



INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR OCTOBER 17

Message for the World Day for Overcoming Poverty & the United Nations International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

17th October 2018

This year we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, despite the progress achieved in human rights since the adoption of this landmark document, we are deeply concerned that people living in poverty, especially those furthest behind, are still disproportionately affected by human rights violations.

Joseph Wresinski was one of the first persons to highlight the critical connection between extreme poverty and human rights violations by demonstrating that a human-rights approach to end poverty was the most effective way to guarantee that people in poverty could live in dignity and enjoy basic human rights and freedoms.

This approach forces us to look beyond providing an adequate income for people in poverty and to also focus on the dignity, capabilities, choices, security and voice that every individual need for the full enjoyment of their fundamental civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. In so doing, we recognize and respect the important mutual roles and relationships we have with each other based on our common and equal dignity.

An important tool in the fight against extreme poverty are the Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights which are intended to ensure that public policies reach persons living in poverty, respect and uphold their rights, and address the significant social, cultural, economic and structural obstacles to their enjoyment of human rights.

The theme “Coming together with those furthest behind to build an inclusive world of universal respect for human rights and dignity” for the October 17 commemoration this year reminds us of our civic and moral duty to defend the human rights of all people, especially those furthest behind. It also reminds us that

only a world free from poverty will provide the enduring foundation for building peaceful and inclusive societies.

Every year, since 1987, people from all walks of life have come together on October 17 to observe the World Day for Overcoming Extreme Poverty as an occasion to renew their commitment to defending the human rights of people living in poverty, and to stand in solidarity with all people who strive to eradicate extreme poverty. By coming together each year on October 17 people who experience extreme poverty have been able to break the silence of poverty and to speak out against pain of exclusion, discrimination, injustice and violence.

These important values of voice, participation and solidarity which are actively promoted by the commemoration of October 17 each year, at the United Nations and around the world, strongly complement and support the ambition of the United Nations’ Agenda 2030 to mobilize all stakeholders in the fight against poverty and to promote the full and active participation of people living in extreme poverty.

The International Committee for October 17 in its Rome Declaration in May 2018 called upon the United Nations to reassess the contribution of the observance of the International Day to the mobilization of all stakeholders in the fight against poverty, and to urgently consider establishing a mechanism at the United Nations to ensure the effective participation and voice of people living in poverty and extreme poverty.

Only by creating and nurturing a genuine partnership with people living with poverty will it be possible to build an inclusive world where all people can enjoy their full human rights.

Donald Lee

President, International Committee for October 17