

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

—
**MESSAGE FOR THE OPENING CEREMONY
OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF LIGHT**
Paris, 19-20 January 2015

Light is a unifying symbol that signifies wisdom and excites the imagination across the world.

Paintings and murals in all cultures show how artists have used light, shade and colour to illustrate mood and create atmosphere. Light is used in some therapies to promote health, and in religious ceremonies as aid to worship and reflection.

On the most fundamental level through photosynthesis, light is necessary to the existence of life itself. Light science has revolutionized medicine, agriculture and energy, and optical technologies are part of the basic infrastructure of modern communications.

For these reasons and more, light sciences are a cross-cutting discipline in the 21st century. As we strive to end poverty and promote shared prosperity, light technologies can offer practical solutions to global challenges. They will be particularly important in advancing progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, achieving the future sustainable development goals and addressing climate change.

As part of our efforts to spread the availability of light, my Sustainable Energy for All initiative aims to dramatically increase energy access, energy efficiency and the use of renewables by the year 2030. This will mean more light in homes, hospitals and enterprises – and that will translate into a safer, healthier and more productive future.

Our chief source of light as a planet – the sun – is being harnessed in new and exciting ways through solar power that offers a clean alternative to other sources.

The International Year of Light can be used to expand scientific cooperation, especially in developing countries, advance education in the basic sciences, and engage talented young minds in our efforts to build lives of dignity for all.

Let there be a year of light.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ki-moon Ban".

BAN Ki-moon