

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

2 January 2007

Excellency,

On taking office as Secretary-General of the United Nations, I write to assure you of my deep sense of mission, duty and dedication. I am determined to do all in my power to ensure that the Organization lives up to the high expectations that Member States place on us, and I very much look forward to working closely with you towards that end.

You should be confident that my sole duty will be to the Organization, its Charter and its 192 Member States. Each brings something special to our common endeavour. Each must be heard. Ultimately, we are all, Member States and Secretariat alike, accountable to "we the peoples." Together, we can, and must, do better. Our peoples and our future depend on it.

I take office amid daunting challenges in world affairs, from Darfur to the Middle East, and other crises that trouble our world; from defending human rights to the need to move forward in reaching the Millennium Development Goals. The United Nations faces an unprecedented surge in peacekeeping, and a range of growing demands for preventive diplomacy, peace-building, and efforts at various stages of conflict management. I intend to examine the ways in which the Organization, as currently structured, can respond to these challenges effectively, and I will assess whether there is a need for structural change.

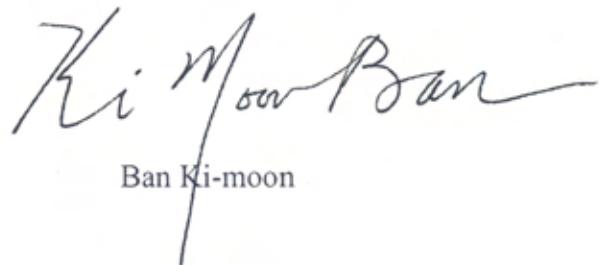
New times require new leadership, at all levels in the Organization. Without States, neither the Secretariat nor the Organization itself would have meaning or purpose, and Member States need a dynamic and courageous Secretariat, not one that is passive and risk-averse. The time has come for a new day in relations between Member States and Secretariat. There will be no place for distrust and disrespect in this Organization.

His Excellency  
Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa  
President of the Democratic Socialist  
Republic of Sri Lanka  
Colombo

Among my first priorities will be to ensure that the Secretariat and its staff are able to carry out effectively the increasingly global role which Member States have entrusted to the United Nations. I will work to enhance morale, professionalism and accountability -- which in turn will help us serve Member States better, and restore trust in the Organization. And I will look to senior managers to work in a compact with me to identify and define goals and targets in substantive areas as well as in management.

By strengthening the three pillars of the United Nations -- security, development and human rights, all underpinned by the rule of law -- we can build a more peaceful, more prosperous and more just world for succeeding generations. I am committed to following these guideposts, and also to strengthening and consolidating our efforts in this direction. In that endeavour, I will seek to act as a harmonizer and bridge-builder. I am heartened that I will be working in partnership with you to ensure that our United Nations can live up to its name, and be truly united; so that we can fulfill the hopes that so many people around the world place in this institution, which is unique in the annals of human history.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ki Moon Ban". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ban Ki-moon