

**Open Letter to the New UN Secretary General:
Mr. Ban Ki-Moon
In Order to Make Another World Possible, Let Us Make
the UN More Democratic and Stronger**

We the signatories have over the last seven years, at the initiative of UBUNTU - World Forum of Civil Society Networks, issued a number of communiqués to world public opinion detailing various common issues, important among them the fact that *«the democratisation, strengthening and primacy of the UN in international politics are essential in order to make a better world possible»*. Some of these communiqués have been launched at the various World Social Forum gatherings, which, in our view, represent one of the most important expressions of the *will and determination of worldwide civil society to participate actively and responsibly in the construction of a better world*.

At this, the start of Mr. Ban Ki-Moon's term of office as the new UN Secretary General, to whom we wish every success in his work for the benefit of humankind, we want, in this open letter, to stress the following considerations and proposals:

1. *In view of the problems of poverty and of development in general, there is a need to:*

– achieve the *Millennium Development Goals* (which we regard as minimum standards) and the *Plans of Action drawn up at UN summits in the 1990s* (which are far from being implemented), to which end external debt must be truly cancelled without further delay.

– fulfil previous Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitments *and above all to implement new financing mechanisms, including the elimination of tax havens, taxation on international financial capital and the consequent creation and application of world cohesion funds for development*.

– move towards a *fair world trade system oriented towards sustainable human development*, unlike the system that would be brought in by the Doha Round of the WTO, which, following the failure of its last meeting in Hong Kong, is still insisting on a neo-liberal model of world trade that would continue to benefit the rich and powerful of the world only.

– a worldwide commitment to tackle *global warming*, in keeping with the principles of the Rio and Johannesburg summits, that would see countries responsible for their own emissions – first and foremost the USA, which must, as a minimum, sign and comply with the Kyoto Protocol – and beginning with rich countries, would *develop and implement alternatives to the existing unsustainable trends in production, consumption and energy model*.

2. *In view of the problems of peace, security and human rights, there is a need for:*

– *compliance with democratic international law based on universal human rights*. Consequently, we unreservedly criticise, as we always have, terrorist acts, as well as the illegal «preventive» use of force (the most serious unilateral and persistent example of which is the war in Iraq). We once again declare that the deadlock, militarization and employment of all kinds of illegal mechanisms («clandestine» prisons, walls of shame and «selective» assassinations with collateral damage) in Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Sudan and more recently Somalia merely lead to widespread and indiscriminate suffering among the civil society in these places. *We call for an immediate end to all these ignominious situations and acts* and above all urge that, in deadlocked conflicts, the armed forces should act as «blue helmets» under the UN flag and command.

– *the essential reform of the UN Security Council* (removal of the power of veto, enlargement of the number of seats on the council to reflect the regional reality of the world, and effective control by the General Assembly) as a necessary step leading to the recovery of international confidence in the body that should be the guarantor of world peace and security. Its action, together with that of the General Assembly and other UN councils, should focus on the following areas: the peaceful resolution of conflicts (by promoting a culture of peace, the strengthening the Alliance of Civilisations, etc.), disarmament and non-proliferation, R2P (Responsibility to Protect) and the use of violence as a last resort and only under the provisions of the UN Charter.

3. *In view of the essential reform of International Institutions, including the democratisation and strengthening of the UN, we note that:*

– the UN reforms on peace, security, disarmament and human rights proposed at the 60th session of the General Assembly have not materialised, with the sole exception of the Peacebuilding Commission and Human Rights Council.

– the capability and possibilities open to the UN on issues to do with development are being «hijacked» and «transferred» to the «market»,

above all through the Bretton Woods Institutions and the World Trade Organization.

– consequently, as the manifesto of the World Campaign for In-depth Reform of the System of International Institutions asserts, there is a need for *«a stronger, more democratic UN, placed at the centre of a consistent, democratic, responsible, effective system of international institutions. More specifically, we need to democratise the composition and decision-making procedures of UN bodies and agencies to ensure that they are effective and democratic. And we need to refound and integrate within the UN all other global multilateral organisations (IMF, WB, WTO, etc.)»*.

– these reforms, each of which are necessary in themselves, will at last make it possible to approve and implement the policies required to tackle and put an end to the grave problems that humanity faces at the start of this century.

We the signatories urge the new UN Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, to press forward with the debate and work on these issues to enable us *once and for all to move from reports and resolutions to reforms and their implementation*, with the participation not only of Member States but every other stakeholder in the world arena, especially civil society. *The democratisation of international institutions is one of the priorities in the process of reform*. Consequently, international institutions ought to act in accordance with the various interests, needs and aspirations of all the world's citizens, *which involves setting in motion new and effective opportunities for citizens, civil society, the various tiers of government, etc. to enjoy representation and to participate in international institutions*. We will support every effort made to achieve the above.

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Association for Christian Communication), *Marino Busdachin* (UNPO - Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation), *Richard A. Falk* (Princeton University; California University), *Cornelio Sommaruga* (Ancient président du Comité international de la Croix Rouge), *Mary-Wyne Ashford* (Former Co-President International Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War), *Ricardo Díez Hochleitner* (President Emeritus Club of Rome), *Fèlix Martí* (President Honorari de Linguapax Institut), *François Houtard* (CETRI - Centre Tricontinental), *Anselmo Lee* (Forum-Asia), *Sara Longwe* (FEMNET - The African Women's Development and Communications), *Olivier Kambala* (CIPAC - Centre International pour la Paix en Afrique Centrale), *Patrice Lovesse* (ROAD - Réseau Ouest Africain des ONG pour un Développement Durable), *Mwajuma Alice Abok* (AWEPON - African Women's Economic Policy Network), *Hassen Lorgat* (SANGOCO - South African NGO Coalition), *Paul Ortega* (PAX ROMANA), *Aldo Caliarì* (Center of Concern), *Markus Brun* (Head of Policy Department FASTENOPFER), *Arcadi Oliveres* (Justice and Peace Europe), *Vicente García-Delgado* (CIVICUS' UN Representative), *Ernesto Lamas* (AMARC ALC - Asoc. Mundial Radios Comunitarias - América Latina Caribe), *Carlos Tünnermann* (ILAEDES - Instituto Latinoamericano de Educación para el Desarrollo), *Jorge Nieto* (Centro Internacional para la Cultura Democrática), *Luz Velásquez* (Red Latinoamericana de Estudios Ambientales Urbanos), *Fernando A. Iglesias* (Democracia Global - por la Unión Latinoamericana y el Parlamento Mundial), *Carlos Bedoya* (Red Jubileo Perú), *Rómulo Torres* (LATINDADD - Red Latinoamericana sobre Deuda, Desarrollo y Derechos), *Àngels Mataró* (Asociación para las Naciones Unidas en España y Latinoamérica), *Antoni Giró* (Rector Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya), *John Foster* (North-South Institut), *Antonio Papisca* (International Centre on Human Rights and the Rights of Peoples University of Padua), *Ferran Requejo* (Professor Universitat Pompeu Fabra - UPF), *Gurutz Jáuregui* (Profesor Universidad del País Vasco), *Martí Olivella* (Alliance for a Responsible, Plural and United World), *Agustí Colomines* (UNESCOCAT - Centre UNESCO de Catalunya), *Gabriela Cauduro* (Cátedra Cultura para la Paz y Derechos Humanos), *Josep Xercavins* (UBUNTU Forum Ad Hoc Secretariat).