

PRESS RELEASE

Sorbonne University awards an Honorary Doctorate to His Excellency Mr Ban Ki-moon, former Secretary-General of the United Nations

Paris, 19 January 2026

On 16 January 2026, Sorbonne University awarded a *Doctorat Honoris Causa* to His Excellency Mr Ban Ki-moon, former Secretary-General of the United Nations.



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An illustration of Sorbonne University's commitment to scientific and cultural diplomacy, this distinction recognises the prestigious career of His Excellency Mr Ban Ki-moon. More than ten years after the signing of the Paris Agreement, Mr Ban Ki-moon's visit to Paris for the World Brain Health Forum, held on 15 January at UNESCO and organised by the Paris Brain Institute (AP-HP, CNRS, Inserm and Sorbonne University), holds particular significance in a context where the role of science faces increasing challenges.

In a complex world shaken by numerous crises – climate, technological, health, geopolitical, democratic, social – the presence of His Excellency Mr Ban Ki-moon at Sorbonne University sends a strong message of support to the academic world. His presence is a reminder of the essential role played by universities, which strive to understand the world with a multidisciplinary approach, educate informed citizens who will become the decision-makers of tomorrow and provide concrete solutions to current challenges.

The universal values he embodies – openness to the world, courage, solidarity, tolerance and resilience, in addition to his many commitments to defending minorities, women's rights, the environment and peace, and the many advances made during his terms as Secretary-General of the United Nations (creation of UN Women, adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals 2023, signing of the 2015 Paris Agreement...), are all precious assets for humanity.

During the award ceremony, His Excellency Mr Ban Ki-moon declared: *“Our education systems need to be transformed to empower socially responsible global citizens who act with passion and compassion. I know that I can count on Sorbonne University to bring this vision to life every day. That is why I appeal to each and every one of you: let us join forces, with urgency and determination, to make this global vision a reality!”*

Nathalie Drach-Temam, President of Sorbonne University said: *“This Doctorat Honoris Causa ceremony at Sorbonne University is particularly significant. It provides us with an opportunity to reaffirm the crucial role of the humanities and sciences in the quest for truth, cohesion and a shared understanding of the world. With this distinction, Sorbonne University honours the legacy of His Excellency Mr Ban Ki-moon, a true spokesperson and advocate for a peaceful, fair, sustainable and inclusive world. The university would like to express its deep appreciation and sincere gratitude for the impact he has made and the message of hope he has provided to the scientific community and future generations.”*

About Sorbonne University:

Sorbonne University is a multidisciplinary research-intensive university covering the humanities, health, science and engineering. Anchored in the heart of Paris and with a regional presence, Sorbonne University has 53,000 students, 7,100 teaching and research staff and over 150 laboratories. Alongside its partners in the Sorbonne University Alliance, and via its institutes and multidisciplinary initiatives, it conducts research and educational activities to strengthen its contribution to the challenges of three major transitions: a global approach to health (One Health), resources for a sustainable planet (One Earth), and changing societies, languages and cultures (One Humanity). Sorbonne University is invested in innovation and Deep Tech through the Sorbonne University Cité de l'Innovation, with over 15,000 m² dedicated to innovation, incubation and the relationship between research and entrepreneurship, but also through the Sorbonne Center for Artificial Intelligence (SCAI), a home for AI in the heart of Paris to organise and promote multidisciplinary AI research. Sorbonne University is also a member of the 4EU+ Alliance, an innovative model for European universities that develops strategic international partnerships and promotes the openness of its community to the rest of the world. <https://www.sorbonne-universite.fr/en>

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