

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

**ADDRESS TO THE UNA-USA BUSINESS COUNCIL
FOR THE UNITED NATIONS
AND THE ASSOCIATION FOR A BETTER NEW YORK
New York, 10 January 2007**

Ambassador Luers,
Chairman Rudin,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I begin, I want to clarify one thing. It is about my name and the pronunciation. I want to tell you, it is not ‘moon’ as Chairman Rudin just said, so I should make the record straight this morning. My name is pronounced “bän”, not “bæn”. My name, as pronounced in Korean, can be spelled out in many different ways in English: b-a-n or b-a-h-n. It should have been b-a-h-n, not to create misunderstandings, or – b-a-n or b-o-n – p-a-n. Somehow, this b-a-n was crafted by me when I first began learning the alphabet, English alphabet. So I’ve been writing this b-a-n without knowing that sometimes the real meaning of this b-a-n is something to ban. This was only up to when I became a high school student.

As time went by, my name had been registered in passports or in the schools, and it began increasingly difficult to change my name from b-a-n to other ways of writing my name, like b-a-h-n. When I became Foreign Minister, again many people and my name had already been spread all throughout the world. I decided when I became the Secretary-General of the United Nations, that I should change my name this time. But I have realized that, in our world, there are so many things to ban in fact, as Secretary-General, that is very relevant to my job – proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the many diseases which needs to be banned through our collective wisdom and efforts. That is why I decided to keep my name spelled as b-a-n. But, please remember that my name is pronounced “bän”, not “bæn”. But I will try to ban all what is not good for everyone.

I thank the Business Council for the United Nations, the UNA-U.S.A. and the Association for a Better New York for hosting this gathering. I very much appreciate this opportunity to meet so early in my term with such a wide array of New York’s business, civic and community leaders. I am especially grateful for your having welcomed me so warmly to your city. But let me remind you that I am not a stranger to New York. I have been posted here before, in the late 1970s as junior officer in the [Permanent Mission of the People’s Republic of] Korea to the UN, and then again in 2001 at the time of the September 11 terrorist attacks – I was here on that very day -- and so have seen the city at some of its most challenging moments. I am glad to be back here again, and proud to call New York my home.

New York is one of the greatest cities in the world. It is a fitting host to its many international visitors, who can come to witness first-hand what a vibrant multicultural democracy looks like. This global city and the global organization I am privileged to lead, are a good match. Like the United Nations, there is something inspirational about New York as a great

melting pot of different cultures and traditions. And if this is the city that never sleeps, the United Nations works tirelessly, around the clock around the world.

Indeed, New Yorkers should be proud of their longstanding record of support for the United Nations. It was the generosity of the Rockefellers of New York that provided the land that now houses the United Nations headquarters. But the building itself, though imposing, is today obsolete and unsafe in many respects. Governments have now agreed to support a major refurbishment of the landmark complex over the next seven years. The process has involved careful planning with much oversight, and I am pleased that we are finally ready to proceed. I thank Mayor Bloomberg for his unstinting support. He has been a strong backer of the UN's presence in the city, as a matter of principle and because he understands the economic and other benefits it brings. In fact, a few days ago, I met Mayor Bloomberg and he assured me of his strong support and assistance for the UN and all the works of the UN, and particularly the renovation of the headquarters building. I hope that, among you, somebody will follow the path of the Rockefeller family.

The renovation will ensure that the complex is equipped with up-to-date facilities and meets modern-day health, safety and energy requirements. The refurbished complex will be safer not only for staff members, but also for those emergency response personnel – New York's finest and bravest – who may need to enter. But as with any major construction process, this will involve some disruptions for the neighbourhood and for commuters on the East Side. Maybe I can help to reduce the traffic jams, particularly during the General Assembly sessions, to advise the visiting heads of state and government to take the subway, as Mayor Bloomberg does!

I look forward to maintaining good community relations during the extended construction period, and may be asking for advice from the experienced "New York builders" in this room. In any case, I hope you will bear with us and support us as we restore one of the treasures of the New York skyline. It will be well worth it to this great city in the long run.

Of course, the importance of the United Nations to New York runs far deeper than its landmark building and the traffic jams our meetings may have caused you. In today's globalized world, the United Nations has a vital role to play. That means bringing not just its headquarters into the 21st century, but upgrading its management practices and its culture as well. One of my top priorities is to bring increased transparency, accountability, efficiency and mobility to the Organization.

As global interdependence deepens and spreads, all of us are struggling to find new ways of cooperating and doing business. Economies and cultures are becoming ever more connected through technology and commerce. Over the past several decades, millions of people across the world have benefited from enormous advances in science, technology and liberalized trade.

At the same time, new threats and challenges have emerged that must command our attention. Terrorism and organized crime transcend state borders. Those are the things which I'm going to ban. Diseases such as AIDS have been spreading rapidly, destroying human lives and disrupting economic activities. Climate change and environmental degradation pose major challenges, and not only to future generations. Inequality and poverty can lead to instability and conflict, as we have seen time and again.

In short, we face serious risks to our shared hopes for a prosperous, more secure and peaceful world. As we consider how we can best respond, I would like to stress two points.

First, the United Nations is the only organization with the worldwide membership, the global reach, and universal legitimacy needed to address today's global challenges. When a disaster strikes, like the tsunami in Southeast Asia, UN workers are already on the ground to respond. The UN's impartiality allows it to negotiate and operate in some of the toughest places in the world. And time and again, studies have shown that UN peacekeeping is far more effective and done with far less money than what any government can do on its own.

Second, the United Nations can only do its job properly with partners. We will need to forge even closer ties with civil society groups, foundations, academic institutions, the media, labour unions, and the private sector. Each has unique contributions to make. But let me say a special word about the private sector, since so many business leaders are in this room today.

Business and the United Nations might seem to have different purposes. Business has traditionally focused on growth and profit. The United Nations focuses its energies on peace and security, poverty reduction, and human rights. But many of our objectives are the same: building and supporting strong economies and communities, providing opportunities for people to pursue a livelihood, and ensuring that everyone can live in dignity. In these goals, the UN and businesses are partners. Business cannot survive or thrive if societies fail or if people feel that their security is threatened. Business is increasingly aware of this symbiotic relationship with society, and of the role that responsible business practices can play in fostering the very stability that business needs to prosper.

The United Nations and business need each other. We need your innovation, your initiative, your technological prowess. But business also needs the United Nations. In a very real sense, the work of the United Nations can be viewed as seeking to create the ideal enabling environment within which business can thrive.

- * Our efforts to maintain peace and eradicate poverty also serve to stabilize the world economy and prepare the ground for productive investments.

- * Our work to safeguard the environment helps protect global common goals.

- * Our technical standards and norms in aviation, shipping, telecommunication, trade, intellectual property rights and other areas are an important part of the "soft infrastructure" of the global economy.

- * Most important of all, the United Nations advocates values that are the cornerstone of an interdependent world: freedom, justice and the peaceful resolution of disputes; better standards of living; equality and tolerance and human rights. Globalization can work only if these values are paramount. Business could not and would not operate without contractual and trust-based relations. Neither can global society. The United Nations fills this void.

At the center of the Organization's engagement with business is the United Nations Global Compact. The Compact has become the world's largest voluntary corporate citizenship initiative, with 3,000 business participants from more than 100 countries. It brings together government, business, labour and civil society – both globally and locally based on the

conviction that business practices rooted in universal principles can help bring social and economic gains. The Compact works with business to respect human rights, to ensure safe workplace conditions, to exercise environmental care and to practice good corporate governance. Quite apart from the sustainable value this has brought to companies and communities, these activities have also had an unexpected feedback effect: the UN system itself, in working with business, is learning ways to make its own operations more effective and efficient.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today's collaboration between the United Nations and other partners recalls the Organization's foundational spirit, when politicians, scholars, business leaders and others shared the belief that business, trade and investment were essential pillars of peace and prosperity. As Secretary-General, I am enthusiastic about carrying forward this spirit. I believe you will find in me someone who is focused on real results, and interested in engaging with you. I, in turn, will look to you for help and support, including for the UN's renovation. We need you to advance universal principles within your spheres of influence. And I hope that you will also speak out in favour of a strong United Nations, in New York and around the world, and on the importance of U.S. leadership and engagement in the Organization.

All of us have a stake in getting these relationships right. So let us work together to make the right choices -- choices that will bring meaningful change to billions of people around the world.

Thank you again for your warm welcome and kind attention, and your support.