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**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

**MESSAGE TO THE INAUGURAL SYMPOSIUM**

**OF THE *AFRICA SERIES* INITIATIVE OF UNU AND CORNELL UNIVERSITY**

**New York, 13 November 2007**

I am delighted to send my warm greetings to all participants in this inaugural symposium of the *Africa Series*. I congratulate the United Nations University and Cornell University on this important initiative, designed to bring a much-needed spotlight on Africa's needs in the field of development.

As we all know, this year marks the mid-point in our race to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, adopted by all the world's leaders as our common vision for a better world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Many African countries have made good progress towards the Goals. But overall, the continent is not on track to reaching our shared development targets by 2015. Much more needs to be done if Africa is to halve extreme poverty, reduce maternal mortality, reverse the spread of HIV, promote gender equality and attain the other Goals on time.

Reaching the Millennium Development Goals in Africa requires a strengthened global partnership. It demands shared responsibility. And it requires a collective effort -- one which brings in Governments of developed and developing countries alike, the United Nations system, civil society, the private sector, and individuals around the world.

That is why I am encouraged by the *Africa Series* initiative of UNU and Cornell University. Academic and research institutions have an important role to play in promoting development. They are essential for the advancement of knowledge and its dissemination in policy circles. Scholars have demonstrated the vital importance of knowledge in understanding the complexities inherent in combating extreme poverty and in charting out a sustainable path for economic development.

Academic and research institutions also make important contributions to capacity-building. And they provide new and innovative ideas for how the United Nations, and the entire human race, can tackle our development challenges.

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I am confident that today's symposium will mark the beginning of a fruitful and constructive series of discussions on key development issues facing Africa. But this *Africa Series* is not an end in itself. By recommending concrete actions in areas of strategic importance to the continent's development, you will be active participants in our global effort to end the scourge of poverty and inequality once and for all.

In that spirit, I wish you a most productive and successful conference.

(<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/sgsm11275.doc.htm>)