



BAN KI-MOON ON CLIMATE CHANGE

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=21720&Cr=global&Cr1=warming#>

1 March 2007 – United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today called on the world’s younger generation to take better care of Planet Earth in the face of global warming than his own.

“We are all complicit in the process of global warming. Unsustainable practices are deeply entrenched in our everyday lives. But in the absence of decisive measures, the true cost of our actions will be borne by succeeding generations, starting with yours,” Mr. Ban [told](#) a UN International School conference in the General Assembly Hall in New York.

“That would be an unconscionable legacy; one which we must all join hands to avert. As it stands, the damage already inflicted on our ecosystem will take decades, perhaps centuries, to reverse – if we act now.

“Unfortunately, my generation has been somewhat careless in looking after our one and only planet. But I am hopeful that is finally changing. And I am also hopeful that your generation will prove far better stewards of our environment; in fact, looking around this hall today, I have a strong sense that you already are,” he added.

Mr. Ban cited his own childhood in war-ravaged Korea as the starting point of his identification with the UN which ended hostilities on the peninsula. “I grew up viewing the United Nations as a saviour; an organization which helped my country, the Republic of Korea, recover and rebuild from a devastating conflict,” he declared.

“Yet if there is one crucial difference between the era I grew up in, and the world you inherit, it is of the relative dangers we face. For my generation, coming of age at the height of the cold war, fear of a nuclear winter seemed the leading existential threat on the horizon.

“Today, war continues to threaten countless men, women and children across the globe. It is the source of untold suffering and loss. And the majority of the UN’s work still focuses on preventing and ending conflict. But the danger posed by war to all of humanity – and to our planet – is at least matched by the climate crisis and global warming,” he added.

As he has frequently stressed since he took office on 1 January, Mr. Ban said action on climate change would be one of his top priorities as Secretary-General, noting that global warming has profound implications for jobs, growth and poverty, affecting agriculture, the spread of disease and migration patterns, determining the ferocity and

frequency of natural disasters, and prompting droughts, land degradation and other changes that “are likely to become a major driver of war and conflict.”

He added that he would discuss climate change with global leaders at this June’s summit meeting of the G-8 major industrialized nations. “These issues transcend borders,” he declared. “That is why protecting the world’s environment is largely beyond the capacity of individual countries. Only concerted and coordinated international action, supported and sustained by individual initiative, will be sufficient.

“The natural arena for such action is the United Nations. I am strongly committed to ensuring that the United Nations helps the international community make the transition to sustainable practices.”