

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

**THE SECRETARY GENERAL**

--

**REMARKS TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADVISORY GROUP  
ON INCLUSIVE FINANCIAL SECTORS**

**Doha, 29 November 2008**

Your Royal Highness Princess Maxima, [*of the Netherlands*]  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to accept these key messages and the final statement of the United Nations Advisors Group on Inclusive Financial Sectors. You have performed a great service to the United Nations and its Member States. You have fulfilled your mandate with distinction.

It is fitting that the handover is taking place at this international conference on financing for development. Your work reminds us that increasing financial flows to developing countries is only a first step. We must also address the exclusion of many poor people from the benefits of financial services within their countries. Such an effort takes on even greater importance amid fears that the global financial crisis will further constrain aid budgets and our work for development in general.

Many of us take for granted the benefits of financial services.

By contrast, most poor people have no bank accounts, insurance plans or facilities for loans and money transfers. Such services can bring ideas to life. They can help people manage risks and invest in their children's futures. They can play a crucial role in attaining the Millennium Development Goals.

Microfinance has been particularly successful in enabling poor communities to prosper. This shows that inclusive financial services are a good way of helping people to help themselves. So we should also be concerned about the possible impact of the current crisis on microfinance – from the ability of institutions to raise funds to the ability of borrowers to repay their weekly loan installments.

I am grateful to the UN Advisors for leading the way. Your key messages to governments, regulators, development partners and the private sector provide a tangible framework for action.

I encourage all who receive these messages to share them widely. We must carry the message to governments, banks, development agencies, and other stakeholders. I am

sure that many organizations and institutions would get involved if only they knew how. These messages provide clear direction.

We cannot continue denying more than two billion people the opportunity to reach their full potential. We must break down the entrenched barriers to access.

Thank you again for this contribution to the Doha review conference and to making the world a better place.