

**News Release** | Friday 26 February 2010 – Singapore

## Cooperation between Asia and Africa is key to global development, says Kofi A. Annan

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**Former UN Secretary-General Kofi A. Annan will highlight the critical ties between Asia and Africa, and call for more to be done to build a mutually beneficial partnership, with poverty alleviation at its heart.**

*Singapore* – In a public address at the University of Singapore today, Kofi A. Annan will outline how Africa can learn from the approach of successful Asian nations, and argue boldly that the region “has not just the means to help Africa but both a responsibility and vital interest in doing so”.

Mr. Annan will say that African nations must take the lead in addressing the political, economic and social challenges they face, not least in building nations underpinned by good governance, and respect for the rule of law and human rights – key elements for the success of any nation. But these challenges will be overcome much more rapidly with support from the international community, especially Asia, which is already reaping the benefits of substantial commercial and investment ties with the continent.

Mr. Annan will argue that there are three ways in particular in which Asia can support Africa along its development path:

- **Asia and Africa must build a mutually beneficial partnership:** Asia’s growing engagement in Africa must be managed in a way “which translates into tangible benefits for Africa’s citizens through sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction. This will require a determination in Africa to improve governance, which should be supported through technical assistance and capacity building. It requires as well more responsible and transparent investment from Africa’s Asian partners”, he will say.
- **By sharing valuable experience and building much-needed capacity:** This is particularly the case with regard to how the state can be used as an effective tool towards actively driving inclusive growth; building a knowledge economy; and driving improvements in agricultural productivity.

- **By supporting African priorities on the world stage:** Mr. Annan will argue “we must build on the long history of South-South cooperation to complement and reinforce global development efforts”. This means championing progress towards the UN Millennium Development Goals, achieving an effective global response to climate change, and tackling unfair international trade rules, which present Africa with such significant barriers to economic growth.

Mr. Annan will not hide from the fact that elements of Asia’s relationship with African nations have caused controversy, but will conclude by arguing that the partnership “is on the right track”. He will note that Asian countries “were among the first to see Africa as a place of opportunities rather than problems, bringing significant chances for hundreds of millions of Africans”. Adding: “It is in all our interests that these chances are seized. It is in all our interests that we see prosperity spread, human rights respected, and conflicts resolved”.

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### **Contact**

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### **Notes to Editors**

- Mr. Annan’s speech entitled ‘Asia and Africa: Past Lessons, Future Ambitions’ will be delivered at the National University of Singapore at 17.00 local time (GMT + 8 hours) on Friday 26 February 2010. Mr. Annan is visiting Singapore in his capacity as the first Li Ka Shing Professor at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, a position announced in September 2009.
- Kofi Annan served two terms, from 1997 to 2006, as UN Secretary-General. In 2001, Annan and the United Nations were jointly awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace. Since leaving the United Nations, Kofi Annan has established a Foundation through which he continues to provide leadership on critical global issues, particularly preserving and building peace and facilitating more equitable sharing of the benefits of globalization, by promoting poverty alleviation, good governance, human rights and the rule of law. Please visit: [www.kofiannanfoundation.org](http://www.kofiannanfoundation.org)