Today's young people can help create a better tomorrow, Ban tells UN student forum

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

13 May 2010 – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today appealed to thousands of young people gathered at a student conference at United Nations headquarters to use their voices and the power of instant communication to create a better world.

"More than any other generation, you have a voice," Mr. Ban **told** more than 2,000 students gathered in the General Assembly Hall for the opening of the 11th annual Model UN conference, sponsored by the UN Association of the United States (UNA-USA).

"Social networking is changing how we interact – and it can change our world," noted the Secretary-General, the first UN chief to use popular social networking tools such as Twitter.

"You are in touch with peers from around the world. You understand the power of instant communication. I appeal to you to use that power for the common good, the power of communication and the power of networking."

Mr. Ban said the UN needs the energy of young people, particularly on efforts such as promoting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (**MDGs**), pledges made by world leaders to reduce extreme poverty, hunger and a host of other socio-economic ills by the target date of 2015.

"I firmly believe that we can make it a better world, not just for a privileged few, but for everyone in the world," he stated.

"I hope this is what you will work for, in your schools and throughout your lives."

Students participating in the three-day conference will debate a number of diverse and pressing global issues such as post-conflict reconstruction, energy for sustainable development, HIV and young people, and election monitoring and peaceful transitions of power.

Also among those addressing the opening ceremony was Ed Elmendorf, President of UNA-USA, and Bill Roedy, Chairman and CEO of MTV Networks International.

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