

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

**MESSAGE TO THE INAUGURATION OF A
CHILDREN'S MEETING PLACE
AT THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE IN NAIROBI
Nairobi, 19 September 2001**

It gives me great pleasure to join you in celebrating the inauguration of a Children's Meeting Place at the United Nations Office in Nairobi.

The planting of a tree carries great symbolism: of life, family, fortitude and roots. In African village life, a tree can also have great spiritual meaning, and serve as a place where people gather to discuss issues of common concern. This tree on the grounds of the United Nations is now a place where you and your contemporaries can voice your dreams, concerns and suggestions for the future.

As you celebrate the inauguration of this meeting place in music, poems, and stories with your peers from Africa and Europe, you have a unique opportunity to learn from each other's experiences, to overcome your differences, and to unite in the noble effort of building a better planet for all humankind.

And as your generation grows up and assumes positions of responsibility and leadership, you will have an opportunity to act on the pledges of unity and peace you make today. The United Nations eagerly looks forward to what you, my dear young ambassadors, will do to make your difference in this world! In that spirit, please accept my best wishes for a successful and memorable gathering.

Kofi A. Annan