



**Kyung Hee University - Peace BAR Festival 2008**  
**Statement by Ms. Hayan Qian, Acting Director**  
**Division for Public Administration and eGovernance**  
**United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs**  
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Thank you, Rector Kim,

Distinguished President Choue,

Distinguished Guests and Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to represent the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) at this important gathering. The theme of this special event on “***Future Civilization, Future Universities: A New Horizon for Knowledge and Praxis***”, connecting theory and practice, is at the heart of United Nations’ work.

From the perspective of UNDESA, our main development purpose is to address the current global challenges of poverty, education, health, gender equality, environmental sustainability, governance, e-governance and other internationally agreed development goals, together with governments, business community and civil society.

The United Nations as a value-driven institution subscribes to the principles of tolerance and equal opportunities for all. As an impartial institution, we have been asked by its Member States to promote connections between knowledge management, development goals and the global improvement of people’s living conditions.

We live in a world populated by stark contrast and inequality. Eight years ago, Heads of State signed a historical Millennium Declaration outlining a global blueprint for development including goals, timeframe and indicators.

Looking at the horizon of our civilization, I am pleased to convey some good news recently discussed at the UN General Assembly by more than 100 Heads of State. Some 400 million fewer people live in

absolute poverty today than in 1990. At least 90 percent of boys and girls in all but two regions of the world are enrolled in school. Deaths from measles fell from 750,000 in 2000 to less than 250,000 in 2006, and 80 percent of children in developing countries are now vaccinated against the disease. Our global malaria effort has brought us within range of containing a disease that used to kill a child every 30 seconds. Since 1990, some 1.6 billion more people can now get safe drinking water. In the past 50 years the world has done more to promote development than in the previous 500 years.

On the other hand, the current global economic turbulences and financial crisis threaten to push millions back into poverty. At the half-way point for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, 1.4 billion people still live in poverty, one sixth of humankind still lives in slums, therefore, the new challenges threaten the achievement of internationally agreed development goals.

Governments acknowledge that they can not act alone. As stated by UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki Moon, ***“To effectively tackle the full range of challenges coming our way, we need to all work together - Member States, the UN system, civil society, the private sector, and other stakeholders.”***

Indeed, I see two key words which summarize the way of the future: **partnerships** and **knowledge**. Partnerships need to be built on effective, transparent, accountable and participatory governance, and knowledge built on the connections between information and experience.

By the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, humanity has learned how to mass-produce knowledge through information and communication technology. Yet the reach of such technology and national capacity in responding to the challenges derived from in the information age are not universal, and its benefits have not been shared equally. We need to build partnerships among all stakeholders to learn new ways and means for creating and managing knowledge so as to balance the potential benefits of our societies.

Effective knowledge management in the information age that we all live in today and tomorrow is the foundation to address these challenges. That is to say, the knowledge provided has to be 24/7 and easily accessible to all, relevant and useful to citizens, localized to communities and customized to individuals. Whilst technology is increasingly improving, evidence suggests that success or failure is less a technological issue and more a people issue - in particular, the ability to change public service cultures and motivate public sector workers to new ways of working, provide adequately skilled and competent management and leadership and have the capacity to engage civil society in development objectives.

Knowledge is the most direct bridge to improve reality. University is the cradle for creation and management of knowledge. This is why the partnership between UNDESA and Kyung Hee University in

the development of the **World Civic Forum** becomes so important. Under the theme “**building just societies**”, we will gather governments, private sector, institutions of higher learning and civil society organizations to discuss civic values, civic engagement and civic action.

In order to build just societies, government and civil society must cooperate in developing and implementing strategies and institutional options to link social capital to development support. The relationships between state and civil society are being globally and locally re-defined. New modalities for policy making and implementation, new leadership models and innovative methodologies for engaging people in development processes are emerging everywhere.

The ability of the citizens, governments, businesses, non-governmental and non-profit organizations and other civic entities to work together for the common good and to build just societies requires both a strong commitment and concerted actions. The World Civic Forum offers a unique opportunity to take stock of progress in this field and map the way forward. I can assure you that we will spare no efforts to do our part and fulfill our commitments to this noble cause. The **United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN)**, which has become a unique one-stop-shop for knowledge creation and sharing through global partnership, will also provide its online service to this event.

In conclusion, the UNDESA would like to highlight the positive prospects for the road immediately ahead of us and congratulate Kyung Hee University once again for the Peace BAR Festival and the World Civic Forum initiatives, which we look forward to contributing together with all of you.

Thanks you.