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Secretary-General says all partners can support UN's work for peace



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

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People of conscience everywhere can support global campaigns for peace, development and human rights led by the United Nations, [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon told a diverse gathering of eminent leaders from the media, arts and entertainment in New York this evening.

The United Nations needs journalists, business executives, activists, faith leaders, academics, artists, actors and other people of conscience to join forces in a partnership that can outpace such global threats as poverty, conflict and environmental degradation, the Secretary-General told an

event in New York hosted by the Korean Consulate to mark his re-appointment to a second five-year term set to begin on 1 January 2013.

Responding to a question, Mr. Ban expressed concern about the situation in Syria, condemning recent attacks on embassies in Damascus as “totally unacceptable” and welcoming the Security Council's statement in response. He added that he had repeatedly pressed high-level Syrian officials, including President Bashar al-Assad, to end the violent crackdown on civilian demonstrators.

Looking to the wider region, the Secretary-General said he had consistently advocated freedom, dignity and opportunity for oppressed peoples.

“I will continue,” he pledged. “The choice of people will ultimately always prevail.”

Mr. Ban said he was extraordinarily honoured to serve the United Nations. “The reason I wanted to continue the job we started five years ago is to make this world better,” he said. “I promised myself and the public I would devote all my time and energy to realizing the goals enshrined in the United Nations Charter.”

A number of participants addressing the gathering expressed high expectations for the Secretary-General's next term, citing in particular his leadership on human rights, women's empowerment and sustainable development.

The BBC's United Nations correspondent, Laura Trevelyan, lauded Mr. Ban's strong and consistent defence of press freedom, citing his decision to take reporters along on his official trips to countries that do not allow the media to operate freely. She recalled in particular traveling with the Secretary-General to Myanmar.

She also hailed his efforts to secure the release of Alan Johnston, a BBC journalist who was kidnapped by armed militants in Gaza for 114 days in 2007 and ultimately freed. At the time, the Secretary-General was one of a number of high-level officials actively campaigning for Mr. Johnston's release.

Richard Smith, the former Editor-in-Chief of Newsweek magazine, recalled interviewing Mr. Ban at the outset of his first term and asking whether he wanted to be remembered more as a secretary or as a general. He said Mr. Ban replied that how he was remembered would not be important; what counted would be what he accomplished.

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