

## THIERRY DE MONTBRIAL & BAN KI-MOON

### **Thierry de Montbrial, President and founder of the World Policy Conference**

First of all, Mr. Secretary-General, thank you. And to begin with let me say that for those of us who are sensitive to the French language, and many of us still are, we greatly appreciated the section of your speech which you gave in French and, if I may say so, very good French, not only because you read it, but because your pronunciation is absolutely remarkable. Thank you very much indeed.

Thank you also for the quality of your speech, which has given us a great deal of food for thought. Unfortunately we don't have time for a real debate. So I am simply going to ask you one question. I'm aware that the question I am going to ask you is a bit like asking Jean-Claude Trichet how exchange rates between the dollar and the yuan are going to move. I think he would give us an answer which would undoubtedly be somewhat difficult to interpret.

I am going to ask you something rather similar, which is the future of what is often known as the P5, and which is effectively linked to the reform of the United Nations system. I'm not going to ask you what the ideal composition of the permanent members of the Security Council would be. You wouldn't be able to answer. But what, at least, in your opinion, are the criteria which would help to improve the representativeness and therefore the legitimacy but also the effectiveness of the Security Council? I am thinking primarily of its permanent members.

### **Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for asking me this very important question in French. If I may, however, I shall answer in English.

The reform of the Security Council has been one of the most important reform agendas. When I first became Secretary-General, many people asked me what my reform agenda was. I thought that they expected me to change the United Nations to become more effective and efficient; I thought of it more in terms of management change. Later on, I came to realise that when people talked about reform of the UN, they only meant reform of the Security Council.

I believe that, given the dramatic changes which have taken place over the last 60 years, the Security Council should be reformed and changed to meet the expectations of the international community. It should be able to address all the global challenges we are facing. We are living in an era of multiple crises, which therefore required multiple solutions, delivered in a multitude of coordinated ways.

The Security Council, particularly the five permanent members, have a special role to play. I believe that there is almost unanimous consensus that the Security Council should be reformed in a more transparent, democratic and representative direction. They should also change their methods of working, so that more members of the UN can participate in their decision making process, not just the permanent five or the 15 Security Council members. I think we have almost unanimous agreement on that.

The question is where, when and how change should take place, and who should be sitting in the Security Council. Member states have presented their proposals over the last 17 years, and the UN has taken up in a much more elevated and focused way the question of how member states can participate in expanding and changing the Security



Council. Many proposals have been made, and there have already been five rounds of negotiations; the General Assembly will soon undertake another round of informal negotiations.

As the Secretary-General I have always tried to facilitate this dialogue so that the member states can find an acceptable and agreeable formula. Securing the common interest is important for meeting global challenges, and is an important part of global governance. I hope member states will make their decisions as soon as possible.

Another reform process is underway in Ecosoc, the Economic and Social Council. They have made good progress, having agreed to establish an annual ministerial review and having established a biannual development cooperation forum. This is a new system which was introduced two or three years ago.

There are many other areas where we could enhance the global governance capacity of the UN and, as the Secretary-General, I have been humbled by hearing so many criticisms and suggestions stating that the UN needs to be more efficient, transparent, accountable and effective. Everybody agrees with this, and we are in the process of making the UN an organisation which is more trustworthy and effective. This is part of global governance.

Thierry de Montbrial said in his opening remarks that we have a G8, a G20, a G77, and a G24, and that there have been a lot of discussions about the optimal formula for the G8. I think that all these formats for global governance were born out of actual necessities at the time. The G20 has now surfaced as the world's premium forum for dealing with financial and economic crises, but it is true that while it has better levels of consultation and coordination with most UN member states, at least 172 countries are not properly represented. I mean that all 192 member states should take part.

We appreciate the role and the political, economic and financial strength of the G20, which accounts for more than 80% of global GDP and population. Therefore, their decisions are very important, but at the same time, as Secretary-General, I have been urging the world leaders of the G20 that they should not lose sight of the challenges and threats that face many vulnerable countries. I will do the same again in Seoul; but for the first time in the history of the G20 the Seoul government has taken on board the development agenda, and that is very much appreciated and commendable. That agenda will deal with the concerns and challenges of most developing countries. I hope this answers your questions.

**Thierry de Montbrial, President and founder of the World Policy Conference**

Mr. Secretary-General, I now have the choice of staying in French, switching to English or speaking in Korean. As I haven't prepared a small compliment in Korean, which I very much regret, I shall remain in French and thank you once again most warmly for having come here, for having outlined views on these major questions of governance, and also for having explained your thinking on the reform of the United Nations system. You have our very warmest thanks. Please allow me also, on behalf of everyone gathered here, to wish you every success as you continue in your vital role.