



## Message from the Secretary-General

I warmly welcome all of you to the 60th Annual DPI/NGO Conference at the United Nations.

Ties between our Organisation and civil society have blossomed in recent years. Today's UN collaborates with its non-governmental partners on matters as diverse as de-mining and disease control, in places as distant as Darfur and Dili. But few issues match climate change in the threat they pose to all of humanity, or the joint efforts they demand from us.

That is why this year's conference theme — Climate Change: How It Impacts Us All — is so important. The impact of climate change is grave and growing. The melting of Arctic ice threatens the region's people and ecosystems, but it also imperils low-lying islands and coastal cities half a world away. On the other hand, as glaciers retreat, water supplies are being put at risk. And for one-third of the world's population living in dry lands, especially those in Africa, changing weather patterns threaten to exacerbate desertification, drought and food insecurity.

We cannot go on this way for long. We cannot continue with business as usual. The time has come for decisive action on a global scale.

As participants in the global carbon-based economy, all of us are a part of the problem. Now, we all must commit to the search for solutions. New technologies, energy conservation, carbon-trading, forestry projects, renewable fuels, and private markets are vital aspects of an overall response. But the enormity of the issue cannot be addressed by mitigation alone. It requires adaptation and a fundamental rethink of the way we live, and how we travel and transact business. The most vulnerable developing countries — who have contributed the least to this phenomenon, yet remain most at risk from it — need assistance to improve their capacity to adapt.

The United Nations is fully engaged in this monumental effort. But our success relies on the active participation of Member States as well as our NGO and civil society partners. Let us join forces to address this challenge, and to ensure that we fulfil our basic promise of a better world for tomorrow's generations.

In that spirit, I wish you a productive and successful conference.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ban Ki-moon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Ban Ki-moon**  
United Nations