



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

MESSAGE FOR THE EXHIBITION
"ANNE FRANK -- A HISTORY FOR TODAY",
AT THE SYDNEY POWERHOUSE MUSEUM
Sydney, May 2001

Anne Frank composed her diary in the cramped confines of a secret annex, where she hid from the fury of a war of unspeakable, unprecedented brutality. Yet her words transcended those walls and, for more than fifty years, have touched people of all ages, religions and nationalities. Anne Frank left our world too soon, but her message of hope lives on.

Since it was first published in 1947, Anne Frank's diary has been translated into many dozens of languages and sold many millions of copies. Her enduring legacy is an answer not only to the cruelty and perversity of the Nazis' hateful theories of racial superiority, but also to the savagery of people who, in our own time, commit genocide, crimes against humanity and other despicable acts of intolerance.

Anne Frank's words have resounded most powerfully among young people, and are a powerful tool in the effort to educate the world about the disastrous consequences of bigotry, and the great benefits of diversity. The United Nations, for its part, has taken her message to heart, and works throughout the world to promote mutual understanding and to rid our societies of the hatred that hinders development and provides a breeding ground for armed conflict.

This exhibition is an important contribution to that struggle. The work to achieve active tolerance will take years, if not generations. Living together in harmony is the fundamental human project. But there are fine examples of real and lasting success in every part of the world. Our responsibility -- as people and communities of conscience -- is to emulate them.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Annan".

Kofi A. Annan