

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

--

MESSAGE TO ORT ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 130TH ANNIVERSARY
New York, 19 November 2009

It is a pleasure to send greetings to everyone who has gathered at the United Nations to celebrate ORT's 130th anniversary.

ORT is a valued partner in global efforts to achieve education for all. Education at every age plays an empowering and essential role in reducing poverty, building sustainable livelihoods and promoting stability. Quite apart from being a Millennium Development Goal in and of itself, education is also a catalyst for progress towards other goals, such as public health and gender equality. Yet 75 million children around the world have no access to education. Millions more in poor communities receive only very basic schooling. The impact of the global economic and financial crisis is exacerbating the problem.

I welcome ORT's efforts to reach out to vulnerable people in more than 100 countries who have been denied education because of poverty and social exclusion. I am also heartened to know of ORT's recent work in Namibia, in partnership with the United Nations Development Program, in which more than 12,000 vulnerable young people, unemployed youth and caregivers received valuable skills training that has helped them help not only themselves, but also the many thousands more who are dependent on them.

We are living through an age of multiple crises: the financial meltdown, the growing flu pandemic, the threat of catastrophic climate change, the hunger that now sends more than one billion people – an unprecedented number – to bed hungry. That is why more and more people are looking to the United Nations. We have more peacekeepers in the field, more human rights offices, more humanitarian relief efforts — more of just about everything we do.

People want results. To deliver, we must be united in purpose and united in action. We must work with all partners – including organizations such as ORT, which has done so much over so many decades to improve people's prospects and well-being. Thank you for your contributions and please accept my best wishes on the occasion of your anniversary.