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## **Ban urges Europe to forge common agenda against global inequality**



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addresses meeting of the UN Economic Commission for Europe in Geneva

18 October 2011 –

[Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon called on European countries today to unite in tackling the world's most looming issues and work together to ensure the prosperity of future generations.

“Our world faces an increasingly complex set of realities,” the Secretary-General said, as he [addressed](#) the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe’s (UNECE) Executive Committee. “We need to forge a common agenda that can address the challenges and yearnings

of people, and help ensure that future generations grow up in a world of sustainable peace, prosperity and progress.”

It was the first time a UN Secretary-General has addressed the European forum.

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Pointing to recent protests in numerous cities worldwide over economic problems, Mr. Ban reiterated remarks he made yesterday calling the demonstrations the result of widespread frustrations with inequality.

“Many people are disillusioned with the established order,” he said. “There is distrust in institutions and a general sense that the playing field is tilted in favour of entrenched interests and elites.”

Against that backdrop, he highlighted UNECE’s “essential” role in contributing to the well-being of global society, noting that more than 100 countries beyond its membership participate and benefit from its work.

Mr. Ban also reiterated his “five imperatives” for the years ahead, calling on UNECE to play a vital role in promoting solutions to all of them – sustainable development; preventing and mitigating conflicts, human rights abuses and the impacts of natural disasters; building a safer and more secure world; supporting countries in transition; and working to engage the talents of women and young people.

Turning to UN reform, the Secretary-General commended the commission for adjusting to the changing European and global environment.

“Tight budgets are simply a reality,” he stated, referring to Organization-wide austerity measures. “This is not an easy exercise. But it is necessary and urgent. It is a process that requires vision and leadership from us all.”

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[Ban urges global leaders gathered at UN to 'shape the world of tomorrow'](#)