

Kofi Annan – RCSEd Congratulatory certificate 1st July 2005

**Reference and contact details:**

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Congratulatory certificate signed by Mr Kofi Annan on his visit to the College on 1st July 2005, in celebration of its Quincentenary, when he received Honorary Fellowship. 1st July 2005

Kofi Atta Annan (born Kumasi, Ghana on April 8, 1938) served as the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations from January 1, 1997 to January 1, 2007, serving two five-year terms, and was the first person from a black African nation to serve as Secretary-General.

In April 2001, he issued a five-point "Call to Action" to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic. As Secretary-General, Annan saw this pandemic as a "personal priority" and proposed the establishment of a Global AIDS and Health Fund in an attempt to stimulate the increased spending needed to help developing countries confront the HIV/AIDS crisis.

On December 10, 2001, Annan and the United Nations were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, "for their work for a better organized and more peaceful world".

On March 21, 2005, Annan presented a progress report, *In Larger Freedom*, to the UN General Assembly. Annan recommended Security Council expansion and a host of other UN reforms.

Citation for Mr Kofi Annan by Professor O James Garden, July 1st 2005

Your Royal Highness, Secretary-General, President, fellows and guests. The Laws of the College state that the award of an honorary fellowship may be conferred on members of the medical profession or others who are deemed worthy of the honour. While we could therefore accept that no explanation need be provided as to why this prestigious award is being made today, few would doubt that the Secretary-General of the United Nations should be recognised in this way on this historic occasion. Indeed, many parallels can be drawn between the career of the Secretary-General and that of a successful surgeon. He has risen to the top of his profession, having enjoyed a varied but demanding training in international politics. Furthermore like many successful surgeons, he has shown some disregard for the recent constraints imposed by working time directives!

Kofi Annan was born in Kumasi, Ghana, where he studied at the University of Science and Technology completing his undergraduate work in economics at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1961. He undertook graduate studies in economics in Geneva and as a Sloan Fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he received a Master of Science degree in management. A sound basic surgical training programme!

He joined the United Nations through the World Health Organization in Geneva, embarking on a varied and intense programme of training that would have tested the most enthusiastic of advanced surgical trainees. He served with the UN Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa; the United Nations Emergency Force in Ismailia and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva. He moved to UN Headquarters in New York, as Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management and Security Coordinator for the UN System in 1987 and served as Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning, Budget and Finance.

In 1990, he facilitated the repatriation of more than 900 international staff and citizens of Western countries from Iraq. He served as Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations for a year until February 1993 and then as Under-Secretary-General until December 1996. Prior to his appointment as Secretary-General, Mr. Annan served as Special Representative to the former Yugoslavia, overseeing the transition in Bosnia and Herzegovina from the United Nations Protection Force to the multinational Implementation Force led by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Whilst this period of training might be considered in surgical terms somewhat prolonged, this experience has enabled him to undertake difficult and challenging reforms within the United Nations organisation as its Secretary General.

He was appointed the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations on 1 January 1997 but as the first Secretary-General to be elected from the ranks of United Nations staff. On 29 June 2001, the General Assembly appointed him to a second term of office which ends in December next year. During his office, he has taken a personal role in maintaining the international community's commitment to Africa, the most disadvantaged of the world's regions. In addition, he has shown himself to be a strong and committed leader taking personal responsibility for global health care issues.

He has used his good offices in delicate political situations not only in Africa but particularly in recent years in the Middle East conflicts, notably those between Israel and Palestine and those involving Iraq. Like most surgeons, there have been times when he has had to take difficult decisions which have left him and the organization which he leads, exposed to criticism. Like many surgeons, there have been times when he has had to follow his instinct based on his experience, knowing what he has believed was right and yet being prepared to accept criticism and the responsibility for his actions. He has shown leadership skills that have carried him and the United Nations through challenging situations. You have set an outstanding example for us.

In 2001, the Secretary-General and the United Nations received the Nobel Peace Prize. In conferring the Prize, the Nobel Committee said Mr. Annan "had been pre-eminent in bringing new life to the Organization". We do not expect you to turn your considerable and new found surgical talents to the Royal College of Surgeons, but as this College celebrates 500 years of international fellowship with its 17000 fellows in 90 different countries I can think of no man more fitting in 2005 to represent its international aspirations. There are times when the surgeon has to act as a politician. I know that we can take you as an inspiring role model and it gives me the greatest of pleasure to present you for the highest honour that this College can bestow.
