

## Secretary-General Kofi Annan



UN/DPI photo: Milton Grant

**T**he seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan is, of all those who have held the position, the one with the most experience in the organization. When appointed in December 1996 for a five-year term commencing in January 1997, Mr. Annan, who has spent more than 30 years at the UN, was Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

Born on April 8, 1938, at Kumasi, Ghana, Mr. Annan is fluent in English, French and several African languages. After studying at the University of Sciences and Technologies in Kumasi, he received a degree in economics from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1961. After a year at the Institut universitaire des hautes études internationales in Geneva, he began working for the

World Health Organization. A few years later, he went back to school and in 1972 obtained a master's degree in management from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology before joining the UN.

Mr. Annan has performed a wide range of duties in his career at the UN, becoming involved not only in management—administration, budgets, finance and personnel—but also in refugee problems and peacekeeping matters. He distinguished himself by leading a number of delicate diplomatic missions, including the negotiations to repatriate over 900 international civil servants and to liberate Western hostages in Iraq following that country's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the development of the "oil for food" formula adopted in response to the humanitarian crisis in Iraq, and the supervision of the transition phase between the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in the former Yugoslavia and NATO's Implementation Force (IFOR) following the signing of the Dayton peace accord in 1995.