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NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**ADDRESS TO THE PRINCETON COLLOQUIUM:
“THE IMPERATIVE FOR A NEW MULTILATERALISM”
Princeton, 17 April 2009**

President Tilghman,
Dean Watson,
Professors, Students,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure and a honor to be here today and to have this precious opportunity to address such a prestigious university. So many leaders have come from Princeton university. It is truly a great pleasure to meet today with so many students who will be the leaders of tomorrow. I am impressed by the turn out in this hall. I ask you to remember me when one day I will retire as Secretary-General and may decide to take the opportunity to teach. I hope there will be this many people in the audience!

The United Nations owes a great debt to this university. Over the years, our work has been inspired by the great thinkers and leaders who have sat in these halls, paced down these corridors and shared their wisdom from the university’s lecterns.

The very concept of a United Nations can be attributed to one of your former University Presidents, Woodrow Wilson.

He called for nations to come together to make it “safe for every peace-loving nation which, like our own, wishes to live its own life, determine its own institutions, be assured of justice and fair dealing by the other people of the world, and be protected from force and selfish aggression.”

That call was heard in 1919. The call of self-determination was heard across the world, too. It reached South Korea, my homeland, and inspired the Korean people to fight for their independence from colonialism. One of the leaders of the Korean independence movements and the first President of the Republic of Korea, Syngman Rhee, was a Princeton graduate!

That call was heard a quarter century later in the wake of World War II.

It resounds today, too.

Ladies and Gentleman,

Some of us in this room are old enough to remember the devastation of World War II, including myself, although many of you were probably not even born yet! At the end of the war, the founding members of the United Nations looked out on a charred and shattered landscape and pledged, like Woodrow Wilson, to do better.

They sought, in the words of the UN Charter, to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, to establish conditions under which justice can be maintained, to promote social progress and provide better standards of life in larger freedom.

Those founders salvaged the ruptured steel beams and fragmented bricks of the League of Nations, and built a new multilateral framework—one that drew on the best of the past but was designed to meet the needs of a changed world. It is about a new multilateralism that I would like to talk with you today.

Today, we face a landscape shattered by global economic crisis and collapse, regional conflict, and escalating humanitarian needs. The images on our television screens are beginning to look frighteningly familiar.

Starving women and children.

People on the move in search of safety, food, and work.

Long unemployment lines.

Exhausted populations numbed by the rising violence and misery surrounding them.

Absent decisive action, we face a real prospect of our existing system unraveling.

The projections should alarm all of us.

- * The number of hungry people has risen to nearly one billion.
- * The ranks of the unemployed could grow by more than 50 million this year alone. Women are likely to bear the brunt.
- * By the end of 2009, Africa's economy stands to lose twice as much in percentage terms as Asia's economies lost during that region's financial crisis a decade ago.
- * Last year's food crisis suggests an increased potential for social unrest. In 2007 and 2008 there were a total of 61 food protests – 23 of them violent and some of them causing governments to fall.

Climate change looms with potentially cataclysmic consequences.

The bleak forecast also includes the continued spread of deadly disease, a possible cascade of nuclear proliferation, the already dangerous rise in extremism, and the fallout of intra-state conflict.

This toxic mix that could give rise to a full-blown crisis of political instability.

For the world and its peoples, 2009 could be a make or break year. This is exactly what I discussed with President Obama when I met him in Washington last month. We agreed to work very closely.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We must stop this descent. We must alter our path.

But this requires bold action. The time has passed for incremental adjustments

We need a new vision, a new paradigm, a new multilateralism.

A multilateralism that is organized around delivering a set of global goods.

A multilateralism that harnesses both power and principle.

A multilateralism that recognizes the interconnected nature of global challenges.

A multilateralism with institutions that have the necessary authority and resources.

Early in my tenure as Secretary-General, I asserted that the world faces a set of global threats that hold the key to our common future.

These threats are contagious, and freely cross borders. They affect everyone, everywhere, and cannot be addressed by any one country in isolation. The United States is the biggest superpower with many resources, yet even the United States cannot face these challenges alone. These threats can only be countered through a global effort to provide a set of global public goods to all.

Those goods include a major push against poverty by delivering on the Millennium Development Goals, which we must accomplish by 2015. A restoration of peace and stability in troubled and war-ravaged regions. Action on climate change. Advances in global health. Counter-terrorism. Disarmament and non-proliferation.

To this list we must add a global good that can no longer be taken for granted: global financial and economic stability.

None of these issues is new. But their scope, scale and intensity take us into uncharted territories.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since World War II, major new actors have emerged on the world stage. The United Nations began with 51 Member States; today it counts 192 Member States. The voices calling for change have also risen in number. We must listen to those voices.

Princeton's own Albert Hirschman, the famed development economist, once warned that members of an organization have two possible responses when they perceive that it is declining in value: they can exit, or they can voice their proposals for change.

Exiting from the institutions that hold our global order together would lead to disaster.

That means our new multilateralism must listen to these voices, and embrace new political realities. But it cannot privilege power at the expense of the weak. Nor can it allow hollow representation to lead to paralysis.

A choice between power and principle is a false one. If we are to make our way through this perilous moment, we need to harness both.

As we address the economic crisis, G-8 and G-20 leaders have a special responsibility to take remedial action. Yet they must also find a way to meet the popular aspirations of the billions of people who are not at the table.

Similarly, in the realm of climate change, the key economies and emitters must shoulder the greatest burdens. But if solutions are to be sustainable, they require concerted action by all.

And in the area of peacekeeping, the members of the Security Council have the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security. But they also have a responsibility to ensure that the resources—human, financial, material, technical and political--will be available to meet the Council's mandates.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We know what we have to do. We know who has to do it. The question is, how do we do it?

The new multilateralism must ensure that we do not address global challenges in isolation.

We cannot solve the economic crisis, the climate crisis, the food crisis and abject poverty in piecemeal fashion.

We cannot provide clean energy and strengthen the non-proliferation regimes without considering the inter-relationships.

For example, no solution to our economic crisis will be sustainable without a new climate change framework. Such a framework will need to attract investments in clean energy.

Strategies for investing in clean energy sources such as nuclear power need to take into account non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament concerns.

Similarly, any reliance on alternative fuels such as biofuels requires us to have strategies to keep clean energy from competing with feeding the hungry.

Strengthening the United Nations must also be part of the picture. The financial crisis led G20 leaders to provide new authority and resources to the International Monetary Fund. It also prompted calls for reforms of both the IMF and the World Bank - calls heard for years but galvanized only now. The United Nations must also be strengthened and reformed.

In recent years, Member States have given the United Nations and the Secretary-General increased mandates. However, they have not provided us with the commensurate authority and resources. Very bitter and serious budget battles in recent years have taken us further from what we need: an effective and empowered instrument of service capable of meeting the dominant global challenges of the twenty-first century.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The agenda for the new multilateralism is clear:

To provide economic and financial stability, the United Nations is leading the effort to achieve the MDGs, including eliminating poverty, providing education opportunities, improving maternal and child health, combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases, achieving gender equality and empowering women, ensuring a sustainable environment and working in partnership. This is a long-term vision set out in 2000 by world leaders.

That means ensuring that developing and emerging countries have access to the \$1.1 trillion agreed by G20 leaders in support of economic and financial stability. It means donors meeting their aid commitments. It means taking a stand against protectionism, which hurts everyone. Many here today are professors and students of economics; you know that protectionism is a shortsighted measure. Yet, many countries continue to apply it, even among the G20, who agreed to avoid such measures.

To address climate change, we hope to seal a deal at crucial talks in Copenhagen later this year. We want not only to reduce emissions but to help countries adapt to and

mitigate the inevitable effects of a changing environment. And we are working with business and scientists to stimulate innovation and investment in green technologies for green growth.

To deliver on global health, we are countering the assault on health funding by forging partnerships to build functioning and affordable health systems, promote maternal and child health and, take action on a range of diseases afflicting the world's poor.

To deliver on counter-terrorism, we are working with States to implement the ground-breaking United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

To deliver peace and security, we are working to align our capacities with our mandated responsibilities.

A decade ago, when a new blueprint for peacekeeping was developed, the UN fielded less than 20,000 civilian, military and police personnel. Today, that number exceeds 110,000.

I have often heard it said that I command the second largest deployed force in the world, after the United States. While this may be true, I am not claiming that the United Nations is a superpower.

I am not at all happy the number is so high. The higher the number means the greater the sign of global instability. I would love nothing better than to end those conflicts and be able to shut all our missions down.

For the moment, of course, we face the challenge of keeping up with the demand for peacekeeping. Without renewed commitment, we will be unable to do so.

That is why we have also been working so hard to head off conflict before it erupts. Proud as we are of our peacekeepers, prevention is far the better course. This year, we will spend nearly \$8 billion in peacekeeping. Prevention is the best way to save lives and resources.

And finally, to deliver on disarmament and non-proliferation, we welcome the leadership shown by Princetonian George Shultz and his colleagues in advocating new progress towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

I was very encouraged by President Obama's and President Medvedev's commitment to non-proliferation recently. On the occasion of his trip to the Czech Republic, President Obama expressed his aim for a world free of nuclear weapons. This is also my goal and the United Nations have been working toward that end for six decades. I was also encouraged by President Obama's intention to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), especially because I once chaired the preparatory commission.

We are urging all parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to fulfill their obligations under the treaty to pursue global nuclear disarmament.

We are calling on members of the Security Council to initiate discussions on various issues, including on assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States that they will not be the subject of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

And we are calling on all Member States to eliminate other weapons of mass destruction, impose limits on conventional arms, and adopt new weapons bans.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dangerous social and political fuses have been lit. Facing crisis on many fronts, the world is coming to grasp the need for a transition -- to sustainable development, to new levels of cooperation, to a new multilateralism.

One natural response to such challenges might be to look inward and protect our narrow interest. But we must not.

Woodrow Wilson once said: "Interest does not tie nations together; it sometimes separates them. But sympathy and understanding does unite them."

To be honest with you, I am reluctant to take issue with a statesman and hero such as Wilson, especially here on his home turf.

But times have changed and I suspect even he would agree that today, interest does indeed tie the world together.

That is our 21st-century reality. Nations may have been slow to realize it, but that is changing.

We are all coming to understanding that none of the urgent challenges of our time can be solved without cooperation.

It is incontestable that no nation, no matter how strong and resourceful, can solve these problems on its own. Nor should it want to. There is strength, not just efficiency, in sharing burdens. Solutions lie that way, too.

In an interdependent world, the common interest is the national interest. Either we will succeed together or fail alone. Therein lies the rationale – the imperative – for a new multilateralism.

For my part as Secretary-General, I am determined to ensure that the United Nations can serve not only as an effective instrument of service for humankind, but as an agent of the transformation that the world needs to weather these troubled times.

I will look to all of you for support in that crucially important effort.

Thank you. Now I would be happy to hear your comments and take a few questions.