

4 December 2007



United Nations

Secretary-General

SG/SM/11314

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York

SECRETARY-GENERAL URGES BUSINESS LEADERS TO BRING ENTREPRENEURSHIP, NEW TECHNOLOGIES

TO BEAR ON CLIMATE CHANGE, IN MESSAGE TO NEW YORK AWARD DINNER

Following is UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon's message to the 2007 Annual Award Dinner of the United States Council for International Business, delivered by Alicia Barcena, Under-Secretary-General for Management, in New York, 3 December:

I send warm greetings to all who have come together for the 2007 Annual Award Dinner of the United States Council for International Business.

Let me congratulate tonight's honouree, H. Fisk Johnson, Chairman and CEO of S.C. Johnson & Son. Mr. Johnson is not only a great captain of industry, he is also a conscientious corporate leader who has demonstrated, time and again, that successful business stewardship and engagement in broader civic causes, especially the environment and education, can and do go hand in hand.

Growing numbers of business leaders, in the United States and around the world, are embracing Mr. Johnson's example. Their actions reflect the realization that support for environmental, social and governance issues helps drive success in the global marketplace. Indeed, while the moral case for responsible business practices remains as strong as ever, it is increasingly complemented by the argument that a sound and proactive approach to today's challenges directly benefits the bottom line. It builds competitive advantages; it minimizes risks; and it drives innovation.

Today, I wish to challenge all of you to bring this type of proactive thinking to bear on what has emerged as the greatest challenge of our time: climate change.

By now, it is clear that this problem requires urgent attention. It is also clear that entrepreneurship and new technologies will have to be part of any solution. On the eve of crucial meetings in Bali on climate change, I hope that every business leader here will take up this cause as a personal calling.

You must make the case to your Governments -- as some already have -- that early, bold and comprehensive action is absolutely necessary. And you must take action to reduce your businesses' carbon footprint and to develop innovative solutions. I particularly encourage your involvement in new and innovative leadership initiatives, such as *Caring for Climate*, a

platform launched jointly by the United Nations Global Compact, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Environment Programme.

Discussions on climate change have reached a stage where the objectives and priorities of the international community and the business world are more aligned than ever before. So I urge every one of you to come join the increasing number of leaders who have already responded to this challenge. And I ask all of you to work with your Government, and the United Nations, in crafting a forceful yet flexible response to this global problem.

Nothing less than the future of our planet, and the well-being of all its people, hangs in the balance.

* * * * *

For information media • not an official record