



**Speech by Mr. Arthur Erken
UN Resident Coordinator ad interim
UN Day 2010
24 October**

Honorable Chief Guest, Her Excellency, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Dipu Moni, MP;
Excellencies, Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues and friends;

Assalamu Alaikum and a very warm welcome to you all.

From the outset, I would like to express my deep gratitude and appreciation to the Hon'ble Minister of Foreign Affairs for her presence at today's United Nations Day ceremony to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

Similar to previous years, I would like to begin by sharing with you, the UN Secretary General's message for UN Day 2010:

QUOTE:

“On United Nations Day, I express my great appreciation to the millions of people throughout the world who believe deeply in our work for peace, development and human rights... and who uphold our ideals and help us achieve our goals. To all of you... friends and fellow citizens of the world... I say: thank you.

Sixty-five years ago on this date, the founding Charter of the United Nations entered into force. Every year on UN Day, we reaffirm our global mission. We reassert the universal values of tolerance, mutual respect and human dignity. And we recognize the progress we have made together: gains in literacy and life expectancy... the spread of knowledge and technology... advances in democracy and the rule of law.

But above all, UN Day is a day on which we resolve to do more. More to protect those caught up in armed conflict, to fight climate change and avert nuclear catastrophe; more to expand opportunities for women and girls, and to combat injustice and impunity; more to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

Last month's MDG Summit at the United Nations generated political momentum... as well as financial commitments that are especially significant in these difficult economic times. I am determined to press ahead as the 2015 deadline approaches.

Despite our problems, despite polarization and distrust, our interconnected world has opened up vast new possibilities for common progress. Let us commit to do even more to realize the great vision set out in the UN Charter.”

UNQUOTE

Honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen;

On behalf of the UN system in Bangladesh, I would like to congratulate the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, led by Her Excellency, the Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, for the deserved praise and recognition Bangladesh received at the UN General Assembly. Bangladesh's progress towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and particularly, the efforts to reduce child mortality are quite remarkable and the people of Bangladesh are right to be proud. I would also like to note the significant progress achieved in other MDGs: in the area of primary education, there has been notable progress toward achieving the net enrollment target and gender parity in both primary and secondary education; in the area of poverty reduction. Bangladesh is also broadly on track for achieving the MDG targets for HIV and AIDS, malaria, and other major diseases.

In view of the progress achieved over the last 65 years in such diverse fields as security, development and human rights, the United Nations, as the sole intergovernmental international organization, has built up invaluable expertise and knowledge across a broad spectrum of important areas. The United Nations continues to play a vital and crucial role in helping to safeguard world peace, promoting sustainable development and advancing international cooperation.

In response to the government's national development priorities, the UN system in Bangladesh is preparing a new UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). This UNDAF will represent the UN system's collective response to key development challenges and will elaborate what the UN system plans to achieve and how these results will be achieved. Building on the recent focus on Bangladesh's attainment of the MDGs, the new UNDAF will respond directly to the lagging MDG targets and priority actions required to reach the goals by 2015.

I take this opportunity to quote a line from the speech deliberated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister at the MDG Summit in New York last month: *"Let us rise and resolve in that spirit as one community in a globalized world to achieve all our Internationally Agreed Development Goals, including the MDGs, thereby serving ourselves, our progeny, and posterity."* Following her words, I would like to reaffirm the UN system's full and unreserved commitment to support Bangladesh in consolidating democracy and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We stand ready and will do our utmost to respond to the needs of the Government and the people of this beautiful, culturally and historically rich and remarkable country that we are privileged to serve. In this spirit, please remember that the United Nations belongs to all of us.

To my colleagues in the UN system, I call on you to uphold, every day, the spirit and ideals on which the United Nations was founded. Working for the UN is not an ordinary job, it is a privilege and an honour; a privilege to serve the people of the world; to give voice to the oppressed; to stand up for universal human rights; to seek dignity and respect for women and girls; to feed the hungry; to protect the most vulnerable; to seek justice in order to make this place a better world. That's the spirit of the UN, and that's why I salute you on this Day for your dedication and commitment to the noble causes of the UN, for your courage and bravery to serve the world's common humanity.

With this, I wish you all a very happy UN Day.
Thank you.