



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE TO HARVARD

NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE (HNMUN)

Boston, 11 - 14 February 2010

On behalf of the entire United Nations system, I congratulate you for taking part in one of the most practical, hands-on experiences in international diplomacy for young people.

As you participate in this Model United Nations exercise, you will get a full taste of the complexity of international relations. You will gain a better understanding of the intricacies of negotiations, the challenges of achieving consensus, and the patience required to win diplomatic progress. These skills will help you in whatever course you choose in life.

The world faces profound opportunities and obligations. We are connected as a human family as never before, opening up vast new possibilities. But we are also living through an age of multiple crisis including food, fuel, pandemic flu, and of course the biggest global economic crises since the founding of the United Nations.

These crises are compounded by other, greater challenges: climate change. The proliferation of deadly weapons. The plight of two billion of our fellow global citizens living in poverty.

None of these problems can be solved by any single nation acting alone. Never has the imperative of acting together been so self-evident. More and more people are coming to understand this fundamental fact.

Young people have much to contribute, not only in influencing our path for the future but in making a difference today. Half the world's population is under the age of 25. You can give voice to their hopes and needs.

As you move forward in life, I urge you to keep learning more about the work of the United Nations and to share your knowledge and commitment with others. There is no greater good than a life of public service. It could be with the United Nations – or perhaps with an NGO, a foundation or your national government.

One thing is certain: extraordinary times open extraordinary opportunities for change. This is such a moment. Help us meet the trials of our age and shape the world for good.

Message to HNMUN
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Ban Ki-moon
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