

**CITATION BY PROFESSOR KISHORE MAHBUBANI
DEAN, LEE KUAN YEW SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE
PUBLIC ORATOR FOR HIS EXCELLENCY MR BAN KI-MOON
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS
HONORARY DOCTOR OF LETTERS RECIPIENT
AT THE SPECIAL HONORARY DEGREE CONFERMENT CEREMONY
TUESDAY, 30 AUGUST 2016
AT THE ISTANA**

It is a real pleasure and honour to read this citation for His Excellency Mr Ban Ki-moon, whom I can call both a world leader and a personal friend. In 2001-2002, when I was serving as Singapore's Ambassador to the United Nations (UN), I got to know Mr Ban well when he served as Chief of Staff of the President of the UN General Assembly, Mr Han Seung-Soo.

Mr Ban Ki-moon has led an amazing life. His childhood was difficult. He was born during World War II in 1944 in a small village in Korea. When he turned six, the Korean War had broken out, and his family had to flee on foot to the mountains. It was a brutally cold winter. His family did not have warm clothes and shoes. They trudged for miles through the deep snow until the pain seemed to cut through to Mr Ban's bones. This childhood experience made him understand well the critical role that the UN plays in saving people in conflict zones.

The legendary Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld once said, "The UN was not created to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell." Mr Ban has fulfilled this key mission in many ways in his two terms as Secretary-General of the UN.

One of his key accomplishments was to secure a strong global consensus to act together to save the world from global warming. When he delivered the Fullerton Lecture in Singapore in March 2012, Mr Ban noted that Singapore was proud to be a "little red dot". He added that our planet is a "pale blue dot" in the galaxy. Hence, he said that we need to think and act together to build a sustainable future for humanity. His leadership contributed significantly to the success of the 2015 UN Climate Change Conference held in Paris.

Mr Ban Ki-moon has led the struggle to improve our planet in other ways. His predecessor, Mr Kofi Annan, will be remembered for launching the Millennium Development Goals in 2000. Mr Ban will be remembered for launching the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015. The ambitious goals under the Agenda for Sustainable Development aim to bring universal peace and prosperity to our planet by 2030. We thank Mr Ban for this impressive legacy.

Mr Ban has also made important contributions to gender equality through his advocacy for women's rights. He pushed for the creation of UN Women as a separate agency in 2011. He helmed several new campaigns and initiatives that seek to address violence against women. His advocacy resulted in the establishment of a new Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Under his leadership, more women have been promoted to senior management positions than ever before, reaching the highest level in the UN's history.

It is no secret that the job of UN Secretary-General is one of the most difficult and impossible jobs in the world. A recent press article on Mr Ban notes that on the eve of the UN Climate Summit in New York in September 2014, a key preoccupation of Mr Ban, he also had to deal with many other pressing challenges, including “the Ebola outbreak; Russia’s invasion of Ukraine; Israel’s’ bombardment of Gaza; and violence in Mali, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic”. A lesser man would have drowned in having to concurrently deal with so many challenges. Mr Ban will be remembered for dealing with many global crises with remarkable calm and equanimity.

Mr Ban’s distinguished career in the Korean diplomatic service prepared him well for these challenges. After graduating from the Seoul National University in 1970, he joined the Korean Foreign Service and served with distinction in many posts — including in India, New York and Washington DC. Mr Ban is a graduate of the Harvard Kennedy School. One of his former professors at the Kennedy School, Professor Joseph Nye, has noted that Mr Ban has “a rare combination of analytic clarity, humility and perseverance”. For Mr Ban, it was particularly meaningful to graduate from the Kennedy School since he had the pleasure of meeting President John F Kennedy in person in San Francisco in 1962.

Mr Ban’s humanitarian accomplishments and sterling commitment to the citizens of the world in the pursuit of sustainable development, human rights, global peace and security have made a significant impact worldwide, and are widely admired. As a Secretary-General hailing from Asia, he has provided strong leadership and contributed to global governance. NUS is deeply honoured to recognise the distinguished work of Mr Ban Ki-moon.

Mr Chancellor, may it please you to confer on Mr Ban Ki-moon the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters.