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Ban confers with Australian leaders on global issues of concern



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

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[Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon and Australia's Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd on Saturday discussed the famine in Somalia and the drought-related humanitarian crisis in the wider Horn of Africa, as well as developments in Libya and Syria, when the United Nations chief called on the minister at his home in Canberra.

Their discussions also touched on the work of the Secretary-General's Global Sustainability Panel, of which Mr. Rudd is a member, and forthcoming high-level meetings on nuclear safety and security, and women's and children's health during the General Assembly session in New York later this month.

The 21-member High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability was created by the Secretary-General in August 2009 and tasked with finding ways to lift people out of poverty while tackling climate change and ensuring that economic development is environmentally friendly.

The Panel brings together representatives from government, the private sector and civil society in countries rich and poor.

Mr. Ban, who is on a four-nation visit to the Pacific region – Australia, New Zealand, Solomon Islands and Kiribati – said he was glad that Mr. Rudd was recovering well from his recent heart surgery.

Meeting with Australia's Prime Minister Julia Gillard later in the day, Mr. Ban praised the country for its strong voice in international affairs, saying Canberra worked with the UN to address global challenges.

“You may be known as 'Down Under,' but when it comes to contribution and commitment you are well above and beyond.

“Australia is a founding member of the United Nations and Australians were instrumental in helping to formulate the United Nations Charter and I have many good historical records of how distinguished Australian diplomats have made contributions to the drafting of the Charter, human rights and women's empowerment and also the first president of the United Nations Security Council was served by a distinguished Australian,” said Mr. Ban.

He thanked Australia for its leadership in various UN activities, including peacekeeping, global development and nuclear disarmament.

“Australia's support for our operations in Timor-Leste has been indispensable. Australia is critical to peacekeeping efforts from Afghanistan to Cyprus where you set the UN record for the longest UN deployment by any country,” said Mr. Ban.

On foreign aid, the Secretary-General noted that Australia was increasing cooperation at a time when many countries are pulling back.

“I thank you very much for your very generous contribution to the humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa by donating an additional \$10 million,” he said.

On Libya, Mr. Ban once again urged the international community to support the North African country.

He stressed that the UN response to the situation in Libya rested on three fundamental principles – national ownership rapid response and delivery and effective coordination.

“I count on Australia to be a vital partner in meeting the expectations of the world's people for freedom, opportunity and a life of dignity everyone deserves,” said Mr. Ban.

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