



## **Gabon / United Nations Secretary-General Remarks to civil society representatives**

LIBREVILLE, Gabon, July 2, 2010/African Press Organization (APO)/ — Secretary-General Remarks to civil society representatives  
Libreville, 1 July 2010

Representatives of civil society,  
Distinguished guests,

Good afternoon. I am very happy to be with you today.

Thank you for coming to meet me. I will be brief to leave maximum time for discussion. I want to hear from you.

Gabon is preparing to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary of independence.

The country has much to be proud of. You have a firm platform to build on as you look to the future.

Since independence, Gabon has witnessed neither conflict nor ethnic strife. Your country is widely recognized for its commitment to peace and dialogue.

It is 20 years since Gabon successfully moved to multi-party democracy. Gabon is now consolidating its democratic experience.

Last year's peaceful transition, and this month's legislative elections, are testament to the maturity of your democratic process.

Civil society is integral to preserving these important advances.

You can help create and maintain an environment conducive to good governance, development and respect for human rights.

You can help to ensure the electoral process is inclusive, credible and transparent.

As you know, I have made three trips to Africa in the past six weeks.

I have visited Malawi, Uganda, Burundi, Cameroon, South Africa, Benin, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo yesterday.

I wanted to see for myself how Africa is making progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and to hear of the challenges that remain.

Wherever I go I meet with civil society representatives. Your insights are invaluable.

Your values are our values: empowering women ... education and opportunities for the young ... good governance ... fighting corruption ... reinforcing the rule of law and democratic processes ... harmony among communities ... protecting the environment.

You are our essential partner as we work with governments for peace, human rights and sustainable development.

I encourage you always to lead by example.

Implement sound governance and democratic practices among your own organizations. Ensure inclusiveness with respect to ethnicity and gender.

And I call on you to take the lead on the Millennium Development Goals.

Gabon is helping to show the world that the Goals are within reach, but much more needs to be achieved.

As representatives of civil society, you are central to making it happen.

The United Nations will stand with you. Our Country Team will work by your side.

I would now like to hear about your hopes and concerns for Gabon.

Thank you.

**SOURCE**

United Nations – Office of the Spokesperson of the Secretary-General