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Secretary-General, at Tel Aviv University, Stresses ‘We the Peoples’ over ‘Us and Them’, Urging End to Occupation

Following are UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's remarks at Tel Aviv University, in Tel Aviv today:

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During my visit, I will continue to deliver the same message: do not allow the extremists on either side to further fuel the conflict. Palestinian and Israeli leaders must stand firm against terror, violence and incitement. We need innovative thinking and action to tear down the walls of mistrust. I urge the “start-up nation” to help us all start up peace, start up understanding, start up reconciliation for a better world. Most of all, I urge you to be a global citizen. Be a proud citizen of your country. But, never forget that challenges know no borders and that you are also a citizen of the world. Embrace that understanding. Practise it in your daily life.

We have a new Agenda that can help realize that vision. It was unanimously adopted last September by Israel and all 193 countries of the United Nations. It is called the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and it is a blueprint for building a people-centred, planet-friendly future. Our ambition is a world where we leave no one behind. Our goal is a life of dignity for all.

It is a universal agenda that applies to all people and all countries. It is as relevant to a villager in a far-off community as it is to a young person upset with growing inequality and injustice around the corner. I urge you to make the most of this Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Use it to fight inequality. Build bridges not walls. Secure human rights. Ensure inclusive societies.

I want to thank you once again for this opportunity. Over the course of the next two days, I will speak to the leaders responsible for bringing peace to Israelis and Palestinians. I will discuss in-depth concrete actions to make words reality. As I do, I have a Hebrew word foremost in my mind; the word for responsibility — “*achrayut*”. I have been told that it is based on the word “*acher*” — which means “the other, not me, the different one”.

In other words, responsibility is more than taking ownership for one's actions — it is about seeing your actions through the prism of others' concerns — and seeking to understand their needs as your own. This wisdom teaches us that we cannot be a world of “us and them”. We must be a world of “we the peoples” as the Charter of the United Nations describes. And all of us have a responsibility — an *achrayut* — to build that world.

Leaders need to move beyond repeating the same phrases and expecting different results. It is maddening and it is not worthy of the future you are seeking to build. Indeed, it makes a mockery of all the technology and innovation that you are nurturing here each and every day.

I strongly believe that members of the international community must exercise their collective and individual influence to help reach the common destination: an end to the occupation which will soon enter its fiftieth year, and the establishment of two States for two peoples living side by side in peace, security and mutual recognition.

Universities are a place of dreams — and there is nothing greater or nobler than the dream of peace. Let us work for it together for the future of Israelis and Palestinians and your shared destiny on this shared land and our shared planet. I thank you. *Toda*.

For information media. Not an official record.

<http://www.un.org/press/en/2016/sqsm17884.doc.htm>