

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

**VIDEO MESSAGE FOR THE 57TH ANNUAL
DPI/NGO CONFERENCE:
“MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS:
CIVIL SOCIETY TAKES ACTION”
New York, 8 September 2004**

Good morning, ladies and gentleman. It is a pleasure to welcome you to the 57th annual DPI/NGO conference.

I deeply regret that I cannot be with you in person. But I am glad to have this opportunity, by video, to address this foremost annual meeting of the NGO community at the United Nations.

And I am especially pleased that you have chosen to focus your formidable skills and energies on the Millennium Development Goals.

The Goals are a test for all of us – for Governments, for NGOs, for the United Nations. People throughout the world want a fair chance at a better life for themselves and their children, and are looking to us for help. Every day we don't act, people suffer. And if the goals are not met, we will all be poorer, and less secure.

Indeed, our own credibility and relevance depend to no small degree on whether we can deliver on these promises.

It may sound like a dream to say that we can eradicate poverty, eliminate hunger, stop the spread of HIV/AIDS, protect the environment and provide education to all.

What makes these goals different from other bold pledges that became broken promises over the past 50 years?

First, they are measurable. We can see where we are making progress, and where we are falling behind.

Second, they have unprecedented political support. All the world's leaders have signed on to them. NGO representatives have a key role to play in increasing and sustaining this political will.

And third, the millennium development goals are achievable. With internal reforms and external support, almost every country can reach the goals by the target date of 2015.

You NGOs can be proud of the enormous contributions you have already made.

You have worked effectively with the United Nations.

You have been wonderfully innovative.

You are great campaigners.

You have put pressure on Governments to deliver on their commitments.

And you have brought real, meaningful change into people's lives.

I very much look forward to receiving the recommendations you will be making during the next three days, especially as we look ahead to next year's high-level review of progress towards the millennium development goals.

I will also be eager for your reaction when, a few weeks from now, I put forward my own suggestions for implementing the report of the panel of eminent persons on the UN's relations with civil society, chaired by former President Cardoso of Brazil. I believe these suggestions will strengthen our partnership, and help the United Nations keep pace with new developments in international affairs.

Thank you again for your support. We have a historic opportunity to end extreme poverty and set the world on a safer, more just and humane path. But there is no time to lose. So let's get to work! I wish you all the best for the success of your deliberations.

Thank you very much.