



# The challenges for **BAN KI-MOON**

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## The enduring legacy of Kofi Annan

Kofi Annan's ten years as Secretary-General are drawing to a close, with attention turning to the challenges facing his successor, Ban Ki-moon. Annan's legacy is likely to be an enduring one. He has galvanised international agreement around the eight Millennium Development Goals, bringing particular focus and new resources to the needs of Africa. He has championed the human rights of

individuals over assertions of state sovereignty by dictatorial leaders, and he has overseen the largest expansion of peacekeeping in the UN's history.

During Kofi Annan's decade in office there have been sweeping changes in the international political landscape. At the outset of his tenure it was clear that Annan recognised this reality and the implications for the UN itself: it had to change too. Annan has advocated reform both of intergovernmental bodies such as the Security Council and of the

staffing, financing and governance of the UN Secretariat, funds and programmes. These reform efforts have faced a range of obstacles, from bureaucratic inertia to political resistance by member states and unrepresentative staff unions.

Reform efforts were knocked off track when, shortly after characterising the war in Iraq as illegal, Annan found his management of the Oil-for-Food programme under fierce attack in the US media. Many commentators linked these two events, argu-

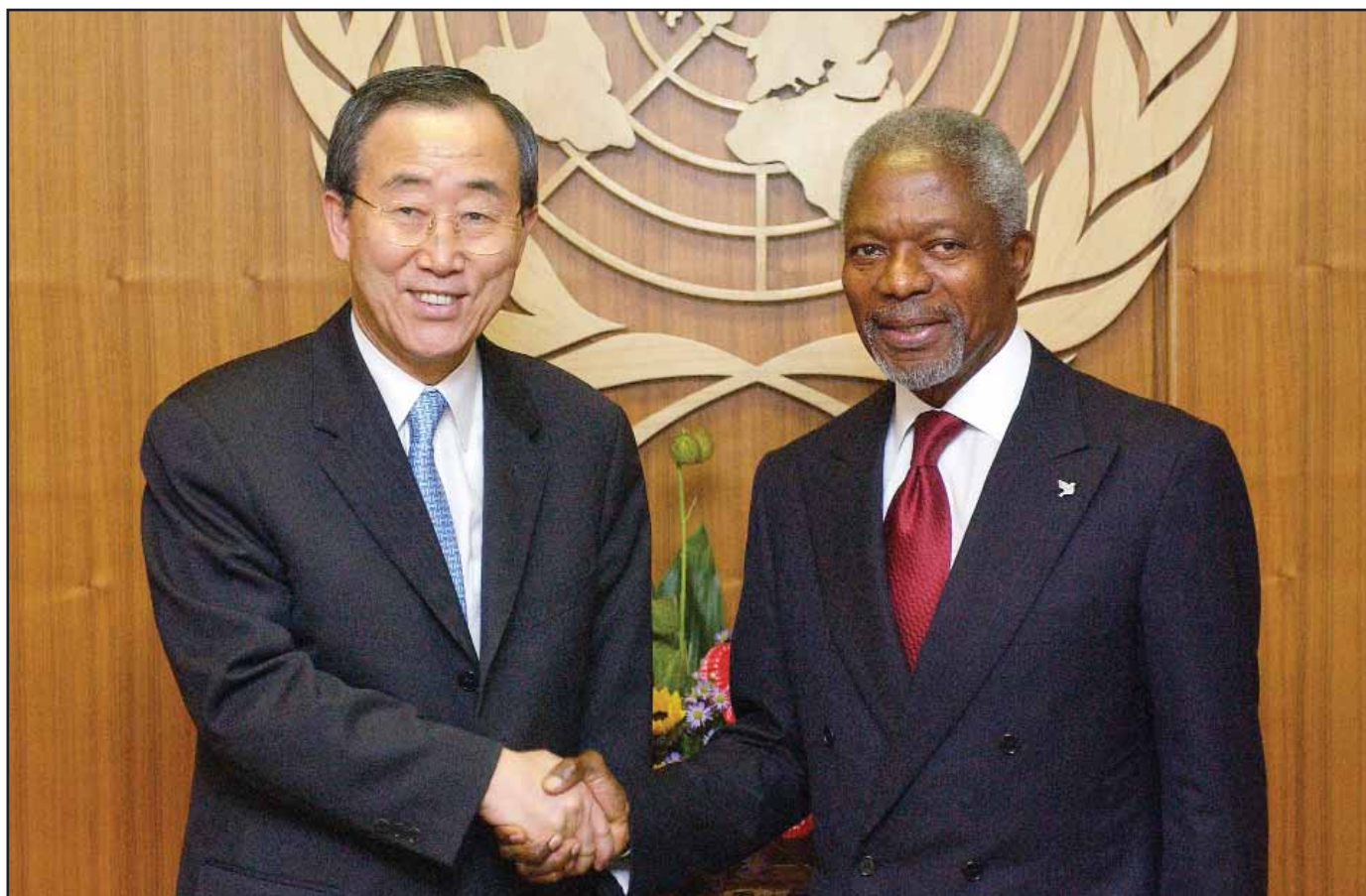


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ing that the criticisms of Annan were politically inspired. This analysis has been lent credibility by the findings of the Independent Inquiry Committee which identified lapses in UN management in overseeing this ambitious project but found scant evidence of corruption in the Secretariat. The Committee's censure focused principally on the failings of private companies and member states.

Over the last year a number of tangible reforms have been made, resulting in improvements to the UN's governance and oversight systems, as well as in institutional evolution leading to the creation of a new Peacebuilding Commission, Human Rights Council, and Democracy Fund.

An initial challenge for Ban will be to make these new institutions a success and to maintain the support demonstrated at the 2000 Millennium Summit and the 2005 World Summit for a credible and effective UN. For without the right tools and resources at its disposal (and the most important resource of the UN has always been first-rate staff),

the UN will not be able to meet the high hopes we invest in it.

### The challenges ahead for Ban Ki-moon:

'Internal' communication and management challenges

- *The need to listen to, and win the trust of, developing countries.* Ban received strong support from the United States during his election campaign. This presents an auspicious start in his relationship with an indispensable member state and the UN's major funder. Ban must also reassure other countries, particularly the G77 group of developing countries (many of whom are sceptical about US intentions towards the UN), that he understands their concerns and priorities. Over time he must articulate a clear vision for the organisation, demonstrating how a strong, independent Secretary-General, who has diplomatic tact but

is vocal when necessary, is in the interests of powerful and weak countries alike. Fulfilling this role effectively also requires the strength to say "no" when the UN is being set up to fail – when member states pass resolutions giving the Secretariat impossible mandates or incommensurate resources. Ban should take a number of simple and visible initial steps to engage with developing countries and their concerns:

- His first official visit should be to Africa, the continent that is host to the majority of UN peacekeeping operations, and which is at most risk of failing to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Ban should make clear that he sees progress in Africa as a central objective of the UN system.
- The everyday crises that come before the Security Council should rightly receive his attention and focus. But



Ban must put aside time – both at the outset of his tenure and regularly throughout it – to attend meetings of ECOSOC, UNCTAD and other UN bodies of importance to the G77 and Non-Aligned Movement, as well as caucus meetings of the G77 itself.

- Ban and his transition team should spend the next three months actively seeking out talented individuals – especially developing country nationals – with demonstrated personal integrity and management ability, to appoint to senior UN Secretariat positions. This search should go beyond the usual government and diplomatic candidates to embrace those with private sector and civil society experience. He should identify and retain exceptional staff from Annan's Executive Office to provide valuable continuity. After assuming office he should initiate the restructuring of the Office of Human Resources Management, bringing to it a new 'headhunting' orientation aimed at identifying, attracting and retaining talented personnel, without neglecting the support and development of existing staff. Morale is low in the Secretariat. It can be

rebuilt if the UN's leadership (and this should be understood to include managers at all levels in the UN system) demonstrates the ability to listen, manage, and deliver results.

- Ban must show that he understands developing country concerns over proposals for changes to UN governance and the management of the Secretariat. He must then identify and work with key G77 partners who can help him modify proposals in order to gain G77 acquiescence while still delivering the needed reforms. It will take great skill to bring about administrative change in an environment in which there are so many more political obstacles than faced in national civil services or the private sector. There is no quick fix: agreement will likely take more than a year to achieve, and Ban's approach should be to build support steadily.
- *The need to be himself.* The seven previous Secretaries-General have demonstrated diverse personal and professional qualities. Ban brings to the job a reputation of calm confidence, astute judgement and quiet but effective political achievement. He will need all these qualities as well as the ability to articulate a clear vision of the organisation both

internally to an international staff and externally to the world, performing in the glare of the global media spotlight. Finding the strength to face daily and relentless challenges is made immeasurably easier when the Secretary-General feels that he can perform the role in a way that is true to himself, and which draws upon his own particular capabilities, background and personality.

- *The need to delegate but also to remain accessible.* Time is precious in the life of the Secretary-General. Effective delegation is therefore key to success in delivering results and change. However, failures in the management of the Oil-for-Food programme demonstrated the dangers of delegation in the absence of accountability and effective performance-monitoring. Another lesson from Annan's two terms of office is that the Secretary-General should avoid being isolated on the 38th floor, cut off from the realities of life in other departments, and for feedback relying mainly on Under-Secretaries-General with a vested interest in giving good reports about the health of their departments. More objective feedback will be obtained through the adoption of results-based management across the Secretariat. The Secretary-General should also conduct (preferably with advance notice) personal 'drop-by' visits – to every floor of the main Secretariat building, to the many outlying UN buildings in New York,

## The other official candidates in the race

### Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai (Afghanistan)

Mr Ghani is currently Chancellor of Kabul University and was previously Finance Minister in the Afghan government. He is a development economist with expertise in poverty eradication and post-conflict reconstruction. He is 57 and holds a doctorate from Columbia University.

### Jayantha Dhanapala (Sri Lanka)

Mr Dhanapala is currently Senior Adviser to the President of Sri Lanka. He previously worked as a diplomat, including as his country's ambassador to Washington. He served for five years as UN Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs. He is 67 years old and speaks fluent Mandarin.

### Zeid al-Hussein (Jordan)

Prince Zeid, the cousin of King Abdullah II, is currently Jordan's ambassador to the UN and the chair

of the Consultative Committee for UNIFEM. He played a key role in setting up the International Criminal Court and led an inquiry into allegations of abuse and sexual exploitation by UN peacekeepers. He is 42 and was educated at Cambridge University in the UK and Johns Hopkins University in the US.

### Surakiart Sathirathai (Thailand)

Mr Surakiart was – until the September 2006 military coup in Thailand – one of his country's deputy prime ministers. His candidature for the post of UN Secretary-General was nevertheless supported by the interim administration. Mr Surakiart had the official backing of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). He is 48 years old.

### Shashi Tharoor (India)

Mr Tharoor is currently UN Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public

Information. His 28 years of UN experience include serving as Executive Assistant to the Secretary-General, as well as working for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and overseeing peacekeeping in the former Yugoslavia. Now 50 years of age, he had obtained by the age of 22 a doctorate and two master's degrees from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in the US. Mr Tharoor is also a prize-winning author.

### Vaira Vike-Freiberga (Latvia)

Ms Vike-Freiberga is currently President of Latvia, a position that she has held since 1999. She has a distinguished academic career as a psychology professor and for the past year she has served as a UN special envoy for United Nations reform. She is 68 and was raised and educated in Canada. She is the only non-Asian and the only female candidate to stand in this year's race.



and to the wider UN family of funds, programmes, specialised agencies, and field missions abroad. Such visits to UN staff at all levels increase productivity by boosting morale, and give the Secretary-General a glimpse of the reality of UN work 'on the ground' – not to mention an opportunity for some healthy exercise from all that walking!

- **The need to reform, but not forever.** There is an appetite for reform at the UN, but not for endless cycles of new public initiatives. Ban can secure some progress through a change in institutional culture within existing rules and regulations: innovation should be encouraged and rewarded, and clear objectives set, with staff development as one of these objectives. Successes should be publicised. Other measures will entail systemic change. In both cases, the language used must begin to shift from *reforming* the organisation to *strengthening* it.

'External' communication and systemic challenges

- **The need to perform in the global media.** In a world where CNN has been described as the 16th member of the Security Council, the Secretary-General needs to be an articulate and savvy media performer. In a September 2006 interview, former Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar expressed his regret that he had not performed better in the media in the 1980s, and stressed how important a skill this is for an effective Secretary-General.
- **The need to promote dialogue based on mutual respect.** The polarisation of 'the West' and 'Islam' glosses over the diversity within each category and so undermines the resolution of long-standing conflicts in the Middle East, Asia and Africa. The neo-cons' characterisation of the coalition military action in Iraq as a 'crusade' has exacerbated the effects of this false division, and has both fuelled terrorism committed in the West in the name of Islam and militated against the project to win the 'hearts and minds' of the Iraqi people. Ban has an opportunity, albeit not an easy one, to create new dialogue between moderates from different cultures, based on principles of humility and mutual respect. Much depends upon whether the next US administration

recognises that perceptions matter and that, to combat networks such as al-Qaeda, it will be necessary to prioritise non-military strategies oriented towards weakening bases of support. Ban should give priority to the role the UN can play in supporting a durable peace between Israel and the Palestinians, not least because perceptions of this one conflict produce negative repercussions worldwide. Dialogue will also be needed to combat nuclear proliferation. Ban has considerable experience of dealing with North Korea in the context of the six-party talks but his nationality may cause difficulties in addressing North Korea's nuclear test. Iran will present its own unique challenges.

- **The need to build upon the human security agenda.** The Secretary-General must help implement the World Summit decisions, in order to strengthen the UN's capacity in the areas of development, human rights, and peace and security. The Secretary-General must also help ensure that solutions generated and largely implemented by states do not ignore the marginalised – indigenous groups, women, the disabled and the economically-disadvantaged.
- **The need to promote democracy and good governance.** Democracy is on the march worldwide. The last decade has seen a steady increase in the number of democratically elected governments in all regions of the world. This has placed in the spotlight UN structures which give under-democratic countries equal weight to democracies. At the same time, Western attempts to promote democracy elsewhere have frequently been seen as self-servingly selective and subject to double standards. In his capacity as Foreign Minister Ban has emphasised the importance of the spread of democracy. He must now build upon Kofi Annan's efforts to help democracy take root in diverse cultures, and in ways that are not seen to be externally imposed. Until only recently corruption was not taken seriously at the UN, in large part because of opposition from developing country despots who funnelled money abroad with the collusion of Western banks. International monitoring of money flows to address terrorism and organised crime has made this kleptocracy easier to track and harder to justify ignoring.

## Ban Ki-moon at a glance

**Name:** Ban Ki-moon (pronounced *Bahn*)

**Date of birth:** 13 June 1944 (age 62)

### Education:

- Master's degree in Public Administration, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, United States
- Bachelor's degree in International Relations, Seoul National University, Republic of Korea

### Career highlights:

- Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea (since 2004)
- National Security Adviser to the President
- Foreign Policy Adviser to the President
- Chef de Cabinet for the President of the UN General Assembly 2001-2002
- 1st Secretary at the Permanent Mission of the ROK to the UN, New York
- Director of the UN Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Seoul
- Postings to New Delhi, Washington and Vienna (as ambassador)
- Director-General, American Affairs, Seoul
- Chair of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO)
- Vice-Chair of the South-North Joint Nuclear Control Commission

### Family:

- Married to Yoo Soon-taek, whom he first met at high school in 1962
- One son and two daughters



The Secretary-General and the Secretary-General-elect with their wives, Nane Annan and Yoo Soon-taek



### Watch Kofi Annan's January 2006 speech to UNA-UK on DVD

Were you unable to attend the speech by Kofi Annan in January 2006? We now have available for free hire by UNA branches and regions a DVD recording of the event.

If you would like to show the DVD at a meeting of your branch, region or affiliate organisation, we would be delighted to lend you a copy. The DVD is approximately 60 minutes long. The request must be submitted in writing from an officer of the branch, and addressed to Mark Rusling, UNA-UK's Campaigns and Education Officer. We have limited copies of the DVD to lend out so please book ahead. The DVD will be sent to you seven days before your event, and must be returned within 48 hours of the event.

**UNA-UK is in discussions with the FCO about the possibility of hosting in the summer of 2007 a joint event featuring the new Secretary-General. It is hoped that Mr Ban will agree to use such an occasion to deliver a major policy speech.**

- *The need to recognise the importance of climate change.* Annan failed to recognise early enough the current and future effects of climate change. Climate change impinges on every area of the UN's work, exacerbating conflicts such as that in Darfur, and thwarting the MDGs in Africa. Strengthening institutional responses to climate change will be a difficult challenge for Ban.

### How did Ban Ki-moon become the eighth UN Secretary-General?

The appointment process

The UN Charter says little about the appointment process of the Secretary-General, only that the Secretary-General "shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council" (Article 97). On the basis of guidance agreed by the Assembly in 1946 and subsequent practice, the Security Council reaches agreement in private on a single candidate: at least nine of the 15 members must cast an affirmative vote, with all five permanent members either agreeing or abstaining. (Before 1965 seven affirmative votes of 11 members were required, which meant that the explicit approval of one permanent member was needed.)

After coming to a decision, the Council forwards its recommendation to the General Assembly for the formal assent of UN member states, two-thirds of which must vote in favour of the candidate. The

Assembly's role in the selection of the Secretary-General is largely symbolic, and the Council's recommendation is traditionally confirmed 'by acclamation'.

The process of appointing the UN Secretary-General has been criticised for being opaque and for not conforming to best practice in comparable public sector appointments. In spring 2006 India proposed that the Security Council put forward a list of three possible names for the General Assembly to choose from. As might be expected, this did not receive the support of the Council's permanent members. Instead, the Council implemented measures put forward by Canada to improve the transparency of the process. This bore some fruit, with procedures adopted for official nominations of candidates by governments well in advance of the formal appointment, allowing more time for scrutiny. This was, however, accompanied by more overt lobbying by governments in support of 'their' candidates, including the proffering of trade and other economic incentives.

The 2006 straw polls

In the 2006 Secretary-General race, 'straw' polls were held by the Security Council to gauge the level of support for candidates before its formal decision. In the first three polls – one was held in July and two in September 2006 – Council members anonymously voted to 'encourage', 'discourage' or express 'no opinion' about nominated candidates. The ballot papers in those polls did not differentiate between permanent and non-permanent members, so it was impossible to tell whether the 'discourages' were from permanent or non-permanent members, and thus whether it was likely that a veto would be cast in a formal Council vote. The fourth ballot on 2 October 2006 did differentiate between permanent and non-permanent members, and revealed that Ban's candidature had received 14 'encourages' and one 'no-opinion', with no permanent members opposed. Shashi Tharoor, the current UN Under-Secretary-General for Communications, came second in every straw poll. He conceded defeat after the conclusive fourth straw poll.

The adjacent summary of the four straw polls demonstrates Ban's consistent lead throughout the contest, prior to his formal appointment by the Security Council and General Assembly.

### First Security Council straw poll - 25 July 2006

	Encourage	Discourage	No opinion
Ban Ki-moon	12	1	2
Shashi Tharoor	10	2	3
Surakiart Sathirathai	7	3	5
Jayantha Dhanapala	5	6	4

### Second Security Council straw poll - 14 September 2006

	Encourage	Discourage	No opinion
Ban Ki-moon	14	1	0
Shashi Tharoor	10	3	2
Surakiart Sathirathai	9	3	3
Zeid al-Hussein	6	4	5
Jayantha Dhanapala	3	5	7

### Third Security Council straw poll - 28 September 2006

	Encourage	Discourage	No opinion
Ban Ki-moon	13	1	1
Shashi Tharoor	8	3	4
Vaira Vike-Freiberga	7	6	2
Surakiart Sathirathai	5	7	3
Zeid al-Hussein	3	6	6
Ashraf Ghani	3	6	6
Jayantha Dhanapala	3	7	5

### Fourth Security Council straw poll - 2 October 2006

	Encourage	Discourage	No opinion
Ban Ki-moon	14	0	1
Shashi Tharoor	10	3(1)*	2
Vaira Vike-Freiberga	5	6(2)	4
Surakiart Sathirathai	4	7(2)	4
Ashraf Ghani	4	11(3)	0
Zeid al-Hussein	2	8(1)	5

\*Figures in parentheses indicate the number of discouragements from permanent members.