



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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VIDEO MESSAGE ON THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE SIGNING OF THE ANTARCTIC TREATYWashington, D.C., 1 December 2009

Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The Antarctic Treaty is a unique example of international cooperation. Its main focus is to ensure that Antarctica is used for peaceful purposes only.

As new issues have emerged, the Treaty has evolved.

Antarctica has been designated as a natural reserve – the world’s largest conservation area. It has been the scene of successful international scientific research on challenges such as climate change and the depletion of the ozone layer.

International cooperation in and for Antarctica provides an example for all.

After half a century, new challenges are emerging. Commercial activities could jeopardize the integrity of the fragile Antarctic ecosystem, in particular unsustainable fishing, adverse impacts of tourism and biological prospecting.

But the greatest threat is climate change.

I urge you to do your part to ensure that this month’s conference in Copenhagen lays the foundation for a legally binding climate treaty. This is crucial if we are to protect Antarctica’s fragile environment and prevent devastating sea level rise.

All these challenges will require strengthened cooperation -- not just among Parties to the Antarctic Treaty and the Antarctic Treaty system, but across the entire international community.

I urge all concerned to work in harmony – for Antarctica, for science, for the progress of all humankind.

In that spirit, I wish you a most successful celebration of this important Treaty.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ban Ki-moon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

BAN Ki-moon