

Address to Secretary General Mr. Ban Kimoon December 5, 2008

Mr. Sec-General and the assembly,

Thank you very much for this opportunity to address you. It's an honor that I never imagine.

Before I begin my comments, I must thank Georg Kell, Manuel Escudero and their colleagues for their leadership and efforts

We also owe our debt to Mr. Kofi Annan and to you Mr. Sec-General.

For my remarks, I would like to focus on the transformative impact of PRME and the UNGC on business education and end with two action items. PRME is an important counterpoint to the direction that business education has taken over the last 60 years.

That approach has developed a lexicon that provides not only terms, but has shaped basic attitudes and entrenched values of our students.

- That lexicon is highly mechanistic, employing terms such as efficiency, utility, maximization, optimization, and as the basis for decision making.
- The business analytical frameworks often turn human endeavors into competitions that glorify a “winner takes all” mentality.
- Our framing has also led to a narrow agenda that focuses solely on wealth creation for owners and legitimizes the dismissal of issues outside the agenda and consequences we call “externalities.”

The UN Global Compact and PRME call us back to the fundamental canons of human communities. For the sake of time, I highlight two.

- First: As a HUMAN community, human rights take precedence over all other interests. As such, economic enterprises must serve people, not the other way around.
- Second: As a COMMUNITY, by definition, we flourish and advance collectively, not individually.
 - A community calls for mutuality, a right proportion between what we take and what we give back; what we use and how we replenish. While legal frameworks and the boundaries of legal entities create the concept of “externalities,” in the life of a community, there are no externalities.
 - Consequences of what one member does, for better or for worse, will be borne by some other members, with or without voice to protest, today or tomorrow in the commons of our shared earth.

UNGC and PRME are not the only voices calling for the right ordering of priorities between people and economic enterprises, between self and the collective. But, these programs are the best structured, and with the imprimatur of the United Nations, they speak with authority, influence, urgency and new energy.

UNGC and PRME will allow business educators to attend to a part of our job we have honestly not done well.

In subtle but undeniable ways, through our focus and content, we have let our students walk away from the bigger picture and the big responsibilities. As we go forward, let it not be our negligence that we continue to foster an attitude of disconnectedness from the common good, a disconnectedness that sows the seeds of unbridled self-interest.

Let us use this opportunity to inspire our students, to enable them to see how business and they can become solutions to issues as big as poverty and peace, and as routine as :

- a safe work environment,
- the promotion of a worker,
- pay day with something left over for savings,
- a day of schooling for a young African girl,
- a meal to come home to, and
- fuel and clean water to make these possible.

Because I care deeply about the UNGC and PRME, I have 2 requests.

- First: As I represent the US region, I am disappointed to see only 27 deans of US schools here. I also note that, of the top 20 business schools, only one dean is present. Everything we know tells us that leadership at the top is required for success. Without downplaying the importance of faculty participation, I am concerned that the transformation will be limited without the personal participation of the deans. For this purpose, I would like to make a request to you, Mr. Secretary General. Would you consider two hours of programming time for you to engage my fellow deans if we do our part to personally reach out to them
- Second: For the UNGC, I believe that accountability in reporting is a absolutely necessary for its credibility and success. As we gather, there are skeptics who would be eager to discredit the engagement of the UN with the private sector as “white-washing,” “green-washing,” and noting the UN color, “blue-washing.” I spoke with Georg Kell and he mentioned a new set of reporting requirements will be presented to the board. I am encouraged to hear this and call for unrelenting monitoring on this front.

I am deeply grateful for this opportunity to address you and the assembly and even more so, for the leadership of the UN for the Global Compact and PRME. These initiatives point the way to a more prosperous, just and peaceful global future.
THANK YOU.