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Note to Correspondents

International Day for Poverty eradication to highlight rights, dignity of people living in poverty

The rights of people living in poverty will be the focus of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, to be observed on 17 October at the United Nations and around the world.

A series of events at United Nations Headquarters will commemorate the Day. Magdalena Sepulveda Carmona, the United Nations Independent Expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty, and Nina Lim Yuson, President of International Movement ATD Fourth World, will brief journalists at an 11 a.m. press conference in Room 226. At the same time, United Nations staff, permanent missions, non-governmental organizations and students will take part in a “Stand Up, Take Action” event in front of the Secretariat building. The Stand Up event will feature performances from the cast of the Broadway Musical “A Tale of Two Cities”, based on Charles Dickens’ novel about poverty and inequality in pre-revolutionary France.

The Headquarters Stand Up event, organized by the Department of Public Information and the Millennium Campaign, is part of the global campaign to mobilize a record number of people to physically and symbolically stand up against poverty within 24 hours around the world. Last year, 900 people took part in the Headquarters event. In all, 43 million people participated around the world and sent a clear message of support for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

“We can end poverty” stamps commemorating the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty and the end of the first Decade for the Eradication of Poverty will be unveiled during the annual ceremony in Conference Room 2, from 1:15 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. The event will feature the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Sha Zukang, the Permanent Representatives of France and Burkina Faso, and the Director-General of ATD Fourth World, Eugen Brand. The Independent Expert on human rights and extreme poverty and a representative of Amnesty International will make statements. The commemoration will hear testimonies on behalf of people living in poverty, and include performances by singer Chris Tapper.

From 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., a round table in Conference Room 8 on “Turning rhetoric into action -- building effective partnership to combat poverty and exclusion” will explore ways to improve community participation and strengthen civil society in promoting respect for human rights and the eradication of poverty.

The General Assembly declared the International Day in 1992 (resolution 47/196), welcoming the fact that certain non-governmental organizations, on the initiative of the International Movement ATD Fourth World, had, in many States, observed 17 October as World Day to Overcome Extreme Poverty. The observance aims to promote awareness of the need to eradicate poverty and destitution in all countries, particularly in developing countries. The theme for this year’s observance is “Human Rights and Dignity of People Living in Poverty”.

The observance is organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the International Movement ATD Fourth World.

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