

UNITED NATIONS

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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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REMARKS TO THE UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
Ottawa, 12 May 2010

Ms. Kathryn White, [*UNA-Canada Executive Director*]
Ms. Nancy Wildgoose, [*UNA-Canada National President*]
Ambassador [Allan] Rock, [*Moderator*]
Honoured Guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

It is a real pleasure to be here.

I understand that the word around town, today, was that a famous South Korean was coming back to visit.

[Pause]

I humbly apologize if you were expecting Kim Yu Na.

Seriously: Canada hosted a truly memorable Olympics.

And I wanted to come here this morning to thank you ... and this UN association ... for doing so much to promote not only the values of the Olympics, but the principles of the United Nations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This is my first visit to Ottawa as Secretary-General, but it is not my first time in Canada.

I was in Quebec almost two years ago for the Francophone Summit. And of course I meet regularly with Prime Minister Harper and others.

When I think of Canada, I think of Lester B. Pearson, who literally wrote the book on peacekeeping. And I think of your UN peacekeepers today... who are adding new chapters serving in difficult missions from Africa to the Middle East.

A famous Canadian, Lester B. Pearson, literally wrote the book on peacekeeping.

I think of Canada as the champion of the Responsibility to Protect.

And I think too of your brave troops fighting to secure Afghanistan.

I think of Canadian diplomacy: the international convention banning land mines ... your recent proposal concerning the status of Jerusalem in a broader Middle East peace ... your generous development aid ... the help you give to countries rebuilding from conflict.

And when I think of UN Associations such as yours, I see some of our greatest supporters ...

Engaged and committed ... standing for justice, human rights, equal opportunity.

A dynamic Member State and an engaged citizenry make a powerful combination. We are fortunate to have such friends.

Thank you. Our world needs a strong UN-Canada partnership.

Canada occupies a special place in this constellation of actors. Especially this year, when you will soon host the G8 and G20 meetings.

Those meetings are yet another sign of a world in transition. We see old groupings giving way to new ones. New powers taking their place in global decision-making.

Most of all we see the emergence of a set of global challenges that require global solutions.

As we gather here in Ottawa, negotiators are working at the United Nations in New York trying to strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

There is new momentum on which they can build. A new START Treaty. The Security Council summit at the United Nations last September. The nuclear security summit last month in Washington.

We have an opportunity, now: to leave a legacy ... not of fear and inaction, but of determined steps toward a nuclear-weapon-free world.

We also have an opportunity to address a second existential threat to humankind – the threat posed by climate change.

The science is sobering. Both the planet and the calendar are telling us that we are running out of time. The first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol expires in 2012.

But here, too, there is hope. Climate change has rightly become a top priority for world leaders. Last year in Copenhagen, 119 Heads of State and Government joined the talks. The Copenhagen Accord was an important first step.

Now the UNFCCC must take the negotiations forward.

That means action on accelerating mitigation... and on reducing emissions from deforestation and land degradation.

It means focusing on adaptation, capacity building and technology.

And it means financing -- fast-track and long-term.

Canada has much to contribute

I commend the UNA-Canada for your own leadership in this area -- particularly in engaging young people through the Ripple Effect initiative. I welcome your efforts to make Ontario the clean water capital of the world.

You are thinking big, and I am sure you will continue press the country's leadership to do the same.

I urge Canada to comply with the targets set out by the Kyoto Protocol. You can strengthen your mitigation targets for the future.

And you can join other industrialized countries in contributing new funding, in keeping with your longstanding tradition of global solidarity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world faces yet another crisis ... one which risks even greater catastrophe than climate change... and that is every bit the security threat as nuclear weapons.

Yet this crisis is all too invisible ... it is a silent scandal of deaths and dashed hopes for hundreds of millions...

I speak, of course, about the global development emergency and the need to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The global economic crisis has made that job harder – but also more urgent.

The upcoming Summits here in Canada must provide a new resolve to meet global commitments to the poor of the world.

They must generate commitments that will guide world leaders at the MDG summit at the United Nations in September.

Certainly we have made great strides. There has been a sharp decrease in malaria and measles deaths across Africa. Marked improvements in child health... increases in school enrolment... doubling of crop yields in some countries ...

Experience shows that when strong commitments are backed by the right policies, adequate investment and international support, countries can achieve remarkable progress – and sustain it.

At the MDG Summit, I want to showcase success stories... scale them up... show the progress that aid has made possible ... create partnerships that will allow us to do even more.

Where we are not on track, it is not because the goals are unreachable, or because time is short. It is because of unmet commitments and a lack of focus and accountability.

In a world of such remarkable know-how and wealth, it should be unacceptable for mothers to lose their lives while giving birth ... unacceptable for so many millions of people to never have a proper chance at an education, a decent job or better standards of living.

This is my message for the leaders who will gather in Canada next month.

We need bold, focused and coordinated action.

I will look to the G8 to make good on its L'Aquila commitment of \$22 billion over three years for smallholder agriculture. I am grateful to Canada for joining the United States, Korea, Spain, and the Gates Foundation in starting the new fund for food security. Yet there is still less than \$1 billion in the pipeline.

I am pleased that Canada has joined our effort on women's and children's health - a global Joint Plan of Action that is an essential investment for stable and productive societies. It will be crucial for the G8 to support this effort in very concrete ways next month.

Let us also deliver full funding of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. The G8 promised to ensure universal access to AIDS treatment, yet the Fund lacks the financing to achieve that life-and-death goal. Let us also ensure full financing for health systems, not only for the control of epidemic diseases. There are huge synergies to be had here.

I will also look to the G20 to push for a green recovery to the global economic crisis. We need to bring the MDG and climate-change agendas together in practical ways.

I thank Prime Minister Harper for declaring the G8 Summit to be the Accountability Summit. This is right, and it is necessary.

This is the year in which the Gleneagles Commitment to double aid to Africa was meant to be fulfilled. Yet the G8 are falling short by \$20 billion per year. I can think of no better way for the G8 to show it stands for accountability than to honour, at long last, this long-standing pledge.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Canada can play a vital leadership role in mobilizing G8 and G20 countries on all these issues.

This is an ambitious agenda, but we can get it done.

In closing, let me give you eight reasons why ...

They are the names of the eight Canadian women and men who gave their lives in the service of the United Nations in Haiti.

Boucif Belhachemi. So eager to take on new challenges, a friend described his motto as “Yes, of course.”

Renee Carrier. She served the UN for more than two decades.

James Coates. Still in his thirties, colleagues of all ages looked to him for advice.

Alexandra Duguay. Ambitious, accomplished and multi-lingual, she dreamed from childhood of serving the United Nations.

Jean-Phillipe Laberge, famous for his skill in getting relief to people in the hardest places around the world.

Mark Gallagher, who reminded his colleagues from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police back home that “the smallest gestures make all the difference.”

Guillame Siemienski, of whom a friend said: “The house would shake from the energy he inspired.”

And lastly, Doug Coates, Acting Police Commissioner and a veteran of missions to Haiti over 17 years.

There are so many memories from this tragedy.

For me, one of the most enduring is an image not from Port au Prince, but from right here in Ottawa.

It is from the funeral of Doug Coates.

The flags of Canada and the United Nations were draped on his casket, side by side.

And side by side stood an honor guard. Canada's Mounties wore not only their distinctive red serge, but also the equally distinctive UN blue peacekeeping beret.

A picture worth a thousand words about the UN-Canada partnership. The UN-Canada bond.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In life, we are measured by the company we keep.

This is the company we keep.

On behalf of a grateful United Nations, thank you for your commitment. Thank you for your support.