

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**REMARKS TO INTRODUCE HIS HOLINESS
POPE BENEDICT XVI
TO THE STAFF
OF THE UNITED NATIONS
New York, 18 April 2008**

Your Holiness,
Dear Colleagues,

This is a big day for the United Nations and for all our staff -- regardless of what church we may belong to.

Dear colleagues, I share your excitement at welcoming His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI to our house. I am deeply grateful to His Holiness for accepting my invitation to visit the United Nations -- one year exactly after I was graciously given an audience with him at the Vatican, 1 April 2007 in Rome.

Dear Colleagues, as staff of the United Nations, we are called to work together in the service of humankind -- for peace, for development, for justice.

In this, we are of one purpose, even though our religions and our cultures may be different.

Your Holiness [SG turns to Pope sitting in chair], we share this purpose with you. That is why I am so proud to introduce you to my colleagues today. As you can see, they are most eager to give you a warm welcome.

The staff of the United Nations work long hours and put enormous dedication into what they do. Their efforts span the world. They are driven by their own brand of faith, but one which unites them with one another -- and with you, Your Holiness

Allow me to say a special word about those who could not be with us today -- those who are on mission and assignments far from Headquarters. From Darfur to Haiti and Afghanistan, many of them work in difficult and even dangerous places. Some have even lost their lives in the line of duty.

Your Holiness, all our staff, wherever they may serve, had an overriding mission in common with you -- the mission to build peace in every sense of the word. We are honoured and grateful to count you as our partner and our ally. And we are blessed to have you with us today to lift our spirits and our faith. In our job, we certainly need it.

Your Holiness, I invite you to address the women and men of the United Nations.

Thank you very much.