

Welcome Remarks

by

Ambassador Rajiv K. Bhatia

Director General, ICWA

at

'Sapru House-UN Lecture'

by

H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon

United Nations Secretary General

at

Sapru House, New Delhi

12 January 2015

With the permission of the Chair, Ambassador C. R. Gharekhan, let us now begin the proceedings of this special event.

H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations; Ambassador Gharekhan; senior UN officials, Madam Lise Grande, UN Resident Coordinator & UNDP Resident Representative in India, Excellencies, Honoured Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.



(L-R) H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations, Ambassador C. R. Gharekhan and Ambassador Rajiv K Bhatia, DG, ICWA.

It is a singular honour for the Indian Council of World Affairs to have amidst us the Secretary General of the United Nations. On behalf of the host institution, it is my privilege and pleasure to extend a most cordial and warm welcome to him. We are delighted that Madam Yoo (Ban) Soon-taek is also present on this occasion. I warmly welcome her and also extend a warm welcome to all of you, dear guests, who have responded to our invitation.

2. This assembly of our Governing Council members, diplomats, officials, representatives of strategic and academic community, research scholars, students and

media keenly looks forward to listening to a global figure of exceptional stature and accomplishments. As you are aware, the Secretary General will address us shortly on the subject of “India and the United Nations in a Changing World.”

3. The Indian Council of World Affairs is the oldest and a premier foreign policy think tank of India. It has been striving ceaselessly since 1943 to conduct and promote the study, policy research, external dialogue and various kinds of outreach activities, focused on interpreting the world to India and India to the world. In our scheme of things, the United Nations enjoys paramount importance, given the role it plays in the pursuit of causes, central to its *raison d'être*, namely international peace and security, justice, human rights, sustainable development and social progress. In this context, I am happy to share with you that ICWA has recently become a member of the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI). For this, we express our appreciation for the cooperation extended by Shri Ramu Damodaran, Chief, United Nations Academic Impact, UN Secretariat. We intend to cooperate closely with UNAI to support the activities of the United Nations in India. We look forward to the world body celebrating the seventy years of its existence and development in the coming months.

4. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated last September, the UN has achieved much in the past seven decades in its mission to end war, prevent conflict, maintain peace, feed the hungry, strive to save our planet, and create opportunities for poor children. Its achievements make the UN an indispensable institution for the world.

5. However, as it reaches the historic milestone of the 70 Anniversary, the UN faces a vast array of challenges and opportunities in the present century. These can be addressed better by reinventing and reforming it from its 20th century-design. We are deeply interested in learning about the Secretary General’s vision of the ongoing transitions and changes in the world, how they will impact on the United Nations, and how the UN plans to cope with them.

6. Our Chief Guest will deliver the Sapru House-UN Lecture. He is the eighth Secretary General of the UN, the second from Asia. He has had a distinguished innings in the domain of diplomacy, lasting thirty seven years, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea. I am happy to note that this impressive and fruitful innings began in New Delhi.

7. H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon was serving as the Foreign Minister of Republic of Korea at the time of his election as the Secretary General in October 2006. He was re-elected to this august position in 2011. The Secretary General is widely seen as the embodiment of the UN. He has been constantly engaged in diverse causes such as promoting sustainable development, empowering women, supporting countries facing disasters, generating fresh momentum on peace keeping, disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, and introducing new measures for making the UN more transparent, effective and efficient.



Ambassador Rajiv K Bhatia, DG, ICWA delivering Welcome Remarks.

8. May I also observe how delighted we are that Ambassador Gharekhan accepted our invitation to chair this meeting. He is one of the most distinguished diplomats of India. He

was the country's Permanent Representative to the UN from 1986-92, after having served in various prestigious positions in India's Ministry of External Affairs, Prime Minister's Office and diplomatic missions abroad. He was Under Secretary General and Senior Advisor to the UN from 1997-99 and later Under Secretary General as well as Special Coordinator in Occupied Palestinian Territory from 1997-99. Ambassador Gharekhan also served as the Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of India for West Asia and Middle East Peace Process from 2005-09. He is presently the President of Trust of Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts.

9. May I now request you all to put your hands together to welcome our Chief Guest and the Chair.

10. May I now request the Chair to conduct the proceedings of this meeting.
