

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon Visits CDC

[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[Dr. Gerberding] Good afternoon, everyone. This is such an amazing occasion for CDC, and it is really my great honor to introduce to you the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Secretary Ban. I don't think we've had anyone here who's more important in the world of -- the world -- as the Secretary-General. He's the eighth Secretary-General of the UN. He has worked for 37 years in service to the government and in particular, some very important efforts related to global health. He is a true expert in international policy and he's repeatedly demonstrated his sensitivity and his humanism as he tries to bring opposing parties together to solve very, very difficult problems. As Secretary-General, he's resolved to be animated by both passion and compassion in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. As I think you all know, the Millennium Goals are a series of time-bound and quantified targets that we hope to have accomplished by 2015 that address basic human rights, the right of each person on the planet to health, education, shelter, and security. In September 2005, as Foreign Minister, he also played a leading role in the adoption of the agreement at the Six-Party Talks of the Joint Statement on resolving the North Korean nuclear issue. So he's a man who has a broad perspective, a broad experience, and a great deal of wisdom to bring to the very, very important job he has.

I had the privilege of joining the Secretary-General for lunch with Governor Perdue and many, many dignitaries from around Georgia, and I was touched by his remarks to us at lunch, where he made specific reference to the importance of the commons -- the shared experience that really unites people around the planet. That health was one of those commons, but also, climate change and, of course, the engagement in finding peaceful resolutions to the conflicts that affect us in so many parts of the world today. He's also, on this visit, planning to see the Carter Center and to visit the family of Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., who, in many respects, shares a common vision -- which you made mention in your remarks to the CDC. So it is really, really a special privilege for us. We know how important the United Nations is to our work at CDC. We know, through the World Health Organization, for the work of Dr. Nabarro -- who is here somewhere -- with the Influenza Program, with Peter Piot in UN AIDS and, of course, UNICEF and our polio efforts, as well as many other health efforts. Just how incredibly important the United Nations is to our success and how critical our partnership is to the important work going on, not just with the United States, but with countries around the world. There's probably never been a time when the world has needed more leadership and more wisdom and perhaps more patience. So I'm very, very pleased to introduce you to a man who I think exemplifies all three of those virtues. Without further ado, Secretary-General Ban.

[Secretary-General Ban] Thank you very much, Dr. Gerberding, for your kind introduction and welcome. I'm fascinated and impressed by such a big turnout of CDC staff. This was not written on my scenario, in fact. All this scenario seems to have changed. I'm sorry that I'm late. I've been talking to one of the important African leaders on Zimbabwean issues. And since early this morning, I have been very busy, talking to global leaders on Myanmar issues and Zimbabwean issues, even in Atlanta. That really made me change all these scenarios. I was supposed to see through all these very impressive facilities and buildings, but I'm just here, directly; I was led

here. So without having seen, I'm afraid of what I need to say. I'm just very envious of these very splendid, impressive buildings, and I'm sure that you must have very good facilities there. But fortunately, we were sitting together during a luncheon hosted by Governor Perdue, so we have discussed a lot already on the roles and contribution and importance of CDC and global health, which is one of my top priorities as Secretary-General. Therefore let me pretend that I have learned all. But I may, I think, have an opportunity of looking around you.

And anyway, dear colleagues, it's a privilege to be here and to see firsthand the wonderful work you do. I appreciate your commitment to this global health. I have long been aware of the importance of data about people's health. When I was young, I saw for myself the link between getting wealthier, being healthier and better nourished and having the opportunity for education and prosperity. During my time in government, I appreciated how information on life expectancy and disease incidence could reveal the challenges in different nations and help guide foreign policy. And I see now how the health lens enables us to assess the severity of crises and the extent of need. The CDC is an indispensable ally and part of the United Nations family, in particular, of the World Health Organization. Our collaboration helps us focus our efforts where they are needed most. It produces results in lives saved and it provides important lessons for the future about fostering synergies between the United Nations System and national institutions. There are so many areas where we have made progress together -- controlling malaria, reducing death from measles, eradicating polio and guinea worm, containing avian flu. I'm delighted to have with me today Dr. David Nabarro -- who was introduced by Dr. Gerberding -- the Senior UN System Coordinator for Avian and Human Influenza. I know he's a longstanding and trusted partner of the CDC. In fact, I have many other special advisors of the Secretary-General, at least four special advisors on HIV/AIDS and one special advisor on tuberculosis, and recently, I appointed or gained a special advisor on malaria. So I am well-equipped and assisted as far as my own efforts to eradicate all these diseases are concerned.

We all know that balancing health is critical to promoting economic and social development, as well as peace and security. And yet, human health and well-being continue to be challenged, especially among the poorest. As we stand at the middle point in the race to reach the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, we are nowhere near halfway to achieving most of the goals, including the critical ones on health. We must step up our efforts and we know that we face many challenges on health. They include the effects of food price increases, where, again, I have asked Dr. Nabarro to help coordinate UN efforts. Climate change, economic downturns, HIV/AIDS, and emerging diseases, such as multidrug-resistant TB. In fact, this climate change and food crisis have a very serious, profound impact on the health and well-being of human beings, persons. Those people, the very poorest of the poor, they have contributed least to this change of the situation, however, they are those who are most affected by this crisis. Therefore we must work together in a concerted effort to help them overcome their difficulties. That is why we will need the CDC even more on the road ahead.

We will need your continued engagement in training and reinforcing national public health systems around the world. We will need your support in dedicating particular attention to the special needs of Africa. We will need your expertise in tackling neglected tropical diseases which afflict one billion of the world's poorest people. Diseases which are largely treatable, but which continue to keep people mired in poverty. Together, we can keep making progress on

these and many other fronts. I'm grateful to every one of you for your strong commitment and devotions. I wish you courage in your vital work in the years ahead, and I thank you very much for this warm welcome. And let us work together for the common prosperity and common well-being of all human beings of the world. The United Nations stands ready to work very closely with you for realizing these goals. Thank you very much.

[Dr. Gerberding] We are inspired by your words and reminded of how important the work is that we have to do. And I have to say that, standing in the shadow of greatness, it struck me that, you know, the world's leader is here. So just as a small appreciation of your visit, we would like to present you with this gift. And while, ordinarily, we don't expect people to open gifts while they're here, I'm going to ask you if you would do us the favor.

[Secretary-General Ban] Thank you. Thank you very much.

[Dr. Gerberding] You're very welcome. If you would be so kind as to open it, we would like to tell you the story.

[Secretary-General Ban] Oh, a lens. I see.

[Dr. Gerberding] So, as I think -- as I think most of you know, this is a symbol of our disease detection capability at CDC, and the foundation of CDC in its role for infectious-disease detection and control. But you also made reference in your remarks to "the lens of health," and so you now have a true lens of health and I hope you -- Thank you very much.

[Secretary-General Ban] Thank you very much.

[Dr. Gerberding] Thank you very much for coming and I hope you are as inspired by this time together this afternoon as I am. Appreciate it. Thank you.

[Secretary-General Ban] Thank you very much. All the best to you. Thank you. Thank you.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.