

**Kofi Annan remarks: Award Ceremony – Reinhard Mohn Prize 2013,  
Gütersloh Theater, 7 November 2013**

1. Thank you for those kind words and that warm welcome.
2. Liz, PM Juncker, [VIPs], Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I am deeply honoured to receive the 2013 Reinhard Mohn Prize.
3. I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the Bertelsmann Foundation for this recognition.
4. What makes this award all the more special is the knowledge that it was established in memory of one of Europe's most remarkable business figures.
5. Through his leadership and determination, Reinhard Mohn built a family firm into a truly world-class enterprise.
6. But his contribution to Germany's development and wider public life went far beyond the extraordinary growth of the company he led.
7. He developed, for example, a model for partnership and dialogue at Bertelsmann, which has been a vital ingredient in German economic success.
8. He also believed strongly that wealth brought wider responsibilities.
9. As we look around the world, it is very clear that we need to rediscover the same values and vision and find the courage to ensure they guide our decisions.
10. This is particularly the case today as we face the challenge of delivering prosperity and progress for all, and in a way that future generations will inherit a healthy planet.
11. Ladies and gentlemen, this is an ambition we are sadly failing to meet.
12. We may be more prosperous but inequality is growing both within and between countries.
13. Current production and consumption patterns are putting tremendous pressure on limited resources and our planet – pressure which will only grow thanks to rising populations and consumer expectations.
14. There is increased stress on both fresh-water resources and land. Forests are being destroyed and our seas and lakes are over-fished.
15. Looming above all these challenges, and exacerbating them, is the threat of climate change.

16. It is a threat whose scale and seriousness has been confirmed in the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the IPCC.
17. Their findings show that human activity is the dominant cause of global warming. This has led to unprecedented changes in our climate system not witnessed for centuries and perhaps thousands of years before.
18. The IPCC has warned that only substantial and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions will prevent further warming and changes in our climate.
19. They are right to ring the alarm bells so loudly. Climate change is not just an environmental challenge.
20. It is an all-encompassing threat to health and security, to stability and prosperity, and to our global food supply system – and it is happening now.
21. Increasing temperatures and changes to rainfall patterns are already reducing harvests and water supplies, and increasing food and nutrition insecurity.
22. We must get used to the storms which hit Europe in the last few days and the floods which caused such destruction in Germany and its neighbours earlier this year.
23. The experts warn that extreme weather events will become more common.
24. All this will only add to instability and conflict, heightening competition for resources, increasing tensions and migrations, especially in fragile states or volatile regions.
25. Climate change is already having major economic impacts, with a recent study putting the sum as high as \$1.2 trillion a year, equivalent to 1.6 per cent of global GDP.
26. No nation, rich or poor, will escape these impacts. But as always it is the poorest and most vulnerable who will suffer the most.
27. Ladies and gentlemen, we are close to a tipping point after which the effects of climate change may be irreversible.
28. It is heartening to see that some governments and the private sector are moving to tackle climate change.
29. But as the IPCC report reminds us, we need greater speed and scale of action in order to stay within the 2 degree Celsius maximum temperature rise that has been agreed.
30. I urge everyone, governments, corporations and civil society, to redouble their efforts.
31. We risk failing future generations unless we radically transform our economies and societies to make them more sustainable.

32. So how do we bring about this shift? Let me set out three priorities.
33. First, we must expose the false choice between prosperity and sustainability.
34. Germany has shown by pursuing a green economy based on clean and renewable energy that these aims can go hand-in-hand.
35. Achieving this requires governments to set the right incentives and establish a stable policy framework to enable growth that is inclusive and which has a lower carbon footprint.
36. Businesses, including SMEs, have to invest in resource-efficient production and green technologies, creating decent jobs particularly for our young people.
37. Civil society organisations, philanthropic institutions, and the science and academic communities must continue to raise awareness, drive action, and invest in research and innovation to accelerate the shift to sustainability.
38. And each of us, as consumers and tax payers, can play an important role by making responsible choices.
39. Secondly, it is essential for governments to raise their sights and put aside narrow national interests. This has to begin at the UN Climate Change Conference in Warsaw next week.
40. The Green Climate Fund must move into its operational phase with developed countries delivering on their commitments to mobilise \$100 billion a year by 2020 to help developing countries.
41. We can and must provide equitable access to sustainable development, particularly for those developing countries that are poised for their greatest growth. They have to be supported financially and technically to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
42. Governments must also make real progress towards an ambitious, universal, and legally binding climate agreement to be adopted in 2015.
43. Third, we must put sustainable development goals at the heart of the post-2015 global development framework.
44. The success of the MDGs in focusing attention and efforts on seemingly intractable problems shows what can be achieved with political will.
45. The challenge now is to ensure economic development eradicates poverty, while reducing inequality and promoting environmental sustainability.
46. In doing so, we should prioritize access to renewable energy, clean water and sanitation, food and nutrition security, and the empowerment of women and youth.

47. Ladies and gentlemen, the IPCC report is a strong reminder of our failure so far to tackle climate change with the urgency it demands.
48. Despite the scale of the challenge, I remain an optimist that the leadership, vision and courage can be found even at this late stage.
49. My experience has taught me just how much can be accomplished when the energy and talents of many different stakeholders are mobilized to realize shared goals.
50. I am confident that Germany, with its European partners, will continue to set an example on a sustainable development path that other countries can follow.
51. I am also aware that Reinhard Mohn strongly believed that each of us had a responsibility to do what we can to make a positive difference.
52. In accepting this Prize, I can promise to follow his lead.
53. The Prize will help me to continue the work of my Foundation to promote better global governance and to achieve a fairer, more secure and sustainable world.
54. This includes efforts to prevent and resolve conflict, to promote effective action on sustainable development, and respect for the rule of law and human rights.
55. Through the *Kofi Annan Dialogues*, I am encouraging a new generation of young global leaders to find solutions and innovative approaches to sustainable development.
56. I am truly honoured to receive this award. Thank you very much.