

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

--

MESSAGE ON INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR ERADICATION OF POVERTY

17 October 2012

Poverty is easy to denounce but difficult to combat. Those suffering from hunger, want and indignity need more than sympathetic words; they need concrete support.

We mark this year's International Day for the Eradication of Poverty at a time of economic austerity in many countries. As governments struggle to balance budgets, funding for anti-poverty measures is under threat. But this is precisely the time to provide the poor with access to social services, income security, decent work and social protection. Only then can we build stronger and more prosperous societies – not by balancing budgets at the expense of the poor.

The Millennium Development Goals have galvanized global action that generated great progress. We have cut extreme poverty by half and corrected the gender imbalance in early education, with as many girls now attending primary school as boys. Many more communities have access to clean drinking water. Millions of lives have been saved thanks to investments in health.

These gains represent a major advance toward a more equitable, prosperous and sustainable world. But more than a billion people still live in poverty, denied their rights to food, education and health care. We have to empower them to help us find sustainable solutions. We should spare no effort to ensure that all countries reach the MDGs by 2015.

At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in June of this year, leaders from around the world declared that poverty eradication is “the greatest global challenge facing the world today.”

We are now developing the UN development framework for the period after 2015, building on the MDGs while confronting persistent inequalities and new challenges facing people and the planet. Our aim is to produce a bold and ambitious framework that can foster transformational change benefiting people now and for generations to come.

Rampant poverty, which has festered for far too long, is linked to social unrest and threats to peace and security. On this International Day, let us make an investment in our common future by helping to lift people out of poverty so that they, in turn, can help to transform our world.