

**TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS CONFERENCE BY SECRETARY-GENERAL
BAN KI-MOON HELD IN GENEVA ON 31 AUGUST 2008**

After the opening ceremony of the 29th session of the
Intergovernmental panel on Climate Change

Secretary-General: I am happy to meet with you and exchange some of our views on the very important issue of climate change on the occasion of celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change] IPCC. I would like to congratulate again IPCC for its anniversary and accomplishments during the last 20 years, and I would like to also support and welcome the Swiss Federal Government for their strong commitment and support for the IPCC, and also [the World Meteorological Organization] WMO and [the United Nations Environmental Programme] UNEP for their foresight and vision to have established this IPCC. With the fourth assessment report of IPCC, not only have they won the Nobel Peace Prize for their accomplishment, but they have put to rest all the lingering skepticism or doubts that climate change was really happening. Now there is no question, no doubt about that. Climate change is now happening, will continue to happen, and science has proved it. The scientists have made their findings and they have given a very important task to political leaders and the United Nations to find out solutions. This is what I have been doing as Secretary-General of the United Nations. As you know, I have placed as the highest priority of the United Nations, addressing this global [climate] change phenomenon. We have the technology, we have the financing, we have the resources, we have the scientific findings, what is largely lacking is political will to address this issue. This is definitely a global challenge, a global crisis, which requires a global response through global partnerships. We must find a common solution with the participation of all the international community Member States before December 2009 in Copenhagen. Before that we have important occasions. In December this year in Potsdam, Poland, we must make a very successful bridge towards Copenhagen, where we will be able to agree on a shared vision, what kind of agreement we should be able to have by next year, then how we can implement the existing agreements in financing, technology transfer, and also make this adaptation fund fully operational and fully funded. This is the benchmark which we will have to achieve in Potsdam this year. I urge the Polish leadership to exercise their leadership again and discuss this matter with major leaders. I will continue to help as Secretary-General to that, and by next year, we must have a very effective, inclusive, a balanced and ratifiable treaty replacing the Kyoto Protocol. This is our historical responsibility as political leaders of the world, to have this planet delivered to our future generations in a more environmentally hospitable and economically sustainable earth. This is our responsibility and I am very much committed and I again count on the leadership of the world and count on the continuing support and efforts of IPCC, and I also thank very much the Swiss Government for their support. Thank you very much.

Question: This is a question for all three of you but particularly for the Secretary-General. With the election phase in the United States heating up and the United States being one of the two or three main actors in the climate discussion, what do you expect from a new Administration come next year, and as a result of that, from the 2009 meeting in Copenhagen? Do you think there will be a break through with the new Administration?

The Secretary-General: By any standards, the United States will have to take one of the most important leadership roles. The United States is the largest, biggest emission producing country. In fact, the United States so far, until now, has been taking a constructive role in the negotiations of the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change] UNFCCC through their initiative of convening a major economies conference, but I think that is not enough. All the countries of the international community are looking forward to more and greater leadership of the United States. I have been discussing this matter with the United States' authorities continuously. Now with the expected change of the Administration in the United States' Government, of course I will expect that the future President of the United States maybe will have to exercise greater leadership as head of the number one economy in the world and as the number one green house gas emission-producing country. I have been publicly stating that in addressing the global warming phenomenon, the developed countries should lead this campaign. Developed countries should lead this process with their increased funding, increased technology transfer to developing countries, commensurate with their historical responsibilities in this issue. At the same time, that does not mean that developing countries should just wait and see. They should also get on board on the principle of this common but differentiated responsibility. This is a crisis and a challenge, and both, developed and developing countries, rich and poor, should get together. In that regard, I sincerely hope that the next Administration of the United States will demonstrate a greater leadership role. As I have been watching this Presidential campaign process, and as I have been exchanging views with other experts, I think that whoever may be elected as President of the United States may be in a better position to address and to lead this process. Thank you.

Question: Dans la même veine sur les grandes puissances, M. Ban Ki-moon, vous avez récemment plaidé pour un monde sans le nucléaire, j'imagine que vous parlez des armes nucléaires, et dans la nouvelle dynamique par exemple qui se dessine surtout dans la zone de la Géorgie, est-ce que vous pensez que du point de vue de la responsabilité des grandes puissances au niveau des changements climatiques et sur l'impact négatif que cela peut avoir, est-ce que votre point de vue est toujours réaliste ou est-ce que vous tenez encore à cette demande?

The Secretary-General: I am supposed to discuss with you only climate change issues, but since you have raised this issue, I am deeply concerned about what has happened in that area, Georgia, and I have been discussing this matter, even yesterday with leaders of concerned parties, and I will continuously engage in this issue. Now, the European Union's Summit meeting is going to take place tomorrow in Brussels and I will continue to consult on this. I have made it quite clear that the United Nations stands ready to provide good offices and also we will continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the affected people, including South Ossetia, and are considering dispatching humanitarian needs assessment teams to South Ossetia. But I need to consult with the concerned parties. This is what I can tell you at this time.

Question: How could you [manage] with poverty and climate change at the same time?

The Secretary-General: Just let me add on that very important issue. I think the international community is now experiencing a triple crisis, development emergency where hundreds and hundreds million people are suffering from abject poverty and pandemic diseases like HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, and the global food

crisis, and most importantly climate change. These three triple crises are closely interconnected. Therefore, the United Nations, under my leadership and in close coordination and consultation with world leaders, have been addressing how to overcome this triple crisis in a comprehensive manner. As you may remember, I have convened the world food summit meeting in June in Rome, and I am going to convene a high-level summit meeting on the Millennium Development Goals on 25 September in New York during the time of the General Assembly. I have also invited 30 or 40 very important world leaders to an event on that day to discuss this global food crisis as well as climate change issues, because I believe these three [issues] are interconnected, we must address them comprehensively, in their multifaceted aspects, all need to be addressed together. If we cannot overcome abject poverty, this significantly weakens the capacity of national governments and people to address climate change. If one cannot buy food because of the soaring price of food, that weakens addressing the Millennium Development Goals at the same time as climate change issues. Therefore I am committed to address all these issues, all at the same time, with the focus on addressing climate change.