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**IN ADDRESS TO UNDP RESIDENT COORDINATORS, SECRETARY-
GENERAL STRESSES NEED FOR 'EXPERIMENT AND CREATIVITY' IN
DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS**

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Following is the text of Secretary-General Kofi Annan's address to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Global Meeting of Resident Coordinators, delivered in Glen Cove, New York, on 28 February:

Thank you, Mark, for those kind words. In a moment, I am going to return the compliment.

But first, dear friends and colleagues, let me pay tribute to all of you. The wealth of experience and talent assembled in this room is an enormous asset to the United Nations.

Since UNDP -- and indeed the United Nations as a whole -- is in the midst of change and renewal, you all have a unique chance to combine the veteran's knowledge with the pioneer's spirit. And you have already shown that you can do so.

Just look at what you have achieved since we launched the system-wide United Nations reform less than three years ago. Thirty-six United Nations houses have been inaugurated, and more are on the way. More than 70 countries are implementing or planning a United Nations Development Assistance Framework. More than 100 are at some stage in a Common Country Assessment process.

But your achievements go much further. More than half your work nowadays is devoted to areas other than UNDP. Indeed, many of you come from other parts of the Organization. You have had to learn a wide range of new tasks, from heading an information office to coordinating humanitarian assistance -- and on each of these functions you report to the relevant department at Headquarters. As United Nations Resident Coordinators, you are required to be team builders and team captains,

persuaders and conciliators, programme officers, practitioners, policy makers -- and many other things at once.

Funds and programmes have been integrated under one roof. Different agencies have come together to assess a country's needs, and adopted common approaches to meet those needs. These changes are the clearest expression of the whole idea behind United Nations reform: the idea of a team held together by a common structure and purpose, and thus achieving an impact far greater than the sum of its parts.

In short, you have not merely shown that change holds no terrors for you. You have shown that you, yourselves, can be powerful agents of change. Thanks

to you and your colleagues in the country teams, we can now truly say that the United Nations family acts with a more coherent effort than ever before. That is something you can all be proud of.

Why has UNDP been given this leading role? Because it is present in more countries than any other branch of the United Nations, and because our work in development is central to the very idea of the United Nations -- making UNDP effectively inseparable from the Secretariat. Indeed, if the United Nations were not working for development, and doing so on the ground, in real and visible operations, its relevance and purpose would be hard to explain to most of the world's peoples.

It is you -- both as UNDP Representatives and as Coordinators of all our work at country level -- who are the public face of the whole United Nations in each developing country. You are all my representatives. We stand or fall together. I appointed each one of you personally, on the recommendation of the Administrator. And that is one of many reasons why I am pleased and proud that the Administrator himself is also someone I personally chose, and in whom I have total trust.

You have come here to learn about, and to help shape, a new strategy, which in turn will reshape your work. That new strategy has emerged from months of hard work and consultation, in which all of you have already played a vital part. You have learned by now that Mark Malloch Brown has a unique talent for articulating goals and sketching route maps, for overcoming doubts and inspiring enthusiasm. You will find that he is also an excellent listener, a leader who combines firmness of purpose with great flexibility of approach, and one who repays loyalty and candid advice with unstinted support, especially when the going gets rough.

As Mark has explained to you, the new strategy does not involve abandoning all the valuable work you have been doing up to now. On the contrary, it seeks to make best use of that work, by understanding where its true value lies and drawing the right lessons from it.

As I travel around the world, talking to governments and to representatives of civil society in developing countries, I find that what they value most about the United Nations

is not its role as a provider of funds -- in that league, for better or worse, we don't rank very high. Rather, they value us as a source of advice on policy and governance. They see us as a channel through which they can gain access to the latest expertise. They look to us for assistance in bringing their own practices into line, both with international norms and with what has worked best elsewhere, in other developing countries.

These, I'm convinced, are our real strengths. Mark is absolutely right to want to build on them, and to build them up.

And this new way of looking at UNDP and its role fits perfectly with the message I've been trying to get across, for well over a year now, in all my statements on globalization and development -- most recently at UNCTAD X in Bangkok. A developed country, I said there, is one that allows all its citizens to enjoy a free and healthy life in a safe environment. And a genuinely developing country is one in which civil society is able to insist, not only on material well-being, but on improving standards of human rights and environmental protection as well. Is globalization an enemy of development, in this broad sense? Surely not. Of course it has its casualties, as any historic change in human society is bound to have. And those who do best out of it have both an obligation to do more to look after those casualties, and a strong interest in doing so -- since otherwise they risk a global backlash which could wipe out all their gains. But the main losers in today's very unequal world are not those who are too much exposed to globalization. They are those who have been left out. The world's poorest societies and peoples have been not so much exploited by the modern economic system as excluded from it. That, in my view, is the question at the heart of the development debate today. How and why are such large parts of the world being denied the benefits of globalization? What differentiates the countries that are really developing from those that are not? Of course there are many factors, but in the long term none is more decisive than the quality of governance a country enjoys. Which countries will succeed in mobilizing resources, both at home and abroad, to bring about balanced and sustainable economic growth? -- Those where the law is clear and impartially enforced. -- Those where both public and private bodies are transparent and accountable. -- Those where natural resources are conserved and exploited in the interest of future generations as well as the present one. -- Those where people at every level of society feel safe from arbitrary violence; where they feel they have some say in decisions affecting their lives; and where they know that their children have a real chance of living better than they do. That puts an awesome responsibility on the men and women in positions of leadership in the developing world -- in civil society, including private business, and also, of course, in the State. Posterity will judge those leaders above all by what they did to encourage the integration of their countries into the global economy, and to ensure that it would benefit all their people. By whether they enabled their people to board the train of globalization, and made sure that everyone had at least standing room on it, if not a comfortable seat -- or whether they missed it, or allowed many of their citizens to be crushed to death in the struggle to get on board.

By the same token, posterity will judge us by what we did to help developing countries board that train in good order. In other words, by what we did to help them improve their capacity to govern, in the broadest sense of the term. And that includes everything from

free and fair elections, through Internet access, to girls' education, halting the spread of HIV/AIDS, soil and water conservation, and better preparation to limit the effect of natural disasters.

And we shall be judged also, of course, by what we did to help developing countries articulate and defend their interests in multilateral negotiations, such as those at the World Trade Organization (WTO).

It is in those kinds of tasks that the United Nations has a real comparative advantage -- an advantage which derives from your experience, your contacts, your knowledge of the countries where you work.

As Mark has said, "our leverage and our influence will not come from money, but from the power of our ideas". It is by intervening "upstream", when policies are being worked out, that we can have the biggest impact -- if we give the right advice, supported by the right pilot projects to test new thinking. And that is precisely the way that most of the countries you work in are already using your services.

It's an opportunity I know you will seize energetically.

Mind you, I also know that circumstances don't always sustain the idealism that drove you when you first joined. When a good idea becomes ensnared by bureaucracy, even the strongest wings of belief may not be enough to make it fly.

All of us who have served in the field know what it is to feel that Headquarters has lost interest in you -- if indeed it still remembers that you exist. I'm sure all of you will still go through moments like that in the future, though I hope they will be fewer than in the past.

But what is most important is that in the future, as in the past, you never let these frustrations undermine your loyalty to the people you are there to help. Because they are the real reasons for your service.

One colleague's way of coping was to remember the private advice her director gave her before she left for her first mission. Himself an old field hand, he told her to forget the weeks of pre-departure briefings she had just undergone and throw the briefing papers in the wastepaper basket.

"We sit in this office playing God almighty", he said, "thinking we know what the various countries need. But what we really want is for you men and women at the country level to assess those needs once you are out there, and shape the policies to fit that assessment".

It was probably not bad -- and I guess Mark is echoing it when he talks about "a country-driven, not a Headquarters-driven, response to demand change". It is up to you to help him put that into practice. In effect, he is asking you to become the policy makers -- or recognizing that that's what you already are.

My friends, this is a time, if ever there was one, for experiment and creativity. Remember that the United Nations itself is still the world's greatest experiment in human cooperation -- as it has been ever since 1945. Even then, our founders recognized the need to fight and win the battle for lasting peace on two fronts: the security front, where victory spells freedom from fear, and the economic and social front, where victory spells freedom from want. And I have no doubt whatever that that dual need, and dual mission, will be reaffirmed in six months' time, when heads of State and government assemble in New York, at the Millennium Summit, to spell out the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century.

We have not won on either front yet. But what has never failed us is the commitment of men and women like you.

We are undefeated because you have never stopped trying. And we can never declare victory until we have won where you are, in the field and on the ground. It is thanks to you, thanks to your work for development, that for millions of people around the world the United Nations is not a mere abstract concept -- not even, important though that is, a mechanism for resolving conflict. It is people serving people.

In this vast and varied team we call the United Nations family, you are the heads of households. You have both the right and the responsibility to lead. I will do everything I can to support you.

Now let me try to answer your questions -- and I hope you will question my answers.

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