



Media Release | Monday 13 May 2013

Kofi Annan launches global initiative to inspire young people to lead

This week Kofi Annan will begin an unprecedented series of conversations on critical global issues with young people around the world.

The former UN Secretary-General believes the views and concerns of the younger generation on challenges central to their lives and future prospects – such as unemployment and democratic governance – are being ignored, and wants to help them get their message across to national and international decision-makers.

He will launch the Kofi Annan Dialogues: LIVE on Wednesday 15 May, with an on-line discussion on “Young People and Leadership.” It will be watched by a global audience who will participate through social media channels.

More than half the world’s population today is under the age of 30 and they are particularly badly hit by global problems such as rising unemployment and insecurity. Young people are three times more likely to be out of work than adults, yet they have little influence on policies to bring about effective solutions.

Mr. Annan said: *“Young people today are truly citizens of the world. Whatever they are working on, whatever their ambitions for the years ahead, they have to think globally – even when they act locally. Sadly, young people are often overlooked during discussions and decision-making at the national and international level. They have the power to make choices, step forward and take a role in leadership and advocacy. We must listen to the future leaders of the world and empower them to bring about real and necessary change.”*

The Dialogues are being organised by the Kofi Annan Foundation, in partnership with One Young World and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

The Dialogues will:

- Provide an unprecedented opportunity for young people to interact with one of the most experienced global leaders of our times;
- Highlight young people’s ideas and actions to bring about positive change in the world;
- Enable and empower young people and encourage other high-profile leaders to interact with the leaders of tomorrow.

The Dialogues will entail a 90 minute live discussion between Kofi Annan and six young people from around the world using the video-conferencing platform Google Hangout. Young people world-wide can join the debate, express their views and ask Mr. Annan questions through a range of social media channels.

The dates and themes of episodes in the Dialogue series are as follows:

- Wednesday 15 May 2013: “Young People and Leadership”
- Thursday 20 June 2013: “Unemployment”
- Thursday 18 July 2013: “Democracy and Elections”
- Monday 9 September 2013: “Education and ICTs”
- Thursday 3 October 2013: Global Live Dialogue at One Young World Summit in South Africa

Additional dialogues on: “The Future of the Middle-East”, “Crime and Corruption”, “Food and Nutrition Security” and “Environmental Degradation” will be held in 2014.

An on-line poll will accompany the series to capture and promote the hopes, goals, priorities and positive ideas of young people around the world on specific issues. The results of this youth barometer will be announced at the BYND 2015 Global Youth Summit in Costa Rica in September and the One Young World Summit in October, 2013.

Please join the conversation on 15 May 2013 at 11h00 CET for the first Dialogue on: “Young People and Leadership.” <http://dialogueslive.kofiannanfoundation.org/> and follow on social media:

- Twitter: @kofiannan #kofiannanlive
- Facebook: Kofi Annan

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Notes to Editor:

- The Kofi Annan Foundation is an independent not-for-profit organization founded in 2007 by Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations and Nobel Peace Prize laureate. The Kofi Annan Foundation aims to promote better global governance and strengthen the capacities of people and countries to achieve a fairer, more secure world.
- The Kofi Annan Dialogues: LIVE aims to share and capture respective experiences of youth worldwide, bring attention to the achievement by young people, and enable and empower youth worldwide.
- One Young World is a London-based charity founded in 2009 by David Jones and Kate Robertson. One Young World gathers together young people from around the world, helping them make lasting connections to create positive change.

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