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Secretary-General calls on newly launched **Commission on Private Sector and Development** to foster Millennium Development Goals

BODY:

Following are the opening remarks by Secretary-General Kofi Annan, as he launched the **Commission on the Private Sector and Development** today at United Nations Headquarters:

I am delighted to take part in this launch of the **Commission on the Private Sector and Development**, and to do so together with my colleagues and friends, Ernesto Zedillo, Paul Martin and Mark Malloch Brown.

The fact that President Zedillo and Mr. Martin are here and are prepared to serve as the **Commission's** distinguished Co-Chairs speaks for the importance of its work.

President Zedillo brings to the **Commission** invaluable leadership and expertise. As you know, he served as the Chair of the High-level Panel on Financing for Development in preparation for the Monterrey Conference last year. He is currently leading the United Nations Millennium Project's research effort on trade and financial issues.

We are equally fortunate to benefit from the experience of Paul Martin, the former Finance Minister of Canada. His global vision and commitment to development, as well as his successful track record as a businessman, will greatly enrich the work of the **Commission**. He also comes, if I may say so, from a "UN family". His father signed the United Nations Charter for Canada.

The birth of this **Commission** is yet another illustration of the rapidly growing partnership between the United Nations and the **private sector**.

It also underscores the importance of that partnership in our work to reach the Millennium Development Goals - a blueprint for building a better world in the twenty-first century.

Ranging from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education - all by the target date of 2015 - the Millennium Development Goals represent a set of simple but powerful objectives that every man or woman in the street, from New York to Nairobi to New Delhi, can easily understand and support.

We cannot reach these goals without support from the **private sector**.

Most of all, we cannot reach them without a strong **private sector** in the developing countries themselves, to create jobs and build prosperity.

I very much hope that this **Commission** will provide both a fresh analysis of these issues and practical proposals that can have an impact on the ground.

There are many promising examples of this happening already, including through the Global Compact - the United Nations corporate citizenship initiative bringing together companies,

governments, United Nations agencies, labour and civil society, with the common purpose of fostering action in support of universal values.

The United Nations Development Programme has taken the Global Compact to the local level in many countries around the world, inspiring dialogue, learning and projects. Several concrete initiatives are already taking shape.

It has also launched strategic project partnerships and ambitious initiatives such as "Growing Sustainable Business in the Least Developed Countries".

I hope that the **Commission** will build on these and other successful approaches, identifying how successful ones can be scaled up, and how business in partnership with other actors can bring about positive change.

There is much to be done, and it is of crucial importance that we move forward. A large part of the work for development, after all, is about preparing the ground for sufficient **private sector** activity to provide jobs and income needed to build a more equitable and prosperous society. I very much hope that this **Commission** will make a difference in that mission.

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◀ [prev](#) Document 6 of 555 [next](#) ▶