



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

MESSAGE TO STATE OF THE WORLD / ROOTS OF PEACE EVENT

San Francisco, 1 October 1999

Your Majesty Queen Noor,
Friends,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to greet all the participants in this year's State of the World Forum. I am particularly gratified by your focus, this year, on our common struggle against land-mines. The role of Roots of Peace, and the active participation of so many Napa Valley winners in this noble effort, is a testament to your commitment to making our one earth a place of life and nourishment, and not one of death and destruction.

The battle to rid our world of mines has to a great extent been led by civil society and courageous individuals who have showed governments the way forward. This efforts led to the Ottawa treaty, which must begin the reversal of the tide of random violence and destruction that begins when a mine is planted and ends only when it is removed.

We must now turn our energies and our imaginations to the cause of mine-clearance, so that this victory today does not become a hollow one. We must ensure that the technology and resources needed to rid the world of mines are finally and lastingly made available. That includes providing countries unable to afford the cost of destroying their stockpiles with the means to do so.

With even greater persistence, we must work toward the removal of the millions of mines that plague post-conflict societies, from Bosnia to Angola to Cambodia. Each mine cleared may mean a life saved. Each mine cleared brings us one step closer to building the conditions for lasting and productive peace. The presence -- or even the fear of the presence -- of just one land-mine can prevent the cultivation of an entire field, robbing a family of its livelihood and an entire village and community of its sustenance.

As winners, community leaders and committed citizens of the world, you have a special appreciation for the noble struggle to make our soil safe for future generations. I wish you a very successful evening, and convey my best wishes for your future success.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'K. Annan', written in a cursive style.

Kofi A. Annan