interdependence deepens, some of our old systems and set-ups have not kept pace,” Mr. Ban told the opening session of this year's World Policy Conference organized by the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI) in Marrakesh.

“We simply must find better ways of working together – and build systems that are tuned to our times – ones that are more accountable, more representative and more able to maximize our collective strength and maximize our limited resources to the best benefit of our global community,” he added. “This is what global governance means to me.”

The Secretary-General noted that no country or group, however powerful or resourceful, can alone resolve problems which do not respect borders.

“Even the United Nations cannot do it alone, without full support of Member States and international organizations, regional organizations, and sub-regional organizations,” he stressed.

Mr. Ban pointed to three main areas in which the world must pool its energy and resources.

Firstly, he said at the start of the three-day gathering set to draw some 140 representatives from governments, the private sector, academia and the media to discuss global governance issues, the world must join forces to help its most vulnerable people.

Developing countries help to drive economic growth and will also help pull the world out of the global economic and financial crisis, the UN chief said.

“Yet their voice in global economic decision-making is not what it should be. It is not what they deserve,” he said.

“Whatever else we learn from the crisis, this much is clear: global economic management can no longer afford to neglect the most vulnerable or the disadvantaged.”

Domestic stimulus packages must never be made on the backs of the poor, Mr. Ban underlined. "It is morally, politically unacceptable to inflict the greatest burdens on those who are the least responsible for the crisis."

Second, the Secretary-General said, stepped up efforts are needed to stave off the challenge posed by climate change.

Although last December's UN climate change conference in Copenhagen did not meet everyone's expectations, it is important not to underestimate the elements world leaders reached agreement on in the Danish capital, he stressed.

For the first in history, leaders agreed to contain global temperature rise within 2 degrees centigrade by 2050, as well as to provide \$100 billion annually in financial support to developing countries by 2020.

"Looking ahead, it is increasingly clear that the more we delay, the more we will pay – in competitiveness, resources, and most importantly human lives," Mr. Ban said, emphasizing the need to lock in progress in areas where there is consensus at the next conference of parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) next month in Cancún, Mexico.

"Most immediately, we need progress on fast-start financing," he said. "We have to admit that there is a serious gap of trust between developing and developed world. The best way and quickest way to bridge this gap of trust is to provide fast-start financial support to developing countries."

The Secretary-General also highlighted what he calls the '-50-50 challenge': by 2050, the global population will grow by 50 per cent, reaching 9 billion people and the world must slash its greenhouse gas emissions by 50 per cent.

"Climate change is not a stand-alone issue. It is a crucial part of the broader agenda on sustainable development," he said.

Lastly, Mr. Ban emphasized the need for global governance to face a host of new-generation challenges, including the situation of the world's more than 200 million migrants, biotechnology, organized crime and terrorism.

"The chance that terrorists could gain access to fissile materials has brought new urgency to the nuclear security agenda. Those armed with bombs and guns today could well arrive with more potent force tomorrow. The best response is again international resolve and coordination and cooperation," he said.

"And indeed, in response to these challenges, we have adopted new legal conventions and agreements and new strategies and forged new partnerships all in the name of global problem-solving, not global government."

Global governance, the Secretary-General stressed, is not just about long-term arrangements, but is also about leadership in the here and now, citing the upcoming referenda on the self-determination of southern Sudan and on the status of Abyei, whose residents will vote on whether to be part of the north or south.

"The stakes are very high. I think everyone is very much concerned about the future of Sudan, the future of Africa, and the peace and security of the international community as a whole," he said, underlining the need to help Sudan find a peaceful way through one of the most important passages in its history.

"Global governance is too important to be left to just one organization or group," Mr. Ban told the gathering.

"But it is at the United Nations – with its universality, experience and operational presence in nearly every country – where global governance can best come together."

The world body, he said, is the right place, provided it keeps pace.

"Institutions and groupings that produce meaningful, positive change – global governance for a better world – will find themselves respected and in demand," the Secretary-General said.

Mr. Ban, who arrived in Morocco yesterday, also held meetings today with Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos and Jean-Claude Trichet, President of the European Central Bank.

With Mr. Moratinos, the Secretary-General discussed Spain's engagement with the UN and the country's chairmanship of the world body's MDG [Millennium Development Goals] Advocacy Group, bringing together current and former political leaders, businesspeople and thinkers to spur action on the eight anti-poverty targets with a 2015 deadline.

The two men also discussed the forthcoming tour of Mr. Ban's Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, Christopher Ross, to the region.

In his talks with Mr. Trichet, the Secretary-General discussed global governance issues, in particular those relating to global economic recovery. They also conferred on the fiscal and economic situation in Europe, as well as on the upcoming summit of the Group of 20 (G20) to be held in Seoul, Republic of Korea.

While in Morocco, he will also meet with the country's King Mohammed VI and the UN Country Team in the capital, Rabat.

He will then travel on to Strasbourg, where on 19 October he will address the Council of Europe on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the European Convention on Human Rights. Later that day, he will also give a speech at a plenary session of the European Parliament.

While in the French city, Mr. Ban will hold talks with the Council of Europe's Secretary-General and with the President of the European Parliament.

He will also take part in an extraordinary meeting of the Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee and be welcomed officially by the Senator-Mayor of Strasbourg.

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