



**United Nations
Secretary-General**

Tel Aviv, Israel

27 June 2016

Secretary-General's remarks at Tel Aviv University

Shalom.

I am delighted to visit Tel Aviv University, and deeply honoured to receive the George S. Wise Medal from this prestigious academic forum.

I know that this recognition symbolizes common goals of our institutions: progress, prosperity and peace.

I accept it in the name of all the women and men of the United Nations working to advance peace, development and human rights around the world and around the clock.

I look forward this morning to the innovative presentations that will follow this ceremony. Over the past ten years as Secretary-General of the United Nations, I have witnessed countless examples of the power of science and technology to transform human lives, and our lives.

Advances in health have helped mothers survive childbirth and assure their young ones a healthier future. A revolution in energy is ushering in a future of sustainability. Global communication technologies are linking people as never before in webs of commerce, culture and connection.

Our challenge is to harness the innovation taking place in the research labs of this campus and around the world to meet the challenges facing humanity -- from tackling climate change and disease, to preventing cyber-crime, promoting food security and so much more.

I am pleased that cooperation between the United Nations and Israel on these issues continues to grow.

Last December, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on agricultural technology initiated by Israel.

In 2014, UN Member States adopted another Israeli-sponsored resolution promoting entrepreneurship.

The UN is drawing on the advice of Israeli organizations working to advance human rights, enhance disaster relief, and expand opportunities for people with disabilities. Two such NGOs - Zaka and Access Israel - have been granted special status at the UN.

And just this month, for the first time in history, the Permanent Representative of Israel, His Excellency Ambassador Danny Danon, was elected chair of one of the General Assembly's six primary committees comprised of all member states.

These are examples of the growing recognition of the contribution Israel can make, and has been making, and how Israel and the United Nations can work together for the global common good.

Beyond scientific and technological research, I know Tel Aviv University is also a place of learning and innovation in the humanities, history and much more.

It is a reminder that whatever the discipline, universities above all provide a space to think and debate and dream.

That's why I love visiting universities. I always come away stimulated by the energy, creativity and fresh ideas. I am pleased that the first stop of my visit to Israel is to a place of higher learning with those who will shape the future of this country.

I started this particular journey on Thursday in Havana. I went to witness and support the signing of an interim peace deal between the government of Colombia and the FARC rebels

They have been fighting for more than half a century. The battles claimed many thousands of victims and shattered families on both sides.

Last week, these old and bitter enemies laid down their arms. It was an extremely moving ceremony - unthinkable just a few years ago. And it offers a glimmer of hope to our troubled and turbulent world.

There is a tug of war going on in our world today - a push and pull in societies north and south, east and west.

Never have we been so able to reach out and engage with the world. At the same time, never in my years as Secretary-General have I seen such potent forces rising up in societies urging people to retreat. Preying on insecurity. Profiting on division. Promoting fear.

Turn inward, they say. Build barriers. It is our way or no way.

I think perhaps the biggest war being waged today does not involve guns or tanks or fighter jets.

The biggest confrontation is the battle for minds. On the one hand, there are those who want to divide the world into "us and them". On the other, stand those who see humanity, in the words of the UN Charter, as "we the peoples".

This is a battle that "we the peoples" simply cannot afford to lose.

During my visit, I will continue to deliver the same message: Do not allow the extremists on either side to further fuel the conflict. Palestinian and Israeli leaders must stand firm against terror, violence and incitement.

We need innovative thinking and action to tear down the walls of mistrust.

I urge the "start-up nation" to help us all start up peace ... start up understanding ... start up reconciliation for a better world.

Most of all, I urge you to be a global citizen.

Be a proud citizen of your country. But never forget that challenges know no borders and that you are also a citizen of the world. Embrace that understanding. Practice it in your daily life.

We have a new Agenda that can help realize that vision. It was unanimously adopted last September by Israel and all 193 countries of the United Nations. It is called the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and it is a blueprint for building a people-centred, planet-friendly future.

Our ambition is a world where we leave no one behind. Our goal is a life of dignity for all.

It is a universal agenda - that applies to all people and all countries.

It is as relevant to a villager in a far-off community as it is to a young person upset with growing inequality and injustice around the corner.

I urge you to make the most of this agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Use it to fight inequality. Build bridges not walls. Secure human rights. Ensure inclusive societies.

I want to thank you once again for this opportunity.

Over the course of the next two days, I will speak to the leaders responsible for bringing peace to Israelis and Palestinians. I will discuss in-depth concrete actions to make words reality.

As I do, I have a Hebrew word foremost in my mind - the word for responsibility - "achrayut".

I have been told that it is based on the word "acher" - which means "the other, not me, the different one".

In other words, responsibility is more than taking ownership for one's actions - it is about seeing your actions through the prism of other's concerns - and seeking to understand their needs as your own.

This wisdom teaches us that we cannot be a world of "us and them".

We must be a world of "we the peoples" as the charter of the United Nations describes.