



The United Nations presents

PLANET UN

The United Nations Confronting the Challenges of the 21st Century

A documentary by Romuald Sciora





Romuald Sciora was born in 1970 in Paris. As a filmmaker, he has directed approximately ten political documentary films. He is also the author of a book on the Middle-East and two plays. He taught realistic cinema for a year at the prestigious Saint-Joseph University in Beirut. Founder and director of United Media*, he divides his time between the United States and Europe in his efforts to promote a more humane and just globalization. He is an officer in the National Order of the Cedar.

The documentary *At the Glass Building*, in which the former Secretaries-General recount the first 60 years of the UN, was produced by Mr. Sciora and broadcast around the world. It was accompanied by a book with a preface by the former French President Jacques Chirac.

About United Media...

United Media for a Better World is a new non-governmental organization that works in collaboration with the United Nations on cultural and educational projects in order to increase public awareness about the work of the UN and other humanitarian causes.

United Media's first important project is the development of a comic book in collaboration with Marvel Enterprises, Inc. the world's leading comic book publisher and creator of some of the most famous superheroes. A million copies of this comic in which we will see Spider-Man lending a helping hand to the United Nations during its missions will be printed. The comic book will showcase in an entertaining way the actions taken by the United Nations and will be distributed in thousands of American schools. With its accompanying games and documents intended to explain the role of the United Nations, this comic book will undoubtedly contribute to helping young Americans acquire a different perspective of our world.

The release of this project will take place in the fall of 2009 and will coincide with that of Romuald Sciora's new film and book on the United Nations. An international distribution of the comic book is currently under consideration.

With the support and cooperation of
The United Nations Office for Partnerships



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Press Conference

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York

PRESS CONFERENCE ON DOCUMENTARY FILM 'PLANET UN'

A new documentary spotlighting the work of the United Nations and featuring in-depth interviews with four of the world body's Secretaries-General discussing its role as a forum for essential dialogue on the pressing challenges of the twenty-first century is set to premier this evening at the Organization's Headquarters in New York.

Planet UN is a documentary directed by renowned French filmmaker Romauld Sciora, who told correspondents at a press conference today that the film was part of a broad creative effort to raise the profile of the United Nations by focusing on its everyday work and proving that, despite some necessary reforms, the Organization could provide a place for "common thinking and overcoming serious challenges".

He said that the launch of the film will include the release of a new book published by *Le Monde Diplomatique* and *Harper's Magazine*, along with a DVD. Those creative efforts will pave the way for the release in September 2009 of a comic book published by Marvel Comics highlighting the United Nations humanitarian work, and featuring Spiderman, Iron Man and the Hulk, among other popular superheroes. Mr. Sciora's unique association with the United Nations had also produced four television shorts in 2006 called *At the Glass Building*, which included footage of former Secretaries-General reminiscing about the 60-year history of the world body.

Mr. Sciora said the new 52-minute film, book and DVD aimed to introduce the United Nations system to a world that might only know of the Organization through the work of two of its most well-known agencies, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Indeed, they would examine its "day-to-day work" in areas such as civil aviation and development.

"In the West, we really don't know what the UN is doing for the population of particular countries. In some countries, the UN is the only thing that is helping the people on a daily basis," he said, adding that, for example, many people were completely unaware of the tremendous on-the-ground work being carried out by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Joining Mr. Sciora was the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, Kiyoo Akasaka, who said that, through the exploration of three major themes -- peacekeeping, development and human rights -- *Planet UN* presented a look at the United Nations as it worked to confront the challenges of this century. He welcomed Mr. Sciora's work as a "wonderful example of partnership between the United Nations and the creative community", and noted that the Department of Public Information had helped provide Mr. Sciora access to, among other things, the United Nations vast media archives.

Also present was Amir Dossal, Executive Director of the United Nations Office for Partnerships, who said his Office was excited about the film and hoped the “refreshing portrayal” would not only boost the Organization’s profile, but also improve its work, by opening it up to initiatives with civil society and private sector partners, especially from the world’s vast creative community. Specifically, noting the project with Marvel Comics, which was set to be distributed to thousands of schools and universities, he said the United Nations needed to find even more creative ways to get its message out.

Mr. Sciora said that *Planet UN* brought together for the first time former United Nations chiefs Kofi Annan, Boutros-Boutros Ghali and Javier Perez de Cuellar, along with current Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. In addition to other senior United Nations officials, it also featured academic and diplomatic dignitaries, including Noam Chomsky. Responding to questions, he said that, while the film could not address all the areas of the Organization’s operation in great detail, it did touch on food aid delivery and human rights, and examined international justice and the work of the new Human Rights Council.

In response to questions, Mr. Akasaka said the Department of Public Information sought to expand its relationship with filmmakers, writers and others, to spotlight the important agenda of the United Nations. He noted that, last year, the Secretary-General had travelled to the Jackson Hole Film Festival to meet film producers and screenwriters, and had invited them to examine the challenges and problems the United Nations faced. The overall effort aimed to show “the real picture” of what Member States discussed and to find ways to ensure those discussions could receive wider and more comprehensive consideration.

The world premier of the documentary will take place at 6 p.m. this evening at the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium. Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro, Mr. Akasaka and the Permanent Representatives of France and Switzerland are expected to deliver opening remarks.

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