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### **Secretary-General to host upcoming Middle East Quartet meeting**

30 April 2008 – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will chair a meeting of the diplomatic Middle East Quartet – comprising the United Nations, the European Union, Russia and the United States – later this week in London.

The 2 May gathering will review all aspects of the peace process launched in the US city of Annapolis late last year and the situation on the ground.

While in the United Kingdom's capital, he is also scheduled to take part in an expanded Quartet meeting with Arab foreign ministers.

He will then participate in a meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Palestinian Authority, a Norwegian initiative set up in 1992 to ensure that development assistance is used efficiently to the peace process and to contribute to the development of Palestinian society.

The foreign ministers of Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates are expected to participate in the Committee's meeting, which will assess progress in Palestinian institutional and economic development since it met in New York last September.

Yesterday in Geneva, Mr. Ban launched a new lecture series on the topic "opportunity in crisis," where he underscored how the current food crisis threatens to undo all the recent efforts to lift people out of poverty around the world and could spark related economic, social and political crises.

Following his lecture, he fielded questions on development, human rights, UN reform, the situation in Zimbabwe and this summer's Olympic Games.

In a related development, the Secretary-General today stated that he does not want to indicate his preference for any candidate contesting the two non-permanent seats in the Security Council for the 2009-2010 period.

The two seats are being contested by Austria, Iceland and Turkey. Mr. Ban "recognizes that they are all eminently qualified for the seats and wishes each of them success in their effort to secure the support of Member States of the Organization," according to a statement issued in Geneva by his spokesperson.