

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE TO THIRD ANNUAL ROOTS OF PEACE  
HARVEST OF HOPE PROGRAMME  
Greenwich, 18 October 2009**

*Delivered by Under-Secretary-General Vijay Nambiar, Chef de Cabinet*

It is a pleasure to send my warmest greetings to everyone who has gathered for the annual "Harvest of Hope" programme.

Roots of Peace continues to be a valuable partner of the United Nations in our efforts to rid the world of anti-personnel mines. Each mine cleared, each square metre rendered free of unexploded ordnance, helps to build a foundation for development and peace. We see land brought back to productive use, offering sustenance and livelihoods to people in need; we see children able to play without risking their lives; we see peace processes newly infused with confidence. De-mining does all this and more.

I therefore very much welcome your decision to focus today's event on Afghanistan, where the Mines to Vines effort is playing a crucial role in the country's reconstruction. Afghanistan needs the international community's assistance and solidarity, and I am pleased that you are doing your part.

It is also a pleasure to add my voice to yours in paying tribute to the winners of your Global Citizen Award. Like my predecessors as Secretary-General, I have welcomed Joseph Verner Reed's advice and support on a wide range of matters, gained through his rich and varied diplomatic career serving both his country and the United Nations. I have also benefited regularly from the wise counsel of the incomparable Ted Sorensen, who is among the Organization's most eloquent advocates – and most ardent defenders. You rightly honour these two stalwart friends of the United Nations.

This is a unique moment in world affairs. Multiple crises – food, fuel, financial, flu – are hitting at once. Climate change looms larger every day. Each illustrates a 21<sup>st</sup>-century truth: we share one planet, one home. As people, as nations, as a species, we sink or swim together.

The United Nations is doing its utmost to respond – to protect the vulnerable, to keep the peace, to address global economic turmoil and the political tensions and social unrest it has generated. We are trying to forge a renewed multilateralism that can deliver real results for all people. And in this, the International Year of Reconciliation, we are trying to promote dialogue and other efforts to bridge the many divides that can – but need not -- characterize our world.

We are making progress, but I am painfully aware of the gap between commitment and action. Let us all resolve to redouble our efforts. Today's challenges and crises compel us to be more united than ever – united in purpose and united in action to make the world a safer, better place.

Thank you again for your engagement and support. Please accept my best wishes for a memorable event.