

**SPEECH BY HE MR GORDON BROWN, UK PRIME MINISTER FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND, ON MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS, 25 SEPTEMBER 2008**

Secretary-General, President of the General Assembly, Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

I come to the richest city in this, the richest country, to declare on behalf of the poorest citizens, of the poorest countries, a global poverty emergency that we must now address.

Under Ban Ki-moon's leadership, we gather today from the Head of the African Union President Kikwete to the Prime Minister of China, from Bill Gates to Bono, Governments, NGOs, businesses, people of all faiths and societies, in a new unique and historic coalition against poverty to unite the world in an unprecedented effort from now on to secure the Millennium Development Goals. And already this is a historic Summit. Even at this time of financial difficulty, already we know that eight billion dollars has been pledged to reduce poverty.

Now our United Nations Charter begins "we the peoples" -, and I am humbled to stand here and speak for the thousands of our people who are dying because they are too poor to live. And throughout the ages, the fate of the hungry, the homeless, the deprived, and what we do to help, has been the touchstone of compassion, the crucible in which our morality is tested. And we cannot stand aside. We say we are "one world", but every three seconds, we allow one child to die from extreme poverty.

Some say this time of financial turbulence is the time to put our ambitions on hold, to cut back or postpone the dream of achieving the Millennium Development Goals, but this would be the worst time to turn back.

Every global problem we have requires global solutions, involving all the continents of the world. We cannot solve the food shortages that face many continents without involving Africa and developing countries. We cannot solve climate change without involving Africa and developing countries. We cannot solve the pressure on resources and energy without involving Africa and the developing countries. And Africa and our developing countries are not the problem - they are part of the very solution to today's problems.

In the museum in Rwanda, which commemorates the thousands killed as the world looked on and looked the other way, there is a picture of a young boy who was tortured to death and the plaque reads:

Name: David

Age: 10

Favourite Sport: Football

Enjoyed: making people laugh

Dream: becoming a doctor

Last words: the United Nations will come for us.

But we never did. Even as he died, that child believed the best of us. In reality, our promises meant to him nothing at all.

Today, facing famine, we promised we, the United Nations of the world, will come to help, but the hungry are dying while we wait.

Facing poverty, we promise that we will come to help, but poor are dying while we wait.

Facing betrayal of the Millennium Development Goals, we say again we will come, but many continue to die while we wait.

And I believe our greatest enemy is not war or inequality or any single ideology or a financial crisis; it is too much indifference. Indifference in the face of soul-destroying poverty. Indifference in the face of catastrophic threats to our planet. A casual uncaring corrosive pass-by on the other side, walk by indifference as Elie Wiesel said "to be indifferent to suffering makes the human being inhuman".

So today again, it is this United Nations of the world that is on trial. It is our credibility, as representatives of the global community, that is being tested. It is our commitment to one inclusive sustainable world that is under challenge. Our global leadership itself is being questioned.

And let us face the shameful truth that while we have made huge advances, 40 million more children at school, three million children living who would otherwise have died, three million getting treatment for AIDS, but despite all our promises, with one mother dying in childbirth every minute, the 2015 goal to cut maternal and infant mortality will not be met even in 2020 or 2030, not before 2050. And with 75 million of the world's children still without a school to go to, the goal promising every child schooling will not be met on present trends in 2015 or 2025 or even in 2100. And I say to the richest countries of the world, the poorest of the world have been patient, but a hundred years is too long to wait for justice.

So to seek to make poverty history, we need to make new history today, and make it happen now, so I ask you to take today four bold steps:

first, on health, that we recruit and train a million health workers,

saving the lives of three million mothers and seven million children;

second, on malaria, we agree that we will stop all malaria deaths by 2015, to ensure everyone has a bed net by 2010, to fund the research for the vaccine that can prevent the loss of life; and then on education, to get 24 million more children into school by 2010, to get us back on track to universal education by 2015; and fourth, on famine, to prevent today's starvation in the Horn of Africa, to fund and deliver seeds and fertilizers to 30 countries in time for the planting season, to invest ten billions in Africa so it can help feed not just Africa, but feed beyond Africa with its exports.

In the past, "feed the world" meant that we helped to feed Africa. In future, if we do things right, we will do best by enabling Africa to feed the world.

So, let this United Nations, this leadership of the world, today rouse the conscience of the world. Summon us as global citizens to great and common purpose so that millions of men, women and children trapped in the prison of poverty can at last be set free.

Thank you.