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United Nations

Secretary-General

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MORE WORK NEEDED TO BUILD INCLUSIVE, ACCESSIBLE SOCIETIES,
SECRETARY-GENERAL

SAYS, WELCOMING HIGH-LEVEL SPECIAL EVENT ON AUTISM, DISABILITIES

Following are UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's message to the High-Level Event on Autism and Disabilities, as delivered by Assistant-Secretary-General for Economic Development, Shamshad Akhtar, in New York, on 19 November:

I am pleased to convey my greetings to all those gathered for this High-Level Event on Autism and Disabilities. I thank the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh for organizing this important meeting.

You have come together to help the United Nations continue its vital work to build inclusive and accessible societies. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is fundamental to meeting our common goal. Efforts to implement the Convention should ensure adequate support and equal opportunities to enable individuals with autism spectrum disorder to achieve their full potential.

In recent years, a coalition of actors — including the World Health Organization, other United Nations entities and civil society organizations — have highlighted the importance of ensuring that the needs of persons with autism are addressed in health, education and other systems such as those responding to disasters and humanitarian crises.

Yet, there is much work ahead. What is understood in principle is not always carried out in practice. The talents and needs of children, adolescents and adults with autism and their families must be recognized by providing them with early intervention therapies and adequate education to facilitate their participation in our communities and enhance their employment opportunities.

Let us work together to give due consideration to mental health, including autism and other developmental disorders, as we prepare for the High-Level Meeting on Disability and Development in 2013, and as we engage in discussions related to the post-2015 development agenda.

I look forward to continuing our progress to achieve our goal of an inclusive society founded on human rights and development for all.

Thank you for your commitment. I wish you a successful meeting.

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