



Open Letter to Kofi Annan

from FWCC

March 17, 2003

The United Nations is facing at present many challenges to its role as the organ through which peoples and nations may work together to promote peace and a full life for all. Friends World Committee for Consultation has sought to co-operate with the UN from its earliest days, through its position as an NGO now in general consultative status with ECOSOC, guided by the continuing commitment of Quakers to peace and to the Divinely-inspired value of every human and of the living world.

We wish to assure you now of our continuing encouragement to the United Nations to continue its multi-faceted work.

The Security Council is currently the focus of much conflict as to how international law and the maintenance of order can retain its vigour in the face of the unilateral exercise of force by powerful nations, and by smaller nations and terrorist groups seeking to exert their own influence by arms and violence. Possibly the outcome of the current debates concerning action in relation to Iraq will be seen by many as a failure of the UN's authority.

If so, it does not diminish the historic and current contribution of the UN to peacekeeping and peace building in many other contexts, nor its overall service to the world.

The majority of our membership live in regions where the potential armed attacks by the USA and its allies on Iraq are not of immediate vital importance. Their daily priorities are safe water, food and shelter security, basic health care, economic survival, education, a healthy environment and all the needs summed up by development. Along with these go the need for good government, the fair implementation of justice, the right for all to play their part as citizens, and freedom from the fear of violence and oppression. The different agencies and offices of the UN serve all these priorities.

We pray that you and all who work for and support the UN will be strong and of good courage, and continue in the spirit in which the organisation was founded.