



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

4 March 2009

Dear Professor Atta-ur-Rahman,

I am pleased to invite you to attend a high-level meeting to be held on 14 and 15 May 2009 in New York that will launch my Biotechnology Initiative. You will be joining a select group of 30 global biotechnology leaders whom we have carefully chosen based on their professional achievements and sectoral experiences.

The purpose of the meeting is to solicit your views on how we can best promote the beneficial applications of biotechnology and life science research while managing the accompanying safety and security risks. In particular, we are eager to hear your views on what role the United Nations, and specifically the Office of the Secretary-General, might play in this complex arena.

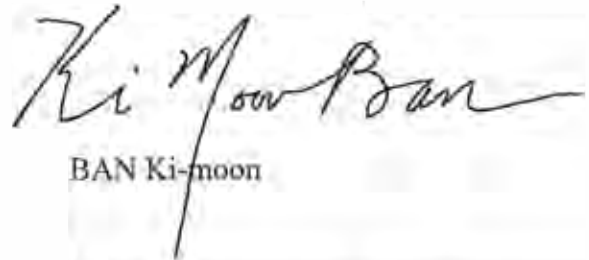
The meeting will take place at the Greentree Foundation Conference Center. We will have transportation available to take you from the United Nations headquarters in the afternoon of 14 May 2009. There will be an informal reception and dinner that evening with all participants. I will formally open the meeting the next morning and proceedings will continue throughout the next day. Transportation will be available to take you back to New York that afternoon.

Professor Atta-ur-Rahman
Coordinator General
Organization of Islamic Conference
Standing Committee on Scientific
and Technological Cooperation
Islamabad

The United Nations will cover your travel costs. Please confirm your attendance to Ms. Nadezhda Novoseltseva by facsimile: 1 917 367 5115 or email novoseltseva@un.org by 31 March 2009. Following confirmation of your attendance, we will send you more detailed logistics information. A one-page description of the Initiative is attached for your information.

I hope very much that you will join us for this important event.

Please accept, Your Highness, the assurances of my highest consideration.



BAN Ki-moon

United Nations Secretary-General's Biotechnology Initiative

Advances in biological research and their application are providing new tools to tackle some of the most difficult and pressing global health and food security issues. Infectious diseases are a leading cause of death worldwide, claiming over 14 million lives each year and disproportionately affecting developing countries. The emergence of new diseases and the resurgence of old ones, together with the rise of drug-resistant bacteria, present major challenges to global health. To address this, researchers are developing rational-design vaccines to combat viruses and are using bacterial genetics to overcome antibiotic resistance. Synthetic biologists have engineered organisms that produce potent—and otherwise rare—anti-malarial drugs. In industry and agriculture, biotechnology is being employed to develop cellulose-based biological fuels; to identify better methods of bioremediation; and to improve crops that are nutritionally enriched, produce higher yields, and are resistant to disease and drought.

Biotechnology has the potential to radically improve human and animal health, guarantee food security and promote sustainable economic development. Reducing the technological gap between developed and developing countries in this arena will be critical to ultimately reducing global inequalities. For this reason there must be a concerted effort to develop sustainable partnerships that promote technological exchanges and scientific collaboration.

At the same time, however, it is important to recognize that while biological research promises to offer tremendous benefits to human health and security, its negligent or deliberate misuse is capable of causing great harm. To guard against illicit acquisition of potentially harmful agents, many scientists already follow rules for the responsible conduct of research. However, further measures to ensure the safe and secure use of these new technologies must be adopted.

To address these issues, the United Nations Secretary-General, with the support of the Member States, is calling for high-level international leadership from prominent figures in the biological sciences, industry, government, international institutions and civil society. His Biotechnology Initiative will bring crucial constituencies together to: 1) map out the biotechnology landscape; 2) enhance multi-stakeholder partnerships and collaboration; 3) promote a culture of responsibility and encourage the adoption of risk-management strategies; and 4) begin to develop a framework that balances biotechnology and life science research benefits with risk-management strategies.

The Secretary-General's Biotechnology Initiative will respond to a need to raise awareness, design workable solutions, and mobilize political, financial and other forms of critical support, while fostering North-South and South-South collaboration. The Secretary-General will use his convening and moral authority as well as his bully pulpit to facilitate dialogue, partnerships and concrete outcomes.

Science and technology capacity-building is a long-term endeavor. The Secretary-General's Biotechnology Initiative process will stress proactive and sustainable engagement.

Secretary-General's Biotechnology Initiative

Invitees for the Launch Meeting

(14 and 15 May 2009)

1. HH Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Misnad
The Consort of His Highness the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani,
Chair of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development
Doha
2. Sir Roy Anderson
Rector, Imperial College London
London
3. Prof. Atta-ur-Rahman
Coordinator General, Organization of Islamic Conference Standing Committee on
Scientific and Technological Cooperation
Islamabad
4. Mr. Francisco E. Baralle
Director-General, International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology
Trieste
5. Dr. Gro H. Brundtland
Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Climate Change
Nice
6. Dr. Margaret Chan
Director-General, World Health Organization
Geneva
7. Prof. George M. Church
Professor in Genetics
Harvard Medical School
Boston
8. Mr. Barry Lowenkron
Vice President
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
Chicago
9. Mr. Bill Gates
Co-chairman and Founder
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
Seattle

To: Invitees for the Launch Meeting
of the SG's Biotechnology
Initiative

Drafter: Eva Busza

Authorized: _____

Date: 4 March 2009

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10. Prof. Nirmal K. Ganguly
Distinguished Biotechnology Fellow
Transnational Health Science and Technology Institute
New Delhi
11. Mr. Hugh Grant
Chairman, President and CEO of Monsanto
St. Louis
12. Mr. Gerardo Jiménez-Sánchez
Director General, National Institute of Genomic Medicine
Mexico
13. Dr. Monty Jones
Executive Secretary of Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
Accra
14. Dr. Rima Khalaf Hunaidi
CEO, Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation
Dubai
15. Dr. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw
Chairman and Managing Director of Biocon
Bangalore
16. Dr. Pascoal Mocumbi
High Representative of the European and Developing Countries Clinical
Trials Partnership
Tygerberg
17. Sir Gustav Nossal
Patron of the PhD Colloquia
University of Melbourne
Melbourne
18. Mr. Kasper Rorsted
Chief Executive Officer of Henkel AG & Co. KGaA
Dusseldorf
19. Dr. Tony Tan
Chairman, National Research Foundation
Singapore
20. Dr. Shirley M. Tilghman
President of Princeton University
Princeton

21. Dr. Harold E. Varmus
President, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center
New York
22. Dr. Daniel Vasella
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Novartis
Basel
23. Mr. Ren Wang
Director, Consultative Group on International Agriculture Research
Washington, D.C.
24. Mr. Andrew Witty
Chief Executive Officer, GlaxoSmithKline
Brentford
25. Mr. Wang Yu
Director, Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention
Beijing
26. Mr. Yongyuth Yuthavong
Senior Researcher, Ministry of Science and Technology
Pathumthani

Senior Advisers to the Project

27. Prof. Christopher Chyba
Director, Program on Science and Global Security
Princeton University
Princeton
28. Prof. Abdallah S. Daar
Director, Program of Ethics and Commercialization
McLaughlin-Rotman Centre for Global Health
Toronto
29. Dr. Peter A. Singer
Director, McLaughlin-Rotman Centre for Global Health
Toronto
30. Mr. Terence Taylor
President, International Council for the Life Sciences
Washington, D.C.