

Ex-UN chief gets UKM doctorate

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UNIVERSITI Kebangsaan Malaysia conferred a honorary doctorate (Global Peace and Sustainable Development) on former United Nations (UN) secretary-general Ban Ki-moon.

A ceremony was held yesterday at Dewan Canselor Tun Abdul Razak for the conferment of the award by UKM chancellor, Yang Dipertuan Besar of Negeri Sembilan Tuanku Muhriz Almarhum Tuanku Munawir.

Present were Tuanku Muhriz's consort, Tunku Ampuan Besar Negeri Sembilan Tuanku Aishah Rohani Tengku Besar Mahmud, Tunku Besar Seri Menanti Tunku Ali Redhaudin Tuanku Muhriz, UKM Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Mohd Hamdi Abd Shukur and Ban's wife, You

Soon-taek.

In an inaugural lecture, Ban said he humbly accepted the honorary doctorate from UKM's Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, and the recognition motivated him to continue using his voice to help galvanise others in ensuring a future where no one is left behind.

"We need a generation of thinkers who can tackle global challenges. We also need doers who will step forward to take action," he said.

"As UN secretary-general, I strove to execute my leadership duties by leveraging the power of partnerships and promoting the spirit of global citizenship.

Ban said it was vital to bring the entire world together to agree to the UN's 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as the Paris Climate Agreement.

He said the SDGs, which were adopted by 193 countries in New

York in 2015, offered us a way forward on current issues like eradicating poverty, providing quality education, reducing inequality, addressing climate change, public health and gender equality, among others.

"We need to move forward with a renewed sense of urgency before 2030.

Conflicts around the world and the deepening climate crisis are leading to troubling reversals in SDGs implementation on the ground."

He said to achieve the SDGs by 2030, we need an "all hands on the deck" approach and a strong tripartite partnership of the government, business community and civil society, including academia.

"I believe that SDG 4 on Quality Education holds the key to doing so, as it is a cross-cutting enabler of the other 16 SDGs," he said.

"Meanwhile, the Paris Agree-



UKM Chancellor Tuanku Muhriz Almarhum Tuanku Munawir looking on as former United Nations secretary-general Ban Ki-moon dons a robe and mortar board at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia in Bangi yesterday. (SARAH RAHIM/ST)

ment offers us a clear game plan to confront serious threats to our planet, as it sets viable targets to impede rising temperatures, construct greenhouse gas emissions, and spur climate-resilient development and green growth.

"Nobody, however powerful or resourceful, can address this climate change issue alone," he said.

In this regard, Ban said he was disappointed at the United States government's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, as the move by President Donald Trump was short-sighted, economically irresponsible, and scientifically wrong.

"I hope that the US will come back

and return to our joint effort to address climate change.

"Nature does not wait for us or negotiate with human beings."

To address issues surrounding the climate crisis, he urged the public to be aware of consumption patterns and carbon footprint.

"Learn more about supply chains and buy sustainable products, recycle, compost, and avoid single-use plastic as well as take a sustainability pledge.

"Let us work together to ensure the world is more sustainable, prosperous and more peaceful so that the future generation can leave in peace and harmony."