



UN NEWS CENTRE

With breaking stories and
newswire products from



UN chief sees sustainable development as top priority in his second term



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

12 August 2011 –

[Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon said today that sustainable development will remain his top priority during his second term as the head of the United Nations, saying that key challenges include achieving the global poverty reduction goals and strengthening disaster risk reduction to avert crises caused by climate change.

The General Assembly in June agreed to appoint Mr. Ban to a second consecutive term as Secretary-General.

“Since my re-election, I have been consulting widely with Member States and the full range of UN partners on what they see as the great challenges going forward,” Mr. Ban [told](#) members of the diplomatic corps in Seoul, the capital of the Republic of Korea. “Looking to the longer horizon, sustainable development is at the top of my list of priorities,” he said.

Mr. Ban stated that global and regional security and democratization challenges will also feature prominently on his agenda.

“We are supporting the transitions that are under way in Egypt and Tunisia, and are deeply engaged in the diplomatic efforts aimed at a solution to the conflict in Libya.”

However, he pointed out that the most immediate concern was the humanitarian crisis brought on by the severe drought in the Horn of Africa which has led to famine in several areas of Somalia and made an estimated 12.4 million people in the wider region dependent on food aid.

“As we respond to this emergency, we also need to deal with the underlying causes. Today’s drought may be the worst in decades, but with the effects of climate change being increasingly felt throughout the world, it surely will not be the last,” said Mr. Ban, adding that long-term solutions would require the development of drought-resistant seeds, irrigation, rural infrastructure and livestock programmes.

The Secretary-General emphasized that in an era of budgetary constraints, the UN must continue to fulfil its mandates with the resources available. “That means continuing our efforts to ‘deliver as one’,” he said.

He also drew attention to the food shortages in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) where, he said, a harsh winter, followed by severe flooding, had put millions of lives at risk, noting that the UN World Food Programme ([WFP](#)) had launched emergency operations there. “Our challenge is to get food to those who need it, when they need it,” he said.

Mr. Ban highlighted the broader challenge of creating a nuclear-weapon-free, democratic and prosperous Korean Peninsula.

The Secretary-General took note of Republic of Korea’s growing presence in the international arena, including its hosting of the last Group of 20 (G20) summit, its support for African development and engagement in UN peacekeeping, among other initiatives.

He emphasized the importance of partnerships between governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, philanthropists and academic community for global common causes.

“We saw a powerful example of this in the ‘Every Woman Every Child’ initiative on maternal and child health. We must extend this model to other challenges,” the Secretary-General said.

Mr. Ban also met Foreign Minister Kim Sung-hwan and attended an event organized by the South Korean Red Cross and the UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) to support children in Africa.

He thanked young Korean entertainers present for backing the project and asked them to use their reach to raise funds and awareness.

“Many people are suffering and dying from HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis – all these are preventable diseases,” he said. “If they have medicine, if they have access to sanitation, they can be saved.”

“Why should all these people die needlessly? That is why we are gathered here today; I ask you all for your support, your compassion, your caring for all these people.”

In addition, the UN chief met the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Seoul, Cardinal Chung Jin-suk. They discussed how religion can help promote the work of the UN, including in the fields of peace and security, development and human rights.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[Sustainable development vital to protect economies and environment – Ban](#)