News Release

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UN Chief Urges “Revolution” to Achieve Sustainable Growth

28 January 2011

- Revolution required to bring about sustainable growth
- No contradiction between economic growth and protecting the environment: nor between the interests of business and economic sustainability.
- Economic growth must be socially inclusive
- More information on the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2011: http://www.weforum.org

Davos, Switzerland, 28 January 2011 – United Nations Secretary-General **Ban Ki-moon** told the participants in the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2011 that a “revolution” is urgently needed in thinking and policy to bring about sustainable economic growth that can both protect the environment and raise living standards.

“We need a revolution. We need revolutionary change, revolutionary action. We need a free market revolution for global sustainability,” he said in an address to the 41st Annual Meeting.

For this to happen, change must come across the board, including to the way people live, the way they organize socially and the way politics are conducted. But most of all, it needs fast and decisive action on climate change to slow global warming, he said.

“The days of consumption without thought are over,” Ban warned. “Climate change is rendering the old model obsolete.” The old economic model now amounts to a “global suicide pact”.

Ways must be devised to manage scarce resources. However, the problem is that the scarcest resource of all is time. “We are running out of time on climate change, on clean energy,” declared the Secretary-General.

Developing a sustainable growth agenda has become “the agenda for the 21st century,” he said. “Together we need to tear down the walls between a green agenda and a growth agenda. There is no time to waste.”

Finland’s President **Tarja Halonen**, a co-chair of the UN High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability, called for an approach that combined growth with social justice and environmental sustainability. “We need a modern trinity,” she said, referring to the three policy goals.

Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of Indonesia, declared that his government is committed to policies that balance growth and environmental protection. Echoing the words of the UN Secretary-General, he said: “We should not make a contradiction between growth and the need to protect the environment.” Economic growth has to be “inclusive” so that it benefits all sectors of the population. “We need growth with equity,” Ban said.

For Mexican President **Felipe Calderón**, the situation also presents huge opportunities, “If you are able to produce more, using less (energy), that will be good for the planet,” he said.

Just as there is no necessary dichotomy between growth and protecting the environment, there is no contradiction between the interests of business and economic sustainability, **Mike Duke**, President and Chief Executive Officer of Wal-Mart Stores, told the participants. “Business should not

see a conflict between doing what is right for business and what is right for the world," he said.

Jim Balsillie, Chairman and Co-Chief Executive Officer, Research in Motion, the Canadian software company, said things are getting worse and the big question is "how do we stop a runaway train." He called for a fundamental rethink of economics. "We must be extraordinarily ambitious," he said.

But **William H Gates III**, Co-Chair, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, said he is optimistic that humankind's ability to innovate will eventually produce solutions. Just demanding that developing countries cut energy use will not resolve the problem. "You cannot tell a guy in India who is using two candles that he can only use one," he said.

Notes to Editors
For more information about the Annual Meeting 2011: http://wef.ch/Davos2011
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