

**Kofi Annan Life Story**  
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**By Zainal Arifin**

**Kofi Atta Annan** (born in Kumasi, Ghana, 8 April 1938, age 73 years) is a Ghanaian diplomat who appeared as the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations in the period January 1, 1997 until December 31, 2006 for two terms of five yearly. On January 1, 2007, he was replaced Ban Ki-moon. He never won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2001. Since June 2007, he led the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, an organization aimed at improving agricultural production and plantation in Africa as well as the fight against hunger, lack of clean water supplies and soil erosion. Organization was created in 2006 by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation with a grant of 150 million USD.

### **Background and family**

Kofi Annan, son of Henry Reginald and Victoria Annan, who was born in the Kofandros Kumasi, Ghana. The name "Kofi" means "born on Friday". Annan was born as twins are considered a special event by the traditions of Ghana. His twin brother (Efua) died in 1991.

Annan's family was part of an elite group of Ghana. Both his grandfather and uncle were tribal chiefs. Her father was half Asante and half-blooded Fante, while his mother was Fante tribe. Annan's father worked for a long time as the export manager of Lever Brothers cocoa company.

### **Education**

From the year 1954-1957, Annan attended the elite school Mfantsipim, a Methodist boarding school in Cape Coast which was founded in the 1870s. Annan has said that his school teaches that the "suffering anywhere concerns people everywhere." In 1957, when he graduated from Mfantsipim, Ghana became the first British colony in sub-Saharan independence.

In 1958, Annan began studying for a degree in economics reach the High School of Science and Technology Kumasi, which has changed its name to University of Science and Technology Kwame Nkrumah. He obtained a Ford Foundation scholarship to help him complete his studies at Macalester College in St. Petersburg. Paul Minnesota, the United States in 1961.

He then continued his studies at the Institut Universitaire des etudes ahutes Internationales in Geneva (Switzerland) in the period 1961-1962, and then follow the Sloan Fellows program at MIT Sloan School of Management (1971-1972) and received his Master of Sciende.

Annan is fluent in English, French, Kru, other dialects of the Akan languages, and other African languages.

He is married to Nane Maria (Lagergren) Annan, of Sweden, a lawyer and artist who is the niece of Raoul Wallenberg's half. Annan had two children, Kojo Annan and Ama, from previous marriage with Titi Alakija, a Nigerian woman. He is divorced with Alakija in the late 1970's. Nane Annan also has a child, Nina Cronstedt de Groot, from a previous marriage.

### **Early career**

In 1962, Annan worked as an employee of the budget for the World Health Organization

(WHO), a UN agency. From 1974-1976, he worked as Director of Tourism in Ghana. After that, he worked again at the United Nations as Assistant Secretary-General in three consecutive positions: Human Resources Management and Security Coordinator (1987-1990), Program Planning, Budget and Finance, and Controller (1990-1992), and Peacekeeping Operations (March 1993-February 1994).

In his book *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (Shake Hands with the Devil: The failure of Humanity in Rwanda), former General Romeo Dallaire, who served as commander of the UNAMIR forces claim that Annan was too passive in response to the 1994 Tutsi genocide in Rwanda. Gen. Dallaire openly said that the Deputy Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations to prevent UN troops to intervene in resolving the conflict and to provide more logistical and material support. For example, he claims that Annan failed to respond to a fax sent Dallaire repeatedly asked to be given access to the armory, which should be able to help defend the Tutsi tribe.

But Dallaire acknowledges that Annan is a man who feels very "high commitment" to the principles of the UN establishment.

Annan was then Deputy Secretary-General until October 1995 when he was appointed as Special Envoy of UN Secretary Jendearl to the former Yugoslavia. He served for five months in this capacity and return to his duties as Deputy Secretary-General in April 1996.

### **UN Secretary-General**

On December 13, 1996, Annan was elected by the UN Security Council as Secretary-General, and confirmed four days later by a vote in the General Assembly. Annan immediately took the oath of office, and first began his term as Secretary-General on January 1, 1997. The Secretary-General Annan to replace Boutros Boutros-Ghali of Egypt, who ended his tenure. He became the first of a Black African who served as Secretary General.

The term of office as Secretary-General Annan updated on January 1, 2002, in an unusual deviation from the policy unofficially. This office usually rotates among the continents, each with two terms. Because the predecessor Boutros-Ghali Annan is also derived from the African, Annan normally would only serve one term in office. Extension of his term shows the popularity of Annan.

Mark Malloch Brown to replace Louise Frechette as Deputy Secretary Jendearl Annan in April 2006.

### **Appreciation**

Doctorate of Law from the National University of Ireland (January 22, 1999).

Doctorate Honoris Causa from the University of Technology Dresden, Germany (March 9, 2004).

Doctorate Honoris Causa from the University of Frei Berlin, July 13, 2001.

Doctorate Honoris Causa from the University of Ghent (Flanders), March 21, 2003.

Honorary Doctorate in Law from Carleton University (March 9, 2004).

Doctorate from the University of Ottawa University on March 9, 2004.

Doctorate of Law honoris causa from the University of Pennsylvania, May 16, 2005.

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