



UN [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon said the world was too often on auto-pilot and called for its casting off the 'tyranny of the status quo' to achieve progress in 2013, in his first address to the United Nations General Assembly in 2013.

He called for innovative action to tackle the numerous challenges facing the world, stressing that now is not the time for business as usual. He singles out shared goals such as sustainable development, disarmament and conflict resolution, as the most important challenges.

"My fervent hope – and our common urgent need – is that we can stop moving from crisis to crisis, from symptom to symptom, and instead address the underlying causes and inter-relationships, and recognize the flaws in many of our approaches," Mr. Ban said in his [address](#) to the General Assembly.

In his first meeting of the year with the United Nations membership, the Secretary-General noted that too often, governments and the international machinery operate on auto-pilot.

"Issues remain in their silos; worrying trends are allowed to persist and unfold, all because 'that is the way things have been done', or because true change is seen as costly or unrealistic, or entrenched interests have a hold on the legislative machinery," he stated.

"This is no time for business as usual," Mr. Ban underscored. ". We will have to throw off another brake on our common progress: the tyranny of the status quo."

This is particularly true given the tremendous turmoil and uncertainty in today's world, he continued, noting that "from armed conflict in Africa and the Middle East, to economic and environmental distress across the globe, we are being tested every minute of every day."

To begin with, Mr. Ban called on Member States to come forward with generous pledges at the Syria Humanitarian Conference that he will convene next Wednesday in Kuwait. The humanitarian community is seeking \$1.5 billion to assist millions in need in the next six months.

"We must do everything we can to reach Syrians in need. We must intensify our efforts to end the violence through diplomacy, overcoming the divisions within Syria, the region and the Security Council," he stated, adding that Syria is one among several crises that have led to the largest refugee flows since the Kosovo crisis 13 years ago.

In 2013, it is also necessary, he stated, to "re-consider our approach" to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, salvage the two-State solution and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, do more to advance the principle of the 'responsibility to protect' in the face of grave crimes and incitement, and advance the rule of law on disarmament and non-proliferation.

This year will also see continued action on the "paramount" challenge of sustainable development, on the campaigns against violence based on sexual orientation and on ending violence against women, among other issues.

At a press conference after his address to the General-Assembly, he added: "My fear is that, on too many of today's challenges, our trajectory may lead people a decade or two from now to ask why leaders did not rise to these tests -- and what narrow interests kept them from seeing the wider and greater good."

Among other highlights from the Press Conference:

- Syria: "I want to stress the need for accountability and justice for the crimes we have seen – and for crimes that could still take place if already high sectarian tensions explode into mass

reprisals and killings."

- "The Security Council must find the unity the people of Syria need. Yet a deadly military momentum has taken hold. I call again for all states to cease sending arms to either side in Syria."

- "Mali is under grave threat from extremist armed insurgents."

- I applaud France for its courageous decision to deploy troops to Mali following the troubling move southward by extremist groups.

- Our humanitarian agencies are working to meet the growing needs of a crisis that has forced 350,000 people to flee their homes.

The Secretary-General leaves today on a mission where all of these challenges will figure prominently.

Mr. Ban will meet the Prime Minister of Lebanon and other leaders in Davos, Switzerland, at the World Economic Forum. In Addis Ababa the Secretary-General will attend the African Union Summit, where Mali, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo will be on the agenda as well as malaria, maternal mortality and ways to sustain Africa's impressive economic growth.

Finally Mr. Ban will attend the Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria in Kuwait.

Written by: Arni Snaevarr, UNRIC Nordic Desk