

UN Secretary-General Visits Honduras on Anti-Violence Mission



Tegucigalpa, January 16 (NNN-UNNS) -- Delivering a “message of hope” on his first ever visit to Honduras, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged the National Congress to draw on the tremendous diversity and voices of all the country's people as they undertake measures to address poverty, inequality and insecurity and move towards sustainable development.

“I come to your country with a strong message of hope: I am with the people of Honduras,” Ban said as he delivered remarks in the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa, where he urged the Congress to “be a space to build consensus and effective responses.”

Two-thirds of Hondurans still live below the poverty line and only one-third of young people finish high school. The country is among the world's most vulnerable to natural disasters and the impacts of climate change. And opportunities for decent jobs remain few and far between, leading many to seek the path of migration, the Secretary-General said.

These obstacles to progress are causing many to “literally run for their lives”, said Ban, referring to the thousands of unaccompanied minors making a perilous journey to the United States, often exposed to

abuse and exploitation.

He urged the Government to fulfil its political responsibilities by boosting regional integration, tackling poverty and inequality and citizen insecurity, and by strengthening human rights.

On the issue of safeguarding human rights, Ban said he looked forward to the establishment of the first-ever UN office on human rights in Honduras in the coming months and underscored how the Human Rights Up Front initiative can be helpful in addressing issues as it aims to ensure the Organization acts earlier to address human rights concerns.

Earlier in the day, the Secretary-General was awarded the Gran Cruz Extraordinaria con Placa de Oro which he accepted “humility and gratitude” for the UN's work to build a better world.

Also Ban met with Juan Orlando Hernández, the president of Honduras. They discussed the country's social and economic issues, particularly the Government's “Plan por una vida mejor para todos” (Plan for a better life for all) and its links with the multilateral discussions on the post-2015 development agenda. They also discussed the importance of focusing on financing for both the development and climate change agendas.

According to Ban's spokesperson, the two leaders also addressed concerns regarding Honduras' security and human rights situation. The Secretary-General welcomed the Government's willingness to strengthen its relations with the United Nations through the opening of a local presence of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

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