

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

MESSAGE TO THE 2004 DOUGLAS COLLEGE INTERNATIONAL
MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
New Westminster, 7-10 February 2004

In September 2000, world leaders adopted the Millennium Declaration, in which they committed themselves to address common threats to peace and security, to meet agreed development goals, and to advance human rights and democracy. But while that vision remains valid, recent events – from the war in Iraq to the setback in trade talks at Cancún -- have upset the consensus behind it. Deep divergences of opinion have emerged on the range and nature of the challenges we face, and are likely to face in the future.

Many people have come to see the dominant threats to peace and security as terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, transnational criminal networks and the ways in which all these things may be coming together to reinforce one another. They worry that the international architecture is not up to meeting them.

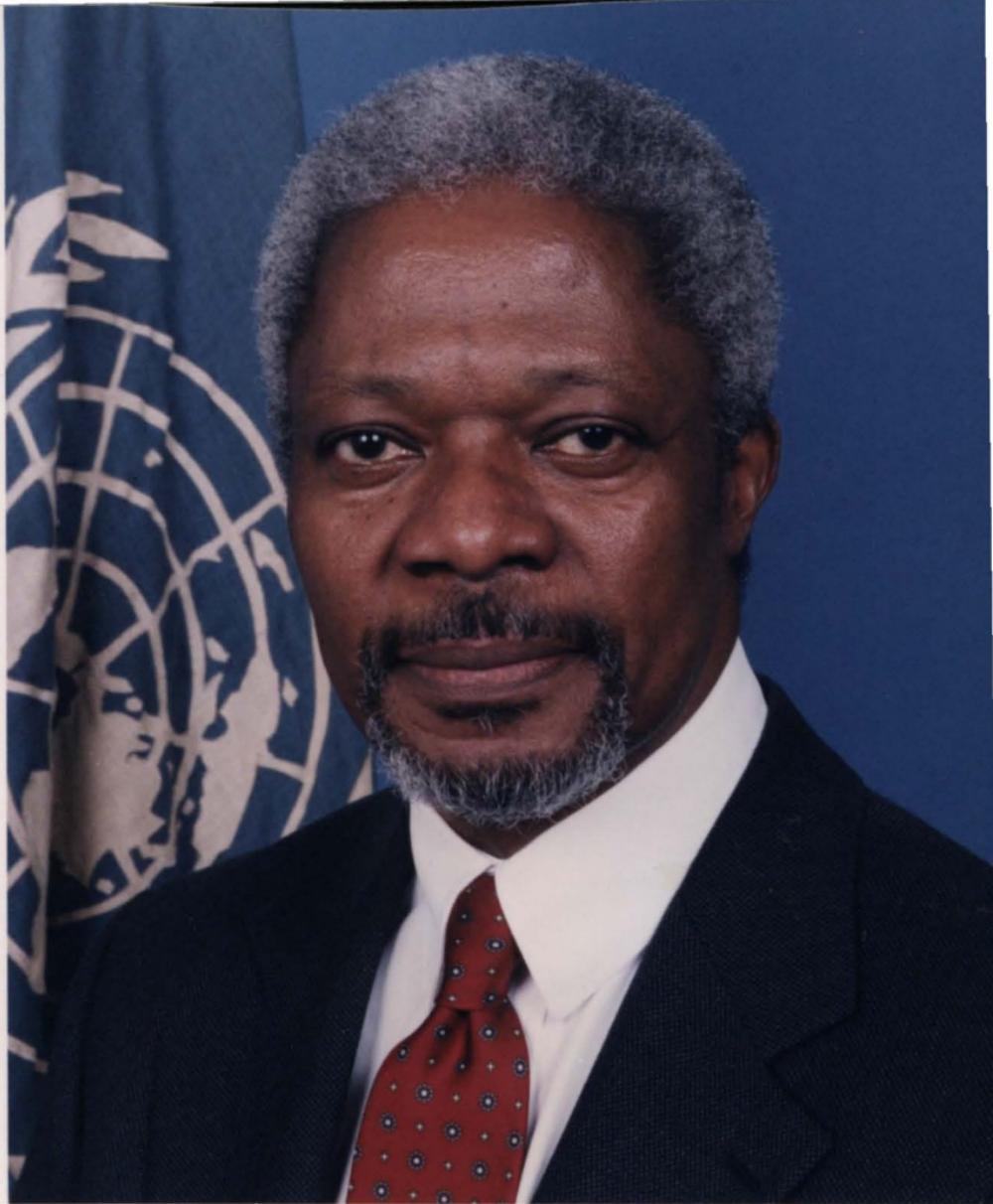
But to people in many and probably most other countries, the threats that really destabilize lives are quite different: civil wars and other armed conflicts fought with conventional, even low-tech, weapons; AIDS and other diseases, poverty and environmental degradation, oppression and violations of human rights. They worry that these issues are being neglected, despite promises and pledges made at world conferences.

These challenges and threats are closely linked. A world not advancing towards the Millennium Development Goals will not be a world at peace. And a world awash in violence and conflict will have little chance of achieving the goals.

Our central challenge is to ensure we have the rules, instruments and institutions to deal with all of them. With that in mind, I have appointed a panel of eminent persons to examine threats to peace and security – as well as other global challenges, including those in the economic and social realms. Then it will consider collective solutions or responses to those threats, and then, in the light of that analysis, will look closely at the international machinery, including the major organs of the United Nations. I hope to make bold recommendations to the General Assembly later this year.

The ultimate decisions can only be taken by the Member States. But each of you has an important role to play in this path of change, and I hope you will make your voices heard. I also hope you will always see the United Nations as a valuable ally in the global struggle for development, human rights and peace. Please accept my best wishes for a successful Model United Nations session.

Kofi A. Annan



K. Annan