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## **On UN Day, Ban calls for renewed commitment to building a better world for all**



Flags of Member States fly in front of the United Nations Headquarters building. UN Photo/JC McIlwaine

24 October 2012 – On the occasion of [United Nations Day](#), [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon today called on individuals and the international community to reaffirm their commitment to building a better world, while also highlighting the importance of cooperation in these efforts.

“We are living through a period of profound turmoil, transition and transformation. Insecurity, inequality and intolerance are spreading. Global and national institutions are being put to the test,” Mr. Ban said. “With so much at stake, the United Nations must keep pace across the

spectrum of its activities – peace, development, human rights, the rule of law, the empowerment of the world's women and youth.”

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“On this UN Day, let us reaffirm our individual commitment and our collective resolve to live up to the ideals of the United Nations Charter and build a better world for all,” he added in his [message](#) for the Day.

The date of 24 October has been celebrated as United Nations Day since 1948. It marks the anniversary of the entry into force in 1945 of the UN Charter. With the ratification of world body’s founding document by the majority of its signatories – including the five permanent members of the Security Council – the United Nations officially came into being.

In his message, the UN chief said there has been progress on many fronts on the international agenda: extreme poverty has been cut in half since the year 2000, democratic transitions are under way in many countries, and, there are encouraging signs of economic growth across the developing world. However, more needs to be done.

“Now is the time to raise our collective ambitions. With the 2015 deadline for the Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#)) fast approaching, we must intensify our efforts to reach all of these lifesaving targets. We must prepare a bold and practical post-2015 development agenda. And we must continue to combat intolerance, save people caught in conflicts and establish lasting peace,” Mr. Ban said.

The eight MDGs, agreed on by world leaders at a UN summit in 2000, set specific targets on poverty alleviation, education, gender equality, child and maternal health, environmental stability, HIV/AIDS reduction, and a ‘Global Partnership for Development’ – all with a deadline for achievement by 2015.

The Secretary-General also spoke of the universality of the United Nations, noting that it is “not just a meeting place for diplomats.”

“The United Nations is a peacekeeper disarming fighters, a health worker distributing medicine, a relief team aiding refugees, a human rights expert helping deliver justice,” he said. “In carrying out this global mission we rely on countless friends and supporters.

He added, “Non-governmental organizations, scientists, scholars, philanthropists, religious leaders, business executives and concerned citizens are critical to our success. No single leader, country or institution can do everything. But each of us, in our own way, can do something.”

As part of the observance for the Day at UN Headquarters in New York, the world body will hold its traditional concert celebrating the occasion, with this year’s concert theme being ‘A Message of Peace’ and featuring a UN Messenger of Peace, musician Stevie Wonder, and a range of other musical artists.

The UN Messengers of Peace – individuals widely recognized for their talents in the arts, academia, literature, sports and entertainment – are tasked with helping raise worldwide awareness of UN ideals and activities. Through their public appearances, contacts with the international media and humanitarian work, they expand public understanding of how the UN helps to improve the lives of people everywhere. In Mr. Wonder’s case, his remit has a focus on championing persons with disabilities.

Elsewhere, amongst the various events being held at UN offices around the world to mark the Day, the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry, paid a visit to the UN office in Gaza as well as its Rehabilitation Center for Visually Impaired, run by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East ([UNRWA](#)) since 1962.

“During my visit, there was another escalation of violence between Israel and Gaza, which I deeply deplore. I call on all parties to show maximum restraint and return to the calm,” Mr. Serry said in a news release.

According to media reports, recent tensions along the Gaza Strip spiked on Wednesday, with a barrage of rockets fired into Israel followed by an Israeli airstrike. Immigrant workers reportedly injured by the rocket attacks and two Palestinians killed in the airstrike.

“I am concerned that with recurrent violence, as illustrated today, continued closures, and the persistent Palestinian divide, we will lose the race against time to preserve Gaza as a liveable place,” he added.

UNRWA is mandated to provide assistance and protection to a population of some five million registered Palestinian refugees in various countries throughout the Middle East. Its services include education, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, health care and emergency assistance.

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