



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

MESSAGE TO THIRD BAKU INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN FORUM
Baku, 31 October – 1 November 2013

I am pleased to send greetings to all participants at the Third Baku International Humanitarian Forum. I thank the Government of Azerbaijan for hosting.

I especially appreciate your efforts to reach out to a wide range of actors. The United Nations works more than ever with non-governmental organizations, the private sector, civil society groups, academia and the philanthropic community. Solving problems in our globalized world demands this broad cooperation beyond borders and across cultures.

People everywhere yearn to be free from conflict, prejudice, inequality, a warming climate and the hopelessness of joblessness. This is an era of tremendous opportunity. Citizens can make enormous contributions to our shared progress if governments respect their rights and empower individuals, especially women and youth.

You meet at an important moment. The international community is stepping up efforts to fight poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. That same year, we also hope to conclude a global agreement on climate change and adopt a universal vision for development beyond 2015 with poverty eradication at its core and sustainability as its guiding principle.

Even as we look to the long-term, we continue to address the urgent crises of today. We are working to provide humanitarian relief to Syria while pushing for a comprehensive political agreement that reflects the will of the Syrian people. The United Nations and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons are making progress in eliminating the country's chemical weapons programme.

The situation in the Central African Republic is deeply worrying. The number of people forced to flee their homes has almost doubled since September, with an estimated 394,000 now displaced amid reports of gross violations of human rights. The United Nations is providing assistance and appealing for an end to the violence. We need the support of the international community in this effort.

I count on all of you to be part of our drive to address the crises of today while building lasting foundations for peace tomorrow. Please accept my best wishes for a constructive gathering.