**Response to Invitation to the Secretary-General : - invitation to the Gala Dinner of the Loomba Foundation, New York, 2 December 2016**

Benjamin Knight to: calendar 14/11/2016 03:45 PM

Cc: Alexandra Barahona Posada, Mary Sack, G. Cucinotta, Sophie Guesne, Rommel Maranan, Jackilyn Punsal, Amy Kyaw, Wook-Jin Chang

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing on behalf of Mr. CHANG Wook-jin, Chief of the Scheduling Unit of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. Please find attached a scan of formal communication to Ms. Cherie Blair CBE, QC and and to Lord Raj Loomba CBE regarding the above-mentioned subject.

The original has been sent via mail. Kindly confirm receipt of this email.

Yours sincerely,

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Benjamin Knight

United Nations
Executive Office of the Secretary-General
Scheduling Office
United Nations Secretariat, Room S-3802
New York, NY 10017

Tel: (212) 963-1402
Email: knight2@un.org
Benjamin Knight/NY/UNO

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
CABINET DU SECRETAIRE GENERAL

REFERENCE:

11 November 2016

Dear Ms. Blair,

On behalf of the Secretary-General and Mrs. BAN, I would like to thank you for your letter dated 1 August 2016, inviting them to attend the Gala Dinner of the Loomba Foundation, which will take place in New York on 2 December 2016.

The Secretary-General and Mrs. BAN appreciate your kind invitation. Regrettably, they will be unable to accept, in view of prior commitments and pressing demands already scheduled on that date. Nevertheless, allow me to take this opportunity to convey their best wishes for a successful event.

A similar response has been sent to Lord Raj Loomba CBE, Founder and Chairman Trustee of the Loomba Foundation, who co-signed the invitation

Yours sincerely,

Edmond Mulet
Chef de Cabinet

Ms. Cherie Blair CBE, QC
President
The Loomba Foundation
London

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
CABINET DU SECRETAIRE GENERAL

REFERENCE:

11 November 2016

Dear Lord Raj,

On behalf of the Secretary-General and Mrs. BAN, I would like to thank you for your letter dated 1 August 2016, inviting them to attend the Gala Dinner of the Loomba Foundation, which will take place in New York on 2 December 2016.

The Secretary-General and Mrs. BAN appreciate your kind invitation. Regrettably, they will be unable to accept, in view of prior commitments and pressing demands already scheduled on that date. Nevertheless, allow me to take this opportunity to convey their best wishes for a successful event.

A similar response has been sent to Ms. Cherie Blair CBE, QC, President of the Loomba Foundation, who co-signed the invitation

Yours sincerely,

Edmond Mulet
Chef de Cabinet

Lord Raj Loomba CBE
Founder and Chairman Trustee
The Loomba Foundation
London

Simple Regress

IR 08/11

**Re: For Advice: Gala diner of the Loomba Foundation - 2 December**

Darrin Farrant to: Sophie Guesne 08/11/2016 03:40 PM

Cc: Alexandra Barahona Posada, Aminata Sy, Amy Kyaw, Benjamin Knight, G. Cucinotta, Jackilyn Punsal, Jaya Dayal, Rania Abdulrahman, Ruxandra Ferascu, Wook-Jin Chang

Dear Sophie

DPI recommends that the SG decline this invitation -- it is not of sufficient merit to warrant his time.

As the SG and Mrs. Ban are being invited as honorary guests, it does not seem likely that the organizers would wish to have a representative/designate if the SG is not available.

Best,
Darrin

Sophie Guesne Dear Darrin, With reference to the above mentio... 02/11/2016 05:13:22 PM

From: Sophie Guesne/NY/UNO
To: Darrin Farrant/NY/UNO@UNHQ
Cc: Wook-Jin Chang/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Alexandra Barahona Posada/NY/UNO@UNHQ, G. Cucinotta/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Benjamin Knight/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Amy Kyaw/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Ruxandra Ferascu/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Aminata Sy/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Jackilyn Punsal/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Jaya Dayal/NY/UNO@UNHQ, Rania Abdulrahman/NY/UNO@UNHQ
Date: 02/11/2016 05:13 PM
Subject: For Advice: Gala diner of the Loomba Foundation - 2 December

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Dear Darrin,

With reference to the above mentioned invitation, I would be grateful if DPI could advise whether :
- The invitation merits the Secretary-General's participation;
- A representative should attend and deliver a message on behalf of the Secretary-General (if so, please recommend a suitable representative and confirm his or her availability);
- The invitation merits another answer.

The invitation is attached for your easy reference.

Thank you,

Best regards,

Sophie

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Sophie Guesne
Associate Programme Officer

Scheduling Office of the Secretary-General
United Nations
S-3744
Extension: 34 123
e-mail: guesne@un.org

Cherie Blair

RECEIVED
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Ban Ki-moon
Secretary General
United Nations Headquarters
1st Avenue and 46th street
New York, NY 10017 USA

ACTION
COPY
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Your Excellency

1st August 2016

I hope this letter finds you both well.

We write on behalf of The Loomba Foundation, as we prepare for our Gala Dinner on **Friday 2nd December 2016**, in New York, to honour you and Mrs Ban Soon-taek after serving the UN for 10 successful years.

During your term you have focused on equality, education and empowerment of women and girls and established UN Women to deal with these issues. In particular, we are honoured that International Widows Day (23rd June), which was initially launched by the Loomba Foundation, was recognised by the United Nations at its 65th General Assembly under your leadership.

As great friends and champions of The Loomba Foundation, it would be our distinct pleasure to have you both join us for this Gala Dinner, as our Honorary Guests. We would welcome the opportunity not only to update you on the recent work and achievements of The Loomba Foundation, but also to honour all of your hard work – and support of our Foundation – over the past decade.

We very much hope that you both will be able to attend the gala dinner on Friday 2nd December; we would greatly appreciate hearing from you, so that we may send a formal invitation and answer any questions that you have. We enclose a copy of the Loomba Foundation International Widows Day (23rd June 2016) Newsletter, which you may also find of interest.

In the meantime, we do hope you have a pleasant and restful summer – and hope to see you both soon.

Yours,

Cherie Blair

**Cherie Blair CBE, QC**
President
The Loomba Foundation

Raj Loomba

**Lord Raj Loomba CBE**
Founder and Chairman Trustee
The Loomba Foundation

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CONFIDENTIAL

Cherie Blair

**Ban Ki-moon**
**Secretary General**
United Nations Headquarters
1st Avenue and 46th street
New York, NY 10017 USA

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on 9 AUG 2016
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Dear Secretary General

1st August 2016

I hope this letter finds you both well.

We write on behalf of The Loomba Foundation, as we prepare for our Gala Dinner on **Friday 2nd December 2016**, in New York, to honour you and Mrs Ban Soon-taek after serving the UN for 10 successful years.

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In the meantime, we do hope you have a pleasant and restful summer – and hope to see you both soon.

Yours,

Cherie Blair

**Cherie Blair CBE, QC**
President
The Loomba Foundation

Raj Loomba

**Lord Raj Loomba CBE**
Founder and Chairman Trustee
The Loomba Foundation

FILED

THE LOOMBA FOUNDATION

Caring for widows around the world

**THE LOOMBA FOUNDATION**

**NEWSLETTER**

**INTERNATIONAL WIDOWS DAY 2016:**

## INTERNATIONAL WIDOWS DAY:

Every year, the 23rd June is an UN International Widows Day. A day for an effective action to raise awareness of the plight of widows and their children around the world, who are suffering through poverty, illiteracy, diseases such as HIV/AIDs, Malaria and Tuberculosis, conflict and social injustice.

International Widows Day was initially launched by the Loomba Foundation, an UN accredited global charity at the House of Lords in the United Kingdom. After our tireless lobbying for five years the United Nations adopted it at its 65th General Assembly in 2010. The theme of our campaign this year is 'JUSTICE FOR WIDOWS'. A song on International Widows Day has been recorded by the famous Bollywood playback singer Mr. Bhappi Lahiri.

## THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE ON INTERNATIONAL WIDOWS DAY 23 June 2016:

*There are some 259 million widows around the world, and nearly half are living in poverty. Widows are often stigmatized by their families and communities. Many suffer discrimination based on age and gender. Some have lived lives marked by physical and sexual abuse.*

*Older widows often have few economic assets, after a lifetime of hard but unpaid work. Even in developed countries, the value of women's pensions can be some 40 per cent lower than men's.*

*Younger widows face other challenges, as heads of households with childcare responsibilities and very limited economic opportunities.*

*The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda with its pledge to leave no one behind has a particular resonance for widows, who are among the most marginalized and isolated.*

*On International Widows Day, let us pledge to make widows more visible in our societies, and to support them in living productive, equal and fulfilling lives.*

## OUR WORK DURING 2015-16:

Like every other year for last 19 years, the Loomba Foundation has continued its educational programme, empowerment projects and advocacy during the year 2015-16. Please see our activity report as below:

The year 2015-16 has been another momentous year for the Loomba Foundation. In addition to our core work of educating the children of poor widows and empowering the impoverished widows in Punjab and Varanasi, we have been busy in promoting the fundamental freedoms and human rights of widows, linking these with the Sustainable Development goal Goals established by the United Nations at its General Assembly in New York on 25th September, 2015.

## 17th March, 2016 - World Widows Report Launched in New York:

Our major achievement has been the publication of World Widows Report. This comprehensive research study was launched at a parallel event during the 60th anniversary meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York on 17th March, 2016.

Before the launch, the publication had been welcomed by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, the Prime Minister of India Mr Narendra Modi and the director of the Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House in London, Dr Robin Niblett.

World Widows Report shows that discrimination against widows is deeply ingrained in cultures across all continents, resulting in extreme poverty, gender-based violence, child labour, discrimination against girls, increased infant mortality and numerous other severe consequences, which directly affect over 259 million widows and 584 million their children around the world. It has also revealed that discrimination against widows is a deep-rooted feature of gender discrimination all over the world, though its form and impacts differ from place to place and from culture to culture – from shocking stories of child widows below the age of 10 in parts of India, and widows in some African countries forced to undergo degrading "cleansing" rituals.

## 22ND JANUARY, 2016 - PM MODI SUPPORTS THE LOOMBA FOUNDATION:

On 22nd January, 2016, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, launched our latest project to empower 5,000 impoverished widows in the holy city of Varanasi in India. This socio-economic project will not only help 5,000 widows but it will also support 50,000 of their children and family members.

Each widow will receive a vocational training in tailoring for two months. Once the training is completed, the Loomba Foundation will give each beneficiary a foot-operated Singer sewing machine so that they can start their own business or work in a factory to earn money, and become self-reliant. They will be able to educate their children and support their family members.

The Holy City of Varanasi is the constituency of the Hon'ble Prime Minister and is the most visited pilgrimage destination in India where many widows come to spend the rest of their lives after being ostracised by their families and society. The 2011 Population Census of India estimates that Varanasi has more than 90,000 widows.

The Hon'ble Prime Minister welcomed guests and 500 widows saying "I met Lord Loomba about a year ago in Delhi and he mentioned that the Loomba Foundation would like to support 5,000 widows in Varanasi. I met him again at the House of Lords during my visit to London in November last year. He told me that the Varanasi project had started and it was progressing as planned. Both Lord Loomba and his wife are dedicated to help the widows in India. I am pleased to launch their project here today.

I commend their work and feel happy that both of them are present at this event here today".

## 25 SEPTEMBER 2015 - UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS:

In his capacity, as Chairman of a Global NGO with ECOSOC status, the United Nations invited Lord Loomba CBE to attend the opening session of the General Assembly on 25TH September, 2015, which was inaugurated by His Holiness Pope Francis.

Lord Loomba was also pleased to have received a second invitation to attend the Special High-Level Sustainable Development Goals session – "***A New Rural Development Paradigm and the Inclusive and Sustainable New Communities***", which was hosted by the President of

Korea and attended by the UN Secretary General, HE Ban Ki-moon and four Presidents of other countries, on 26th September, 2015.

The Pope Francis said "Economic and social exclusion is a complete denial of human fraternity and a grave offence against human rights and the environment. The poorest are those who suffer most from such offences, for three serious reasons; they are cast off by society, forced to live off what is discarded and suffer unjustly from the abuse of the environment. They are part of today's widespread and quietly growing - Culture of Waste".

The United Nations has adopted Sustainable Development Goals, which has 17 Goals with 169 targets. The purpose of these goals is to end extreme poverty, fight gender inequality & injustice, fix climate change and leave no-one behind. Lord Loomba welcomed the adoption of Sustainable Development Goals by the United Nations as implementation of which will not only eliminate prejudices and discrimination against widows but it will also empower them economically, socially and politically.

## 23RD JUNE, 2015 - INTERNATIONAL WIDOWS DAY:

London: The Loomba Foundation hosted a fundraising dinner at One Great George Street near Parliament Square in Westminster in London on 23rd June, to commemorate the 10th anniversary of International Widows Day, which was launched by the Loomba Foundation in 2005 and adopted by the United Nations in 2010. The dinner was attended by over 250 high profile guests, including senior politicians, and business leaders.

The event featured passionate speeches from both Lord Loomba and Cherie Blair, President of The Loomba Foundation, highlighting the plight of widows and their children affected by widowhood worldwide.

Having campaigned for more than a decade for the rights of widows worldwide, Lord Loomba sees this year's Sustainable Development Goals as an opportunity for widows' rights to be finally put on the international development agenda. He said "Whilst I am very proud of the steps the Loomba Foundation has taken to empower widows over the past decade, and the political support the cause has gained, I will not rest until the plight of widows worldwide is addressed on the global scale that only Sustainable Development Goal recognition will deliver."

Foundation President Cherie Blair said: "This is clearly not just a personal tragedy but a societal tragedy and a global tragedy. It's absolutely crucial that we acknowledge the particular problem of widowhood and support efforts to tackle it. It is critical that this issue is taken seriously at the international level."

In India, Mr. Pratap Singh, Country Head of The Loomba Foundation and Mrs. Monica Dhawan, Director of the India Vision Foundation distributed the 'certificates of proficiency' to the widows and destitute inmates of Faridabad jail who had successfully completed vocational

training in garment making. The project was launched last year by Dr. Kiran Bedi and Lord Loomba for the benefit of 120 widows including 40 inmates in the female wards of the Gurgaon and Faridabad jails. The International Widows Day was also observed in Ludhiana district, where the first phase of empowerment project is being conducted. In partnership with the Punjab Government, The Loomba Foundation is providing free sewing machine and garment stitching training to 5000 widows in the state.

It has become a global movement as a number of organisations in many developing countries in South Asia and across Africa observe International Widows Day on 23rd June every year since it was launched in 2005. The UN General Secretary has issued a message to all UN member states on every International Widows Day since 2011.

## EDUCATION PROGRAMMES:

We have continued educating children of poor widows in India. During the year, we have educated 1631 Children in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhatisgarh, Delhi, Haryana, J&K, Karnataka, Mizoram, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.

In addition, the Loomba Foundation has supported the education of 18 students who are studying a four year engineering degree course at the Laxmi Narayana College of Technology in Bhopal in the state of Madhya Pradesh in India.

We are pleased that over the past 17 years we have educated over 10,000 children of poor widows and supported over 60,000 their family members. Each beneficiary is selected irrespective of religion, gender and class. Once selected, they receive a monthly scholarship of Rs. 500.00, which is guaranteed for a period of five years initially.

## RAISING FUNDS AND AWARENESS:

Like every other year, the Loomba Foundation has raised funds this year by organising a fundraising event in London and through major partnerships with the state Government of Punjab in India and Lions Clubs International Foundation in the USA.

In addition, the Loomba Foundation has remained busy during the year by engaging in advocacy. We have published World Widows Report and the Chairman has spoken at various events in London, Mumbai, Delhi and New York. We welcome the Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations, which if implemented by National Governments, they will help reduce poverty, provide education and empower the disadvantaged widows economically, socially and politically – giving them hope and dignity in their lives.

## 28TH MAY, 2015:

**Lord Loomba CBE urges the UK Government to lead the inclusion of issues relating to 258 million widows in the UN Sustainable Developments Goals 2015-2030**

Lord Loomba CBE participated in Her Majesty The Queen's Gracious Speech on International Development at the House of Lords. Lord Loomba informed the Lordships House that the

United Nations is setting up Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030 to build on the successes on Post 2015 MDG's.

Lord Loomba said "it is fantastic that SDG are seeking to promoting education and promoting gender inequality for women and girls". He added that that education and socio-economic empowerment is fundamental tools to achieve the UN targets.

Lord Loomba also praised what DFID is doing to help widows and their children around the world through direct aid to the developing countries and the United Nations.

Lord Loomba urged the Minister the Noble Baroness Anelay of St. Johns to take lead at the United Nations to ensure that the issues relating to widows and their children are included in the Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2013.

## 17TH SEPTEMBER, 2015:

**Lord Loomba says that the UN should include widows and their children in the indicators which follow the adoption of the sustainable development goals.**

Lord Loomba CBE participated in the House of Lord's debate regarding the forthcoming summit to adopt the sustainable development goals, which takes place at the UN General Assembly from 25th September to 27th September, 2015. There are 17 goals with 169 targets covering five areas to act as a springboard from the MDGs.

Lord Loomba highlighted that if these goals are to be achieved, the UN must pay attention to a group of over one billion people comprising of 259 million widows, 584 their children and many more the family depends, who suffer in silence. Widows are invisible, forgotten sufferers in the developing countries. They are burden on society whereas if they are given education and empowered they will become contributors to their families, communities and nations.

Lord Loomba is pleased that the main purpose of these goals is 'do not leave anyone behind'. This can only happen if all nations will take responsibility of reducing the gap between poor and rich; gap between rural areas and urban; gap between educated and uneducated; gap between skilled and unskilled; and improve gender inequality and increase women and girls security.

Lord Loomba is delighted that he has been invited to attend a High Level Plenary Session at the United Nations General Assembly, which will be chaired by His Excellency Ban Ki Moon, UN General Secretary.

## 5TH FEBRUARY, 2016:
## IOD INDIA INVITED LORD LOOMBA CBE AS GUEST OF HONOUR:

After successfully organizing the Indo-Global Business Meet at the House of Lords and the Annual IOD Global Convention on Corporate Governance and Sustainability at London in October, 2015, the Institute of Directors organized it's 10th International Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility on 05-06 February, 2016 at Hotel Taj Lands End, Bandra (West), Mumbai, India.

Lord Raj Loomba, Founder of the Loomba Foundation, graced the occasion as Guest of Honor and recalled how his own personal struggles had motivated him to work for the cause of widows, globally. His moving speech had the audience in rapt attention and elicited a huge round of applause and acclamation for the phenomenal contributions made by his foundation. Lord Loomba spoke of the importance of corporate giving and how the culture of giving can help support the development landscape of the nation.

The CSR mandate promulgated through the Companies Act, 2013 asks over 16000 companies to spend 2% of their net profit on specified CSR activities. The Act has asked these companies to have CSR policies, CSR committees and work on board's direction. CSR has moved from backroom to boardroom. CSR has become the new game changer, needing an actionable business agenda. That was the context of the widely attended International Conference, where India is the first country in the world to mandate CSR.

The conference saw participation from over 9 countries including New Zealand, Bangladesh, Switzerland, Indonesia, USA, UK, UAE, Thailand and Canada. The conference was inaugurated by the Indian Philanthropist Padma Bhushan Mrs. Rajashree Birla, Chairperson, Aditya Birla Group. Dr. R Seetharaman, Group CEO, Doha Bank delivered the keynote address while Mr. S. Chakraborty, Chief Executive, Innovative Financial Advisors delivered a special address.

## 6TH FEBRUARY, 2016: LORD LOOMBA CBE RECEIVES ONE GLOBE AWARD 2016 FOR SOCIAL IMPACT:

Minister of State for Urban Development, Shri Babul Supriyo gave away the One Globe Awards at the fifth edition of the two-day One Globe: Uniting Knowledge Communities Conference held in New Delhi. The awards recognize and honor individuals as well as domestic and international companies for their contributions in building a 21st century knowledge economy through their initiatives in digital economy, R&D, smart cities, entrepreneurship and social impact. The conference was inaugurated by India's Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting Shri Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore.

Lord Raj Loomba CBE received the Award for Excellence in Creating Social Impact for helping provide global recognition to the cause of over 258 million widows and their 585 million children worldwide. Prime Minister Modi recently supported The Loomba Foundation's project to provide dignified livelihood to 5000 widows of Varanasi through skills training in tailoring and sewing machines.

The One Globe conference is India's leading conference that brings together global thought leaders to discuss how we build a 21st century knowledge economy in India and South Asia. It explores the intersection of technology, innovation, smart cities, skills, regional collaboration and education. This 5th annual edition of the One Globe Conference: Uniting Knowledge Communities conference will specifically focus on ideas, issues and impact of the Indian government's ambitious agenda to transform India into a 21st century knowledge economy through its initiatives like "Digital India", "Make in India", "Smart Cities" and "Entrepreneurship".

**Lord Loomba CBE has written many columns in the Asian Voice, which is a renowned weekly newspaper in London, advocating for the plight of widows and their children around the world.**

## FUTURE PLANS:

During 2016, the Loomba Foundation will be organizing events in London at the Dorchester on 13th October and New York on 2nd December. In addition, a mega Concert has been planned to take place at the Siri Fort in Delhi in India on 5th November, 2016, which is expected to be attended by over 1500 people. The concert will celebrate Diwali 2016 and

raise funds for our projects in India.

It will be the 20th anniversary of the Loomba Foundation next year as it was established in 1997. We will be organizing a memorable event to mark International Widows Day on 23rd June, 2017 in London, 7th October in Delhi and 4th November in New York.

We expect to complete our existing project of empowering 5000 widows each in Punjab and 5000 in Varanasi during the year.

In addition, we are planning to empower 2600 widows in Vrindavan, a city known as 'City of Widows' in 2016-17. This project is in partnership with Lions Club International Foundation, who have given us grant on 1:2:4 basis, which means that the Loomba Foundation will pay 25%, another 25% will be added by Lions Club in the UK making it 50% This amount will be matched by Lions Club International Foundation. The total amount comes to approximately £120,000.00, which will enable us to empower 2600 widows, who will receive vocational training in tailoring for two months. On completion of their training, they will be given each a foot-operated sewing machine so that they can become self-reliant, educate their children, support their family members and live a life of dignity.

We will hold three events at the House of Lords this year to promote other organisations such as the Consortium of Street Children, Asian University of Women and Barnardo's, the largest charity for children in the UK.

Finally, we will continue educating children of poor widows in India, each of whom receives a scholarship of Rs.500 per month. We will also continue raising awareness of the plight of widows in India and around the world through advocacy and debates in the House of Lords in London.