

Ban Ki-moon is beginning his second five-year term as Secretary-General of the United Nations this week. He joins us in the UN studios to reflect on some of the biggest moments and issues during his first term in office.

This is Darrin Farrant from the UN News Centre, and I'm joined by Maha Fayek from UN Radio. Secretary-General, thank you for your time today.

UN Radio/UN News Centre: Secretary-General your second term has begun. What do you consider to have been the most significant global development since taking office in 2007?

Ban Ki-moon: We have seen the power of the people, people power and also deepening globalization. We have seen so many people, marginalized people, oppressed people, who have been yearning for democracy, their dignity and human rights. We have a heavy responsibility to help them in their transition to democracy. With the deepening of globalization, we have seen so many things happening in the world. There are many good ideas and many people really wanted to be connected. Between ideas and people, we have to help this transition to materialize as soon as possible. Being united depends on us. Sometimes technology may help to unite people, but ultimately it is people who should be united.

UN Radio/UN News Centre: Which accomplishment during your first term in office are you most proud of?

Ban Ki-moon: It's hard to quantify. Some results will materialize in many years. However, I am most proud of when I was meeting with the people who really need our support. There are so many marginalized, vulnerable people. When I was speaking with them I could see clearly the expectation and faith in the United Nations. That really struck me. I was very proud to be a part of the United Nations system.

For example, when I was meeting with a boy in the South Pacific island of Kiribati, he appealed to me: 'Please help us address this climate change. Our homes and our way of life may be swept away overnight.' That's why we have been able to bring this climate change to the top of the global agenda. We have been meeting so many people, particularly women and girls, whose human rights were totally abused. When I met them, still, I saw from them the dignity and determined will to overcome their life. This has led us to establish UN Women.

Then there are many areas [where] we have been successful in expanding women's and children's health. We have been able to start good progress in nuclear disarmament. We have been trying to organize our work in a more nimble and efficient and effective way. Those are some of the areas where we can be proud, but we need to do more.

As I said in my acceptance address to the General Assembly last June after being decided for second term, I said 'together nothing is impossible.' *Ensemble... rien n'est impossible...*

UN Radio/UN News Centre: You mentioned Kiribati in the South Pacific. You travelled a lot during your first term. You went to Kiribati, you went to Antarctica, to Darfur, to the Dadaab refugee camp on the Kenyan-Somali border, you went to Semipalatinsk in the former Soviet Union. Is there one particular experience that left the biggest impression on you personally, and if so, why?

Ban Ki-moon: As you said, I have been travelling extensively. There is almost no place where I have not been to learn the plight or challenges of marginalized people; to learn more about how we can help protect this planet Earth in a more environmentally sustainable way. There is one common thread among all these visits to different places and meeting different people: that is what the United Nations has to do. There is a high level of expectation that the United Nations should stand for in leading this campaign: in leading the campaign to address climate change, leading the campaign to fight poverty, leading the campaign against curable, preventative diseases, leading the campaign in prevention of man-made or nature-made [crises and disasters]. There are so many areas United Nations can do. That is why I have been travelling. That is why I have been meeting so many people around the world. And I will continue during my second term.

UN Radio/UN News Centre: You talked a little bit there about the expectation and the responsibility of being Secretary-General. Was there a particular moment in your first term when you saw both the responsibility and, I guess, the opportunity that comes with the post?

Ban Ki-moon: There have been many crises. But crisis also comes with opportunity. This is what I have felt. I was struck when I was standing before UN headquarters in Haiti [after the January 2010 earthquake]. I was just lost. I could not describe what I have seen in Fukushima [after the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami]. And I have seen so many people. Then there is a high level of expectation together with opportunities. How the United Nations can organize, and lead this awareness, as well as translate into actions and that is what United Nations should do. Of course we are living in an era of austerity; resources are very much limited. But if we modernize the way we do, delivering as one, I believe that United Nations can still lead this campaign around the world. I need support from all Member States.

UN Radio/UN News Centre: For this second segment of the interview, we will talk about challenges. What was the most difficult challenge in your first term?

Ban Ki-moon: There are many challenges, man-made and nature-made. The most difficult challenge at this time is how to modernize our organization, adapting to changes of 21st century. Technology outpaces our current thinking, people's ideas and our current way of working. We have to make our Organization more nimble, more efficient and effective, and transparent and accountable. Of course this requires full support of 193 Member States. But coming to other challenges, real challenges which we are facing: climate change. We have to protect this planet Earth in a more environmentally, sustainable way for our succeeding generations. There are so many people whose human

rights are totally abused that we have to protect them. There are so many people who are dying needlessly from preventable diseases. There are so many areas where people's human rights are abused, particularly in conflict areas. We are maintaining now 120,000 UN peacekeepers. But all these challenges can be overcome if we are better organized, if we are more united. And that is what I'm going to do in my second term.

UN Radio/UN News Centre: The first Secretary-General, Trygve Lie, told his successor Dag Hammarskjöld: 'You are about to take over the most impossible job on Earth.' What is so tough about this job?

Ban Ki-moon: I have heard this assessment many times in the past. Maybe I should ask Tom Cruise for any advice! But what is important at this time is for Member States, 193 Member States, to have a correct vision and correct understanding of the situations and challenges we are facing. Then, I think this can be overcome. My mission is to make this seemingly impossible job a possible job. My predecessor Kofi Annan once told me before I took over my job that 'this may be the most impossible job, but this may be the best and most honourable job for humanity.' I ask all Member States to unite behind the ideals and goals of the United Nations Charter. Then I think there is no such impossible job.

UN Radio/UN News Centre: Let's follow up on the Member States. It is a fact that the five permanent members of the Security Council have a special status in the UN and often as Secretary-General you are caught between powerful Member States. How do you deal with that pressure, especially when countries have different positions?

Ban Ki-moon: As Secretary-General of the United Nations, I cannot be loyal to any one or another country or any group of countries. I have to be loyal to the people whom we serve. I have to be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Some people say that we have 193 bosses. The board members are composed of 193. It seems to be almost impossible to deal with all these people because they are all coming from different countries with different backgrounds and different interests. But I believe that they are united also and they all believe in the United Nations Charter. We are able to carry out many important and difficult challenges when the Member States are united. That's what I'm going to ask the Member States. There is a diversity which can be fully utilized to the best purpose of the Charter.

UN Radio/UN News Centre: What would you like to do differently in your second term?

Ban Ki-moon: I have seen the strong power of partnerships. If we strengthen these partnerships among governments, business communities, civil organizations and philanthropists, then I think all these powerful partnerships can bring us towards the right direction. We were able to bring climate change to the top of the global agenda. We were able to deploy 120,000 UN peacekeepers in 16 missions. We were able to establish UN Women, trying to protect and promote more about women's social status and political status.

We are going to build upon all these achievements which we have been building during the last five years. Therefore, I would like to connect all these seemingly different agendas into one thread. This is what I'd like to do. I'd like to connect the people with ideas.

UN Radio/UN News Centre: Secretary-General, you spoke about some challenges lying ahead. May I ask you to list your priorities for the second term? Is there any challenge of human interest that you would like to tackle immediately?

Ban Ki-moon: I have laid out five generational opportunities for my second term to work with the Member States. First, we have to achieve sustainable development. We have to connect the dots among climate change, the food crisis, water scarcity, energy shortages and women's empowerment and global health issues. These are all interconnected issues. Therefore, [with the] Rio+20 summit meeting in June 2012, we have to make this conference a great success. Then we are focusing on prevention: prevention for man-made or nature-made crises. And thirdly, we have to make this world a safer and more secure world. We are maintaining 120,000 soldiers but if we succeed in mediation and facilitating political dialogues, we can save much of our energy and time, and even money. Fourthly, we have to help those countries in transition. We have seen the Arab Spring in Middle East and North Africa. There are still many more people whose human rights and basic dignities are not fully respected. We have to do more for those people. Then we have to do more to work together and for women. Gender empowerment will be one of my top five priorities in the coming five years.