

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY
FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY**

17 October 2005

Poverty devastates families, communities and nations. It causes instability and political unrest and fuels conflict. Today, some 800 million people are chronically hungry and malnourished. Every day, 30,000 children die due to causes directly related to poverty.

Those figures lend acute urgency to the theme of this year's International Day for the Eradication of Poverty -- "Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Empowering the poorest of the poor". The theme underscores the fact that poverty can be reduced only if we reach out to the poorest of the poor, including those often excluded from the development process. Only through partnerships with them, and by taking steps to tackle inequality, can we eradicate poverty in all its dimensions.

The Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, adopted by 189 Heads of States and Governments in 2000, represent a partnership between rich and poor countries to fight extreme poverty and achieve concrete, measurable improvements in the lives of millions of men, women and children across the world. The Goals form a central framework for promoting human development -- from ensuring all children receive primary school education to reducing the number of child and maternal deaths; from tackling the spread of HIV/AIDS and other major diseases to the overarching aim of halving the number of people living in extreme poverty and hunger by 2015.

In September 2005, world leaders gathered once again to deliver a unanimous endorsement of the Millennium Development Goals, as well as the broader UN development agenda agreed at UN conferences and summits. The leaders agreed to adopt, by 2006, comprehensive national development strategies to achieve that development agenda. Developed countries agreed to support developing country efforts through increased development assistance, through supporting agreements on debt relief for some of the world's poorest countries, and through measures to ensure that trade can play its full part in promoting economic growth, employment and development for all.

Those commitments represent a breakthrough in the fight against poverty -- promises that we must all work to ensure are translated into concrete actions, especially for the world's poorest people. On this International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, let us resolve to build on the momentum that now exists. Let us work in partnerships between rich and poor to improve the opportunities of all human beings to build better lives.

