



UN NEWS CENTRE

With breaking stories and
newswire products from



Clasping Oscar UN won, Ban calls on Hollywood to play supporting role in raising funds



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

23 February 2011 – Wielding an Oscar that the United Nations won over 60 years ago for a film on children with disabilities, [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon is seeking to mobilize Hollywood to help the world body fund and spread its humanitarian message to every corner of the globe.

“From this early film to today we know the power of the creative community,” he [told](#) the Global Creative Forum dinner last night in Los Angeles, holding the golden statuette of a knight standing on a reel of film and gripping a sword, which the UN won in 1947 for the film called ‘First Steps.’ “You have a tremendous reach. That is why I am here.”

At the time of the award, millions of children suffered from polio. “Since then, the UN brought together partners around the world to stamp out this dreaded disease,” he noted. “More recently, we launched a Global Strategy for Women and Children’s Health that has gotten \$40 billion in commitments from governments, companies, philanthropists and non-profits.”

Earlier in the day, Mr. Ban [appeared](#) at a virtual town hall meeting hosted by the UN Foundation on the Facebook social media website with multi-platinum band Linkin Park and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to keep the public engaged in rebuilding Haiti after last year’s devastating earthquake.

“Significant progress has been made in Haiti in the 13 months since the earthquake, and there is still tremendous work to do,” he said during the event, citing the Facebook Town Hall as an

innovative, effective way to educate people on the work the UN is doing in Haiti and ways that individuals can get involved.

“Truth be told, when it comes to music, I’m an Elvis kind of guy,” Mr. Ban quipped at the dinner. “But I am now Linkin Park’s biggest fan. Because they took a film that the UN made about Haiti. We had put it on YouTube and got about 6,000 hits. Linkin Park set that same film to their music and got 6,000,000 hits.

“I can meet with presidents and prime ministers. But I will never get 6 million hits on YouTube unless something very, very bad happens. And even better, Linkin Park created Download to Donate so this song is raising awareness and money to address real needs in Haiti.”

Noting the work that artists from the entertainment world have done for the UN, Mr. Ban cited film actress Charlize Theron, who also won an Oscar for her portrayal of serial killer Aileen Wuornos in the film ‘Monster,’ and is now UN Messenger for Peace for ending violence against women.

“Last month, Charlize Theron was with us in Congo, where the United Nations helped bring an end to what many called ‘Africa’s First World War’,” he said, referring to the 1996-2002 conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), which killed an estimated 4 million people from the fighting and the attendant starvation and disease it produced, the largest number of civilian casualties since the Second World War.

“Now our challenge is protecting the civilian population in one of the world’s most difficult contexts. The UN is distributing food. We are providing security. We helped the Congolese people vote in the first election there in more than 40 years. Maybe one of the children in Congo today will be a UN goodwill ambassador of the future, or even a Secretary-General.”

He cited, too, Audrey Hepburn, another Oscar winner for ‘Roman Holiday,’ who was born in Belgium and as a child was fed by the UN.

“After the Second World War, the United Nations gave out food to hungry children in Europe,” he said. “One of them came to Hollywood. You all know Audrey Hepburn from ‘Breakfast at Tiffany’s.’ But before that, she got breakfast from the UN. And then she went on to become one of the best champions UNICEF [UN Children’s Fund] ever had.”

Mr. Ban stressed that he was not asking his listeners to make a documentary about how great the UN is. “I am telling you that the real drama is out there, where we work, every day. The UN reaches people in the world’s corners where no one wants or dares to go. I am here because we have real stories to tell,” he said.

He recalled how a few years ago, the UN brought victims of terrorism together to tell their stories, including Ashraf Al-Khaled who spoke about the bomb attack at his wedding in Amman, Jordan, that in a flash killed 27 members of his family, and Carie Lemack, who lost her mother in the terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September, 2001. They created the Global Survivors Network, linking victims of terrorism from around the world.

They also worked on a film. 'Killing in the Name' tells the story of the costs and causes of terrorism. "It is up for an Oscar. Whatever the Academy decides, Ashraf and Carie have already won. The UN is inspiring more than Oscar-nominated documentaries," Mr. Ban said

"We see dramas every day, up close. Rape victims in the Congo rebuilding their lives. Brave Cambodians testifying against the architects of the Killing Fields in a UN Tribunal. Families in Haiti and Pakistan who lost everything in disaster and ask for nothing more than a job and a second chance. Female troops in places like Liberia keeping the peace and inspiring young girls.

"I do not claim to be an expert on Hollywood. But I know enough about your skills and your talents, your imagination and your reach to know how much you can spread those and a thousand other stories."

At the virtual town hall event, fans could log on to the UN Foundation's Facebook page where they were encouraged to Download to Donate as part of Linkin Park's charity Music for Relief, where a one-time donation offers year-long access to a growing catalogue of music from a variety of artists.

The donations support the work of five organizations in Haiti: Artists for Peace and Justice; charity: water; Direct Relief International; Partners In Health; and the UN Foundation. By partnering with Download to Donate, the UN Foundation aims to raise enough money to enable UN agency partners to provide 100 new solar lights to keep the women and children of Haiti's tent camps safe at night.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[Hollywood star visits Afghanistan to shine light on UN de-mining campaign](#)