



## THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON PRESENTATION OF PAINTING  
OF HARRY TRUMAN AND THE SIGNING OF THE CHARTER  
New York, 17 June 2006

This gift is precious to the United Nations in several ways. It comes from the Government of our host country, without which the United Nations could not have been born, and without which we could hardly exist today. And it depicts a singularly poignant moment in human history -- the President of that country attending the signing of the Charter which sealed our creation.

Harry Truman called the work of the San Francisco conference “a profound cause of thanksgiving to Almighty God”. The following year -- 60 years ago this October -- he told the United Nations General Assembly: “The United Nations cannot fulfil adequately its own responsibilities until the peace settlements have been made, and unless these settlements form a solid foundation upon which to build a permanent peace. I submit that these settlements, and our search for everlasting peace, rest upon the four essential freedoms. These are freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. These are fundamental freedoms to which all the United Nations are pledged under the Charter. To the attainment of these freedoms -- everywhere in the world -- through the friendly cooperation of all nations, the Government and people of the United States are dedicated”.

As we look back on the six decades that have passed since, we must recognize that the world today is very different from that of our founders. Our mission is still to serve the cause of peace, advance development, and defend the dignity of every human being. But to achieve that mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the UN must adapt to new realities, and be equipped to deal with new challenges. This is so, whether we are fighting poverty, disease and environmental degradation, or working to strengthen democracy; whether we are advancing human rights and the rule of law, or combating terrorism; whether we are building peace, or making the United Nations more effective and more accountable to the peoples it exists to serve.

A great deal of work lies ahead of us as we strive to fulfil the dream of our founders -- the dream of a just and peaceful global community. It is the biggest test the United Nations faces in the new century. It is a test Harry Truman would definitely want us to pass.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Annan'.

Kofi A. Annan