

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE TO THESSALONIKI INTERNATIONAL STUDENT
MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE (ThessISMUN)
Thessaloniki, 27 April - 1 May 2011**

Congratulations on taking part in the Model United Nations. This experience will give you a full taste of the complexity of international relations -- the intricacies of negotiating among diverse peoples and perspectives, the challenges of achieving consensus, the patience required to win progress. These skills will help you in whatever course you choose in life.

I trust you have all heard the saying, “united we stand, divided we fall”. That adage captures this moment in international affairs. No single country or group, no matter how powerful, can take on the major issues of the day alone. In an era when challenges spill over borders and have global reach, our future depends on how well we work together.

We must unite to overcome climate change, and create a greener, more sustainable world for all. We must work in unison to defeat extreme poverty and build a more just and prosperous world. And we must stand up for human beings in crisis -- people caught up in war or disasters, or those whose fundamental rights are being infringed.

You are an important part of the solution. The world needs your active engagement. I urge you to use the knowledge and skills you gain from this Model UN and other pursuits to advance the objectives of the United Nations. After all, you will soon be the government officials who will negotiate peace... the community leaders who will help feed and shelter the vulnerable ... the entrepreneurs and innovators who will get carbon emissions under control ... the lawyers and human rights defenders who will fight injustice, impunity and intolerance.

But, of course, your influence is already making a difference. Recent events around the world demonstrate once again the power of young people to take the initiative and turn the tides of history. Technology, awareness, activism and a commitment to social justice are all combining to provide young people with a voice like never before. The world must take account of those voices and the legitimate aspirations of young people everywhere for opportunity and dignity.

Please keep working with us, pushing us and inspiring us. Above all, help shape our world for the better; help us meet the collective tests of our times; and help the United Nations deliver what the world needs at this crucial moment. Please accept my best wishes for a rewarding Model UN.

BAN Ki-moon