

The Centre for International & Public Law, ANU College of Law, The Australian National University *presents the 2008 UN Lecture\**

## The United Nations in 2008

### The Hon. Robert Hill

Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the  
United Nations, New York

Wednesday 19 March 2008, 6pm

Manning Clark Centre, Theatre 1

Bldg 26a, Union Lane, (near Union Court), The Australian  
National University

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The mechanism for dealing with many of the issues facing the global community falls to an organization developed in a different era and designed to address different challenges. As the principal multilateral organization of nation states, the United Nations, now with 192 Members, struggles to meet the ever-increasing burden of expectations and demand.

All the big issues are back before the United Nations, but will this lead to revitalization and positive outcomes, or will outmoded structures and political differences lead to growing frustration and disappointment? What does the international community really want of the United Nations? Are Member States genuinely committed to collective responses to today's global challenges? Are they prepared to make the concessions necessary to achieve agreed outcomes? How can a country such as Australia, through the United Nations, contribute to progress on matters of peace and security, disarmament, non-proliferation, counter-terrorism, humanitarian response, human rights, poverty and development, environmental sustainability, and global health? In an ever more interrelated world, these are questions that warrant urgent and serious debate.

The Hon. Robert Hill took up his appointment as Australian Ambassador to the United Nations in April 2006 following a distinguished career in the Australian Parliament and as a Cabinet Minister in Government. He was a Senator for the State of South Australia from July 1981 until March 2006. From March 1996 to October 2001 he was the Federal Minister for Environment. From October 2001, until his resignation in January 2006, he was the Minister for Defence. He was Leader of the Government in the Senate from 1996 to 2006. Prior to his entry into politics he practised law as a barrister and solicitor. Ambassador Hill's interests include law reform, Australian and Asian history, legal and environmental education and the arts.

**\*This lecture will be the fifth in the series of the United Nations lectures. The United Nations lectures are delivered by the Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, New York at the time of the presentation. The first United Nations lecture was presented in 2000 by HE Ambassador Penny Wensley and in 2002, 2004 and 2005 by Ambassador John Dauth LVO.**