

World crises also 'opportunities for change,' Ban tells young graduates



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (right) at the Manhattan campus of the UN International School (file)

28 May 2009 – A time of crises is also a time of challenge and “opportunities for change,” Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told the graduating class of the United Nations International School (**UNIS**) today.

“You will not be surprised to hear me say that you graduate at a time of great global uncertainty. But perhaps it would surprise you to know that I also consider this as exciting a time as I can remember,” Mr. Ban **told** the 122 high school graduates from 53 nations.

“The crises we face – food, fuel, finance and flu – are devastating indeed,” he said. “But they also create opportunities for change.”

The Secretary-General told the graduates they have “tremendous potential” in playing a key role in making these changes happen.

Citing challenges in world finance, climate change and the flu epidemic, he stressed that “no nation can deal with them alone.”

Global leadership and powerful partnerships are demanded to tackle such obstacles, Mr. Ban said.

“That is why I urge you to join us ... and to enlist in the new multilateralism, at the grass-roots,” he said, urging the graduates to join such organizations as the Peace Corps, Red Cross, Red Crescent, Human Rights Watch or any number of emerging non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from the developing world.

“The point is to be a part of something larger, larger than yourself.” The Secretary-General said. “The United Nations needs you. The world needs you.”

The graduating class, which speaks 34 languages as their mother tongues, will attend more than 80 universities in 12 countries and 18 states in the United States, according to UNIS.