

Special Address by Mr Kofi Annan

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Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, let me thank Prime Minister José Socrates and President José Manuel Barroso for inviting me to speak on this important occasion. I am honoured to be here and it is a pleasure to see so many friends.

I stand here today in the hope that together we can build a stronger global community to tackle the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Over the last decade we have witnessed changes of truly global proportions. We have seen an exponential increase in trade, transport and communications, which bind together every corner of our planet, like never before.

These changes bring huge benefits: we have more opportunities to connect, and access to more information than was ever imaginable.

But the effects of integration have not always been positive: many communities remain excluded from the global economy; epidemics spread faster and volatility in markets bring risk to countries and companies alike. So we are being forced to rewrite the rule books for dealing with familiar problems, while new challenges are emerging for which we have no rule book at all.

Faced with this complexity, we have become highly focused and specialized. As a result we are less accessible to others. And despite being better informed, our knowledge is often restricted in its outreach, and our more-rigidly defined sectors limit options for collaboration – whether between humanitarian and environment, development and corporate, military and civilian, or local and international.

This is happening when our understanding of the impact of climate change is deepening and demands that we work better together in order to achieve sustainable development for all.

And this is why I applaud the efforts of the Portuguese Presidency of the EU and the European Commission for bringing together a range of experts from different countries, ministries, sectors of society and disciplines. Your collective expertise represents the untapped potential for a more integrated and effective response to the environmental and development challenges of today and tomorrow.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During my years at the United Nations I learnt a number of lessons. Often the simplest of lessons are the most powerful, and I would like to share three of these with you today:

First: we can achieve much more when we open ourselves up to work together in partnership with others. And in this, I look to the business community to demonstrate greater leadership.

Second: in order to work effectively with others we have to find common objectives. This was the rationale behind the Millennium Development Goals, which we have seen become instrumental in creating a unified global front for improving the lives of the world's poorest.

And third: whenever possible, we must strive to be more proactive and less reactive. This is easily said, and been stated time and again. But the reality is that capacities and resources are limited, and one crisis is swiftly followed by another. And the international community is often left struggling to respond.

Until more of our efforts are focussed on preventing crises from arising, we will always be one step behind. And while we can rebuild houses, roads, hospitals and schools, we can never give back life where it has been taken away. For this reason, it is imperative that the international community invests more in prevention, risk reduction and adaptation.

As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has shown, climate change is a serious threat to development everywhere. It will set back efforts of countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and undermine strategies to eliminate poverty and improve the well being and livelihoods of people everywhere.

Climate change must not diminish our collective responsibility to realize the objectives of the global development agenda. It should compel us to act with even greater urgency.

And for far too long we have considered climate change as a problem of the future – one to be dealt with by ministries of environment and conservation. However, global temperatures have already risen and weather patterns altered, and climate change is already claiming a heavy human toll. Indeed, this is one of the most significant humanitarian concerns we now face.

Today, natural disasters occur on a much larger scale than before:

- This year alone floods in India, Bangladesh and Nepal have affected some 30 million people. And we are seeing floods of similar intensity from North Korea to Vietnam and most recently in Mexico.
- Worldwide, around 200 million people living in coastal areas are at risk from rising waters and more violent storms.
- In parts of Africa and Asia, deserts are engulfing habitable land at the rate of 7 kilometres a year.

Climate change is not an issue of rich versus poor, or of North versus South. It is a global issue and we are seeing its effects in all regions: in Australia, in the South West of the United States, in South Asia, Africa, the Mediterranean and Small Island States.

We have all seen how highly developed nations have struggled to cope with the consequences of climate change, from Hurricane Katrina to the more frequent and severe heat waves and floods of recent years. Many lives have been claimed and billions of dollars worth of damage inflicted.

How then can we possibly expect those least-developed and most-indebted countries to cope?

Mitigating carbon emissions is a global challenge which requires concerted action by all parties, based on common but differentiated responsibility.

Just as important are efforts to address the impact of climate change on the poor and the vulnerable. Climate change attacks the natural resource base of these communities – their land, food and water supplies, putting life and livelihoods in real danger.

Situations of extreme stress or deprivation force people to migrate for survival. This can increase tensions over scarce resources, and can exacerbate humanitarian crises, such as we see in Darfur and Somalia. So the impact of climate change can become a contributing factor culminating in threats to national and international security.

Our response must be to redouble efforts and provide additional resources to enable these communities to adapt and increase their resilience to growing environmental stress.

This will involve many different actors: from programmes aimed at improving livelihoods to disaster reduction initiatives; humanitarian preparedness; crop substitution schemes; scientific modelling; micro-insurance; sustainable business practices and more.

Indeed, effective solutions are going to require an unprecedented level of cooperation, and often between people and groups that do not usually come together on these issues.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are meeting one month ahead of the EU-Africa Summit, and at the mid-point of our journey towards the realization of the MDGs.

Both events are of particular importance to Africa – the continent of my home, which is experiencing varied and dynamic change.

A decade ago, we called for peace in Africa. Countries such as Burundi, Sierra Leone, Angola and Liberia have answered this call convincingly. Africa is moving in the right direction but much remains to be done.

Better governance, democratic institutions and civil society are taking root and expanding. The AU and NEPAD are developing into effective and credible institutions. African economies are better run today than they were ten years ago. With the increase in commodity prices and other positive factors, economic growth is averaging almost 5% a year, but remains far short of the 7% annual growth that needs to be sustained to make substantial inroads into poverty reduction.

Above all there is appetite for change in Africa. This is being seen in efforts such as the **Mo Ibrahim Award for Achievement in African Leadership**, the first prize which is being presented to President Chissano later this month. Mo's initiative is generating a lively debate on the quality of governance in African countries and societies.

But I am under no illusion that all the hard work is done.

An assessment by the UN Economic Commission for Africa about how many of the 53 African countries are likely to achieve the MDGs makes for sober reading:

- With regard to MDG 1 – to halve poverty and hunger by 2015, the ECA reports that only 13 countries are likely to reduce poverty to the required degree;
- Only 14 countries are likely to achieve MDG 2 of providing universal primary education;
- Only 7 countries are likely to achieve MDG 3, promoting gender parity at the level of secondary school education and promoting equality of women;
- A mere 8 are likely to achieve MDG 4 of reducing child mortality;
- Just 9 countries are likely to achieve MDG 5, cutting the maternal mortality rate;
- For MDG 6, only 8 countries are likely to meet the HIV and AIDs reduction targets, and only 13 with regard to malaria;

Simply put, African countries are way off track to meet the MDGs in full.

The key to Africa's progress is good governance and fair rules for the global economy. Without both, worthwhile initiatives designed to promote progress towards the MDGs will falter.

Europe has made some fine promises. The recent Berlin Declaration committed to build on the strength of your European partnership to promote freedom and development in the world. I applaud your resolve to lead the fight in driving back poverty, hunger and disease.

But as I always say, the only promises that matter are the promises that are kept.

It is here that all those who have committed to Africa's development, particularly Europe, must do better.

Whilst ODA has increased slightly since the G8 and EU's major commitments in 2005, it is clear that, at current rates of progress, governments will not meet their 2010 target to increase their annual assistance to Africa by US\$ 25 billion.

The official OECD's DAC said this year that *"aid will now have to be increased very substantially in 2007 and 2008 if there is to be a realistic prospect of meeting 2010 targets."*

And Africa's overall share of world trade fell to some 2% of the total in 2005 according to the WTO. The AU continues to express its profound disappointment at the limited progress in the Doha Development Round. It is clear therefore that EU and G8 leaders must continue to complement their stated resolve to deliver on previous promises with concrete plans and action that will result in all their commitments being delivered on time.

That is why I chair the **Africa Progress Panel**, which has come together in direct response to this imperative for change. We are working with both Africa and its development partners to encourage them to meet their commitments.

My fellow Panel members and I have come together to provide a force for change which is very different from what has come before. The Panel is independent and authoritative – we serve no political or economic masters. Members include Michel Camdessus, Bob Rubin, Graca Machel, Bob Geldof, Mohamed Yunus, Peter Eigen and Thidjane Thiam. Tony Blair has just joined.

Our shared interest is in pushing Africa forward and realising its hidden potential for the benefit of all. These are early days but the Panel's remit is clear. We see our role as engaging face-to-face with

decision-makers. We will make sure political leaders know how they are doing in delivering on commitments, and urge them to face the challenges and ramp up progress to agreed goals. We met with Chancellor Merkel and Mr Blair in April, President Kufuor in June and we will meet our host, Prime Minister Socrates, today. You will be hearing from us!

Our focus is building the institutions of good governance, enhancing peace and security, stimulating growth through productive investment, employment creation and just trade regimes. All of this must be underpinned by two key resources: a healthy and educated population and adequate and predictable financing.

I spoke earlier of growth and prosperity. In Africa, the path to prosperity should begin in the fields of our farmers.

Yet ours is the only continent that cannot feed itself. While there is food surplus globally, in Africa, per capita food production is declining. Malnutrition and hunger affect one-third of the African population and in the past 5 years alone, the number of malnourished children has increased by 12%.

As global weather patterns have changed, crops in Africa have failed. It is predicted that climate change could reduce yield in some countries by as much as 50% by 2020, and reduce crop net revenues by as much as 90% by 2100, with the burden falling on small-scale farmers.

To address poverty at its core, particularly in light of the growing threat of climate change, we need a uniquely African green revolution. Our farmers need better seeds, soils, and prices for what they sell. They need access to water, markets and credit. They need policies that accelerate rural economic growth, investment and job creation.

For me, there is nothing more important than meeting these needs. That is why I have accepted the chairmanship of the **Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa**. AGRA is working in close partnership with scientists and farmers to develop new plant varieties based on conservation and existing crop diversity. We are training a new generation of African plant breeders and crop scientists. We are also launching a new continent-wide soil health initiative that will identify precise and efficient solutions to Africa's soil health crisis.

Here the EU has an important role to play in investing in trading relationships which strengthen Africa's farmers. Why? Because rising poverty and food insecurity in Africa is one of the major development challenges facing the continent today. Around 70% of total employment in Africa is in agriculture, and the sector contributes 30-50% of national incomes.

The EU has already committed to leading the way in energy policy and climate protection and to contribute to averting the global threat of climate change. This statement is welcome but Africa cannot wait. We need to see concrete action now.

Given this imperative, last month I announced the formation of a **Global Humanitarian Forum** which will put the prevention of individual suffering at the centre of its concern. For the initial phase of our work, the Forum will focus its efforts on the humanitarian impact of climate change, particularly on the poor and most vulnerable.

So how do we begin to address the challenges I have laid out today?

The EU-Africa Partnership has a major leadership role. The EU is an inspirational example of countries working in partnership for mutual betterment.

In an increasingly interconnected world, it is critical that this partnership extends its benefits to countries and people outside the union; as we recognise we all must depend on each other.

The EU is already a critical partner of Africa's. You are the world's largest donor in Africa and the continent's most important economic and trading partner. You therefore have a particular role to play and a particular responsibility towards the African continent. After all, only 8 miles separates us.

The upcoming EU-Africa Summit in December is a unique opportunity to press ahead in developing Europe and Africa's partnership further. This meeting is critical, and it must go ahead. And it must conclude with concrete action plans for implementation by the partners.

Your collaboration and dialogue must be based on a partnership of equals and serve to meet the needs of both continents. It is important for the EU to listen carefully to Africa's strategy; to help African countries build on their own successes, and to respond effectively to outstanding difficulties.

The EU should not be Eurocentric in its relations with Africa. True partnership is about finding shared solutions for issues of mutual concern, for example, on economic development and migration. And how we manage migration for mutual benefit of countries of origin, transit and destination will be

The world is clear on the challenges that face Africa and many speak eloquently of the need for a common vision to address them. A peaceful, prosperous Africa is in all our interests. We know what to do and we have the resources to do it.

Friends,

We are all bound together as human beings. If we remain indifferent to the suffering of others, we are only depriving ourselves of our own humanity. We need to act together as humanity for humanity. And now is the time.

I challenge all of you here to make the best possible use of this conference and the EU-Africa Summit to work together to establish a stable, peaceful and prosperous Africa.

Thank you.