



PRESS RELEASE



UN OFFICE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES,
LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

GLOBAL MEDIA COMPACT TO BOOST AWARENESS OF DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES FACING WORLD'S POOREST COUNTRIES

United Nations, 10 July 2006: In a bid to create greater awareness of the challenges facing the world's 50 poorest nations, the United Nations envoy for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Anwarul K. Chowdhury today launched a 'Global Media Compact' in partnership with the media company, MediaGlobal.

The 'Compact' aims to encourage international and local media companies to increase their coverage of developmental issues in vulnerable countries through innovative media initiatives.

Mr. Chowdhury appealed to editors and owners of newspapers to feature stories that would raise international awareness on issues of poverty, disease and hunger in Least Developed Countries.

"It is unfortunate that the voice of the LDCs continues to get marginalized. There is, indeed, a need for increased focus on the everyday challenges facing millions of impoverished people in the LDCs. Their needs ought to be placed at the forefront of the global development agenda," he said.

"A Global Media Compact would bring together editors of newspapers to advance the cause of human development and help their readership understand the suffering of the poor," said Nosh Nalavala, Executive Director of MediaGlobal.

"Today much of the media offers an unbalanced coverage of developing countries in Africa and Asia. With this Compact we hope to engage powerful media organizations as partners," he added.

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Media for Global Development (MediaGlobal) is one of the world's leading providers of information on global development issues facing vulnerable countries of Africa and Asia. MediaGlobal's message reaches leaders of developed countries, the global media, policymakers in donor countries, non-governmental organizations and key personnel in the United Nations Secretariat, its agencies and managers in the field worldwide.

SEVEN POINT PROGRAMME

Today, the Under-Secretary-General asked that major media companies commit themselves to expand public knowledge and understanding about the suffering of the Least Developed Countries. Specific efforts that media companies are encouraged to undertake include:

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Alleviation of poverty, disease and hunger in poor and vulnerable countries as a vital corporate priority by media organizations;

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Feature stories on development issues in poor countries and devote adequate space for articles, editorial and advertising;

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Focus on issues of poverty, disease and hunger in poor countries and provide current coverage;

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Report stories without bias or prejudice about these poor and vulnerable countries and deal with the constraints of these countries in a fair manner;

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Train reporters and correspondents to increase their knowledge of development issues and encourage them to report on human-interest stories;

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Support the development of films, documentaries, web sites and multi-media programmes related to poverty, disease and hunger initiatives;

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Newspapers, newswire agencies, broadcasters and networks make contents of development issues available to other media outlets without a rights fee.

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The Global Media Compact will be a “network” of newspapers contributing to informed perceptions of these vulnerable countries to the rest of the world. MediaGlobal will work towards increasing the level of media participation and bring in media leaders to work towards this initiative.

The Compact is not a regulatory initiative. It relies on editors and broadcasters to recognize the constraints of poor people in vulnerable countries and give coverage in their respective media — print or electronic.

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