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## THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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### MESSAGE FOR THE NEW YEAR 2004

Dear Peoples of the United Nations,

Your Organization, which I have the honour to serve, has just been through one of the hardest years in its history.

We have seen war in Iraq, and deep divisions among nations, about grave issues of war and peace. On 19 August, in a bomb attack on our headquarters in Baghdad, we lost some of our best and most beloved colleagues.

These events have distracted the world's leaders from dealing with other threats – threats which, to most people, are more immediate, and more real.

I mean the threats of extreme poverty and hunger, unsafe drinking water, environmental degradation, and endemic or infectious disease.

These dangers stalk large parts of our planet.

They kill millions and millions of people every year.

They destroy societies.

They fuel division and desperation.

After a year of war and division, it's time to focus more of our energy on people's health and welfare.

It's time to make sure that poor countries have a real opportunity to develop.

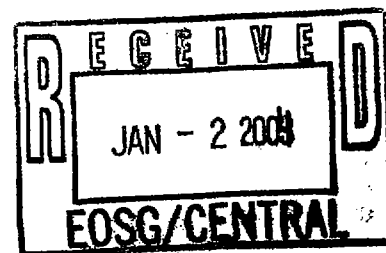
And it's time we took decisive action to save the resources of our planet.

Yes, we have to fight terrorism. Yes, we must prevent the spread of deadly weapons.

But let's also say Yes to development. Let's bring hope into the lives of those who suffer.

Without development and hope, there will be no peace.

Just over three years ago, at the Millennium Summit, leaders of all nations pledged to provide that hope. They set themselves precise, time-bound targets – the Millennium Development Goals.



To meet these Goals would cost only a fraction of what our world spends on weapons of war. Yet it would bring hope to billions, and greater security to us all.

But in 2003 we did not live up to these promises. We let ourselves be swept along by the tide of war and division.

2004 must be different. It must be the year when we begin to turn the tide.

We can turn the tide against HIV/AIDS, if we act on the “three-by-five” initiative – the World Health Organisation’s plan to get three million people on anti-retroviral treatment by 2005.

It’s a bold target, but it can be met – if rich countries, poor and afflicted countries, governments, civil society, the private sector, and the United Nations system all pull together – and if the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria is fully funded.

We can turn the tide against hunger, if we all work together to make existing food stocks available to hungry people everywhere, and to help Africa produce the extra food it needs.

And we can turn the tide in world trade, if governments do as they promised, and make the current round of negotiations a true “development round”.

We don’t need any more promises. We need to start keeping the promises we already made.

Let’s all make that our New Year’s resolution – and I wish you a very Happy New Year!

# URGENT

Urgent

Note to the Secretary-General

Ref: New Year message?

*Dear SG,*

1. Jeff Sachs tells me that you mentioned to him recently your up-coming "end of the year speech", and he was wondering whether this could be turned into a "major, high-profile event, like a true State of the World address".
2. What he has in mind – as you would probably guess, after the briefing he organized for you on the Millennium Project – is "one overwhelming and overriding theme: restoring balance to the global agenda – making it more than war and peace, but also economic development and environmental sustainability". As he sees it, the agenda was hijacked this year by the U.S. and the war in Iraq, and in 2004 there needs to be a rebalancing of the global agenda and debate, focusing once again on the true state of the world and its true priorities: hunger, disease, extreme poverty, climate change, biodiversity depletion, etc.
3. I said that I understood this was very much what you had in mind as one of your key priorities for 2004, but that I was not aware of any "end of the year speech" as such. Probably he misheard or misunderstood a reference to your end-of-year press conference on 18 Dec, and indeed I think a short statement on the above lines would be a good way to open the press conference.
4. However, we know from experience that in press conferences it is often the answers to questions rather than the opening statement that get media coverage. I wonder, therefore, whether you would consider recording a New Year video message on the same lines. I think, if we pitched it right and released it two or three days before the New Year, we might get good exposure for this – provided there are no very dramatic world events at the same time...
5. Would you be willing to consider this, and if so, could you find time to record it in the week of 15-19 Dec?

*Yours sincerely,*

*EM*

Edward Mortimer

14 October 2003

Dec.

cc: DSG, ST, EL, MM, FE, MiM

*I had spoke to Jeff about the press conference on 18 Dec. I will be happy to record an end of the year message and stress the message. I can discuss with you and Jeff who may have some suggestions. I may also flag it at the end of the year.*

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