

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**REMARKS AT WELCOMING SESSION
FOR GLOBAL COMPACT LEADERS SUMMIT
New York, 23 June 2010**

Distinguished ministers,
Mr. Wang, President of the China Enterprise Confederation,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to welcome you to the United Nations.

For more than half a century, governments have gathered in this General Assembly Hall to debate the pressing matters of the day.

Today, CEOs fill the seats.

The symbolism is clear: the United Nations and the international business community have become true partners.

And the Global Compact has helped to make it happen.

From 40 companies at the start to more than 8000 participants today.

Guided by ten universal principles covering human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption.

We have had ten productive years.

The tide has shifted in two fundamental ways.

The United Nations understands that we will not achieve our goals without the engagement of the private sector.

The business calculus has changed dramatically as well. Corporate responsibility is going mainstream. More and more business leaders accept that principles and profits go hand-in-hand.

But let us not forget that the vast majority of companies operating in the world today have yet to commit to the tenets of corporate sustainability.

Moreover, high-profile corporate crises have eroded public trust.

The global economy raises further concerns. Many countries have shown great resilience and remain engines of tremendous dynamism. Yet there is also great pain. People everywhere are losing jobs and livelihoods. None of us can say whether we are fully on the road to recovery or still in the eye of the storm. Meanwhile, new threats loom ... climate change, conflict over increasingly scarce resources, environmental catastrophe.

We will discuss these issues over the next two days.

We will take stock of where we stand and chart a way forward, building on what works, challenging ourselves to do more, wanting global integration work for business and people alike.

And we will come together on an agenda of concrete steps that business can take to support the Millennium Development Goals.

Let us, today and tomorrow, agree on a “Development Compact” – in which companies work even more actively with the United Nations to scale up proven measures and projects.

And let us recognize that investments in the MDGs are investments in sustainable economic growth. Business will flourish only if people do.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is a moment of transition and uncertainty. The private sector knows this as well as anyone. Your businesses are on the front lines.

From Wall Street to Main Street, from boardroom tables to kitchen tables, from national capitals to capital markets, people look for sustainable growth and sustainable development.

With your engagement, with your recommitment here at this summit, we can move toward a more stable and prosperous world for all – and toward a new Global Compact for the 21st century.

Thank you again for being here. I look forward to a very productive summit.