

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 2008**

The theme of this year's International Day for the Eradication of Poverty – “*Human Rights and Dignity of People Living in Poverty*” – recalls the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 60 years ago. The Declaration affirms that “everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family”.

Sixty years on, hundreds of millions of people are still deprived of basic human rights such as food, housing, education, and decent working conditions. Those forced to live in poverty often face social exclusion, discrimination and disempowerment. Poverty robs the poor of their human dignity.

Our efforts to eradicate poverty must pay close attention to respect for human rights and the dignity of all. They must go beyond basic material needs and address discrimination and inequality. That means ensuring that all poor people have access to the resources they need - land, capital, knowledge and skills – to escape poverty. It means empowering the poor to effectively participate in decision-making and other activities that directly affect their lives

Current economic uncertainties make this task even more challenging, but also even more important. Rising food and fuel prices, and the global financial crisis, are threatening to negate the progress made to reduce poverty and hunger in many parts of the world. An estimated 100 million people are now at risk of falling into poverty.

At the high-level event last September, Governments reconfirmed their commitments to the Millennium Development Goals. Many pledged new resources to bolster food security, eradicate disease, ensure access to water and sanitation and manage the financial crisis. These commitments are not a matter of charity, but an obligation in the pursuit of human rights for all. If we fail to keep our promise on the MDGs, we create the conditions for greater human misery and global insecurity.

Poverty will not be eradicated without due respect for human rights. On this International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, let us guarantee the inherent dignity and equal rights of all members of the human family and strive for a world free of poverty and injustice.