

**Anna Lindh Lecture at Lund University (Sweden) on 2 October 2008**  
**Delivered by Dr Kofi A. Annan\***

*A few words of thanks by Ambassador Hans Corell*

Dr Annan,  
Mrs. Annan,  
Governor Thunhammar,  
Former Archbishop Hammar – Your Grace,  
Former Minister for Foreign Affairs Jan Eliasson, Chairman of the Board of Trustees  
of the Anna Lindh Foundation,  
Former Minister of Finance Allan Larsson, Chairman of the Board of Lund  
University,  
Vice-Chancellor Bexell,  
Ambassador Ehrenkrona,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Fellow students!

Allow me in my capacity as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law to express on behalf of all of us our deepest thanks to former Secretary-General of the United Nations Kofi Annan for finding time to visit us here in Lund and to deliver this year's Anna Lindh Lecture.

Dr Annan, we both remember the tragic death of Anna Lindh. I represented you and brought a message from you to the commemoration ceremony at the Stockholm City Hall. In particular, we remember that two days after this horrible event, you had a meeting with the Foreign Ministers of the five permanent members of the Security Council at Geneva to discuss the future of Iraq, a country then occupied by two of those permanent members.

Before we commenced our work at the meeting, you softly asked us all to rise and observe a moment of silence to honour Anna Lindh's memory. U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell looked up from his briefcase, nodded slowly and rose. So did Li Zhaoxing of China, Jack Straw of Great Britain, Dominique de Villepin of France and Igor Ivanov of the Russian Federation. We all rose and stood in silence.

Dr Annan, knowing you, I cannot think of a better way of thanking you than by turning to the students present in the auditorium this evening.

Students, one day your stint at the university will be over. But your thoughts will often wander back to your days at your Alma Mater – no doubt with love and gratitude. On these occasions you will experience that one constantly recalls moments that one holds in very special memory. No doubt, this evening will be such a moment – an event that you will never forget.

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\* Dr Annan's lecture is available at the website of the Raoul Wallenberg Institute <http://www.rwi.se> .

Let me share with you what happened at my level in the UN Secretariat when Kofi Annan was elected Secretary-General in December 1996. Kofi was one of us on Boutros Boutros-Ghali's team – one among Jean-Claude, Chinmaya, Ismat, Mick, Joseph, Nitin, Yasushi – and Hans for that matter. But the moment the result from the election reached us, all of us – 70-year-old Ismat Kittani, former President of the General Assembly, took the lead – adopted a new nomenclature: no longer “Kofi” but “Mr Secretary-General”.

This was not an expression of flatter or some artificial courtesy. On the contrary, it was to demonstrate the difference between the relatively anonymous role of an Under-Secretary-General and the role of the person who holds the most difficult job in the world – to cite the famous quote from Trygve Lie.

It was to make clear that, even if we were the same friends, we understood that for obvious reasons the relationship between us was now different. It was to serve as a constant reminder that we must not falter and that we must be clear and precise in our communications and, in particular, our advice.

Kofi Annan started out by reforming the UN Secretariat and took many initiatives that truly changed the course of the Organisation. The Senior Management Group was established to better coordinate the work of the Secretariat. The role of business and the civil society was emphasised. The Global Compact was born, as were the Millennium Development Goals and responsibility to protect. The importance of human rights and the rule of law were brought to the forefront. Time does not allow for a general overview of these initiatives on this occasion. But there is no doubt that the UN was re-energised during Kofi Annan's tenure.

But now you ask: was there not also criticism against Kofi Annan? Yes there was! And surely, no human being is above criticism. But I belong to those who firmly believe that most of this criticism will fall back on the critics themselves. You students will be around when the history books will be written with some perspective on the events.

Let me just explain that the Secretary-General of the United Nations who from time to time does not have an argument with the major powers simply does not do his job. It deserves to be recalled in this context that Dag Hammarskjöld was also criticised by almost all permanent members of the Security Council. If there is no resistance, the major powers will simply continue on a course that they have taken even if that course, seen in a United Nations Charter perspective, may be ill advised.

Even if the leaders of such powers may not realise it, they are sometimes best served if there is someone with the moral authority that comes with this unique position – the Secretary-General of the United Nations – who can put his foot down in a diplomatic manner and say that this is far enough.

And people around the world do not accept that the Secretary-General is only a “chief administrative officer” as said in Article 97 of the UN Charter. They view the Secretary-General as a man of peace and someone who can make a difference. This, I believe, is also what Kofi Annan realised and what became his lodestar.

The topic “Establishing a culture of prevention” is very important. You have heard it addressed by someone who has been and is better placed than most to speak about it.

In his presentation Kofi Annan made several references to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Let me add that this important instrument, although adopted as a declaration by the General Assembly, today applies to all states with the force of customary international law.

With respect to human rights, he pointed to the fact that norms are now developed and that it is the implementation that remains. This is true also for international criminal law. There must be an end to impunity! The International Criminal Court must be supported. In particular, the Security Council must support the Court when it is engaged in activities based on the Council’s own resolutions, as is presently the case with respect to the Sudan.

Kofi Annan described the attack on Iraq in 2003 as a setback. No doubt the price is being paid today for this action without proper authorisation by the UN Security Council. Personally, I am convinced that the recent event in Georgia has its roots in what happened back in March 2003. As Kofi Annan, I believe that it will take a very long time to repair this damage to the international legal system. There must be an end to the double standards!

Let me close this ceremony in memory of Anna Lindh by reciting a very special moment that I experienced with Kofi Annan during his mission in Kenya earlier this year. As he mentioned, he assisted the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation in his capacity as Head of the Panel of Eminent African Personalities, established by the African Union.

After the December elections last year, Kenya was on the brink of civil war before the Panel entered into action. Those of us with UN experience immediately viewed the situation in Kenya against the backdrop of what happened in Rwanda in 1994 – the genocide! Things could have gone very, very wrong in Kenya.

In February 2008, Kofi Annan asked me to assist him by chairing a Working Group on Governance consisting of the Minister of Justice and three other high officials, representing the two parties to the dispute. It turned out that the plenary meetings between the parties always started by someone saying a prayer. On 19 February, Kofi Annan, having asked for the necessary technical arrangements, rose and said:

As in the past, we should commence our meeting with a prayer. I believe it falls to me to say the prayer this morning. I will do so by playing a hymn, composed by Hans Corell, who joined my team here in Nairobi last week. When he left the UN in March 2004, he presented me with this hymn as a farewell gift, explaining its title – “Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s Prayer for Peace” – with these words:

“At one point, Mr. Secretary-General, when we were engaged in a difficult and politically perilous task, you said to me: It often helps to pray! I recalled that moment some time ago and thought: maybe I

should give the Secretary-General a prayer! And so, I have written a prayer.

But this prayer has no words. It is a piece of music that hopefully can be understood by all. And those who listen would be free to add in their minds in any language words of their own. I know that the composition is a very humble contribution to music. But so should a prayer be humble.”

**[Here the music – available at <http://www.havc.se> – is tuned in for a few moments and is then slowly tuned out.]**

When the music faded out, Kofi Annan continued:

We read from the National Anthem of Kenya:

Natujenge taifa letu  
Ee, ndio wajibu wetu  
Kenya istahili heshima  
Tuungane mikono

Let all with one accord  
In common bond united  
Build this our nation together  
And the glory of Kenya

Lord, may you make the parties to this Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation realise the seriousness of the situation and see that they have an obligation to find, in the interest of all people of Kenya, this one accord. And may you lead them that they may unite in a common bond not only to build their nation together but now also to bring their nation together. Amen

To the students I would like to say that through his effort in Kenya, and in so many other endeavours during his time in the service of the United Nations, Kofi Annan has demonstrated something that is called statesmanship. That is a rare quality. But it is something that the leaders of the nations of the world simply must demonstrate if international peace and security is to be maintained in the world in the future – your world!

Dr Annan, dear Kofi, our deepest thanks for your frank, insightful and thoughtful presentation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This brings us to the close of this ceremony in memory of Anna Lindh.

Quod bonum, felix faustumque sit! Dixi!