



**UN NEWS CENTRE**

With breaking stories and  
newswire products from



## **Shanghai Expo offers 'invaluable' ideas for tackling today's challenges – Ban**



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (left) visits the UN Pavilion at the 2010 Shanghai World Expo

31 October 2010 – The 2010 World Expo may be coming to a close but the ideas it has provided over the past six months are “invaluable” to tackling some of today's biggest challenges, including rapid urbanization, climate change and sustainable development, [Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon](#) said in Shanghai on Sunday.

More than 70 million people from dozens of countries visited the Expo, the first to be organized by a city in a developing country. Mr. Ban said its theme – “Better City, Better Life” – was very timely, noting that more than half of the world's people currently live in cities, and that percentage will continue to grow.

“Thanks to this Expo, millions of people learned about possibilities for making our cities healthier and safer – cities that better integrate nature and technology, cities that offer their citizens cleaner air and water, and better lives all around,” he [stated](#) at the Expo's Summit Forum.

It offers “hope for tackling the growing challenges of our age of urbanization,” he added.

The Secretary-General noted that cities remain powerful draws for jobs and economic opportunity, with people flocking to them in hopes of finding a better life. At the same time, today's cities are under enormous pressure, becoming less and less able to cope with the growing number of people moving into them.

Billions of people live in life-threatening conditions, he said, trapped in slums from which they cannot hope to escape, lacking basic amenities from fresh water and sanitation to basic shelter.

“The Shanghai Expo has given us invaluable ideas for tackling these challenges,” stated Mr. Ban.

“We have seen innovations in construction and new uses of natural resources. We have been reminded of what architects and builders can do to cut energy and water use. We more fully appreciate the importance of mass transit systems. And we understand that special attention must be given to the unique problems of the world's slums.”

He expressed hope that, in all this, China will be an “urban pioneer,” noting that the country is already a frontrunner in addressing the urban slum challenge and in embracing green technologies, renewable energy sources and green business models.

Mr. Ban arrived in Shanghai yesterday, and met with the Foreign Minister of China, Yang Jiechi, with whom he discussed a number of issues, including further expanding China-UN cooperation, climate change, non-proliferation, as well as the situations in the Korean peninsula, Myanmar and Sudan. They plan to continue their discussion in the capital, Beijing, in the coming days.

From Shanghai, the Secretary-General traveled to Nanjing, where he received an honorary doctorate from one of the world's oldest centres of learning.

“By honouring me, you are recognizing the critical role of the UN in shaping our modern world, a world that increasingly looks to China,” he [told](#) the gathering at Nanjing University.

Noting that the world's most populous country is its fastest growing economy, Mr. Ban said that the big question is how to ensure that this growth is sustainable.

“You have become the world's largest manufacturer and exporter. But you are also the world's greatest emitter of greenhouse gases, the price of feeding the consumption habits of people in developed countries,” he said.

Also, while China is the fastest growing market for cars in the world, it lays claim to seven of the world's ten most polluted cities. Ten years of close regulation have seen the country's forests start to recover, but its paper mills and furniture makers contribute to the loss of forests in Russia, Indonesia and Brazil.

At the same time, China is not only fighting poverty, but it is beginning to fight the side-effects of prosperity – climate change and environmental degradation, said Mr. Ban.

China has set a target of controlling biodiversity loss by 2020, backed by state funds. Its biodiversity action plan designates 35 priority conservation areas, covering 23 per cent of the country. Also, it invested over \$34 billion last year in the low-carbon economy, more than any other nation. Three of the top 10 global wind turbine makers are in China and the country commands half the global solar market.

“These facts tell me that China is serious about sustainable development,” said the Secretary-General. “Let China be the country to show the way ahead. Let China show the world how to live comfortably, in harmony with the environment and leaving none of its citizens behind.”

China is the last leg of the Secretary-General's four-nation Asian tour, which also included visits to Thailand, Cambodia and Viet Nam.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[UN Pavilion launches at World Expo 2010 in Shanghai](#)