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Annan pleads for United Nations reform

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15 September, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Annan pleads for United Nations reform

BNE: United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan has made an impassioned plea to world leaders convening in New York for the 60th anniversary of the organization. He asked them to fully implement pressing reforms and to take bolder steps to fight poverty and bolster world security. "I urge you, as world leaders...to keep working on this reform agenda... to persevere and find the vision needed to forge a real consensus," he told the more than 170 leaders attending the three-day summit. Mr. Annan also voiced disappointment: "We have not yet achieved the sweeping and fundamental reform that I believe is required. Sharp differences, some of them substantive and legitimate, have played their part in preventing that."

Mr. Annan feels the biggest letdown has been the inability to find agreement over nuclear weapons. He bemoaned the failure of member states to address the nuclear threat, especially where rogue states have nuclear designs. He told the opening session: "Our biggest challenge, and our biggest failing, is on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Twice this year, at the NPT (Non Proliferation Treaty) review conference, and now at this summit, we have allowed posturing to get in the way of results." Mr. Annan continued: "This is inexcusable. Weapons of mass destruction pose a grave danger to us all, particularly in a world threatened by terrorists with global ambitions and no inhibitions." He further rued the fact that leaders could not agree on a definition of terrorism.

WARM-UPS

1. UNITED NATIONS: You have a new nationality. Choose your new country. Walk around the class and talk to other students, who also have new nationalities. Tell each other about your new country and the kind of lifestyle you have in that country.

2. UN REFORM: Look at the issues below currently being discussed at the three-day summit at the UN. In pairs / groups, discuss what you think member countries should agree on. Do you think the UN will ever succeed with these issues?

- a. World poverty
- b. Human rights
- c. Peace-keeping
- d. Genocide and ethnic cleansing
- e. Terrorism
- f. UN internal reform
- g. Nuclear non-proliferation / disarmament

3. UNITED NATIONS SEARCH: Speak to as many students as you can, collecting information about the United Nations. Join a partner / group and share your information. Make presentations to other groups. Vote on the best presentation.

4. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

United Nations / Kofi Annan / world leaders / New York / reforms / world security / poverty / nuclear weapons / disarmament / grave dangers / terrorists

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

5. KOFI ANNAN: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with Kofi Annan. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

6. OPINIONS: How far do you agree with these opinions on the United Nations? Talk about them with your partner(s).

- a. The world would be a poorer and more dangerous place without the UN.
- b. The UN cannot work effectively because the USA does not like it.
- c. Japan, Brazil and India should get a seat on the UN Security Council.
- d. The UN is achieving its aims of allowing countries to talk to each other.
- e. The UN has achieved its main aim of preventing another world war.
- f. It's impossible to get 190 countries to agree with each other.
- g. The UN is a good way for corrupt leaders to add millions to their bank accounts.
- h. The UN must have more power.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. Kofi Annan wants the UN to be revamped. T / F
- b. Kofi Annan wants member states to fully implement pressing reforms. T / F
- c. Mr. Annan wants to preserve people's vision and forage for consensus. T / F
- d. Non-substantive and illegitimate differences are blocking reform. T / F
- e. Mr. Annan is positive over efforts to curb nuclear proliferation. T / F
- f. The world has failed twice this year to agree on disarmament. T / F
- g. Mr. Annan said terrorists with no inhibitions threaten the world. T / F
- h. Member countries could not agree on a definition for terrorism. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| a. impassioned | real |
| b. convening | serious |
| c. bolster | create |
| d. forge | meeting |
| e. substantive | posing |
| f. letdown | complained |
| g. bemoaned | ardent |
| h. posturing | present |
| i. pose | disappointment |
| j. grave | strengthen |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. has made an impassioned | ambitions and no inhibitions |
| b. fully implement | to forge a real consensus |
| c. bolster | in the way of results |
| d. find the vision needed | inability to find agreement |
| e. sweeping and fundamental | have nuclear designs |
| f. the biggest letdown has been the | reform |
| g. rogue states | plea to world leaders |
| h. we have allowed posturing to get | a grave danger |
| i. weapons of mass destruction pose | pressing reforms |
| j. terrorists with global | world security |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Annan pleads for United Nations reform

BNE: United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan has made an impassioned _____ to world leaders _____ in New York for the 60th anniversary of the organization. He asked them to fully implement _____ reforms and to take bolder steps to fight poverty and _____ world security. "I urge you, as world leaders...to keep working on this reform agenda... to persevere and find the vision needed to _____ a real consensus," he told the more than 170 leaders attending the three-day summit. Mr. Annan also _____ disappointment: "We have not yet achieved the sweeping and fundamental reform that I believe is required. _____ differences, some of them substantive and legitimate, have played their _____ in preventing that."

Mr. Annan feels the biggest _____ has been the inability to find agreement over nuclear weapons. He bemoaned the _____ of member states to address the nuclear threat, especially where _____ states have nuclear designs. He told the opening session: "Our biggest challenge, and our biggest _____, is on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Twice this year, at the NPT (Non Proliferation Treaty) review conference, and now at this summit, we have allowed posturing to get in the _____ of results." Mr. Annan continued: "This is _____. Weapons of mass destruction pose a grave danger to us all, particularly in a world threatened by terrorists with global ambitions and no _____." He further _____ the fact that leaders could not agree on a definition of terrorism.

sharp
pressing
forge
plea
part
bolster
voiced
convening
rogue
inhibitions
failure
way
rued
letdown
failing
inexcusable

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**bold**' and '**step**'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "UNITED NATIONS" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about the United Nations.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| • impassioned | • letdown |
| • implement | • rogue |
| • bolster | • challenge |
| • forge | • posturing |
| • sweeping | • grave |
| • legitimate | • rued |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What were your initial thoughts on this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What do you think about the United Nations?
- d. What would the world be like without the United Nations?
- e. What problems does the UN have to deal with?
- f. Kind of reforms does the UN need?
- g. Is Kofi Annan an effective leader of the UN?
- h. Do you think working for the UN would be interesting?
- i. What successes has the UN had?
- j. What are the biggest obstacles facing the UN?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. What kind of influence does your country have in the UN?
- d. How difficult do you think it is for 190 countries to agree on issues of world importance?
- e. Do you think some countries have too much power in the UN?
- f. Do you think Japan, Brazil, Germany and India should become UN Security Council members?
- g. Do you think countries should be penalized for not complying with UN resolutions?
- h. Why do you think countries can't decide on a definition of terrorism?
- i. Should Kofi Anan "name and shame" countries that posture and "get in the way of results"?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

UNITED NATIONS: Imagine you are responsible for agreeing on the measures the UN must take at the three-day summit. Look at the areas below and recommend the actions that should be taken.

AREAS FOR ACTION	RECOMMENDATIONS
Development (Millennium Development goals) and eliminating poverty	
Human Rights	
Peace-building and peace-keeping	
Responsibility to prevent genocide and ethnic cleansing	
Terrorism	
UN management (internal) reform	
Nuclear non-proliferation / disarmament	

Change partners and show each other what you agreed. Give each other feedback on how to make the recommendations better.

Present your recommendations to other groups. Ask and answer questions.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

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HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on the United Nations. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. TERRORISM: Create a definition for the word "terrorism" as it applies in today's world. Show your definition to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all have similar ideas?

4. LETTER TO KOFI ANNAN: Write a letter to the UN Secretary General. Tell him what you think of him and his performance as head of the UN. Tell him your biggest concerns for the world. Read your letter to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar concerns?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. T c. F d. F e. F f. T g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| a. impassioned | ardent |
| b. convening | meeting |
| c. bolster | strengthen |
| d. forge | create |
| e. substantive | real |
| f. letdown | disappointment |
| g. bemoaned | complained |
| h. posturing | posing |
| i. pose | present |
| j. grave | serious |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. has made an impassioned | plea to world leaders |
| b. fully implement | pressing reforms |
| c. bolster | world security |
| d. find the vision needed | to forge a real consensus |
| e. sweeping and fundamental | reform |
| f. the biggest letdown has been the | inability to find agreement |
| g. rogue states | have nuclear designs |
| h. we have allowed posturing to get | in the way of results |
| i. weapons of mass destruction pose | a grave danger |
| j. terrorists with global | ambitions and no inhibitions |

GAP FILL:

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