

## Ban enlists UN school in war against poverty



Banners against poverty in the UK (file photo)

16 October 2009 – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon used a visit to the United Nations International School (**UNIS**) in New York today to rally children in the battle against extreme poverty, a scourge that afflicts over a billion people around the world.

"We know that investing in children and securing their rights is one of the surest ways to ending poverty. And I know that no one can better speak for young people than you," Mr. Ban **said**, inviting his youthful listeners to first crouch and then rise in a symbolic gesture of the UN's "Stand Up Against Poverty" campaign on the eve of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

"We know that if we take a stand – if we act – we can end poverty in our lifetimes," he added of the first of the eight Millennium Development Goals (**MDGs**), which seeks to halve by 2015 the proportion of people living on less than \$1 a day. "You are the leaders of tomorrow. And every day you are learning more about our world and our challenges. One of our biggest global challenges is poverty."

He said a great deal of progress had been made on getting more children into schools, especially girls, and on fighting malaria and measles and other diseases, but over 70 million children still could not even go to school, and many nations needed help, with the economic crisis making the situation more difficult for more people.

"It can be difficult to understand, or even imagine, what extreme poverty feels like. But I know that we all feel compassion and solidarity with those who live it every day," Mr. Ban declared. "Together, let us pledge to stand up in the fight against poverty."

The children then crouched at the sound of one and stood up at the sound of three, reciting with Mr. Ban the campaign's pledge: "We are standing now with millions of people around the world on this historic day, to show our commitment to the fight against extreme poverty, hunger and disease."

"Today, we Stand Up together to call on our leaders to keep their promises and act now to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. We will continue to Stand Up, not just today but every day, to say: No more excuses, End Poverty and Inequality Now!"

Mr. Ban then left his young audience with a final exhortation: "Keep taking a stand!"

UNIS was founded in 1947 by UN-affiliated families. It has a multinational staff from 70 countries and over 1,450 students from 120 countries.

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