

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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REMARKS AT IPS INTERNATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD 2006
19 December 2006

Thank you very much, Mario [Lubetkin, IPS Director General] for those wonderful words. My dear friends, this has been a highly emotional period for Nane and myself, and for me in particular, as I complete a journey that began 44 years ago in Geneva, and this month comes to a full circle.

I want to thank Mario, the [IPS] Director-General, and to thank you Dumi Kumalo for those very kind words. It gives me great pleasure to join you today, and I am truly honoured by this award, especially as it comes from members of the world's press corps.

After 10 exhilarating years as Secretary-General, it is humbling to be recognized for doing what you love to do. By now, our bags are all packed so this will be one of the awards – not the Nobel Prize! – that I will be carrying with me in my hand as Nane and I head for our vacation, and hopefully to live in larger freedom.

Of course, it's not only our bags that are packed. We've also said goodbye to all our colleagues. These past several weeks, I have gone around delivering a series of valedictory speeches sharing what I have learnt, and highlighting what I believe the UN has achieved, during my decade in office.

Yet it feels right to conclude with one final farewell – to you, my friends and sparring partners in the press. You have kept me on my toes – and sometimes in the throes – over all these years.

I would be misleading you – which of course I will never do – if I said that it has always been a pleasure. But it has always been a privilege.

In fact, I am convinced that I could not have attained even half of what the IPS International Achievement Award ascribes to me if it weren't for the power of the press, and organizations like IPS in particular, to convey not only the UN's exhaustively documented shortcomings, but also report on the Organization's invaluable work and transformation - our work on behalf of peoples around the world; our work to support people in need; our presence in all areas where there are disasters – manmade or natural; our effort to support the poor, to give a voice to the voiceless, our fight to ensure that human dignity is respected by all – these are some of the achievements which are not covered as exhaustively in some press as our shortcomings.

The press helped the United Nations build the broad base – among civil society, ordinary citizens, heads of States and Government, the private sector, and even movie stars – to make change possible, and to carry forward its work. It held me to account, but it also allowed me and my colleagues to hold our partners – from Member States to civil society and the private sector –

to their commitments. And I must say, the civil society has been a great partner in the work that we have done over the past ten years.

Of course, not all press is created equal. It is no mere coincidence that I am receiving the IPS Achievement Award and not, say, the FOX and Friends Award.

As Secretary-General of the United Nations, as a Ghanaian and as an African, I have always appreciated your reporting. Your coverage of the UN and my career here began at essentially the same time. Ever since, you have reported on the UN with a uniquely developing world perspective, and you have allowed us to hear, and to be heard by, many people around the world for whom the UN matters most.

So thank you, my dear friends, for this great honour. Your recognition affirms my efforts as a civil servant, and it motivates the work that I hope to do as a member of civil society, if civil society will have me. It is also, quite simply, a wonderful way to cap ten years as Secretary-General, and forty-four years at the United Nations.

Thank you very much, my dear friends.