

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BROADCAST
MEDIA AND CLIMATE CHANGE: A PUBLIC SERVICE REMIT
Paris, 4 September 2009**

I am pleased to send my greetings to all the participants in this timely and important conference on confronting the challenge of climate change. I thank UNESCO for organizing this conference in partnership with UNEP and the regional broadcasting associations.

You are meeting at a pivotal moment. We are now only 15 negotiating days away from the start of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen.

Climate change is one of the most fundamental threats ever to confront humankind. It exacerbates all of the problems we face: poverty, disease, hunger and insecurity. It impedes progress toward the Millennium Development Goals. It deepens the food and energy crises.

That is the harsh reality. But there is an upside: if we combat climate change with a sustainable, low-emissions approach, we can change the way countries develop. We can foster green growth. We can fight hunger and poverty while protecting the environment.

The downside is equally dramatic. If we fail to act, climate change will intensify droughts, floods and other natural disasters.

We have the power to change course. But we must do it now. As we move toward Copenhagen in December, we must seal a climate change deal that secures our common future. The science is clear. We know what to do and we know how to do it. What is needed is the political will.

Two years ago, only a handful of world leaders could talk about these issues. Today leaders in all countries, on every continent, are aware of the threat we face. But we need a well informed public to ensure that leaders make this issue a top priority – and are then held accountable by their constituents for their actions, or lack thereof, during this crucial year.

Public awareness marks the crucial first step. Broadcasters play a vital role by informing and educating the public about the realities of climate change and the costs of inaction. Armed with information, citizens are better equipped to push for meaningful and responsible follow-through from their elected representatives. This is all the more essential in the final days before Copenhagen.

With this in mind, I draw your attention to the Summit I will be convening on 22 September to build political momentum for action. I have invited every Head of State and Government to come to the United Nations and engage in frank and robust discussions to help unlock the key political issues in the negotiations.

I trust you will give the Summit and the entire Copenhagen process full coverage. I encourage you to dedicate the resources and broadcasting space needed to report on the climate challenge with the seriousness and urgency it deserves. Thank you for your efforts, and please accept my best wishes for a successful and informative gathering.