

At high-level meeting, UN chief to press world leaders to ‘live up to their commitments’



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon being interviewed by Elizabeth Philip of the UN News Centre.
UN Photo/E. Debebe

21 September 2012 – As the United Nations gears up for what is shaping up to be one of the busiest general debate seasons ever – with over 120 world leaders in attendance and around 50 separate side events – [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon faces one of his toughest challenges.

“Convincing world leaders to live up to their commitments – that will be quite an important mission for me,” said Mr. Ban, who is preparing for the first General Assembly high-level debate of his second term in office.

In an [interview](#) with the UN News Centre, Mr. Ban said world leaders need to do more for their people and put them at the centre of their national priorities.

“There are many world leaders who have their own national policy priorities. But sometimes they do not deliver,” he said. “I will try to be very frank, to tell them where they are falling short, where they need to do more, particularly when it comes to the Millennium Development Goals.”

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The Goals – or MDGs, as they are commonly known – were agreed by world leaders at a UN summit in 2000 and sets specific targets on poverty alleviation, education, gender equality, child and maternal health, environmental stability, HIV/AIDS reduction, and a ‘Global Partnership for Development.’ The target date for achieving them is 2015.

“We have only three years and three months left,” said Mr. Ban. “We have to meet this target by 2015.”

Other issues likely to dominate this year’s general debate – to be held from 25 September to 1 October – are the ongoing crisis in Syria and the humanitarian emergency in the Sahel region of West Africa, along with the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and relations between Sudan and South Sudan.

“This is going to be the biggest season,” said Mr. Ban, who will not only be meeting separately with over 145 world leaders, but also chairing or participating in around 50 side events on issues ranging from the rule of law and disarmament to sustainable energy and nutrition.

“The coming two weeks will be very politically important. At the same time, for me, how to manage this very compact time will be a key challenge,” said the Secretary-General.

“I start my day very early in the morning and stay up to very late in the evening. So my time sometimes has to be controlled minute by minute... I hope that my limited time will be used very constructively for common good.”

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