

# THE MILLENNIUM SUMMIT CHALLENGE



UN Security Council in session

Over the past 55 years, the UN has achieved extraordinary successes. It has helped settle disputes between nations, prevent conflicts and put an end to fighting. It has conducted complex peace support and humanitarian operations, and has played a crucial role in resolving some of the longest-running conflicts of recent years.

The United Nations and its member states have struggled against racism and colonialism, against disease and illiteracy. The UN has insisted on the fundamental necessity of respecting human rights (including the human rights of women and children) and ensuring peace, stability and development.

The UN touches on many aspects of our lives. Its specialized agencies regulate postal services worldwide, co-ordinate the registration of patents, manage the world's oceans and outer space, set and defend universal standards and values, and promote sustainable development.

In his report, the Secretary-General expresses optimism for the Millennium Summit. He sees it as a unique opportunity for reshaping the United Nations so that it can continue to make a real and measurable difference to people's lives in the new century. Mr. Annan has invited the public to follow the Summit closely, and to make sure that the UN redoubles its efforts to address effectively the important issues he has highlighted.

To learn more about the UN Millennium Summit, visit its Web site: [www.un.org/millennium/summit.html](http://www.un.org/millennium/summit.html)



UN Headquarters in New York

## Shared values, common action

To focus discussions at the Summit, last April the Secretary-General presented to the UN General Assembly a report entitled *We the Peoples: The role of the United Nations in the 21st century*. The report lists six shared values: freedom; equity and solidarity; tolerance; non-violence; respect for nature; and shared responsibility. Mr. Annan has called for the Millennium Summit to adopt a series of resolutions demonstrating the international community's will to act on those values. He has also proposed action in specific areas.

### • Freedom from want

With the aim of drastically cutting the global poverty rate, the Secretary-General called for measures that include: achieving sustained growth; giving everyone full access to education; combatting disease; improving the lives of slum dwellers; increasing agricultural productivity in Africa; increasing access to information technologies; improving market access; and providing debt relief and better-focused development assistance.

### • Freedom from fear

In the last decade, civil wars have claimed more than 5 million lives. The threat of deadly conflict, says Mr. Annan, must be tackled at every stage, through: conflict prevention; better enforcement of international and human rights law; intervening when necessary to protect civilians, particularly women and children; strengthening peace operations; better-targeted sanctions; and arms reductions.

### • Sustaining our future

Before 2002, says Mr. Annan, UN member states must be prepared to act decisively in the following areas: coping with climate change; confronting the water crisis to give everyone access to safe water; examining the issue of biotechnology in agricultural production; preserving the world's biodiversity; and integrating environmental concerns into economic policy.

### • Renewing the United Nations

Without a strong UN, says the Secretary-General, it will be much harder to meet the challenges facing the world. Among his proposals: to identify the UN's core strengths and build on them to improve people's lives; to strengthen links between the UN, international institutions, civil society, the private sector and national governments in pursuit of common goals; to use the new information technologies to make the UN more efficient and better-connected with the rest of the world; and to complete the structural reforms of the UN, develop a clearer consensus on priorities among member states and introduce results-based budgeting. ●