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Safeguarding Earth crucial to development, human well-being, Ban stresses



22 April 2010 – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today stressed the need to respect and care for the Earth, noting that safeguarding the environment will impact efforts to achieve development goals and ensuring the health and well-being of its inhabitants.

Environmental sustainability – the wise management of the Earth’s bounty – is one of eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that world leaders have pledged to try to achieve by 2015, along with other ambitious targets to halve poverty, hunger and disease.

Mr. Ban noted that protecting the Earth must be an integral component of the strategy to achieve the MDGs.

“Without a sustainable environmental base, we will have little hope of attaining our objectives for reducing poverty and hunger and improving health and human well-being,” he stated in a [message](#) on International Mother Earth Day, observed on 22 April.

The Secretary-General stressed that the Earth is under pressure. “We are making progressively unreasonable demands on her, and she is showing the strain.

“For all of human history we have depended on nature’s bounty for sustenance, well-being and development. Too often we have drawn on nature’s capital without putting back. We are now beginning to see the consequences of failing to safeguard our investment.”

Climate change and the depleted ozone layer are among the starkest examples, said Mr. Ban, noting that biological diversity is in rapid decline, freshwater and marine resources are increasingly polluted, and soils and fisheries are growing barren.

“The impact of our neglectful stewardship is being felt most by the world’s most vulnerable people,” who, if they are to break out of the poverty trap, need at the very minimum fertile land, clean water and adequate sanitation, he noted.

“I call on all governments, businesses and citizens of the world to give our Mother Earth the respect and care she deserves,” stated Mr. Ban.

The General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution last year proclaiming 22 April as International Mother Earth Day, expressing its conviction that, to achieve a just balance among the economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations, “it is necessary to promote harmony with nature and the Earth.”

While noting that Earth Day is observed each year on 22 April in many countries, the 192-member body invited all Member States, the entire UN system, regional and sub-regional bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to observe and raise awareness of International Mother Earth Day.

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