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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

**MESSAGE TO THE 63RD SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION
FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
Almaty, 20 May 2007**

*Delivered by Mr. José Antonio Ocampo
Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs*

It gives me great pleasure to send my greetings to this important meeting, as this year marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

Over the past six decades, ESCAP has worked closely with its Member States to improve the well-being of people throughout the Asia and Pacific region. Sessions such as this have provided a unique forum in which all countries of the region can come together to discuss issues of common concern, build consensus on the way forward, and foster collaboration in tackling the region's challenges.

Later this morning, you will discuss an issue that is very important to us all – achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the ESCAP region. As we all know, this year marks the mid-point in our efforts to fulfil the goals. With Asia-Pacific now home to two thirds of the world's population, the level of progress achieved in your region will be a critical factor in determining whether our global efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals will succeed or fail.

I am encouraged by the fact that, in recent decades, the countries of Asia and the Pacific have seen a record number of people lifted out of poverty. Still, over 600 million fellow human beings who have not benefited from the region's economic gains continue to face a daily struggle to survive. The need to redouble our efforts is abundantly clear. I hope that your deliberations will provide fresh impetus to our collective actions to combat extreme poverty.

There are many other challenges confronting the region. Rapid economic growth has come at a high environmental price. I am glad that ESCAP, by promoting a "Green Growth" model, is trying to fundamentally change the way we define growth to ensure a more sustainable and environmentally-friendly approach.

The latest *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific* rightly focuses on another major social problem -- gender discrimination. By putting an estimate on the

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economic costs of such practices, the *Survey* serves to highlight the fact that we are all losers, in more than one way, when half of humanity is deprived of its basic rights.

The ESCAP region has achieved a great deal, and yet there is much that remains to be completed. As you gather in Almaty -- the first time that a Commission session is being held in Central Asia -- I offer my very best wishes for a productive and successful meeting.

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New York, NY 10017

FACSIMILE MESSAGE

Date: 2 May 2006

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To: Mr. Kim Hak-su Executive Secretary ESCAP Bangkok	From: Vijay Nambiar Chef de Cabinet New York 
Fax: 66-2-288-1000	Fax: (212) 963-3826 Tel: (212) 963-8922
Subject: 63rd session of ESCAP in Almaty – 21 May 2007	

Message

Dear Mr. Kim,

With reference to your letter of 4 January 2007 inviting the Secretary-General to attend the opening of the Ministerial Meeting of the sixty-third session of ESCAP, we regret to inform you that the Secretary-General will not be able to join you on this occasion. However, the Secretary-General has appointed Mr. José Antonio Ocampo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, to represent him and to deliver a message on his behalf.

Many thanks and best regards,

cc: Annika Savill

Note to Mr. Ocampo


Sixty-third session of ESCAP

17-23 May 2007, Almaty

Thank you for kindly agreeing to represent the Secretary-General at the 63rd session of ESCAP, to be held in Almaty, Kazakstan.

A message by the Secretary-General is being prepared. It would be very much appreciated if you could deliver the message on his behalf. The Speechwriters unit will be in touch with you when the message is ready. For your information, please find attached the invitation sent to the Secretary-General.

Thank you.


Vijay Nambiar
2 May 2007

cc: Ms. A. Savill

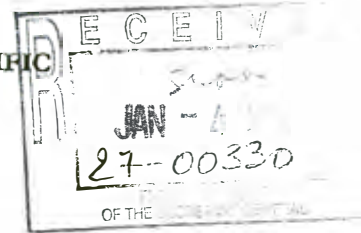
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4 January 2007

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

On behalf of all my colleagues at the ESCAP secretariat and its five regional institutions and on my own behalf, I should like to express our heartiest congratulations on the commencement of your tenure at the helm of the United Nations. Please be assured of our whole-hearted devotion and commitment to our work in the service of the Organization under your leadership.

I should like to inform you that the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, at its resumed sixty-second session held in Bangkok on 21 December 2006, decided to accept the offer of the Government of Kazakhstan to host the sixty-third session of the Commission in Almaty from 17 to 23 May 2007.

The sixty-third session of the Commission will be a major event in the sixtieth anniversary year of the founding of ESCAP. Highlights of the session will include the following:

- A high-level panel session to consider the Asian and Pacific region's roadmap for MDG achievement: as I mentioned at the first Senior Management Group meeting that you chaired on 3 January, the President of Mongolia and Nobel Peace Laureate Professor Yunus have been invited and are expected to address this session.
- Ministerial Roundtable on "Development of health systems in the context of enhancing economic growth towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific" -- the theme topic for the sixty-third session.

/...

His Excellency
Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General
United Nations



- Consideration of the reform of ESCAP, including its programme and conference structures, taking into consideration the outcome of an external evaluation of ESCAP, and the views of member States.
- First-ever convening in Central Asia of the Asia-Pacific Business Forum, a side event of the Commission session.

It is therefore my great honour to invite you to attend the opening of the Ministerial Meeting of the sixty-third session, to be held at Almaty on Monday, 21 May 2007, and to deliver a commemorative address. This would be an excellent occasion for you to reaffirm the vital role of the United Nations in advancing Asian and Pacific integration and reducing disparities, as this highly diverse and vast region reaches new levels of economic strength. It would also be a timely opportunity for you to meet with ESCAP's membership of 62 Governments that is collectively responsible for the economic and social well-being of two-thirds of the world's population. The draft tentative programme is attached for your advance information.

I should like to add that our keen interest in your personal presence at the sixty-third session of the Commission had been conveyed last year to EOSG (Mr. Robert Orr on 31 October, and Mr. Kevin Kennedy on 20 November for inclusion in the "Major conferences and events to be considered by the Secretary-General's 2007 calendar").

I very much look forward to your positive consideration of this invitation and to welcoming you to the very special commemorative session of the Commission in Almaty.

Please accept, Mr. Secretary-General, the assurances of my highest consideration.

With warmest regards,

Kim Hak-Su
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and
Executive Secretary of ESCAP

