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## **Highlighting need for energy conservation, UN goes dark for Earth Hour 2011**



25 March 2011 – The United Nations will turn out the lights at its New York Headquarters tomorrow night at 8:30 p.m. in observance of Earth Hour 2011, a global event aimed at promoting awareness of the need to take action on climate change.

“Let us join together to celebrate this shared quest to protect the planet and ensure human well-being. Let us use 60 minutes of darkness to help the world see the light,” [Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon](#), who has called climate change “one of the defining issues of our era,” said in a message.

This is the third time the UN is taking part in Earth Hour, an event that has enjoyed widespread support among the UN leadership and staff, including from members of the “Green Team,” who are working to make the Organization more sustainable.

In New York, the Department of Management will turn off non-essential lights in the various buildings that make up the Headquarters complex at 8:30 in the evening on Saturday.

UN offices worldwide are also expected to take part in the event, which will feature the participation of many of the world’s iconic landmarks. People in 131 countries have registered to participate this year, according to the non-governmental organization (NGO) World Wildlife Fund, which has championed Earth Hour since 2007.

The event takes place a week after the vernal equinox, when the seasons change, and it is dark at 8:30 p.m. local time in both the northern and southern hemispheres, so that people anywhere and everywhere can participate.

While the actual hour is a symbolic call to action on climate change and not intended as an energy-saving measure, event organizers are asking people to “go beyond the hour” and take meaningful steps to reduce their energy consumption after the lights go back on.

Mr. Ban noted in his message that when the renovations in New York are completed, the new LEED-certified UN Headquarters will use less energy and water, and create less waste.

“It will be an example of modern sustainable architecture at its best,” he said.

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