

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE TO THE GENOA MODEL UNITED NATIONS  
CONFERENCE (GeMUN)  
25-27 February 2016**

Thank you for taking part in this Model United Nations and for your commitment to greater global understanding.

You gather at a moment of challenge and opportunity for the human family.

The United Nations marked its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015 by taking landmark steps to advance sustainable development and combat climate change.

In December, governments came together to sign the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Three months earlier, all 193 Member States of the United Nations agreed on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to end poverty and build a life of dignity for all on a healthy planet. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are transformative and universal, and they will demand action from all partners, including young people.

I am also pleased that the Security Council recently passed a landmark resolution on Youth, Peace and Security. That means young peacebuilders have the full support of the United Nations. Young people have the greatest stake in the future so you must have a voice in building it.

These agreements open up promising new horizons for our common progress. At the same time, our gains and hopes are threatened by the conflicts, exploitation and despair that characterize much of today's global landscape. Violent extremists are carrying out appalling crimes. Fighting is forcing people from their homes and destroying the lives of millions of young people like you. Some countries are putting up new barriers, both physical and legal, to prevent refugees from entering. Some people are stoking fear and hatred. Huge sums of money continue to be squandered on weapons of war, while life-saving humanitarian programmes struggle for resources.

The United Nations stands with the vulnerable. Every day, we strive to make a difference: delivering food; providing clean water and healthcare; promoting equal rights; advancing the empowerment of women and girls; bringing enemies together around a peace table; helping countries build effective institutions and move towards prosperity and stability.

By taking part in this Model United Nations, you are demonstrating your commitment to peace, justice, human rights and human dignity. I hope this Conference will continue to inspire you to be a life-long global citizen.

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