



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
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**OPENING REMARKS AT MEETING
WITH LEADERS OF U.S. FOUNDATIONS**
New York, 9 May 2007

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the United Nations. Foundations have been good friends of the United Nations since its inception. The UN Headquarters site was itself a donation of John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

So I wish to thank all of you for your generosity to UN causes over the years, and for being at the vanguard of the philanthropic spirit which the United States has always exemplified.

I am pleased that we have among us today a representative sampling of the great variety of the modern foundation world. Some of you are leaders of older foundations with many years of engagement in good causes. Others lead newer corporate foundations that have joined the effort to find creative solutions to global challenges.

The United Nations of the 21st century can attain its goals only by working with partners. The foundation community has tremendous potential to reinforce the mission of the United Nations. You have great convening power. You are innovative. You are risk-takers.

And you command rising levels of financial resources. I am very encouraged that, in 2005, grants by U.S. foundations for international affairs reached a record 2.8 billion dollars. This trend could radically reinvent development funding.

Indeed, foundations can make a particularly significant contribution in our work to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. That effort reaches its mid-point this year, and we are hoping for concerted action especially in those many countries that are lagging behind.

The foundation community can also be a strong advocate for UN causes in general. I am very grateful for Ted Turner's faith in the United Nations, which led to more than 1 billion dollars being channeled to the Organization in less than nine years, and has changed the way in which we do business.

As you know, the UN Office for Partnerships provides the gateway for foundations, private and corporate, to engage with the UN system. It was again Ted Turner's visionary support that led us to create that office, which now handles numerous inquiries from all over the world.

I also hope to work with foundations on the issue of climate change, which is one of the most profound global challenges of our time. Climate change is not only an environmental concern, but also has implications for economic and social development, and peace and security.

I hope to hold a high-level meeting on climate change during the General Assembly session this fall, and recently named three envoys to help me canvass governments on what can be achieved at such a meeting. I will also be attending the G-8 meeting in June, where this topic will be high on the agenda.

I know it is also important that the United Nations “walk the talk” in this area. Toward that end, my leadership team is working hard to ensure that the renovation of our Headquarters here in New York takes into account energy efficiency and other standards that will make our building as “green” as possible.

Dear friends,

The support and leadership of the United States has always been crucial to a strong and effective United Nations. To put it simply, there can be no effective United Nations without the United States. And the foundation community is an important constituency in the United States.

Your access to American political leaders places you in a uniquely influential position. You also have a vital role to play in fostering understanding and in building constituencies that can help to make the UN more effective.

For these reasons and more, I thank you again for your support and hope to forge even closer ties with you in the years ahead.

Thank you very much.