

**DRAFT VERSION—FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

**INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON  
THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY**

**An inter-agency and multi-stakeholder  
event to mark the end of the  
First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty**

**REPORT OF THE MEETING**

**United Nations Headquarters, New York  
15-16 November 2006**



## PREFACE

Poverty is one of the greatest scourges of our times and we know that only by working together will we be able to eradicate it. This report summarizes the outcome of the International Forum on the Eradication of Poverty which was organized by 13 different Departments, Funds, Programmes and Agencies of the United Nations in collaboration with civil society and a bilateral donor. This collaboration clearly shows that there is a strong commitment by all stakeholders to work together and learn from each other to achieve the goal of eradicating poverty.

The Forum was the closing event of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, which began in 1997. The objective of the Decade was to achieve the goal of eradicating poverty and reducing overall poverty substantially in the world. While we have clearly not met this goal, we have made some important strides towards it.

At the 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, Governments committed themselves to the eradication of poverty as an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind. The proposal to designate a Decade for the Eradication of Poverty was agreed upon in the Programme of Action of the Social Summit, and was formally launched by the General Assembly at its fiftieth session in 1995. The various activities that had been undertaken during the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty in 1996 helped to lay the foundations for the Decade by raising awareness of the issues and sustaining efforts at the national and international levels in support of poverty eradication.

Over these past ten years, our way of thinking about poverty and how best to fight it has evolved greatly. We have recognized that poverty is a multidimensional problem and that by focusing only on reducing income poverty, we fail to address its root causes. For example, we need to take people's access to education and health care into account as well as their vulnerability and their lack of political influence. Over the past years, we have also come to realize the importance of governance, in particular the debilitating effect of corruption, on the effectiveness of poverty eradication efforts. In addition, the adverse impact of environmental degradation, notably global warming, on poverty reduction efforts is increasingly becoming the focus of attention. Therefore, strategies to fight poverty need to be comprehensive and address the entire range of factors that prevent poor people from escaping from the clutches of poverty.

The major international conferences of the 1990s all contributed towards strengthening the commitment to poverty eradication at the national and international levels. The twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, held in 2000, called upon Governments to put poverty eradication at the centre of economic and social development. It urged them to build consensus with all relevant actors on policies and strategies to reduce the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by one half by 2015. As we all know, this was reaffirmed at the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000,

where 189 Heads of State and Governments adopted the Millennium Declaration. The fact that the objective to eradicate poverty has been integrated into the Millennium Development Goals, has increased global awareness of this pressing issue and contributed to a concerted effort at the national and international levels to reduce poverty. The 2005 World Summit Outcome document reaffirmed the commitment of the international community to the goal of poverty eradication and the MDG target to halve extreme poverty by 2015. At the same summit, all developing countries committed to adopt national plans for achieving the MDGs by the end of this year.

Despite major gains in the fight to eradicate poverty worldwide, almost 20 per cent of all people continue to live in extreme poverty. At the global level, the proportion of poor people living on less than one dollar a day in developing countries declined from 27.9 to 19.4 per cent between 1990 and 2002. However, this global picture masks important disparities at the regional level. Global poverty reduction has been driven by the success of East Asia and the Pacific and South Asia. All other regions have experienced little change or setbacks since 1990. Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, has achieved little or no progress.

It is important to recognize that we are not acting out of charity when we work towards ending poverty. Poverty is a clear violation of human rights and it is our duty to fight for its eradication. Finally, a variety of best practices exist. There is no need to reinvent the wheel and we can learn from the experiences of others. The recommendations in this Forum outcome document provide a way forward in addressing poverty in the future by focusing on what has worked in the past, and how best to apply our knowledge and experiences from the First International Decade for the Eradication of Poverty to meet the goal of halving poverty by 2015.

Over the last ten years - the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty - much has been achieved. However, much remains to be done. Many promises have been made. We now need to ensure that these are kept. I sincerely hope that the outcome of this Forum is put into action. If we want to achieve the MDGs over the next decade, we need to act now. We need to keep the promise and make it happen.

## CONTENTS

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>Preface</b>   | iii |
| <b>Introduction</b>  | 1   |
| <b>Messages</b>  | 3   |
| Closing statement by H.E. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, President of the United Nations General Assembly   | 3   |
| Statement by Mr. José Antonio Ocampo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic And Social Affairs  | 4   |
| <b>Summary of Sessions</b>   | 9   |
| Opening and Plenary Session  | 9   |
| Session 1. Reducing Hunger and Extreme Poverty   | 11  |
| Session 2. Eliminating Child Poverty and Breaking the Intergenerational Cycle of Disadvantage  | 16  |
| Session 3. Building Productive Capacities and Facilitating Access to financial Resources   | 20  |
| Session 4. Empowerment of Women: Access to Assets  | 25  |
| Session 5. Mainstreaming Decent Work into Poverty Reduction Strategies   | 30  |
| Session 6a. Breaking the Cycle of Poverty: Challenges and Opportunities of the Least Developed Countries   | 34  |
| Session 6b. Working Together, Building Partnerships  | 37  |
| Session 7. Thinking Outside the Box, Innovative Approaches   | 40  |
| Special Event on Poverty Traps   | 44  |
| Special Event on Good Practices in Poverty Eradication Initiatives: Improving Results through Stakeholder Involvement and Ex-Ante Poverty Impact Assessments | 49  |
| Special Event on The Millennium Villages Project   | 54  |
| Special Event on Rights, Participation and Poverty Eradication   | 58  |
| Closing Plenary Session  | 64  |
| <b>Biographical Notes for Speakers</b>   | 66  |
| <b>Annex:</b> Forum Programme  | 79  |



## **INTRODUCTION**

To mark the end of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, the Division of Social Policy and Development, DESA, in collaboration with United Nations agencies and civil society, organized the International Forum on the Eradication of Poverty. The Forum achieved two major objectives. First, it sent a strong message on the importance of a continued and enhanced commitment to poverty eradication in the run-up to 2015. Second, the Forum provided a valuable opportunity for forward-looking dialogue among stakeholders on the next steps to be taken over the next decade towards the realization of the universal goal of poverty eradication. As the closing event of the first United Nations decade for the eradication of poverty, the Forum addressed the key developments in policy and practice of the last ten years. However, the main purpose of the Forum was not to reflect on the past but to look forward in order to identify the main challenges ahead and the concrete and sustainable strategies to combat poverty in its various dimensions over the next ten years.

### **Organization of the Forum**

The Forum was an interagency initiative held on 15 and 16 November 2006 at United Nations Headquarters. It consisted of a series of high-level panels and dialogues as well as special lunch time events on a variety of topics central to poverty eradication, including the root causes of poverty and effective measures to address them. Panelists included high-level representatives from Government, multilateral international organizations, academia, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders including people living in poverty. Forum participants included delegates, United Nations staff, donor agencies, representatives of civil society, academics and the media. The event was designed to be as inclusive as possible; to this end, donor agencies and civil society organizations sponsored the participation of people from developing countries.

A main theme of the dialogue was the commitments that were made throughout the Decade. The panels are all related to the concept of poverty traps and address the factors needed to escape from them. The panels did not focus on sectoral issues, but discussed cross-cutting issues fundamental to the eradication of poverty. Since poverty is both an economic and a social problem, this involved discussing not only issues such as access to resources, trade and education, but also human rights and governance. Specific issues pertaining to the various social groups, including women, youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples were discussed in many panels. The common thread running through the panels was implementation and sustainability. The planned lunchtime events focused on concrete initiatives such as the Millennium Villages Project.

Participants in the panels included Government officials, heads of various multilateral international organizations, academics and other experts, civil society as well as other stakeholders.

## **Participating Organizations**

The United Nations partner organizations that organized the Forum are:

Department of Public Information (DPI)  
Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)  
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)  
International Labour Organization (ILO)  
Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked  
Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS)  
United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)  
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)  
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)  
United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)  
United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)  
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)  
United Nations Global Compact  
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)  
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)  
World Food Programme (WFP)

## **Other Collaborating Organizations**

ATD 4th World  
Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives (COPAC)  
Feminist Task Force of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP)  
GTZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit)  
International Co-operative Alliance (ICA)  
NGO Sub-Committee on for the Eradication of Poverty

## MESSAGES

### **Closing Statement by H.E. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa President of the United Nations General Assembly**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have come to this closing event for the first United Nations Decade on Poverty.

Over the past ten years, we have come a long way in our joint efforts to reduce poverty. But we all know that much more needs to be done.

During this Forum, we have listened to many distinguished experts, who have identified the challenges we need to address, and the strategies we need to adopt, in order to keep our promises and achieve our goal of eradicating poverty by 2015. There have also been many helpful comments and concrete ideas from the floor to guide us in our joint task to fight poverty.

During the 61st Session of the General Assembly, it is my goal to work to make further progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. That is why I have called for an informal thematic debate at the United Nations on the 27th of November, involving donors, partner countries, the private sector and civil society. The detailed discussions and ideas that you have generated during the Forum will provide very helpful input into this debate.

I would like to thank the organizers of this Forum for putting together such an interesting programme.

And also, to thank all of you - the Departments, Funds, Programmes and Specialized Agencies of the United Nations, civil society, academics and donors - that have worked together during the Forum in true partnership, demonstrating your willingness to overcome poverty.

We all bring different expertise and perspectives from our own fields. If cultivated effectively, we can all work together towards achieving our common goal of reducing poverty.

## **Opening Statement by Mr. José Antonio Ocampo Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs**

Excellencies, colleagues, friends,

Eradicating poverty is one of the greatest challenges of our times, and we know that we can only do it by working together. In a clear sign of multi-stakeholder commitment, this International Forum on the Eradication of Poverty has been organized by more than a dozen different UNITED NATIONS Departments, Funds, Programmes, and Agencies, in collaboration with civil society and with the support of GTZ. On behalf of the organizers, I am delighted to welcome you all.

The UNITED NATIONS global Conferences and Summits since the 1990s have put the commitment to poverty eradication at the centre of national and international development efforts. At the 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, Governments committed to eradicating poverty as an ethical, social, political, and economic imperative. The Summit's Programme of Action included a proposed Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, adopted shortly thereafter by the General Assembly. The International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, in 1996, helped lay the foundations for the Decade.

The Assembly's 24th special session in 2000, urged Governments to build consensus with all relevant actors on policies and strategies to cut in half the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and hunger by 2015—a call that was soon echoed by the Millennium Summit. Showcasing that commitment as the first of the eight Millennium Development Goals has heightened global awareness and helped mobilize a concerted effort not only to reduce poverty and hunger, but also to confront closely related issues captured in the other MDGs and the call in MDG 8 for more ambitious development co-operation.

This Forum serves as the concluding event of the Decade for the Eradication of Poverty. It will look, during its main sessions as well as special events, at the central issues to tackle poverty effectively, at innovative approaches to poverty eradication, and at concrete initiatives to eradicate poverty, such as the Millennium Villages Project.

While we have certainly not met the Decade's objective of eradicating extreme poverty, we have made some advances in reducing overall poverty, as well as in some other areas. Let me highlight four of them. First, over the past ten years, our way of thinking about poverty and how best to fight it has evolved greatly. Today, in line with the vision of the Copenhagen Summit on Social Development, we firmly recognize poverty as a multidimensional problem, with an array of root causes that must be addressed.

Lack of education and employment opportunities and thus the need to resort to sheer survival strategies to make a living are the most important determinants of poverty's perpetuation across generations, and we must break the poverty traps that they generate. We must also face poverty's most blatant manifestation, hunger, and the health problems of poor communities, including those associated with the lack of access to clean water and sanitation, and the special problems generated by HIV/AIDS and malaria, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

We must build upon the capacity of women to lift themselves and their families out of poverty. We must face the dialectical link between poverty and conflict, and also

look for governance reforms that give the poor access to political influence and enable them to benefit from inclusive and participatory approaches to development.

Almost half the population of least developed countries (LDCs) lives in extreme poverty. To break the cycle of poverty, the economic, infrastructural, and environmental challenges that these countries face must be addressed. LDCs have been recognized as a distinct category in the international trading system, leading thus far to steps such as the European Union's "Everything but Arms" initiative. This issue has also been at the centre of the now interrupted Doha WTO negotiations.

This brings me to a second area of advance: the emergence of an enhanced global partnership for development. Official development assistance (ODA) has been steadily increasing since the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development. Some European countries already exceed the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of GNI for development cooperation, and the rest have committed to achieve that target by 2015 or earlier. Pledges were also made to provide immediate support for "quick impact" initiatives to support anti-malaria efforts, education, and health care.

Beyond ODA, innovative sources of financing are enlarging the resources for financing development. Nineteen countries are implementing a Solidarity Levy on airline tickets to finance an international drug purchase facility ("UNITAID"), launched at the beginning of the current General Assembly. Another initiative, the International Finance Facility (IFF), was launched last week under a pilot project to fund immunization programs through the initial flotation of a US\$1 billion five-year bond. 2005 also produced agreement to consider additional measures to ensure long-term debt sustainability through increased grant-based financing and a 100 per cent debt cancellation for heavily-indebted poor countries.

A third area of advance is the emergence of national development strategies, with poverty reduction at their centre. This has reflected a renewed emphasis on national ownership of development and the importance of capacity building to enable countries to design and implement poverty reduction and development strategies. At the 2005 World Summit, all United Nations Member States committed to devising comprehensive national development strategies to achieve all the MDGs and other development goals agreed to through the United Nations conference process. Poverty reduction strategies have also been considered by the Bretton Woods institutions since 1999 as a precondition for obtaining debt relief and concessional financing.

A fourth area of advance in our efforts to eradicate poverty is improved coordination within the United Nations system. The organizations of the United Nations system have made significant progress in integrating the MDGs and goals of the broader United Nations Development Agenda into their work programmes and in devising system-wide approaches to support country-level implementation. The 2005 Summit has put a powerfully reformed Economic and Social Council at the centre of efforts to monitor and advance implementation of the development goals, in a unified and coherent way. This Forum is a good example of the commitment of United Nations organizations to build on our individual strengths and work together to exploit synergies, all to ensure delivery of better development results for our member states and their peoples.

What I have quickly highlighted here are clearly all important gains. Yet, almost 20 per cent of all people continue to live in extreme poverty. So where have we fallen short?

The proportion of poor people in developing countries living on less than one dollar a day declined from 27.9 to 19.4 per cent between 1990 and 2002. But this global picture masks important regional disparities. Global poverty reduction has been driven by the success of East Asia and the Pacific and of South Asia. All other regions have experienced little change or setbacks since 1990. Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, has achieved little or no progress. And the reduction of poverty in the developing world, measured by the two-dollars-a day poverty line, shows a slower rate of improvement.

The eradication of poverty thus remains a major policy challenge as well as an intellectual one. We still do not know enough, nor have traditional approaches always been useful. We have a good handle on the human development dimensions of these challenges, and the multidimensionality involved. And some innovations in social policy have made important contributions, particularly the design of conditional targeted transfer programs for the poor, such as those making cash transfers conditional upon children attending school and mothers having regular health controls during pregnancy. Let me underscore, however, that these social safety nets are no substitute for integrated social protection systems, which have become all the more necessary given the growing risks faced by populations today.

We have also acquired a good understanding of some of the economic dimensions of poverty eradication, particularly the role of building productive capacities and providing access to financial services. When the poor enjoy the same rights extended to others, to own a bank account and to apply for credit, their assets are used more productively. This was recognized during the International Year of Microcredit and in the publication last year of our Blue Book, *Building Inclusive Financial Sectors for Development*. And the recent announcement of the Nobel Peace Prize to Professor Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank has shined a spotlight on the important role that financial services play in the lives of millions of people.

But let me be blunt: our level of understanding drops way down when it comes to the exact link between economic growth and poverty reduction. The concept of “pro-poor growth” has ultimately helped little, given the lack of consensus on the elements of such growth or even on a definition of when growth actually is “pro-poor”. A recent IMF report evaluating the PRSP experience makes the point: “...knowledge of the links between policies and growth remains limited and understanding of the links between policies and poverty reduction even less so”. We do know, however, that strategies, to be effective, must take into account country-specific institutional and structural characteristics, which rules out any “one-size-fits-all” approaches or policy solutions. And let me refer to two dimensions that remain the most important challenges, and on which limited progress has been made: the need to generate adequate levels of quality employment and to address the broad-based trend towards income inequality.

In recent years, the importance of employment has been recognized at the highest level in the intergovernmental process. At the 2005 World Summit, leaders pledged to make full and productive employment and decent work for all a central objective of their national development strategies, and this commitment was ratified by ECOSOC. And all poverty reduction strategies should place employment generation as the major channel to poverty reduction. We have thus decided to dedicate our 2007 Report on the World Social Situation to this issue. As for growing inequality, this has been at the centre of our work in many parts of the United Nations and at the World Bank. It was the focus of our

report *The Inequality Predicament* and of the World Bank's Global Development Report last year. But inequality has not yet been recognized as a central issue of concern at the intergovernmental level.

Over the decade since the Social Summit, however, unemployment has risen, rather than fallen. According to the ILO, in 2005, the number of unemployed worldwide reached new heights—nearly 192 million people. At the same time, underemployment, characterized by low productivity and inadequate income, remains pervasive in the developing world, and is probably increasing. And the world as a whole seems to be experiencing a long-term trend loss in what people perceive as “secure employment”, whether in the private or public sectors. This trend, together with persistent calls for more labour flexibility, has generated a growing sense of economic and social insecurity.

We have also seen a broad-based trend towards widening inequality within countries. According to research undertaken by the United Nations University's World Institute for Development Economic Research, 48 out of 73 countries for which such information is available experienced a deterioration of income distribution during the last three decades, and most of them in a substantial way. As those 48 countries contain 87.5 per cent of the population of the sample countries, this means that approximately nine out of ten citizens in the world live in countries where income distribution has deteriorated—a staggering figure. Indeed, as I have averred on other occasions, rising inequality has truly become a global pandemic. Many factors explain this: the growing gap in wages between skilled and unskilled workers, the rising share of profits, and, in some countries, growing regional or urban-rural disparities.

What all this means is that generating adequate levels of employment and reducing inequalities through “pro-poor” or “shared growth” strategies, will fundamentally require national level institutions that effectively mainstream employment generation and overcoming income and wealth inequality concerns into economic policymaking—that is, in the decisions of finance ministers, central banks, and production sector, technology, and trade ministers. And it requires, at the international level, that such matters as the global integration of financial markets, global trade negotiations, and intellectual property rights should be evaluated not only in terms of their economic merits but also in terms of their effects on the social dimensions that I have underscored.

These challenges are immense yet essential to put an end to poverty in our times and to build inclusive societies. And we must do this together, building on the different strengths enjoyed by international organizations, foundations, academia, civil society, and the private sector. And, above all, we need to work in partnership with people living in poverty who know their real needs much better than we do. Many of the NGOs present here today helped crystallize the commitments made over the past decade to poverty eradication. And I am certain that you will continue to hold Governments accountable to ensure that these commitments are met.

It is my hope that our discussions and exchanges over the next two days will enable all of us to together seize the momentum generated by this United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, its advances and shortcomings.

Let's keep the promise and make it happen.



## **SUMMARY OF SESSIONS**

### **OPENING AND PLENARY SESSION**

**Wednesday, 15 November 2006**

**11:15 - 12:45, Conference Room 2**

#### **Moderator**

Mr. Johan Schölvinnck, Director Division for Social Policy and Development,  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs

#### **Keynote Speakers**

H.E. Ms. Tiina Intelmann, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Estonia  
to the United Nations, Chair of the Second Committee

Mr. Jose Antonio Ocampo, Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social  
Affairs, Department of Economic and Social Affairs

#### **Guest Speakers**

Professor Peter Townsend, Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research

Ms. Wahu Kaara, Ecumenical Coordinator for the Millennium Development  
Goals, All Africa Conference of Churches & Global Call to Action against  
Poverty (GCAP)

#### **Session Summary**

Mr. Johan Schölvinnck, Director Division for Social Policy and Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs opened the Forum by noting that the Forum marked the end of the First International Decade for the Eradication of Poverty and introduced the speakers.

Ambassador Intelmann noted that in support of the Copenhagen Declaration, the Second Committee called for the first decade for the eradication of poverty to commence in 1997 and end in 2006. Each year the Second committee has reviewed progress in poverty eradication, and since 2000 has reviewed progress in light of the Millennium Development Goals. The Decade has made important contributions to poverty reduction, including a change in United Nations strategy, characterized by a more holistic approach to economic and social development, and a strong focus on national strategies for poverty reduction. The International Year of Microcredit, one of the outcomes of the Decade, also increased awareness of the fact that the poor deserve a broad range of financial services that can empower them.

Mr. Jose Antonio Ocampo discussed how the United Nations conferences and summits of the 1990s have brought attention to poverty reduction, especially the World Social Summit in Copenhagen in 1995. Living free of poverty has come to be viewed as a right, and increasingly a rights-based approach has been taken to poverty eradication. Since the start of the Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, significant advances have

been made. At the Millennium Summit of 2000, Governments agreed to reduce poverty by half by 2015. Our way of thinking has also changed over the past decade: we now view poverty as multi-dimensional. There has been an increase in Official Development Assistance and an overall enhancement of financing for development. The idea that each country is responsible for its development is widely accepted and many countries have thus developed national development strategies such as PRSPs. There has also been improved coordination within the United Nations system.

Mr. Ocampo noted that despite these improvements, 20 per cent of the world's population, and half the population of LDCs still live in poverty. Why have we fallen short? One explanation is that the link between poverty, growth and policy is not clear. The two most important dimensions are the challenges of generating employment and persistent and increasing income inequality. Unemployment reached new heights in 2005. Underemployment and less secure employment are also increasing. There has also been a rise in income inequality. To best address these issues, national development strategies are needed. International strategies should be evaluated in regards to their impact on human development.

Professor Peter Townsend started his presentation by proclaiming that we are at a turning point, the United Nations has an important role to play. He illustrated the point that overall there has been a decline in poverty, though aggregate statistics hide regional variation. For example, Asia has been very successful but sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern Europe have witnessed increases in poverty. Despite these efforts, almost 1 in 5 people in the world still live in poverty. The best hope to meet the MDG is to emulate successful cases of poverty reduction such as the OECD countries, which have drastically reduced poverty through universal social security systems. Professor Townsend concluded with two recommendations for addressing poverty. The first is to view social security and a decent standard of living as fundamental rights, and the second that universal social security systems are the most promising way to alleviate poverty in developing countries.

Ms. Wahu Kaara reminded the forum constituents that poverty is a human construct, not a natural state and therefore poverty eradication is an ethical imperative of human kind. Ms. Kaara called for partnerships between government and civil society and strategies that are informed by people's experience. The basis of partnerships and poverty eradication strategies should be justice, not charity.

## **Conclusions/Recommendations**

- National development strategies are needed to eradicate poverty. Such strategies should give attention to employment and inequality;
- International strategies to eradicate poverty should be evaluated in regards to their impact on human development;
- Poverty eradication strategies should be informed by experience and successes such as those in OECD countries, where universal social security systems have been highly effective in eradicating poverty;
- A rights-based approach to poverty eradication is important. Social security and a decent standard of living are fundamental rights and should be treated as such;
- United Nations leadership and partnerships between United Nations agencies, between the United Nations system and civil society, and between governments, the

United Nations and civil society are important and effective means of successfully addressing poverty.

## **SESSION 1: REDUCING HUNGER AND EXTREME POVERTY**

**Wednesday, 15 November 2006**

**10:00 - 11:15, Conference Room 2**

### **Moderator**

Mr. Prabhu Pingali, Director, Agricultural and Development Economics Division, FAO

### **Speakers**

Ms. Rajul Pandya-Lorch, Head, 2020 Vision for Food, Agriculture, and the Environment Initiative, and Chief of Staff, Director General's Office, International Food Policy Research Institute

Mr. David Beckmann, President, Bread for the World

Mr. Roberto Bissio, Executive Director, Third World Institute; Coordinator, Social Watch

### **Session organizers**

FAO, IFAD, WFP and UN-HABITAT organized the session and prepared the background note.

## **Background Note**

### **Trends in Hunger and Extreme Poverty**

Half way through the time period for reaching the millennium development goals (1990-2015) the progress with achieving the poverty target presents a mixed picture of success in some parts of the world (China, East Asia) and failure in others (sub-Saharan Africa). Progress in hunger reduction the picture is discouraging. Virtually no progress has been made towards the realization of the World Food Summit target of halving the number of undernourished people from the 1990-92 level by 2015. Recent data confirm that since 1990-92, the undernourished population in the developing countries declined from 823 million to 820 million, only by 3 million people. This corresponded to a reduction in the proportion of undernourished from 20 percent in 1990-92 to 17 percent in 2001-2003. However, progress over this period was slower than over the previous two decades.

### **The hunger-poverty nexus**

Poverty in developing countries is predominantly a rural phenomenon, both in that the majority of the poor tend to live in rural areas and that poverty rates in rural areas are almost always higher than in urban areas. The rural poor derive their living directly from agriculture or from activities closely linked to it, while participation of rural households in agricultural activities is as high as 90 per cent in some countries.

Poverty and hunger are closely related. Extreme poverty is almost always at the root of chronic hunger. Poor people do not possess the means to access and/or produce

the food necessary for an active and healthy life and are more vulnerable to destitution following extreme events. However, hunger also impacts negatively on longer term sustainable development through its negative impact on health, disease and mortality. Hunger causes the loss of millions of productive life years as a result of disease, disabilities and premature death.

The “hunger–low productivity–extreme poverty” nexus acts as a trap, a vicious circle from which poor rural people find difficult to escape.

Hunger also have adverse impact on the effectiveness of effort to achieve other Millennium Development Goals: malnutrition is a major cause of child and maternal mortality and of low rates of school attendance; the struggle for survival may cause the overexploitation or misuse of natural resources which, in turn, compromises people’s food security, thus giving rise to a vicious circle of poverty.

### **Lessons learnt in the fight against poverty and hunger**

Lessons from past experiences, including those of the three Rome based food agencies (FAO, IFAD and WFP), can provide important insights for general policy directions.

*Pro-poor agricultural growth plays a critical role* in enhancing food security and reducing poverty in developing countries. Countries which gave due importance to the development of the agricultural sector and the rural areas have performed better in terms of hunger and poverty reduction.

*Pro-poor institutions are vital for sustainable reduction of poverty* and the poor must be empowered to negotiate investments in the rural and agricultural sectors. Impact is higher when project designs involve beneficiary participation.

*Access to land and other natural resources is vital* for ensuring sustainable reduction of poverty and ensuring food security.

*Hunger reduction is a prerequisite* for fast development and poverty reduction. Poverty reduction and progress towards other MDGs is faster when carefully targeted programmes provide immediate hunger relief.

*Access to improved technology, especially for small-scale farmers,* can accelerate poverty reduction through increased crop yields and higher incomes. Technologies that build on and complement local knowledge tend to be particularly effective in meeting the needs of poor farmers in marginal environments.

*Bottom-up and participatory approaches* through local institutions, managed by local communities, are the most effective ways of sustainable poverty reduction. Empowering poor people involves local capacity building and the enhancing of legal and property rights and access to resources, especially for vulnerable people. It is essential to strengthen the political leverage of rural people.

*Equitable and secure access to resources* can accelerate poverty reduction. Traditional supply side policies must be combined with enhanced access to productive assets, especially land and water as well as technologies and support services. More equitable access to land requires changes in policies, legislation and institutions both at the national level and by local communities.

*International trade can contribute to reductions in hunger and poverty,* but the benefits are neither automatic nor universal. The pace and sequencing of trade reforms is crucial as is the existence of policies and programmes for the most vulnerable, who stand to lose

from the impacts of trade.

*Public investment in agriculture* such as in infrastructure, agricultural research, education and extension, *is essential*. But the share of agriculture and rural development in actual public expenditures in the developing countries does not reflect the importance of the sector to their national economies and the livelihood of their populations.

*Development assistance for agriculture and rural development has to increase in volume and targeted at the neediest countries and regions*. Development assistance is essential for very poor countries, and it is particularly critical for agriculture. Yet, external assistance to agriculture has declined significantly in real terms from the early 1980s and has not been targeting the neediest countries sufficiently.

*Peace and stability are sine qua non conditions for growth and poverty reduction*. Violence and severe economic and political disruptions hit the poorest and most vulnerable populations particularly hard and pushes them into chronic destitution.

### **Emerging policy challenges in a changing world context**

*Designing participatory development interventions*. Reduction of poverty and hunger is not just a matter of increasing income on aggregates and producing enough food. Extreme inequality in distributing development benefits lie at the heart of much of the woes of the world today. The challenge of involving the poor and the hungry in designing appropriate investment interventions lies at the root of development policy making. Building capacity so that the poor can effectively engage in development, giving their voices due weight, channelling more resources to their welfare, and involving responsive civil societies and the poor in policy dialogues are some of the major policy challenge that the development community faces today.

*Urbanization and the transformation of food markets*. Rapid urbanization in developing countries poses a new set of issues for poverty and hunger reduction. Rising urban food demand and diet diversification induce an increasingly commercial orientation of production systems, an increasing dominance of agribusiness, private standards on food safety and quality and new forms of contractual arrangements between buyers and sellers along the food marketing chain.

There is a need to ensure that small farmers are equipped with the necessary knowledge, technology and have access to cost-reducing public investments. The development of rural and urban areas must be addressed in an integrated manner in order to promote market integration with benefits to both urban and rural areas and to stem premature urbanization. Infrastructure development and institutions are key interventions in this regard. Strengthening the development of secondary cities and towns has proven to be an effective way of furthering rural-urban linkages and achieving balanced and sustainable territorial development.

*Resource use and resource degradation*. Rapid and extensive degradation of ecosystem services is exacerbating poverty and food insecurity in the developing world. Because many ecosystem services are not traded in markets, markets fail to provide appropriate signals for efficient allocation and sustainable use of the services.

A major task therefore is to devise and implement appropriate economic and financial instruments to influence behaviour, such as: the elimination of subsidies that promote excessive use of ecosystem services and the promotion of market based approaches,

including user fees and payments for environmental and ecosystem services. In addition, strengthening institutional and environmental governance mechanisms, including the empowerment of local communities, is fundamental.

*Science and technology for development.* Rapid advances in science and technology are opening up new opportunities. It is important to harness this knowledge both for small scale primary producers, as well as for activities such as processing, distribution and meeting grades and standards. The key is to remove obstacles to access by smallholder farmers and small rural enterprises. Biotechnology involves promises and risks. In most countries, the scientific, political, economic or institutional basis needs to be built in order provide adequate safeguards for biotechnology development and application, and to reap all the potential benefits.

## Session Summary

The World Food Summit Declaration sets a target of having the number of undernourished people by 2015 from the 1990-92 level. The Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 1 refers to the reduction in the proportion of hungry and poor. In other words, progress towards MDG 1 does not refer to absolute numbers of people but rather proportions of people. Even if MDG 1 would be reached, the number of hungry people would still be very high and the fight would not be over. Public investment in infrastructure, agricultural research, education and extension is essential in stimulating private investment, agricultural production and resource conservation. Peace, economic and political stability and good governance have also been critical in facilitating the creation of favourable policy environments for growth and food security.

The some of the essential elements of a coherent policy agenda to design the fight against poverty and hunger are:

- (a) Focus on “hotspots” where a significant proportion of people suffer from malnutrition and high incidence of poverty;
- (b) Focus on the long term while responding to immediate needs;
- (c) Enhance productivity of smallholder agriculture;
- (d) Invest in developing the capacity of poor men and women and promote their participation in the development process.

Ms. Rajul Pandya-Lorch provided an analysis of the progress made in achieving MDG 1. The progress made was not so evident if China was taken out from the figures, in fact there had been no progress except in big countries like China, India and Brazil, despite all the summits held on this issue and all the efforts made. The only way forward is to elaborate new policies which take into account landless people, urbanization and demographic transition.

Regarding the issue of ageing, it is important to take into account the fact that the population is living longer. It is also true that old people are forced to go back to work as the middle age population is disappearing in many countries because of HIV/AIDS and migration.

Mr. David Beckmann addressed the issue of political commitment in the fight against hunger and poverty. The important role of governmental organizations and of specialized organizations, such as farmers associations, to change the policies aimed at food security and poverty reduction was stressed. In addition, pro-poor institutions have

to keep on pushing towards the aim of the eradication of poverty on the frontline.

In the context of poverty reduction and food security, positive examples of government initiatives exist like the case of Guatemala where the government has coordinated effective programmes. The United Nations system should study best practices like the Chinese case and develop ad hoc strategies to fight hunger and poverty as well as indicators for both developed and developing countries.

The issue of political will was also addressed by Mr. Roberto Bissio. In 1995, the commitment to poverty reduction and gender equality was strong, but ten years later the goals related to MDGs were not met in many countries. Regarding indicators, social indicators were completely missing as was the necessary data to measure the progress made.

The MDGs were formulated in a modest way; they were not ambitious nonetheless they will probably not be achieved. If in the past the achievement was considered to depend on money and funds nowadays what it is needed is voice and political will, especially in LDCs.

The following issues were raised during the interactive dialogue:

- (a) The need to consider sustainable development in the achievement of MDG 1;
- (b) The problem of corruption in the effective use of aid;
- (c) The roles of older people in dealing with poverty and hunger;
- (d) The problem of subsidies in the development of agriculture in LDCs;
- (e) The inheritance left by colonialism in Africa and the exploitation of resources by colonialist countries;
- (f) The need for capacity building in LDCs.

IFAD raised the following points:

- (a) The need for indicators to show the progress made and for instruments to take into account the situation of the very poor;
- (b) The importance of the dialogue with the poor and hungry;
- (c) The need for capacity building especially in agriculture and fishery;
- (d) The importance of food sovereignty.

The role of hunger reduction, not only in the fight against poverty, but also in the achievement of the other 7 MDGs was stressed by WFP. For example, school feeding programmes would increase school attendance. The importance of agriculture for the fight against both poverty and hunger was also raised.

UN-HABITAT addressed the issue of the urban poor: the combined impact of high density occupation and the lack of predictable income as well as access to shelter, water and sanitation rendered the urban poor as vulnerable as their rural counterparts to poor health, disease and malnutrition. With regard to the relation between rural and urban development, the two areas should be recognized as two ends of the same continuum of human settlements.

## Conclusions/Recommendations

- Public investment particularly in infrastructure, agricultural research, education and extension is essential in stimulating private investment, agricultural production and resource conservation;
- A coherent policy agenda is important to fight against poverty and hunger. Some of the essential elements are:

- (a) Focus on “hotspots” where a significant proportion of people suffer from malnutrition and high incidence of poverty;
  - (b) Focus on the long term while responding immediate needs;
  - (c) Enhance productivity of smallholder agriculture;
  - (d) Invest in developing the capacity of the poor men and women and promote their participation in the development process.
- Policies should take into account landless people, urbanization and demographic transition;
  - Political will is a key element to reducing hunger and poverty. Governmental organizations and specialized organizations, such as farmers associations, must change the policies aimed at food security and poverty reduction;
  - Hunger reduction is pivotal not only in the fight against poverty, but also in the achievement of the other 7 MDGs.

**SESSION 2: ELIMINATING CHILD POVERTY AND BREAKING THE INTERGENERATIONAL CYCLE OF DISADVANTAGE**  
**Wednesday, 15 November 2006**  
**15:00-16:30, Conference Room 2**

**Moderator**

Ms. Elizabeth Gibbons, Chief, Global Policy, Division of Policy and Planning, UNICEF

**Speakers**

Prof. Peter Townsend, Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research

Prof. David Gordon, University of Bristol and Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research

Ms. Jo Maher, HelpAge International

Prof. Michael Samson, Economic Policy Research Institute, Cape Town

**Session organizers**

UNICEF and HelpAge

**Background Note**

Poverty is currently the world’s largest source of harm; it causes more death, disease, suffering and misery than any other social phenomenon. Each year, more than 10 million young children die – mainly from preventable causes which, due to poverty, go untreated. About a half million children under 14 die each year due to AIDS, though prevention and treatment should protect both them and their parents. Across the developing world, over a billion children – one in two – experience some form of severe material deprivation. The long list of vulnerable children includes almost all children who have been orphaned by war or disease. The poverty that grips these children today has the potential to impact the lives of generations to come.

There is no need, and no excuse, for any child in the 21st century, anywhere, to starve, go without clean drinking water, toilets or access to basic health care and education, or to live in institutions. Globally, new opportunities are emerging from innovative

approaches to breaking the poverty cycle, preventing deprivations and securing access to services and supports for children and their families, including elderly care-givers.

The presentations in this Session will highlight the scale and dimensions of poverty children experience in the developing world; explain the intergenerational cycle of disadvantage; explore the links between economic growth, poverty reduction, social protection and improved access to services for girls and boys; and review a number of innovative approaches to break the poverty cycle even in ‘poor’ and ‘low capacity’ country environments.

## Session Summary

In her opening remarks, Ms. Elizabeth Gibbons highlighted two aspects warranting special attention to children in a discussion on poverty reduction. Poverty affects children disproportionately, with over one billion children—half the children in the world—suffering from severe deprivation of basic human need. Child poverty is distinct from adult poverty in that it presents a major loss of opportunity with life-long consequences that are likely to be irreversible. Given the extent of child poverty and its impact on children’s lives, Ms Gibbons called for poverty analyses, national development strategies and policy priorities to pay special attention to child poverty.

Prof. David Gordon’s presentation contrasted rhetoric on ending child poverty with the actual realities confronting children in poor countries. Using comparative data on child mortality from developing countries, he showed that children are bearing the brunt of extreme poverty. Prof. Gordon pointed to persistent and growing inequality within countries and among nations, arguing that child poverty is to a large degree an issue of redistribution. Accordingly, the neo-classical theory on economic growth does not provide the correct answer to this problem.

Speaking on the extent of child poverty, Prof. Gordon highlighted that from the one billion children suffering from severe deprivation of basic human need about 650 million suffer from two or more severe deprivations, such as lack of access to food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education – showing the extent of absolute poverty. He argued that current policy responses are skewed towards human capital, namely food and education, whereas research shows that lack of access to physical capital, namely shelter and water & sanitation is even more widespread. He challenged the audience by putting a price to saving lives: it would cost only \$13 billion a year for ten years to provide basic health and nutrition for every person on the planet; in comparison Americans spend \$30 billion annually on pizza and Europeans \$12 billion on dog and cat food.

Prof. Peter Townsend used his presentation to call for an international child benefit as a policy measure to alleviate child poverty. He underlined that current anti-poverty strategies for developing countries – broad-based economic growth, overseas aid, human capital/education, minimal social safety nets, and debt relief – have proved to be relatively unsuccessful; thus extreme poverty persists. These strategies have not had a direct impact on the poor, and their effectiveness has been compromised by policy conditionalities for loans and debt relief, the use of cost-recovery policies in basic social services, excessive privatization, unregulated globalization and unequal terms of trade. The World Bank’s current advocacy for investment in human capital, while important, will

have a postponed effect on poverty eradication, since it takes time to raise a better educated generation. Against this background, Prof. Townsend called for a re-prioritization of current anti-poverty strategies and urged that more attention be paid to the potential of international social policy in providing instruments for more immediate and direct poverty alleviation. One such instrument is that of an international child benefit, and Prof. Townsend made concrete suggestions for how to put such a universal benefit into practice. He proposed the establishment of a United Nations Child Investment Fund and pointed to new sources of development finance that could be tapped into in order to raise revenue for children: global environment taxes, taxes in currency flows, special drawing rights, global lottery or premium bonds, and increased migrant remittances.

Ms. Jo Maher discussed the potential of social pensions as one element of a social protection strategy in developing countries. While targeted at the elderly, social pensions have proved to have a positive impact on children's wellbeing therefore on breaking the intergeneration cycle of disadvantage. This is particularly the case in countries severely affected by HIV/AIDS, where 60 per cent of orphaned children live in households headed by their grandparents. In these settings, social pensions not only serve to realize older people's rights, but to reduce poverty, tackle the impact of HIV/AIDS, and effectively support the most vulnerable, including children. Evidence from social pension schemes in four Sub-Saharan countries (Lesotho, Ethiopia, Zambia, and Mozambique) shows their positive impact on households, such as increased consumption, increased school-related expenditures, protection from livelihoods shocks, and investment in income generation. Ms Maher highlighted that despite their affordability, social pensions schemes have been an underused policy instrument in many countries. Coverage data from 17 countries surveyed by HelpAge International shows that the majority of old people do not have access to a social pension because the schemes are either means-tested or the age limit is set too high. Ms Maher urged that social pensions be mainstreamed in policy responses in developing countries.

Prof. Michael Samson's presentation focused on the positive impact of social transfers (regular cash payments to poor households, such as social pensions and child support grants) in the developing world. Backing arguments made by Jo Maher and the other presenters, Prof. Samson showed that social transfers produce remarkable social outcomes. The evidence from countries like South Africa, Lesotho and Namibia show improved health, education and nutrition among children as well as increased labour market participation in the recipient households. He argued that the evidence does not support concerns often raised with respect to social transfer schemes: that they result in dependency and that they are not affordable. Rather, Prof. Samson cited evidence demonstrating the opposite is true; regular transfers enable household members to search for employment and increase their chances of finding a job.

He also argued that while the cost of social transfer programmes could be substantial – up to 3 per cent of national income – they have multiple benefits. Social transfer programmes expand fiscal resources and stimulate short-term economic growth; they also contribute to long-term growth and development by breaking the inter-generational poverty cycle. Prof. Samson argued against the use of conditionalities in social transfer schemes saying that conditionalities deprive the poor of the freedom to choose appropriate services and make effective decisions to improve household welfare. Conditionalities can also be expensive, inefficient and – in the worst case – they can be a major factor in

excluding the poorest from access to social services.

The open discussion following the panel highlighted, among others the need to:

- (a) Give children a voice in research and policy responses aimed at reducing the poverty children are exposed to;
- (b) Strengthen the family as part of policy responses as it forms the nucleus of social protection for children;
- (c) Identify policy instruments beyond social transfers to reach those children who live outside the family; and to
- (d) Combine social protection policies with other opportunity enhancing measures, such as legal action to protect women's property rights.

## **Conclusions/Recommendations**

- Poverty analyses, national development strategies and policy priorities should pay special attention to child poverty;
- Current policy responses are skewed towards human capital, namely food and education, whereas research shows that lack of access to physical capital, namely shelter and water & sanitation is even more widespread;
- An international child benefit should be instituted as a policy measure to alleviate child poverty;
- A United Nations Child Investment Fund should be established drawing on new sources of development finance;
- Social pensions are one element of a social protection strategy in developing countries. While targeted at the elderly, social pensions have proved to have a positive impact on children's wellbeing therefore on breaking the intergeneration cycle of disadvantage. Despite their affordability, social pension schemes have been an under-used policy instrument in many countries;
- Evidence does not support concerns often raised with respect to social transfer schemes: that they result in dependency and that they are not affordable. Rather, the opposite is true; regular transfers enable household members to search for employment and increase their chances of finding a job;
- We should re-prioritize current anti-poverty strategies and pay more attention to the potential of international social policy in providing instruments for more immediate and direct poverty alleviation;
- Conditionalities in social transfer schemes deprive the poor of the freedom to choose appropriate services and make effective decisions to improve household welfare.

## **SESSION 3: BUILDING PRODUCTIVE CAPACITIES AND FACILITATING ACCESS TO FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

**Wednesday, 15 November 2006**

**16:40-18:00, Conference Room 2**

### **Moderator**

Mr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Assistant-Secretary General for Economic Development, DESA

### **Speakers**

Mr. Charles Gore, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, UNCTAD

Mr. Augusto de la Torre, Senior Regional Financial Sector Advisor Latin America & the Caribbean, World Bank

Mr. Kadmiel Wekwete, Director, United Nations Capital Development Fund, Local Governance Unit

### **Session organizers**

UNCTAD, DESA and UNCDF

## **Background Note**

### **Productive Capacities and Poverty Reduction: Links and Processes**

Substantial poverty reduction, rather than marginal poverty alleviation, occurs if productive capacities are developed and utilized in such a way that the working age population becomes more and more productively employed. The core processes through which productive capacities are developed are: (a) capital accumulation; (b) technological progress; and (c) structural change. The two key ingredients of these processes are finance and knowledge. The processes are strongly interrelated. All are also strongly affected by the form and degree of integration of a country with the global economy as well as by national and international institutions.

The development and utilization of productive capacities matter for poverty reduction, because there is a virtuous circle between the development of productive capacities and economic growth. However, there is also virtuous circle between the development of productive capacities and poverty reduction. The development of productive capacities can lead to poverty reduction through:

- (a) The employment channel: Progressive absorption of unemployed and underemployed into expanding economic activities with higher productivity;
- (b) The price channel: Lowering the prices of wage goods, particularly food prices, and the reduction of the instability of those prices;
- (c) The governance channel: Strengthening the productive base enables increased government revenues, which can allow improved public services and increase the fiscal space which is essential for good governance.

At the same time poverty reduction can lead to the development of productive capacities through:

- (a) The human development channel - associated with increased expenditure on education, health, nutrition and skills formation;
- (b) The consumption demand channel - through which increasing demand acts as

- a stimulus to the full utilization and development of productive capacities;
- (c) The entrepreneurship channel - in which poverty reduction is associated with reduced insecurity enabling less short-term opportunism and more risk taking.

Ideally policy-makers should seek to start, sustain and accelerate a cumulative process in which the development of productive capacities and the growth of demand mutually reinforce each other. Inclusive development (or pro-poor growth) will be achieved if this is done in such a way that the labour force becomes more productively and fully employed, the prices of wage goods fall and fiscal space is expanded, and poverty reduction will itself reinforce the cumulative process.

There are significant differences between poverty reduction through a policy focus on productive capacities and the proposals in session two, it is important not to polarize these positions. What is needed is a twin track approach to poverty reduction which encompasses long term expansion of productive capacities and related productive employment and the alleviation of present destitution through social security transfers, as argued by Professor Townsend.

### **The Role of the Public Sector in Broadening Access to Finance**

Economists agree that some government intervention is needed to promote financial development; there is less agreement as to its form. There are two opposing views: the interventionists argue for an active public sector involvement in mobilizing and allocating financial resources to broaden access to credit, as private markets have failed to do the job; and the laissez faire group contends that government involvement harms more than it helps, and that its efforts should focus instead on improving the enabling environment to help ease agency and entry problems, and reduce transactions costs.

At the heart of the “enabling policy environment” is a clear vision of the respective roles of the public sector and private stakeholders in bringing about an inclusive financial sector. More recently, a third view has emerged, a middle ground which favours direct government intervention, but in non-traditional ways. The pro-market activists call for a limited public sector role in financial markets, recognizing that institutional efficiency is the economy’s primary goal (in this sense, it is closer to the laissez faire position). Pro-market activists state, however, that government action may be needed in the short-run, because newly built institutions take time to grow. The report, “Building inclusive financial sectors for development”, notes that while there are core government roles (maintaining economic stability, assuring an overall conducive policy environment, and regulation and supervision), much is driven outside the government sphere.

The purpose of the presentation is to show how pro-market activism has worked in practice, not to give a comprehensive evaluation of policies in force, or judge which type has been successful. It will be shown that the country experiences raise further questions, and that additional study is needed to understand whether pro-market activism is a viable option to developing inclusive financial sectors for development.

## **The Role of Local Government in Rural Finance**

Traditionally local governments in rural areas deal with local government finance, which includes grants from central governments, local taxes and fees, and a range of funding from donors and other non-governmental actors. Therefore the policy and intellectual debates tend to revolve around fiscal decentralization issues and the various modalities of transfers and conditionalities. Most of these transferred funds go to satisfy the local governments' primary mandates of providing infrastructure and services, and other key national policy objectives, which are manifest in sector policies- health, education and basic infrastructure provision.

In most developing countries it has been observed that there is an inefficiency gap between potential supply in rural finance provision and current achievements, an insufficiency gap between legitimate demand, and potential supply, particularly in the rural sector, and a feasibility gap between political expectations of an all inclusive finance and legitimate demand of those in real need. In the Africa region these gaps are huge and continue to grow in spite of the many internally and externally funded programmes targeted to achieve rural development.

The CGAP Donor Information Resource Centre 2004 has highlighted the following challenges as characterizing rural finance: dispersed demand, high information and transaction costs, weak institutional capacity, crowding –out effect due to subsidized and directed credit, seasonality, farming risks and lack of usable collateral. These and many other country specific challenges have marginalized many rural African communities and have made them “unbankable”.

The recent wave of Decentralization in many African countries has been characterized by devolution and democratization of local governments. This has meant a greater empowerment of local communities, adoption of democratic local governance, more significant transfers of resources to locally elected bodies and greater horizontal and vertical accountability.

Local governments are responsible for feeder roads, for provision of schools, clinics and water supply –they create the necessary infrastructure, which is the lifeblood of economic activity. This touches on the fundamental issues of reaching the remote villages, of having effective land records and of preparing legal plans on which built environment assets can be created. While these functions are very well developed in the urban local government sectors, they are sadly missing among rural local governments and this is a major drawback because most of the assets that people have are not recorded –their land, their houses, their livestock and their fruit gardens. This is indeed the collateral that they have, and it requires local governments to make it usable through recording these assets and giving them the necessary legal endorsements.

In many developing countries, there is a huge opportunity for expanding the frontier of finance in rural areas by tapping on the power and potential that local governments have and could readily use. Local governments are therefore an important part of unravelling these mysteries of capital through fixing the economic potential of assets; integrating dispersed information into one system; making people accountable; making assets fungible; networking people; and protecting transactions.

## Session Summary

There is a need for new strategies both in terms of national strategies and in the nature of the global partnership for poverty reduction. Whilst Professors Townsend and Gordon in on Eliminating Child Poverty and Breaking the Intergenerational Cycle of Disadvantage focused on welfare state mechanisms (associated with transfers, benefits and social security), Session 3 emphasized development state mechanisms focusing on production and employment.

Mr. Charles Gore noted that UNCTAD focuses on productive capacities to interpret regional divergences in development patterns and compares the role of productive capacities in countries' development policies.

The key to substantial poverty reduction in developing countries is the development of productive capacities in a way in which the population of working age becomes more fully and productively employed. Productive capacities develop through three closely interrelated processes:

- (a) capital accumulation
- (b) technological progress
- (c) structural changes

All three processes are interrelated and also strongly affected by the form and degree of integration of a country with the global economy as well as by national and international institutions. The development of productive capacities leads to poverty reduction through: the employment channel, the price channel and the governance channel. Preferably policy-makers should search for a process in which the development of productive capacities and the growth of demand reinforce each other.

Pro-poor growth will be achieved if productive capacities and demand reinforces each other in a way that the labour force becomes more productively and fully employed, the prices of wage goods fall and fiscal space is expanded. While structural adjustments programmes in Africa did not enhance productive capacities, East Asian countries achieved substantial poverty reduction through long-term development strategies which developed their productive capacities and associated productive employment.

Augusto de la Torre emphasized a major component of productive capacities: access to finance. Even market activists acknowledge that government action may be needed to build productive capacities in the short-run. The report, "Building inclusive financial sectors for development", notes that while there are core government roles, much is driven outside the government sphere. Augusto de la Torre presents the NAFIN, an example on how pro-market activism has worked in practice

NAFIN (National Financiera) is a World Bank system of Internet-based receivable finance. It's an innovative solution that provides access to financial resources to SMEs in developing countries. It can be replicated from one country to another. Competing banks post proposals and SMEs select the most interesting offer at the lowest interest rate. Additional study is needed, however, to fully understand whether pro-market activism is a viable option to developing inclusive financial sectors for development.

Mr. Kadmiel Wekwete raised the issue of scale in this debate. Access to finance at the local scale has proved fundamental for grassroots development. In most developing countries it has been observed that there are insufficiency gaps between potential supply in rural finance provision and current achievements and between legitimate demand and

potential supply. In the Africa region these gaps are huge and continue to grow in spite of the many internally and externally funded programmes targeted to achieve rural development.

Country specific challenges such as dispersed demand, high information and transaction costs, weak institutional capacity, crowding out effect, seasonality, farming risks and lack of usable collateral have marginalized many rural African communities. Functions to address these problems can be well developed in the urban local government sectors, but they are often missing among rural local governments.

Support to local institutions can transform the whole economy. A major focus of next decade development policy should be the role of local government in developing productive capacities and related infrastructure. Local governments should focus on the economic potential of assets through integrating dispersed information into one system; making people accountable; making assets fungible; networking people; and protecting transactions.

Whilst there are significant differences between a focus on Productive Capacities and the Townsend/Gordon perspective, it is important not to polarize these two positions. What is needed is a twin-track approach which encompasses long-term expansion of productive capacities and the meeting of immediate needs.

In the open discussion that took place, several NGOs from developing countries and students questioned the exact meaning of “productive capacities”. They asked what appropriate strategy was needed to implement programmes and training to reach the poor, without encountering corruption problems. The audience also raised the question of scale, emphasizing local governments’ dependence on external revenues and the need for specific strategies to help local players understanding and improving their productive capacities.

## **Conclusions/Recommendations**

- Pro-poor growth will be achieved if productive capacities and demand reinforce each other in a way that the labour force becomes more productively and fully employed, the prices of wage goods fall and fiscal space is expanded;
- Employment is central to poverty eradication;
- The active role of local government in developing productive capacities and related infrastructure should be a major focus of next decade development policy;
- There are significant differences between poverty reduction through a policy focus on productive capacities and the proposals in session two, it is important not to polarize these positions. What is needed is a twin track approach to poverty reduction which encompasses long term expansion of productive capacities and related productive employment and the alleviation of present destitution through social security transfers, as argued by Professor Townsend.

**SESSION 4: EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN: ACCESS TO ASSETS**  
**Thursday, 16 November 2006**  
**10:00-11:20, Conference Room 2**

**Moderator**

Dr. Caren A. Grown, Senior Scholar and Co-director of the Gender Equality and Economy Program, The Levy Economics Institute at Bard College

**Speakers**

Ms. Haoua Dia MP, President Senegalese Women's Council

Ms. Jan Peterson, Chair, Huairou Commission and Member, High-Level Commission on the Legal Empowerment of the Poor

Dr. Cheryl Doss, Professor of Economics and Director of the Graduate Studies Program in International Relations, Yale University

**Session organizers**

UNDP, UN HABITAT, UNFPA and UNIFEM

**Background Note**

“Women are still grossly denied the right to adequate housing and related rights such as land and water. We live in a world today where millions of women are homeless and landless. Many millions more due to non-implementation of their rights to housing and land, are one step away from becoming homeless and landless. Poverty is a critical overlaying factor that intersects with the other factors to deny women their right[s]...”

Miloon Kothari, Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, March 2005

Poverty has the power to simultaneously disenfranchise, deny and disempower. Its effects are multiple – economic, political, social and cultural. Yet they are not equal for all groups or by sex. Too many women in too many countries confront constrained opportunities and are unable access to the productive resources and assets that exist within their societies.

This gender-based “gap” refers to gender inequality in ownership and control over wealth and assets, including land, housing, savings and other financial assets, and livestock, among other things. Gender biases are repeated along the different channels through which men and women acquire assets - through inheritance, purchases or transfers from the state. Limiting women’s ability to accumulate wealth and access services has far-reaching implications for inclusive and gender-equitable development.

In policy and practice, the response has been directed at the need to establish, standardize and implement effective frameworks that can overcome these different barriers in different spheres of society. A country’s legal framework, especially marital and inheritance regimes, sets the stage for women’s ability to accumulate assets. However, legal codes alone are not sufficient to ensure equal access. Social norms, cultural practices and market institutions provide further constraints and opportunities. In the case of Senegal, women continue to suffer from significant access gaps although the country is a signatory to various international agreements and proclaims citizen equality in the Constitution.

The gender gap – both in terms of assets and access- is not a new concept. What are open for debate are the policies and programmes to address it. Discussions should

involve reassessing ways to partner with the poor and rethinking how things should be done. One approach involves assisting women to organize as the implementers and evaluators of the kind of changes they want. It calls for power sharing and shifting resources and decision-making. It requires looking at the share of funds going to research and professionals versus the flows received by community driven initiatives. Networks of grassroots women's organizations are already entrenched in these topics through their work on issues of land, housing and basic services. What is needed now is to learn about, apply and multiply them.

Additional discussion is merited on how women's access to assets impacts a country's overall development, such as achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Constraints and obstacles to opportunities mean more women are less educated and healthy, and more are vulnerable and marginalized. Within countries, questions of access may vary by region, province and town, and across social groups. In Senegal, there has been a call for the government to promote the decentralization of healthcare as a means to improve women's access to the system, particularly for those living in rural areas. Maternal and infant healthcare, family planning and HIV/AIDS prevention are among the list of services where advocates claim that access for women has been compromised under current policies. Accounting for these differences across and within countries will require flexible approaches rooted in local realities.

## **Session Summary**

The interaction between access, empowerment and poverty formed the context for the session jointly hosted by UN-Habitat, UNDP, UNFPA and UNIFEM. The panel brought together practitioners, policymakers and field specialists to share experiences and strategies for bridging the gender-based gap affecting women's access to assets.

Panelists distinguished between the different sources and solutions for this divide. The ability to access, control and own productive assets – whether land, housing or savings and other financial assets – is one channel for empowering women and improving household welfare. Another is the ability to access and consume basic services like education and health care, which gives women the means to build their capabilities – knowledge and health –and provides them with the base necessary for strengthening their livelihoods. Limiting women's abilities in either of these instances has far-reaching implications for inclusive and gender-equitable development.

Panelists discussed a wide range of policy interventions that have demonstrated effectiveness in overcoming these limitations and expanding not only women's access to productive assets, but also their capabilities for full economic and social participation.

Dr. Caren Grown served as the panel's moderator. In opening the discussion, she recognized the importance of expanding women's ownership and control over productive assets. Whether this means being a land owner, businesswoman or savings account holder the effect is the same: the control of productive assets has been found directly and indirectly to reduce poverty, enhance household welfare and increase women's bargaining power. Dr. Grown noted the existing challenge for reinforcing these relationships stems from the fact that data presently collected on gender and assets is "woefully inadequate." Very few countries produce nationally representative data that capture the gender differences in ownership, control and use of assets. Cross-country comparisons

are not possible and the lack of empirical backing has undermined serious policy dialogue within countries.

Despite the lack of data, empirical evidence suggests that the magnitude of the gender gap is substantial. Dr. Grown stressed that there is no single solution for reducing it that will work in all countries. Interventions and reforms must address local norms and conditions to ensure consistent, sustainable implementation. When policy interventions and legal reforms are not country and context-specific, their maximum effectiveness is compromised. Dr. Grown concluded the introduction by providing an overview of the key topics that the panelists would address. Included were techniques for nationalizing or “domesticating” provisions of the “Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women” (CEDAW), harmonizing statutory and customary law, and organizing women at the community level for collective change.

The first panelist, Dr. Cheryl Doss of Yale University, continued the discussion by highlighting how productive assets impact the social and economic security of women. Women’s control and ownership of productive assets provides them with a means for income generation as well as a buffer against shocks. The resulting asset base also has powerful empowerment effects given the protection and platform it offers women in society and the economy. The principal channels for asset acquisition are through marriage, inheritance, gifts, markets and state and community (re)distribution. The marital and inheritance regimes used in a country play pivotal roles and condition the ability and degree of asset accumulation. Dr. Doss outlined the three categories of marital regimes. Law and practice may call for a separation of property within the marriage that allows for individual ownership of assets. A full community property regime pools the couple’s assets under joint ownership. A partial community property regime mixes some of the features of the other two. It allows for assets that are brought into the marriage to be owned separately while assets accumulated during the union are jointly owned. The relative advantage of community property marital regimes is that they recognize women’s non-monetary contributions to the household while regimes that provide for the separation of property help to protect women’s individually owned assets during the marriage.

Inheritance regimes can promote access to and the accumulation of productive assets depending on how they combine with marital regimes (i.e. if widows receive any of the deceased husband’s property). Inheritance regimes also involve other factors that condition whether women control and own assets: the level of testamentary freedom, the ability to divide estates, the provision for interstate succession laws and the inheritance rights of spouses. Dr. Doss’ presentation echoed the need for practitioners and policy-makers to recognize how a country’s unique legal and social framework will affect the type and pace of reforms as well as recommended policy interventions.

Ms. Jan Peterson, Chair of the Huairou Commission and a Member of the Commission for the Legal Empowerment of the Poor, spoke next about her extensive experience in collaborating with grassroots women’s organizations to secure land and housing rights. She argued that locally-driven actions provide a major resource for effectively understanding how to expand women’s access to assets. For her, the goal should be to leverage what is being done in communities and to build upon their successes. Ms. Peterson argued that a new vision of development partnership must be cultivated – partnerships that empower local women by providing them with the right context for asset acquisition, political presence and voice. While grassroots organizations vary in size and success, their

range demonstrates the different ways for effectively incorporating constituent voices into policy dialogue and enhancing their applicability and legitimacy.

Development partnerships between international agencies and grassroots networks such as Slum/Shackdwellers International, GROOTS International, and Streetnet demonstrate effective ways for bringing local voices into policy dialogue and reforms in order to enhance a programme's relevancy, sustainability and legitimacy. Ms. Peterson cited the Huairou Commission's work in grassroots-led mapping exercises in Kenya as a good practice. The activity relies on the use of existing community knowledge - of actors, power relations and assets - to generate a profile of local concerns and development priorities.

She noted that a first step in the empowerment of women is the establishment of "safe places" that function as meeting grounds for women to discuss, organize and act. Strategies for scaling up grassroots efforts from discussion to action include resource mobilization, new partnerships and paradigms, strategic technical assistance, and community organization. Clustering grassroots organizations can yield extremely effective results, enabling smaller groups to form collective masses, lead campaigns, effectively share knowledge and information and consolidate their positions and constituencies to promote relationships with external partners.

The third panelist expanded the discussion of empowerment beyond questions of assets and rights to include how women's livelihoods and well-being affect it. Ms. Haoua Dia, considered how her country was providing women with the services they needed to improve their capabilities and knowledge. For her, education and health services were the key policy levers for increasing women's ability to access assets, rights and voice in the context of a patriarchal society that considerably limits women's empowerment. While the empowerment of women through the expansion of access to basic services differs significantly from controlling productive assets, both strategies are critical for building women's capabilities to participate fully in a country's society and economy.

Ms. Dia noted that the patriarchal nature of Senegalese society leaves women dependent on their spouses and without the ability or space for individual choices, particularly in terms of social and economic decisions. The situation is amplified in rural areas, where women are largely illiterate, lack resources and work in the informal economy.

In Senegal, several promising initiatives are being rolled-out to improve women's access to education and health. Ms. Dia explained that the Senegalese government has achieved significant gains in programmes aiming to enhance the literacy and schooling of girls. However, a secondary problem has surfaced in that families continue to choose to invest more in boys for schooling. Ms. Dia also discussed the access-empowerment dynamic in relation to health services. Healthcare has been placed high on the agenda in Senegal, and a national health development plan reduced maternal and infant mortality and produced other desired health outcomes. Despite these successes, Ms. Dia recognized continuing challenges in terms of de facto discrimination, rural-urban disparities and the failure to integrate the informal economy into asset-building programmes. She cited the need to heighten awareness and link related policy interventions for added impact on women's well-being.

Comments from the floor drew attention to the fact that legal reform may not be sufficient as a stand-alone mechanism for expanding women's access to assets. Social norms, cultural practices and market institutions provide further constraints and opportu-

nities. Strategies to expand women's access to assets and basic services must recognize and address practical issues of implementation and participation, namely on-the-ground realities and practices. Implementation remains a challenge despite a global plan for action and several high-level public commitments to equal women's access (land, housing, infrastructure and services). As such, audience members argued that institutional reform must take place at the local authority level. Comments from the floor also supported the panelists' innovative practical examples like community poverty mapping in Kenya and Senegal's attempt to use education and health reform to empower women. The exchange of ideas between panelists and participants underscored the importance of creating networks for knowledge-sharing, peer learning and scaling up initiatives aimed at building the assets – both productive and for well-being – of women.

Dr. Grown's closing statement assessed the panelist presentations and discussion through the lens of gender equality. For her, gender equality means a world where all people – men and boys, women and girls – have basic capabilities (education, health) and opportunities for full economic, political and social participation. Gender norms and practices that prevent women (and sometimes men) from achieving this vision are inconsistent with poverty reduction and sustainable development. While enhancing women's access to and control over productive assets may have unintended and undesirable consequences, the answer is not to deny women the rights to own and control assets. Rather, policy-makers and practitioners must continually experiment and refine the range of strategies used to transform social norms that prevent women from achieving an adequate standard of living.

## Conclusions/Recommendations

- The ability to access, control and own productive assets is one channel for increasing women's wealth and income. Another is the ability to access and consume basic services like education and health care, which gives women the means to build their capabilities;
- Improving access to assets and services should be viewed within the broader social and economic reality of the country rather than idealizing or prescribing a single structure;
- Better data are needed. Very few countries produce nationally representative data that capture the gender differences in ownership, control and use of assets;
- Inheritance and marital regimes must be considered in addressing the question of women's access to assets;
- Locally-driven actions provide a major resource for effectively understanding how to expand women's access to assets and basic social services;
- Collaborating with local women's groups is a doubly empowering approach: it helps women acquire assets as well as increase their voice with project partners in government and policy decisions.

## **SESSION 5: MAINSTREAMING DECENT WORK INTO POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGIES**

**Thursday, 16 November 2006**

**11:20-12:45, Conference Room 2**

### **Moderator**

Mr. Riswanul Islam, Director, Economic and Labour Markets Analysis  
Department, ILO

### **Speakers**

Prof. Martha Chen, Harvard University

Mr. Claude Akpokavie, ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities

Dr. Ladis Columban Komba, Permanent Secretary of Labour, Tanzania

### **Session organizer**

ILO

### **Background Note**

Nearly half of the world's 2.8 billion workers are unable to earn enough to lift themselves and their households above the poverty line of US \$2 a day. Although most of the developing regions have seen a decline in the share of working poor in total employment, there is still much to be done. Having a regular job substantially reduces the risk of poverty, but to obtain a job is not always easy. The widening dispersion of wages and concerns over poverty amongst more vulnerable workers has focused attention on how to achieve reasonable wages, avoiding income inequality.

Poverty reduction is at the core of the ILO's mandate and values. "Working out of Poverty", the Director General's Report to the 2003 International Labour Conference, set out the range of decent work instruments that cut across all its four strategic objectives (full respect for workers rights and International labour standards, employment creations in quantitative and qualitative dimensions, social protection and social dialogue) and contributed to the fight against poverty.

In 2005 and 2006, significant progress was made in connecting the Decent Work Agenda with the fight against poverty at the national, regional and international levels. In September 2005, the Heads of State gathered at the United Nations General Assembly resolved "to make the goal of full employment and decent work for all, including for women and young people, a central objective of our relevant national and international policies...including poverty reduction strategies, as part of our effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals...".

The integration of the Decent Work Agenda within the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper process successfully underscored the importance of tripartite participation and social dialogue in deepening the national ownership of Poverty Reduction Strategies and in increasing the relevance of the Decent Work Agenda for effective poverty reduction at the country level. This has led to increased recognition by the international community of the importance of productive employment as a priority goal in the design, implementation and monitoring of Poverty Reduction Strategies. This has resulted in a notable change in the new generation of Poverty Reduction Strategies, which are more employment-friendly. There are now converging calls by national drivers of development strate-

gies and economic policies to assess the employment impact of financial and investment plans and of public expenditure frameworks.

The ILO will also provide support to improve the capabilities of governments and social partners to promote decent work through integrated local development strategies for low-income groups in rural communities and urban informal economies. ILO strategies and tools include, among other things, skills training, the development of cooperatives and small and medium-sized enterprise (SME), support to microfinance, and promoting labour-intensive works. It also entails practical action for eliminating child labour and forced labour, combating HIV/AIDS, fighting discrimination and advancing the rights of minorities and the vulnerable groups. The promotion of collective organization of informal economy operators, employers and workers and the promotion of practical strategies for social dialogue at the local level are part of this agenda.

In March 2006 The High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) agreed to undertake the development of a tool to support countries to give effect to their commitment to employment and decent work, to guide the management of the U.N system in this area. The facilitation of the assessment of the potential of the policies, strategies, programmes and activities of different U.N agencies individually and collectively in terms of employment and decent work outcomes was highlighted as a must. Within these activities, poverty eradication is one of the most important issues to be firstly addressed by the U.N system in general and the countries in particular.

The discussion in the panel will try to provide a "state-of-the-art" discussion on how to include the four dimensions of decent work into the actual practice of pro-poor policies, either from a macroeconomic or social policies point of view, or from the application of actual pro-poor policies, at the micro and meso-levels.

How both types of policies can effectively foster employment growth and also better quality employment, particularly among the most vulnerable groups, is a challenge. This would undoubtedly be linked with the four dimensions of decent work: employment creation in accordance with international standards, with social protection and using social dialogue.

We will discuss how these macro and micro policies can concretely foster good quality employment with rights and protection to the poorest directly or indirectly. Which are the main questions to be solved when developing a transfer programme? How can we be employment-friendly in education, health and migration issues? How rights or dialogue is embedded in the discussion of a national strategy or in a PRSP process? How macroeconomic policies are inclusive of topics like productivity, social protection, employment creation and poverty alleviation programmes? How to best develop a lens to see through it in an array of possible policies to achieve decent work directly or indirectly?

The need for practitioners in the international arena to mainstream decent work goals into their own activities, as well as the need for national policies to be more coherent in terms of economic and social policies to foster "good policies" taking decent work on board, is really a challenge and we would like to discuss it as a means of working out of poverty.

## Session Summary

The panel is tripartite in nature including the perspectives of workers, employers and governments regarding mainstreaming decent work into macro and micro policies.

The links between economic growth and poverty have been incomplete due to inadequate attention given to the employment outcome of growth. Despite high rates of economic growth achieved by the global economy in recent years, there have not been substantial improvements in the employment and labour market situation. Moreover, research has shown that while high rates of economic growth are a necessary precondition for poverty reduction, it is not sufficient. Productive employment and decent work provide the missing link between the economic growth and poverty reduction conundrum. It is against this backdrop that the international community has recently affirmed to make decent work a central objective in national and international development policies, as indicated most notably in the 2005 World Summit outcome document and the 2006 ECOSOC ministerial declaration. The time is now for all development partners to ensure that these commitments are realized and that decent work is indeed mainstreamed into all aspects of national poverty reduction strategies.

Translating the concept of decent work into an effective policy framework for poverty reduction will require three basic pillars: (a) an economy must attain high rates of economic growth on a sustained basis; (b) growth must be employment-intensive; (c) it is important for the poor to have the means (e.g., necessary education, skills, access to productive assets and financial resources) to utilize the economic opportunities that may be available.

In addition to productive employment, three other aspects of decent work are important from the point of view of poverty reduction. First, rights at work are critical for protecting the interests of the poor in their places of work. Second, the poor need protection against unemployment, ill health, and ability to work in old age. Finally, peaceful social dialogue between the partners in production is an important means of protecting and advancing the interests of the poor.

Ms. Chen emphasized that employment, or more precisely, decent work is the key pathway to poverty reduction because employment is the main and often only source of income for the poor. She pointed out that the majority of the world's poor are 'working poor' because they have jobs, but are unable to earn enough to lift themselves and their families out of poverty. Therefore, increasing the quality as well as the quantity of employment opportunities are together essential ingredients for ensuring that economic growth leads to poverty reduction. The challenge is to integrate a three-part development strategy: (a) generate new and better employment opportunities; (b) ensure the poor gain access to new employment opportunities; (c) increase incomes and reduce risks for the working poor. The first requires increasing demand through macro-economic and sectoral policies and increasing productivity through investments and market access. The second requires targeted employment policies as well as skills training and job matching. The third as well as the two other strategies require that the root causes of poverty are properly addressed including lack of productive assets, lack of economic rights, lack of social protection and lack of organization and representation in order to be successful.

Ms. Adaba highlighted that the "jobless growth" of recent years has done nothing to improve the lives of the more than 2 billion people worldwide living on less than US\$2

per day. The recent shift in discourse, particularly at the United Nations in recognizing the importance of decent work towards the eradication of poverty is an encouraging advancement. However, decent work must not be a remit only of the ILO; it is a challenge for all development partners to ensure that decent work is mainstreamed into all poverty reduction strategies. This is clearly linked to the toolkit being developed to mainstream decent work into the whole United Nations system activities. Decent work without exploitation is the only sustainable solution out of poverty. Poverty reduction strategies must be pro-poor, employment intensive and focus on sectors where the poor are actually present. Interventions must target gender disparities, capacity building and provide access to assets. Cooperatives provide an important tool to allow the working poor to pool resources, knowledge and skills. The promotion of fundamental principles and rights at work remain a challenge for many countries. Thus, governments should be encouraged to ratify the core ILO Conventions as well as those on collective bargaining. In addition, it is important to continue tripartite discussions on this issue to ensure that decent work strategies are fully implemented.

Dr. Komba discussed the linkage between the unemployment problem and poverty levels facing many developing countries. Unemployment threatens to perpetuate poverty because many developing countries are unable to provide social safety nets such as unemployment benefits. The only sure way to address the poverty predicament is to focus development efforts on employment creation and strive to mainstream the decent work agenda into overall development strategies. Efforts towards mainstreaming decent work are often challenged by many offsetting circumstances: (a) many workers remain willing to accept substandard working conditions; (b) many job seekers often lack the education, skills and experience required by many to secure jobs with most multilateral organizations; (c) many participants are unaware of the decent work agenda. While the Decent Work Agenda provides cross-cutting guidelines for achieving the poverty reduction targets, it must be domesticated to reflect a country's level of economic development as well as its priorities. A conducive environment for development must be created by enhancing access to basic needs; increasing income levels of the poor; improving agricultural productivity; enhancing investments in industries; and empowering the private sector; and by mainstreaming cross-cutting issues such as gender, environmental concerns and HIV/AIDS.

## Conclusions/Recommendations

- Evidence based research shows that productive employment and decent work is a key element in translating the benefits of economic growth into poverty reduction;
- Mainstreaming decent work in poverty eradication policies would entail integrating the issue of productive employment and decent work into the process of formulating macroeconomic, sectoral and micro level policies. In the formulation of macroeconomic, sectoral and other economic policies, the possible impact on employment must be taken into account;
- As a large number of the poor in developing countries belong to the category of “working poor”, it would be important to address the root causes of low income from employment and formulate strategies for increasing the returns to the working poor;
- The strategy for raising the incomes of the poor should include access to productive

- assets and markets for products, economic rights, and social protection;
- Productive employment and decent work consideration needs to be integrated into all development interventions, e.g., in infrastructure, health, education;
- Promotion of small and medium enterprises and cooperatives would be an important mechanism for fighting poverty;
- Fundamental principles and rights at work have to be respected in order to give the poor a voice, which is vital for improving the quality of employment;
- It is essential to put in place a system to assess the social impact of poverty eradication policies;
- The decent work approach should continue to be mainstreamed throughout the United Nations system.

## **SESSION 6A: BREAKING THE CYCLE OF POVERTY: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES**

**Thursday, 16 November 2006**

**15:00-16:20, Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium**

### **Moderator**

Mr. Anwarul K. Chowdhury, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked and Developing Countries and Small Island States (UN-OHRLS)

### **Speakers**

H.E. Mr. Joe Robert Pemagbi, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Sierra Leone to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations

Mr. Charles Gore, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, UNCTAD

### **Session organizer**

UN-OHRLS

### **Background Note**

Almost half of the population of LDCs lives in extreme poverty. The major constraints on their development are extreme poverty, structural weaknesses of their economies, limited human, institutional, technical, trade and productive capacity, inadequate infrastructure, limited capacity to mobilize domestic and attract external resources, unsustainable external debt, high vulnerability to external economic shocks, natural disasters, and the prevalence of communicable and non-communicable diseases, including HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. High population growth, rapid urbanization and environmental degradation further aggravate extreme poverty. Climate change is emerging as a new challenge for their sustainable development, in particular for those in Africa and the small island LDCs. Post-conflict LDCs face even greater challenges as they emerge from ashes of war and begin reconstruction.

The poverty trap is further tightened by the asymmetric nature of current globalization. Breaking the vicious cycle of poverty requires beneficial integration of LDCs into the world economy by improving their access to external finance, international markets,

ICT and technology. It also requires building productive capacities of LDCs, promoting trade, investment and employment. Tapping latent entrepreneurship, traditional knowledge, hidden or underutilized resources, and strengthening the linkages between dynamically growing sectors with the rest of the economy while providing necessary skills and training are also indispensable for sustainable development of LDCs.

Creative industry offers new opportunities to many LDCs. According to UNCTAD, exports of recorded music discs and tapes from developed market economies to LDCs grew in nominal terms by 642 per cent or 10.5 per cent per annum while imports of developed market economies from LDCs rose by 321 per cent or 7.4 per cent by annum between 1980 and 2000. Many LDCs have already internationally recognized brand names and world-class musicians. However, lack of investments, competitive entrepreneurial and marketing skills and a digital divide prevents LDCs from transforming music industry into export-oriented business. Furthermore, the nascent entertainment industry often suffers losses from piracy of intellectual property in the absence of effective national copyright regimes in LDCs.

Tourism also has great economic potential to contribute to the reduction of poverty but despite rich assets (culture, art, music, natural landscapes, wildlife and climate, including World Heritage Sites) of LDCs the share of tourism in their economy remains negligible: only 2.6 per cent of the world market share in terms of international tourist arrivals (ITAs) and of international tourism receipts (ITRs). Nonetheless, the growth in ITAs has been faster in LDCs (42.5 per cent) than in other the developing countries (30.8 per cent) and in the world (15.8 per cent) between 2001 and 2005. As for ITRs, there was 50.3 per cent growth in LDCs as compared to 40.6 per cent growth in the developing countries and 33.2 per cent growth in the world between 2001 and 2004. Apart of constraints of general nature (political instability, insecurity and corruption) to promotion of tourism, LDCs have also a number of specific constraints: high proportion of economic leakages, outside the local economy; insufficient awareness among national and international financial authorities about the real potential of tourism; lack of coordination among various actors in the tourism development process; lack of coordination between the public institutions and private sector; lack commitment of the private sector.

The proposed event on “Breaking the Cycle of Poverty: Challenges and Opportunities for the LDCs” will address poverty as a multifaceted and multidimensional phenomenon, with a special focus on areas which offer opportunities for creating employment and driving economic growth in LDCs. It will include all major stakeholders in development process: representatives of governments, civil society and NGOs, academia and private sector, bilateral and multilateral donors.

## Session Summary

Opening the session, the Moderator, Mr. Anwarul K. Chowdhury depicted the challenges faced by the LDCs in reduction of poverty.

Regarding the challenges of poverty reduction in post-conflict LDCs, Mr. Joe R. Pemagbi highlighted several problems that Sierra Leone has been encountering in the effort of reducing poverty rate of the country, including unstable and insecure social and political situation, institutional weaknesses and inefficiency, widespread corruption and lack of political accountability, weak and inefficient public service, weak and inefficient

infrastructure and lack of an enabling environment for investment.

In his presentation on indigenous knowledge and innovation in poverty reduction in the case of Bangladesh, Mr. Iftekhar A. Chowdhury described micro credit as a unique vehicle for economic development and social justice in Bangladesh. Microcredit has proved that the poor are capable of working their way out of poverty, having creativity and capacity to improve their own situation. Microfinance has contributed to assets-creation, employment generation, providing economic security and empowerment of the poor. Microfinance has also empowered women's roles in society, indicating that poor women have the best credit ratings and that credit extended to women has a much greater impact on household consumption and quality of life of children.

On the household income distribution in the LDCs, Mr. Charles Gore stated that poverty in the LDCs has not declined. He concluded that the low average household income and the low private consumption in the LDCs are the main obstacle in reducing poverty. Also, population growth in LDCs is accompanied by declined farming areas and increased unemployment, which further deepens poverty. The development and utilization of productive capacities should be placed at the heart of national poverty reduction strategies and international support measures for the LDCs

### **Conclusions/Recommendations**

- It was pointed out that in Sierra Leone, poverty eradication has been impeded by: (a) unstable and insecure social and political situation, institutional weaknesses and inefficiency, widespread corruption and lack of political accountability; (b) weak and inefficient public service; and (c) weak and inefficient infrastructure and lack of enabling environment for investment;
- Microcredit has shown that the poor are capable of working their way out of poverty, being creative and improving their own situation;
- Microfinance has contributed to assets-creation, employment generation, economic security and empowerment of the poor;
- Microfinance has empowered women's roles in society, indicating that poor women have the best credit ratings and that credit extended to women has a much greater impact on household consumption and quality of life of children;
- The low average household income and the low private consumption in the LDCs are the main obstacle in reducing poverty;
- Population growth in LDCs is accompanied by declined farming areas and increased unemployment, which further deepens poverty;
- The development and utilization of productive capacities should be placed at the heart of national poverty reduction strategies and international support measures for the LDCs.

**SESSION 6B: WORKING TOGETHER, BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS**  
**Thursday, 16 November 2006**  
**15:00-16:20, Conference Room 2**

**Moderator**

Mr. Amir Dossal, Executive Director, United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP)

**Speakers**

Mr. Bharat Wakhlu, President, Tata Inc., US

Ms. Wahu Kaara, Ecumenical Coordinator for the Millennium Development Goals, All Africa Conference of Churches & Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP)

Ms. Stefania Marccone, Director, International Relations Office, Legacoop

**Session organizer**

DESA

**Background Note**

“In the age of interdependence, global citizenship is a crucial pillar of progress.”  
Former United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan

Recently there has been a growing recognition that successfully addressing global poverty requires establishing partnerships between the poor, non-governmental organizations, foundations, the private sector and governments. It is clear that global problems need collective action to be addressed most effectively. Including the poor in poverty reduction strategies not only gives voice and ownership to the poor but also increases the effectiveness of the efforts. By recognizing the common goal of global poverty reduction and the important complementary contributions that can be made by each type of actor, the global community has increased their ability to respond to some of the major social problems of our time. Recent natural disasters throughout the world have mobilized governments, NGOs and foundations as well as private companies to support local relief efforts. Governments, nonprofits and private companies have come together to increase the availability of life saving anti-retroviral treatment to address the AIDS epidemic in Africa. By pooling resources, these partnerships are having a much greater impact than any one actor possibly could.

These highly visible cases illustrate a growing trend towards increased partnerships throughout the world. Millennium Development Goal 8 calls for developing a global partnership for development, and the global community is rising to the challenge. Official development assistance has increased since 1997, a large proportion of the increase has been aid in the form of debt relief. While debt relief is extremely important for reducing the strain on already struggling economies, it does not necessarily release more funds directly for poverty reduction. Also, the disaster relief mentioned above, while essential, does not address long-term development needs.

There has been an increasing appreciation in the development community of the role of the private sector. The amount of money invested in developing countries by the private sector is many times the amount of money given through development assistance

and plays an important role in poverty reduction by generating investment, creating jobs and building wealth. Corporations can put their skills and assets to work addressing poverty through market-driven approaches to meeting basic needs, to complement donor and subsidy-led approaches. For such initiative to be effective it is essential that donors dialogue with the poor to innovate new means of meeting their needs. In addition, corporations can and do contribute to poverty reduction efforts through contributions in cash and in kind. They also set examples for employees through philanthropy and facilitate individual giving through employee matching programmes.

The United Nations has been reaching out to the business community through the Global Compact Initiative which promotes the practical application of universal principles on human rights, labour and the environment. More than 4000 organizations from 70 countries including mostly private companies but also dozens of civil society organizations and global trade union federations have joined the initiative.

There is increasing recognition that partnerships with poor people and poor communities are essential in order to implement successful poverty reduction campaigns. Civil society and international institution with presence on the ground provide an important link between governments and donors and facilitate such partnerships. Assessing the needs of the poor and realistic means to address those needs must be done in partnership with the poor themselves to be successful.

Foundations have increased partnerships recently under the MDGs. Foundations provide expertise, ideas and can take the role of advocate and leader. Foundations are credible and respected actors in the countries and local communities being targeted. They also have the ability to work with partners on the ground as well as directly with the poor themselves. The United Nations Office for Partnerships, established following a \$1 billion contribution from Ted Turner, facilitates linking foundations and other partners looking to support United Nations causes.

International institutions play an important role in building partnership-based action for poverty reduction. International institutions have global presences, with on-the-ground operational capabilities throughout the world. They have strong relationships with governments and civil society organizations to facilitate effective partnerships, as well as expertise and staff skilled in international development.

Despite important progress being made in forging partnerships, more work is needed. The speakers in today's panel come from an international institution, an NGO, and the private sector. Each will discuss their involvement in developing partnerships to reduce poverty.

## **Session summary**

Mr. Amir Dossal opened the session highlighting that building partnerships between the United Nations, governments, civil society, the private sector, foundations, and the poor are crucial in addressing global issues, including poverty. There is a growing trend towards collective action at the national and global levels. MDG 8 calls for developing a global partnership for development, and reaching the targets requires a concerted effort by the international community. By recognizing the common goal of poverty reduction and the comparative advantage that each stakeholder has, the global community has increased their ability to respond to some of the major problems. The Nairobi Framework,

announced at the November 2006 Climate Change Conference, is an example of partnership between the United Nations, governments, and the private sector to help developing countries. It is a United Nations System initiative to help developing countries participate in the Kyoto Protocol clean development mechanism.

Ms. Stefania Marcone pointed out that at the global level cooperatives employ more than 100 million people and associate 800 million people, and contribute significantly to economic and social development and to poverty reduction. The International Cooperative Alliance, the apex organization, focuses its efforts on tapping the potential of cooperatives for poverty reduction through creating economic opportunities, providing basic protection and security, and empowering local communities. Legacoop, a national multi-sectoral cooperative organization in Italy, undertakes activities for promoting solidarity and cooperative development in various regions of the world, promoting cooperative values and culture, advocacy and building partnerships. Legacoop's major cooperative solidarity projects include the "Water for peace campaign"; *Cooperativa Sin Fronteras*; Economic development against AIDS; Reconstruction, empowerment and peace: tsunami fund raising campaign, and economic empowerment of Palestinian rural women; and Development of cooperativism: promotion of cooperative enterprises in Central and Eastern Europe, and building institutions and partnerships in several countries in Latin America.

Mr. Bharat Wahkul underlined that addressing global issues requires forging creative and sustainable partnerships. The Global Compact is an important forum and more such forums are needed, which have global reach and convening power of all stakeholders. Major issues confronting the international community are interrelated needs to be dealt with collectively. It is essential to translate the commitments into action. The private sector, in partnership with other actors plays a significant role in poverty reduction by generating investment and creating sustainable wealth. The business community understands the importance of corporate social responsibility. Such critical issues as climate change and health need to be tackled through partnership-based action.

Wahu Kaara noted that NGOs and civil society play a significant role in development and in the implementation of the MDGs, particularly the goal to eradicate poverty. Establishing real partnerships based on justice, equality and dignity not on charity is a fundamental pillar of paradigm shift. Involving the local community and the poor themselves in decisions that affect their lives, and empowering them on a more sustained basis are essential components of poverty reduction. If the benefits of growth are to reach the poor, giving them the voice and opportunity for equal participation needs to be a critical priority in all countries.

## Conclusions/Recommendations

- Building partnerships between the United Nations, governments, civil society, the private sector, foundations, and the poor are crucial in addressing global issues, including poverty;
- By recognizing the common goal of poverty reduction and the comparative advantage that each stakeholder has, the global community has increased their ability to respond to some of the major impediments to poverty alleviation;
- Establishing real partnerships based on justice, equality and dignity not on charity is a fundamental pillar of the paradigm shift. Involving the local community and the poor

themselves in decisions that affect their lives, and empowering them on a more sustained basis are essential components of poverty reduction.

## **SESSION 7: THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX, INNOVATIVE APPROACHES**

**Thursday, 16 November 2006**

**16:40-18:00, Conference Room 2**

### **Moderator**

Mr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Assistant-Secretary General for Economic Development, DESA

### **Speakers**

Prof. Nicholas Negroponte, Founder, One Laptop per Child

Prof. Iqbal Qadir, Founder Director, Program in Developmental Entrepreneurship, MIT

Mr. Patrick Mulvany, Senior Policy Adviser, Practical Action

### **Session organizer**

DESA

### **Background Note**

While traditional approaches to poverty eradication have met with some success, technological innovations have given rise to new challenges and new forms of inequality that can perpetuate and exacerbate poverty. Such challenges call for innovative approaches to address poverty and the global divide in access to technology. Rapidly changing technology also presents new opportunities and means to address global poverty. This session will focus on the innovative use of technology to combat poverty.

One relatively new cleavage contributing to persistent poverty is the digital divide, the widening gap between the wealthy and poor in terms of access to information and communications technologies (ICTs) that are quickly becoming essential for human capital and economic development. The 'global divide' in access to ICTs refers to the disparity in access to the internet, e-mail and telephones between countries. The divide is deep: according to the International Telecommunication Union in 2004, less than 3 out of every 100 Africans use the Internet, compared with an average of 1 out of every 2 inhabitants of the G8 countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the UK and the US). Also, the 14 per cent of the world's population that lives in the G8 countries accounts for 34 per cent of the world's total mobile phone users. ITU estimates that some 800,000 villages – representing around one billion people worldwide – still lack connection to any kind of information and communication technology.

Access to ICT is becoming increasingly important in efforts to eradicate poverty. ICT has the potential to level the playing field in many areas of inequality vital to poverty eradication. It can facilitate the delivery of basic social services such as education and health information. The internet has the potential to provide the same library resources to children in rural areas of poor countries as students at elite schools in Europe or the US. The internet and other ICTs can open up distance learning opportunities as well as provide a means for pooling of knowledge and expertise in areas such as health or agriculture.

ICT allows users to share and access information more rapidly and for less cost than traditional means and contributes to increased productivity and economic development. Technology empowers the poor and should therefore be considered a central component of a rights-based approach to poverty eradication. This is why the global divide along with other cross national disparities in technology access and use should be addressed to successfully eradicate poverty.

One Laptop per Child (OLPC), founded by Nicholas Negroponte, aims to provide inexpensive durable laptop computers to millions of children in developing countries. The laptops will provide children with access to the internet and will enhance education and ultimately raise the standard of living for poor children world wide. Putting the XO laptop into the hands of children in developing countries is in essence providing access to textbooks, maps, libraries, news and other media that is often missing from impoverished children's lives. The increase of internet and computer use will also contribute to the opening of closed societies. The project contributes to building an inclusive information society.

Prof. Iqbal Quadir is the Founder and Director of MIT's Program in Developmental Entrepreneurship which focuses on design and implementation of commercially sustainable products and services for low-income communities around the world. He is also the founder of GrameenPhone. The Village Phone Program of GrameenPhone is a unique initiative which provides access to telecommunications facilities in remote rural areas where no such service was available before and empowers the poor by connecting them to basic services and facilitating entrepreneurship. The Program enables mostly poor village women to own a Village Phone subscription and retail the phone service to her fellow villagers while providing them with a good income-earning opportunity. It is administered by Grameen Telecom in cooperation with Grameen Bank, the internationally renowned micro-credit lending institution which was together with its founder Muhammad Yunus awarded the Nobel peace prize this year for their efforts to create economic and social development from below. According to the International Telecommunications Union the addition of each new telephone in a developing country like Bangladesh adds USD 2,500 to the country's GDP.

Practical Action, represented on today's panel by Mr. Patrick Mulvany aims to demonstrate and advocate the sustainable use of technology to reduce poverty in developing countries. They help poor communities respond to the challenges of new technologies, helping them to access simple effective technologies that can change lives forever. Practical Action works directly in four regions of the developing world – Latin America, East Africa, Southern Africa and South Asia, with particular concentration on Peru, Kenya, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal. In these countries, Practical Action works with poor communities to develop appropriate technologies in food production, agro-processing, energy, transport, small enterprise development, shelter and disaster mitigation. Practical Action is also actively involved in seeking practical answers to 'information poverty' by testing out how new information and communication technologies (ICTs) can be used by small-scale producers to improve their livelihoods.

Innovative approaches to poverty eradication are essential to complement the success of more traditional approaches and to address the new challenges to poverty eradication that an increasingly technology-dependent world presents.

## Session Summary

Mr. Patrick Mulvany underscored that technologies must be in the control of poor people in order to have an effective and sustainable poverty reduction and to protect the environment at the same time. He shared three key lessons learned about technology and innovation from the past 40 years of Practical Action's work with poor communities. First, the use of technology in poverty reduction initiatives should embody and promote the development and preservation of traditional knowledge and skills used by poor people especially at the local level. Second, it is important to build on technologies that have co-evolved with local people in order to improve livelihoods and diverse local agroecosystems that are resilient to external pressures including climate change. Related to this is the importance of the use of indigenous property rights (IPRs) to privatize proprietary seed technologies and restrictive contracts. Third, in order to be effective, technologies must be developed with and by poor people, not imposed on them.

Dr. Iqbal Z. Quadir, founder of GrameenPhone Ltd. in Bangladesh, explained the success of his business enterprise which provides access to telecommunications facilities in remote areas where such services are not available. Providing this service empowers the poor by connecting them to basic services and facilitating entrepreneurship among the poor. A believer in the "connectivity is productivity" principle, his business has brought mobile-phones to millions of people in Bangladesh and created self-employment opportunities for thousands of poor. Inspired by the microcredit initiative of the Grameen Bank, he developed a distribution scheme whereby small entrepreneurs, with loans from Grameen Bank, could retail telephone services to their surrounding communities. The success of his business can serve as a model for using technology to empower the poor.

Dr. Nicholas Negreponte, introduced the one laptop per child (OLPC) project. The first laptops of this project will be distributed next year. Citing the primacy of education, especially primary education, in poverty reduction, providing laptops to children in developing countries promotes a path for children to learn through independent interaction and exploration. He hopes the laptop will get children engaged in their learning. The initiative could also help develop skills that will bridge the digital divide in access to information and communications technology (ICT). The affordable laptops are to be sold to governments for distribution at local schools with the goal of providing one laptop per child.

In the open discussion, there were very positive and enthusiastic reactions from the audience about the initiatives presented. One participant noted this session was the most inspiring since the initiatives presented provided hope and possibilities. It was noted that technology can play an important role in giving voice to the poor.

Making technology accessible to poor children through the OLPC project was received with much enthusiasm. There were questions about how their respective organizations can have access to the OLPC laptops. Concerned about issues of dumping, an NGO inquired on possible partnership with the OLPC project since their organization was involved in collecting old PCs and sending them overseas.

## **Conclusions/Recommendations**

- Technologies must be in the control of poor people in order to have an effective and sustainable poverty reduction and to protect the environment at the same time;
- The use of technology in poverty reduction initiatives should embody and promote the development and preservation of traditional knowledge and skills used by poor people especially at the local level;
- Technologies should be developed with and by poor people, not imposed on them;
- Technology should be used to empower the poor.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

### **SPECIAL EVENT ON POVERTY TRAPS**

**Wednesday, 15 November 2006**

**13:30-14:45 Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium**

#### **Moderator**

Mr. Johan Schölvinck, Director, Division for Social Policy and Development,  
DESA

#### **Speakers**

Prof. Stephen C. Smith, Professor of Economics and International Affairs,  
Director, Research Program in Poverty, Development and Globalization,  
George Washington University

Ms. Rabeya Yasmin, Program Coordinator, BRAC, Bangladesh

Ms. Chinwe Effiong, Regional Director, East and Anglophone W. Africa,  
Africare

#### **Session organizers**

DESA and Professor Stephen C. Smith

#### **Background Note**

The presence of interlocking poverty traps makes ending global poverty much more challenging; but out of improved understanding of poverty traps, we are finding better and more effective strategies for overcoming them.

Poverty is multidimensional. Poverty is more than lack of income, although it is that, with over one billion living on less than \$1 per day. Poverty is also pervasiveness of early death. Every day, nearly 30,000 children die from preventable causes, over 10 million this year. Poverty is hunger and poor health; 17 per cent of the world's population is undernourished, while micronutrient malnutrition affects nearly two billion people. Life expectancy in SSA is less than 47 years and has been falling due to AIDS. A woman dies in childbirth every minute; almost none of these women would have died if they lived in Europe or North America. Poverty is denial of a basic education, with some 100 million primary age children still not in school. In over a dozen sub-Saharan African countries a child is more likely to die before age 5 than to attend secondary school. Poverty is the loss of childhood, with over 100 million children labouring around the world. And poverty is powerlessness; the poor pay a bigger share of their incomes in bribes, sometimes have little choice in their employer or terms of work, are often excluded from public services and the ability to participate in the public sphere, and are vulnerable to violence. The multidimensionality of poverty makes overcoming poverty more difficult.

There has been great progress especially in Asia. But for many, poverty is a trap, in which conditions of poverty today lead to further conditions of poverty in the future.

Perhaps 400 million are subsisting in chronic income poverty alone. The range of poverty traps parallel the conditions of extreme poverty cited above. Poverty traps sometimes exist on a national scale, such as the vicious cycle of low income and low savings, but are much more common at regional, village, and even family levels. Progress is harder but still possible when the poor are in traps of child labour, illiteracy, low skills, inadequate working capital, uninsured risk, undernutrition, illness, poor shelter, inadequate information, subsistence farming, disconnectedness from markets, powerlessness, and erosion and ecological degradation, among others. (A discussion of 16 poverty traps is found in *Ending Global Poverty: A Guide to What Works*). The poverty traps framework is helpful for several reasons; for potential donors, it reinforces the basic fact that poverty is not the fault of poor; and it underscores that escape from the traps is possible, but many require help from the outside. For development professionals, the framework can help us to identify key constraints holding back progress for the poor, and assist us with designing local programs to break sets of interlocking traps, encouraged to engage the active and full participation of the poor who typically understand these traps better than any outsiders.

To escape from at least the worst of poverty traps, even in low growth environments, the poor need several key capabilities and assets: Health and nutrition security; basic education to build the foundations for self reliance; access to credit, savings opportunities and insurance for working capital, business opportunities, consumption smoothing, and defence against risk generally; access to functioning markets for income generation and opportunities to acquire assets; access to new technologies and the skills to use them for higher productivity; a non degraded and stable environment to ensure that gains by the poor are not negated by ecological loss and to ensure that escape from poverty traps is sustainable; personal empowerment; and community empowerment for defence against communal violence, to claim a legitimate share of public resources, and to participate in wider world.

Effective and sustainable programs for the poorest of the poor are designed to build these capabilities and assets in response to traps or other conditions of poverty. I provide some 40 case examples in *Ending Global Poverty*. I identified these using 3 screens: presence of rigorous evaluation showing strong positive results; juried prizes and awards; and citations in expert interviews. Recent discussions on aid have focused on the question of “planners” versus “searchers.” Between these poles we confront the question of how we “search for the searchers,” to identify good ideas that work locally (or more widely) and that can benefit from strategic commitments of aid resources. My book project was one example of methodical searching for searchers; and I fervently hope that others will join me by offering other examples of how to do this and to find and get the word out on many more worthy programs and activities.

Many (though not all) of the programs featured in *Ending Global Poverty* were designed and operated by NGOs. Civil society, within which NGOs are the most organized sector, and community based organizations play an essential role, represent, along with government and the private for-profit sector, the equally important third leg of the stool upon which successful poverty alleviation rests. NGOs have organizational comparative advantage in responding to extreme poverty in several dimensions: Innovation in design and implementation; flexibility in modifying programs and activities to suit local conditions; opportunities for rigorous evaluation; specialized knowledge; providing targeted

public goods; assisting with common property resource design and implementation; potentially high trust and credibility among a wide range of development actors from ultimate donors to individual poor people; and representation and advocacy of the poor. At the same time, it is critically important that NGOs and those who support and work with them recognize that they have some inherent limits as development actors. Paralleling the concepts of market failure and government failure are the limitations of “voluntary failure.” Among the most such important concerns that have been raised by critics are institutionalization leading to loss of flexibility, growing emphasis on means particularly fundraising rather than end services; insufficient voice by program participants in which NGO choices of clientele and of projects reflect priorities of founders and funders rather than those of beneficiaries; lack of high levels of staff training; insufficiency of organizational resources; and relatedly an inability to scale up activities when opportunities of broader reach are present.

Many NGO programs are making a substantial difference in the lives of the poor as chronicled in *Ending Global Poverty*. These include the multisectoral work of the organizations represented by our two other speakers in this session: BRAC in Bangladesh (and now in Afghanistan and East Africa), and Africare throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Both work to break the interlocking traps faced by the poor, in large part by helping them build individual and community capacity.

Although small scale programs are the focus of my book, we should also note the success of many large scale efforts especially in health and education, not just in Asia and middle income countries but also in Africa, where school enrolments are well up, and child mortality is down in many countries. The enormous contribution of oral rehydration therapy is well known. As chronicled by the Centre for Global Development, river blindness has been essentially eradicated in 11 West African countries, guinea worm has been largely brought under control; vaccines have made a great difference; measles has been essentially eliminated as a cause for child death in south Africa.

Some patterns of successful program innovation by NGOs in addressing extreme poverty suggest themselves: help the voices of poor and excluded to ring louder; involve large numbers of paraprofessionals in scaling up; identify and leverage assets of the poor, including social solidarity and other often overlooked resources; protect the environment while addressing poverty needs as seen in many of the programs receiving the UNDP/UNEP Equator Prize, identify niche products that can help increase value added by the poor (self employed or not); search for local constraints preventing children from staying healthy and going to school or from performing well, and attack these problems relentlessly; and evaluate programs boldly – not only to test impact, but also because important innovations often emerge in absorbing lessons.

Ending extreme poverty is a difficult problem: many are caught in poverty traps; national growth is hard to ignite and sustain; and the poor may not benefit from growth. But we have a moral imperative to redouble our efforts: An end to extreme poverty is possible but not inevitable. Practitioners know much about how to help the poor escape extreme poverty even without prospects for high rates of national economic growth. Much good is being done with relatively little money. We can do better by identifying and supporting programs that help develop key assets and capabilities of the poor, and utilizing rigorous evaluation. Aid could have more impact on extreme poverty with greater focus on work to expand the capabilities and assets of the poor, and proceeding

with the approach that “helping people and communities helps their countries get stronger and grow,” instead of only or primarily seeking to help government and the private sector and hoping that the poor will benefit indirectly.

## Session Summary

Prof. Stephen C. Smith presented insights into the global poverty situation showing that extreme poverty is still widespread. Although there is progress, over 1 billion people subsist on less than \$1 per day and nearly 20 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are poorer today than they were a generation ago. Therefore, it is an obligation to understand problems of poverty and development, and then to act. As it has often been raised, any action will have to consider the multidimensional nature of poverty. It is not only lacking of income, poverty is also “pervasiveness of early death”, hunger and poor health, the denial of the right to basic education, loss of childhood, oppressive conditions and powerlessness. And all these factors are interrelated and make it more difficult for the poorest of the poor to make further progress.

Poverty becomes a trap when a vicious cycle undermines the efforts of the poor; conditions of poverty feed on themselves and create further conditions of poverty. An illustrative example could be the child labour trap: if a parent is too unhealthy and unskilled to have enough income, the children have to work. But if children work, they can’t get the education they need and will never achieve higher incomes; so when they grow up, they have to send their own children to work. The author identifies at least 16 different poverty traps, such as undernutrition traps and illiteracy traps that can explain the vicious circle of poverty.

Regarding the keys to unlocking these poverty traps, it is fundamental to increase individual capabilities. Taking into account the 16 different poverty traps, Prof. Smith presented 8 keys that are basic capabilities the poor often lack and that facilitate escape from these poverty traps. The services and goods to increase individual capabilities must be delivered by governments, the private sector and particularly NGOs. Civil society actors utilize independent voluntary efforts to promote their values and aspects of social, economic, or political development and therefore are the equally important third leg of the stool on which poverty reduction rests. They have comparative advantages compared to governments and the private sector, in intermediate goods, situated between the public and the private ones. So the citizen sector can play a central role in ending extreme poverty.

Ms. Rabeya Yasmin presented the goals and results of a new program targeted for the ultra-poor groups in Bangladesh. Although BRAC was founded in 1972 and has worked with different poor groups, since 2002 it has created a new program designed for those who are largely left out of the mainstream development programmes, i.e. the ultra poor. In particular, the conventional microfinance programmes view the ultra poor as a high risk group and are not suited to their livelihood pattern. Therefore, BRAC has decided to innovate and to create “A Pushing Down” strategy to combat extreme poverty.

The objectives of the “pushing down” strategy is firstly to assist the ultra poor to improve their livelihoods by achieving positive economic, social and aspirational changes; secondly, to assist the ultra poor to access mainstream development services. The first phase of the program started by covering 5,000 persons in 2002 and has reached 50,000

in 2006. Considering the characteristics of the ultra poor, the pushing down strategy has provided specific supports and services: such as enterprise development training, special investment, asset transfer and short-term income support, a tailor-made health care program and tailor-made social development services.

A survey in 2004 showed that this program had a positive impact by reducing the incidence of extreme poverty; the daily per capita food expenditure increased from 9 to in 2002 to 13.5 in 2004. Some of the keys that can explain the success of this program are: a thoughtful program design taking past experiences of BRAC, careful staff recruitment and development process, effective monitoring and supervision, close coordination, continuous research and enormous support from development partners. However, the key lessons learned from this first phase of the program reveal several challenges for the second phase: rethinking targeting, capturing diversity since the ultra poor group is not homogeneous, continuing health support for the graduates and capacity building.

Ms. Chinwe Effiong presented on Africare's mission is to improve the quality of life in Africa. While Africare programs traverse a wide range of sectors, their primary contribution to development is their commitment to empowering Africans and African communities. Africare was founded and continues to operate on the basis of two critical assumptions: (1) extreme poverty can be eradicated; (2) African people have the innate ability to take charge of their own political and economic wellbeing and should be empowered to do so.

Keeping in mind these assumptions, Africare's approach has been to develop models for capacity building of local NGOs. In addition to these specific programs that are focused on NGO strengthening as an objective, all Africare programs are designed to transfer real skills to local stakeholders (NGOs, Cobs, Fobs, Government agencies). Consequently, from the conceptualization stage, local stakeholders are actively involved and encouraged to take ownership of the project. In recent times, the main focus of the Africare program has been on Agriculture/Food security and Health/HIV/AIDS, which are also the agency's primary areas of focus. Africare has positively contributed, with notable achievements to the Government of Uganda's (GOU) efforts of alleviating poverty and improving the quality of life of Ugandans, during the period 2002-2006. This has been achieved through successful implementation of projects that target agriculture/food security, natural resources management, maternal and child health, water and sanitation, malaria and HIV/AIDS.

This and other several other successful development project models in different countries and areas have raised a set of key lessons and recommendations. There must be a transfer of real knowledge and of tangible resources. Community ownership can only be achieved by involving community members at every stage of the development process – from design to evaluation. Some form of income generation should be a cross-cutting element of every project. The engagement has to be sustained over a period of years and projects have to be holistic to maximize their impact. Therefore, the recommendations raised by these experiences to eradicate poverty are first to give to local communities the opportunity to take ownership of the project from the beginning. Second, donors need to be more strategic in identifying and providing longer term support for successful models to reduce the waste of time and resources.

## **Conclusions/Recommendations**

- Any action to eradicate poverty will have to consider the multidimensional nature of poverty;
- Community ownership can only be achieved by involving community members at every stage of the development process – from design to evaluation;
- Local communities should be given the opportunity to take ownership of the project from the beginning;
- Donors need to be more strategic in identifying and providing longer term support for successful models to reduce the waste of time and resources.

## **SPECIAL EVENT ON GOOD PRACTICES IN POVERTY ERADICATION INITIATIVES: IMPROVING RESULTS THROUGH STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND EX-ANTE POVERTY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

**Wednesday, 15 November 2006**

**13:30-14:45 Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium**

### **Moderator**

Mr. Roberto Bissio, Executive Director, Third World Institute; Coordinator,  
Social Watch

### **Speakers**

Ms. Solveig Buhl, GTZ

Ms. Cecile Reinhart, International Movement ATD Fourth World

Ms. Tracy Dolan, Christian Children's Fund

### **Session organizers**

GTZ, NGO Sub-committee for the Eradication of Poverty of the Committee for  
Social Development

## **Background Note**

Good practices for ensuring a genuine involvement of relevant stakeholders in efforts to combat poverty will be examined during this special event. The three speakers will examine this issue by highlighting three examples of good practices: the inclusion of children living in poverty in community development efforts, an initiative that builds partnerships between people living in poverty and academics and professionals in the field of poverty eradication, and an initiative which aims to develop a harmonized approach to ex ante Poverty Impact Assessment (PIA).

There are currently 1 billion children living in poverty around the world, according to the United Nations Children's Fund . It is estimated that of these children, 674 million are living in absolute poverty . Because children are dependant on adults for their survival, they are especially vulnerable to the effects of poverty . Research conducted by Christian Children's Fund (CCF) has found that children are more sensitive to and affected by poverty than is generally appreciated or understood by adults. Children feel the effects of poverty in terms of the lack of basic goods and services, as well as its associated divisiveness, stigma, and humiliation . Thus, when trying to address child poverty, it is

important to tackle the problem holistically, and to include children in efforts and programs to combat poverty. In order to improve the lives of the poor, achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and afford all children with the rights outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, children should play a meaningful role in poverty eradication efforts. This includes ensuring that children are engaged in the planning, implementation, and review of development programs, so that they can have a voice on how such efforts are affecting their communities. Children are stakeholders, and should be included as such in programs and poverty eradication efforts that affect them. Ms. Dolan will provide an overview of examples and experiences in selected countries where CCF works, where children are contributing to CCF-led program planning, implementation, and review processes.

The anti-poverty project entitled *Croisement des Savoirs* (Crossroads of Knowledge) was developed in partnership with academics of various disciplines of professionals from various fields elected by their institutions and with people who have direct experience of poverty. This knowledge is exchanged with the understanding that people living in poverty have much to contribute to the discourse, as equal partners.

Thanks to a climate of trust, conditions were created to enable this previously ignored and invisible knowledge to be shared and analyzed within the group. There was a genuine exchange and dialogue between the actors as equal participants, which, when pooled together, stimulated new ideas and thinking. Two publications, *Le Croisement des Savoirs* and *Le Croisement des Pratiques* detail the results of this innovative approach.

From this initiative, many others were developed in France and internationally, whereby people living in poverty are able to participate in the training of others from different backgrounds. These initiatives recognize those with experience of living in poverty as experts in their field, and they participate in the training of social workers, student teachers, humanitarian workers, and others in social and cultural fields.

In order to reach the MDGs, donor organisations and their partners have been striving to understand and maximize the poverty reducing impacts of their policies, programs and projects. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of March 2005 stresses that partner countries and donors are mutually accountable for development results and that in order to reduce the burden on partner countries, donors need to harmonize their approaches.

For this reason, in 2005, the Development Cooperation Directorate of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (DAC OECD) Poverty Network (POVNET) formed a Task Team to develop a harmonized approach to ex ante Poverty Impact Assessment (PIA). The approach has been approved by DAC in March 2006. A User's Guide will be submitted to POVNET for approval in November 2006.

PIA integrates already established approaches, their terminology and procedures (in particular ADB work on poverty impact, the Poverty and Social Impact Analysis (PSIA), the OECD/DAC capabilities framework). PIA consists of five modules. The results of the assessments within the modules are each visualized using matrices. This allows the possibility of sharing ex ante PIA exercises based on a common format across a number of agencies.

The wide application of the harmonized PIA provides a basis for future joint assessments with partner governments and between donors. PIA offers clear recommendations for decision makers on how to improve interventions to increase pro-poor impacts.

## Session Summary

Ms. Solveig Buhl presented an approach to ex-ante Poverty Impact Assessment (PIA). The approach was developed within a working group of the OECD DAC Poverty Network as a response to the challenges of greater harmonisation, alignment, accountability, management for development results and increasing effectiveness. A number of donor agencies have contributed to this task and representatives from partner agencies were invited to participate in the development and testing of the approach. The approach has been approved by DAC in March 2006. It has been tested by several donor agencies. Based on these tests it was slightly revised. A User's Guide was drafted and submitted to POVNET in November 2006. There are now further applications on the way and POVNET and its member states are in the process of upscaling the approach. A harmonised PIA provides a basis for future joint assessments with partner governments and between donors.

Ex-ante PIA is a focused process for donors and partner countries to inform themselves of the intended and unintended consequences of interventions (policies, programs, projects). PIA integrates already established approaches, their terminology and procedures, particularly ADB work on poverty impact, the PSIA approach, the OECD/DAC capabilities framework and the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach. Its novelty is that it merges them into one approach. A PIA allows (1) identification of interventions with high poverty reduction and pro-poor growth impact; (2) improvement of the design of the proposed intervention; (3) identification of existing information and information gaps and (4) identification of monitoring needs.

A PIA should ideally be embedded in ongoing planning and appraisal processes. It can either be carried out as a desk study or an interdisciplinary team, using in between 2 days and 2-3 weeks. The approach can also be used in a slightly modified way for assessment during or after implementation.

PIA consists of five modules:

- (a) Module 1: Assessment of the general poverty situation and relevance of the intervention to national strategies and plans
- (b) Module 2: Stakeholder and Institution Analysis
- (c) Module 3: Transmission channels used and overall results by channel (the transmission channels are: prices, employment, transfers, access, authority and assets)
- (d) Module 4: Assessment of anticipated results on stakeholders' capabilities (by the OECD Capabilities Framework)
- (e) Module 5: Assessment of impact on MDGs and other strategic goals

The results of each module are visualized in matrices. This allows the possibility of sharing ex-ante PIA exercises based on a common format across a number of agencies. The approach may follow closely the modules provided here, or may choose those modules relevant to the context in which the PIA is conducted.

The PIA tests have already shown that this approach has the potential to be highly beneficial to improve the poverty outcomes of interventions. Harmonising ex-ante PIA is therefore clearly in line with the spirit of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and it is hoped that its wide application will improve the poverty outcomes of interventions.

Ms. Cecile Reinhardt began her presentation by describing her involvement with International Movement ATD Fourth World. She, like many other members, had lived

her childhood and much of her adulthood in extreme poverty. Ms. Reinhardt noted that poverty is not only manifested in material hardships, but also in the lack of power to make decisions for oneself. Ms. Reinhardt noted that her life changed drastically when she joined ATD Fourth World: at last she was able to express her thoughts and experiences in an environment that valued her knowledge.

Ms. Reinhardt explained that the founder of the Movement, Fr. Joseph Wresinski, was also from a very poor family. He built the Movement with families living in extreme poverty by bringing together a group of committed people from different backgrounds. He always emphasized the importance of a participatory approach that conscientiously takes into account the irreplaceable contributions and expertise of people living in poverty.

Ms. Reinhardt also briefly mentioned the law to fight exclusion that was passed in France in 1998. A major contribution to this law was the recording of the histories of people living in poverty, who might otherwise be forgotten.

Ms. Reinhardt also discussed the project Crossroads of Knowledge, an initiative to create an equal exchange between people living in extreme poverty and academics.

The program lasted for two years, during which time the participants learned to understand each other. The eleven academics were from a variety of disciplines including history, law, criminology, education, sociology, physics, and psychology and contributed their scientific knowledge. The five members of the ATD Fourth World Volunteer Corps shared the knowledge gained from their long-term commitment to working closely alongside people living in poverty. The fifteen people living in poverty contributed their knowledge, background and way of thinking of their own people. In the end, all involved were co-researchers and co-authors of the final outcome document. The purpose of this project was not for academics to interrogate people living in poverty, or for people living in poverty to tell their whole life story to be analyzed.

Ms. Reinhardt also described the pedagogic counsellor who was present to assist those living in poverty who had limited formal education. The counsellor was necessary so that all involved could participate equally, with the confidence that they were able to work as equals. This egalitarian environment was of particular importance, because people living in poverty are often considered incapable of doing anything other than suffering. The pedagogic support promoted an environment of security and confidence.

There was a second Crossroads of Knowledge program that lasted from 2000-2001 which was modelled after the first program. The second program was slightly different in that it attempted to identify the specific conditions that limited interactions between people living in poverty and professionals. It also analyzed the disconnect between people living in poverty and the institutions and professions that purport to help them.

The second working group was made of thirty professionals, all from different fields, and thirty people who have experienced life in poverty. Ms. Reinhardt participated in this event, and described the difficulty in learning to trust the professionals, and their genuine desires to improve the conditions of those living in poverty, and to understand the conditions in which they work. There was also pedagogic support at this program, to make the participation genuine and productive. The knowledge of people living in poverty is at the centre of these seminars.

Ms. Tracy Dolan presented CCF's efforts to enable child and youth participation in poverty reduction. CCF is an international child development agency that strives to

create an environment of hope and respect in which children in need have opportunities to achieve their full potential. CCF's approach to involving children in all aspects of poverty planning is highlighted in specific articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child that define participation as a responsibility to both encourage childhood expression and to disseminate information in child-friendly ways. CCF's study on child poverty found that children experience poverty through deprivation, exclusion and vulnerability. The study also found that children and adults have differing perspectives on poverty. CCF therefore has put mechanisms in place to engage children in poverty reduction planning processes. CCF explores ways to reduce poverty in all its dimensions by providing a space for children to discuss their ideas about poverty.

Dolan gave specific examples of how children have been integrated into planning processes in Zambia, and have played significant roles in program reviews in Ecuador. She stated that in order for children to be meaningfully involved in poverty reduction planning, program implementation and review they need a regular space for dialogue that is not dominated by adults, support from adults who understand how to talk to children, tools and structures to help them contribute to community development, and commitment to follow up after planning. With the right conditions, even the most invisible of children can contribute meaningfully to poverty reduction.

## **Conclusions/Recommendations**

- Poverty is not only manifested in material hardships, but also in the lack of power to make decisions for oneself;
- Special support is essential to enable the participation of poor in poverty eradication initiatives;
- In order for children to be meaningfully involved in poverty reduction planning, program implementation and review they need a regular space for dialogue that is not dominated by adults, support from adults who understand how to talk to children, tools and structures to help them contribute to community development, and commitment to follow up after planning;
- The input of the poor is essential for poverty eradication programmes and strategies.

**SPECIAL EVENT ON THE MILLENNIUM VILLAGES PROJECT**  
**Thursday, 16 November 2006**  
**13:30-14:45 Conference Room 2**

**Moderator**

Mr. Johan Schölvinnck, Director, Division for Social Policy and Development,  
DESA

**Speakers**

Prof. Pedro Sanchez, Director, Millennium Villages Project, Director, Centre for  
Tropical Agriculture and the Rural Environment, The Earth Institute,  
Columbia University

Dr. Patrick Mutuo, Science Coordinator, Millennium Villages Project

**Session organizer**

DESA

**Background Note**

The Millennium Villages Project is a revolutionary, bottom-up approach developed by experts in policy and science at the Earth Institute and the United Nations Millennium Project—but led and driven by community members—to lift some of the poorest areas of the world out of extreme poverty.

The United Nations Millennium Project was commissioned by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2002 to develop a concrete action plan for the world to reverse the grinding poverty, hunger and disease affecting billions of people worldwide. Under the leadership of Jeffrey D. Sachs, United Nations Millennium Task Forces were created to plot out a way forward to achieve the Millennium Development Goals—eight targets to reducing or ending inequality, disease, hunger and other pressing issues of our time.

Based on the recommendations made by the Task Forces, rapid development of selected villages in Africa is tackling poverty in all its complex dimensions—from preventing and treating malaria to improving farming methods for robust harvests—at a cost of just \$110 per person per year for five years. The Millennium Villages are a true reflection of how the integration of diverse scientific approaches can yield measurable results that are already affecting the lives of the most vulnerable.

Along with experts from the United Nations Millennium Project and its Scientific Council, Earth Institute researchers across a spectrum of fields, including agriculture, nutrition and health, economics, energy, water, and information technology, are working side by side with community members to end poverty at its root. They are applying a proven holistic package of 10 key interventions to help villages become productive and sustainable communities with real hope for the future:

- (a) Training in agricultural and agro-forestry techniques to dramatically increase farm production while enhancing soil health with fertilizers and drought-resistant seeds;
- (b) Building, stocking and staffing functional health clinics to address the daily health needs of the village;
- (c) Providing critical, life-saving medicines for malaria, HIV/AIDS and other

- diseases as well as preventive measures such as insecticide-treated bed nets;
- (d) Alleviating household burdens through improved infrastructure such as transport and roads;
  - (e) Providing free, daily school lunches using locally produced food to support nutrition, learning capacity and school attendance;
  - (f) Implementing innovative energy alternatives that are inexpensive and long lasting;
  - (g) Increasing access to safe drinking water to eliminate disease and alleviate the burden on women and children;
  - (h) Increasing access to information with wireless Internet services and computers;
  - (i) Helping communities thrive economically by helping them make the transition from subsistence farmers to small-scale entrepreneurs and making markets work for the poor.

The Millennium Villages launched its first project site with Sauri, Kenya, in 2004, and later in Koraro, Ethiopia—each home to about 5,000 people. The Earth Institute is working to scale up its reach to include one hundred Millennium Villages. Today, Villages have been started or will be initiated throughout distinct African agro-ecological zones that include 68 villages in a total of 10 countries (Ethiopia, Nigeria, Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya, Senegal, Mali, Tanzania, Malawi, Uganda).

Villages in these countries are located in hunger “hotspots” where chronic hunger is often accompanied by a high prevalence of disease, lack of access to medical care, and a severe lack of infrastructure. Countries participating in the Project are reasonably peaceful and are led by accountable governments.

The Millennium Villages Project is scientific research in action: The inaugural village in Sauri, Kenya, held its first Harvest Festival on July 21, 2005, celebrating a three-fold increase in crop yields from the previous year, a fully staffed health clinic, insecticide-treated bed nets that are helping stave off once high rates of infection; and its very own truck to carry precious cargo: sick patients to the hospital and foodstuffs to market.

For more information about the Millennium Villages, please visit <http://www.earthinstitute.columbia.edu/mvp/>

## Session Summary

Prof. Pedro Sanchez underscored the importance of a new African Green Revolution in the Millennium Villages Project, with the elements of agriculture, nutrition, markets, environment, politics and policies requiring special attention.

The Millennium Villages Project is community-led and science-based; it represents a bottom-up approach and focuses on practical interventions in the areas of health, education, water provision, environment and infrastructure.

The Project’s arsenal of effective interventions for poverty and hunger reduction includes: replenishing soil health; home-grown school feeding; diversification of high value products; smart input subsidies; cereal banks and storage systems; micro and meso-finance; crop insurance; antiretroviral drugs, anti-malaria bed nets, internet access and transportation infrastructure.

For the Millennium Villages strategy to be effective, simultaneous steps have to be taken at community, national and international levels.

At the community level, getting out of the hunger/disease trap is achieved by drastic increase in food production (farm inputs), improvement in health (a clinic) and the provision of safe drinking water. The second stage, transformation from sub-subsistence to small-scale entrepreneurs includes selling of crop surpluses and entering the market. To that end cereal banks and storage systems together with good transportation system and micro and meso-finance were indispensable.

At the national and international level, it was important to succeed at fixing market infrastructure; doing away with trade and food aid distortions and developing a scaling-up strategy. Scaling up required organizational and political strategy; linking villages to district and cities through the development of infrastructure as well as strong accountability on the part of the governments.

In one year the Millennium Villages Project succeeded in increasing food production to feed 120,000 people. Initial successes of the project have set a solid foundation but it is still far from claiming sustainability. Sustainability can be achieved with the successful transformation from sub-subsistence to small-scale entrepreneurship at the village scale, accompanied by national MDG-based budgets.

Dr. Patrick Mutuo emphasized that the purpose of the Millennium Villages Project is to demonstrate that the MDGs, as adapted to local circumstances, are achievable while operating within realistic financial, human resource and institutional constraints. Its goal was to inform and support national growth and development strategies and to provide a model for sustainable investments leading to an economic transformation in rural areas.

The Millennium Villages Project is an integrated multi-sectoral approach focusing on practical interventions; applying the best science, knowledge and experience available; encouraging and benefiting from community participation, ownership and leadership; implementation through a partnership of communities, government, United Nations and other development partners. It is driven by a rural economic transformation within a 5-10 year time frame, backed by capacity building.

In the case of the Millennium Village Sauri, in Kenya, several agricultural handicaps had to be overcome including degraded soils, low crop yields, limited extension services, high price of fertilizers, unstable market prices and low labour productivity. The agricultural intervention plan aimed at transforming sub-subsistence farmers into small entrepreneurs focusing on the provision of fertilizers, improved water management, building of storage facilities, provision of credit, crop diversification and improving of the links to markets.

Health interventions in Sauri focused on the provision of basic health care; preventive measures such as immunization, health education and anti-malaria bed nets provision; managements of HIV/AIDS and training of community health workers. One year after putting the interventions in place, there was a notable reduction in malaria prevalence.

Water interventions concentrated on the rehabilitation of water springs, rain water harvesting, piped water revival and extension as well as bore well construction. In the area of education investments were made in school meals programmes and infrastructural development. An adult education and a community learning centre were established as

well.

In the area of environment rehabilitation of degraded areas, soil and water conservation and water catchment protection were taken up. Infrastructure projects included electrification, road upgrades, use of rechargeable lanterns for students, investments in phones and information and communication technologies.

The business development plan for Sauri concentrated on improving private sector linkage on agro-based processing, value addition and contract farming. The project in Sauri resulted in steady rural wealth creation. Scaling up of the project would entail extending it to Siaya district covering 55,000 people.

In the ensuing discussion questions were raised about the sustainability of the Millennium Villages Project; dependency on subsidies; corruption; the experimental nature of the project; scaling up of the project and expanding it beyond Africa.

The panelists explained that targeted, smart subsidies were in kind, not monetary, and went directly to the villages not governments. Such arrangements limited the possibility of corruption. Subsidies would diminish with time, encouraging gradual self-sufficiency as well.

So far, there are 78 Millennium Villages in Africa and the project has a goal of reaching 100,000 villages. There are plans to expand it to Asia and Latin America as well. In addition, a 'Millennium cities project' reaching provincial capital towns is currently under consideration. The challenge for donors and governments is how to devise a massive scaling-up plan to expand the outreach of the project.

## **Conclusions/Recommendations**

- The holistic and bottom-up approach to poverty eradication embodied in the Millennium Villages project has proven to be successful in increasing food production, health access, entrepreneurship and educational access;
- The Millennium Villages Project should be expanded to include urban areas and eventually throughout the world.

**SPECIAL EVENT ON RIGHTS, PARTICIPATION AND POVERTY ERADICATION**  
**Wednesday, 15 November 2006**  
**13:30-14:45 Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium**

**Moderator**

Ms. Sharon Altendorf, Executive Director, International Presentation Association  
of the Sisters of the Presentation

**Speakers**

Dr. Quentin Wodon, Lead Poverty Specialist for Africa, World Bank  
Prof. Iulia-Antoanella Motoc, Member, United Nations Sub-Commission on  
Promotion and Protection of Human Rights  
Mr. Jacques Petidor, Informal education specialist, Ministry of Education, Haiti

**Session organizers**

NGO Committee for Social Development and the Sub-committee for the  
Eradication of Poverty

**Background Note**

In recent years, there has been a growing realization that poverty is more than an economic issue - it is also a challenge to human rights. Those who live in extreme poverty are struggling daily to preserve their dignity and move themselves out of poverty but most often, this is unrecognized and their voices remain unheard. Different institutions - including the World Bank, the United Nations Human Rights Commission (now Human Rights Council) and major human rights NGOs - have started to look at the implications of a human rights approach. The purpose of this panel and exchange is to draw out the perspective of various actors on that theme. A common starting point is the way that people living in extreme poverty around the world are working with others to foster a better understanding of extreme poverty, as well as a commitment to work for its eradication. Many are also working in partnership with actors from different sectors of society to seek out concrete ways to make human rights a reality for all, including the poorest of the poor.

Jacques Petidor is an informal education specialist in Haiti, as well as a member of the local branch of International Movement ATD Fourth World, an NGO that works to create partnership with people living in extreme poverty. He will describe the current situation in Haiti - a country founded through a struggle for liberation, but which today is still struggling against a poverty that hampers development by pitting various sectors of society against each other. Mr. Petidor will also describe the actions being taken by some of the poorest members of society to respond to the challenges of surviving in the current situation, and especially their efforts to ensure a better future for their children. Mr. Petidor will present the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty as a tool to enable people living in extreme poverty to contribute to the international dialogue.

Dr. Wodon will use as a basis for his presentation a recently published World Bank study on "Participatory Approaches to Attacking Extreme Poverty," as well as other recent material prepared at the World Bank on issues related to extreme poverty. There is a growing interest within international institutions on reaching the poorest through programs and policies. Yet this is difficult not only for practical and implementation rea-

sons, but also because of a lack of in-depth knowledge on extreme poverty. Beyond traditional quantitative analysis, it is important to take into account the knowledge of the very poor themselves, and of those engaged at their side to fight extreme poverty. The presentation will also discuss issues that need to be considered carefully when evaluating the effectiveness of programmes and policies aiming to reach the extreme poor, whether in developing or developed nations.

Prof. Motoc, as a member of the Geneva United Nations Sub-commission for the promotion and protection of human rights, has been involved in the process that led to the adoption of draft guiding principles on extreme poverty and human rights (A/HRC/2/2 resolution 2006/9) in August 2006. This process included consultations with people living in extreme poverty and of those working closely with them. Prof. Motoc will comment on the process, and on the impact that the input of the poorest of the poor had on the final outcome. The guiding principles affirm in particular that extreme poverty persists everywhere in the world and constitutes a negation of the full range of human rights. It is therefore necessary to move towards the re-establishment of all rights (civil, economic, cultural, political, and social). The guidelines also affirm that the international community must make a concerted effort to foster partnership with people living in extreme poverty so that they are able to participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of all initiatives that concern them directly.

## Session Summary

Mr. Jacques Petidor noted that “Haiti was, in the past fighting for freedom, and today is looking for equal dignity.” He stated those 200 years ago, Haiti was the conquest of freedom by people who were slaves and denied all of their human rights. Today, the people of Haiti are still searching for recognition of their history. In post-slavery Haiti, people experience an extreme poverty that prevents a nation from developing. This is why people from different backgrounds must gather to think and act together. Mr. Petidor said that it is most important for the non-poor to know how poor families live, and to have a dialogue with them to understand their perspectives on the world and social change. It is also important that others are aware of what people living in poverty are doing to achieve these changes.

Mr. Petidor expressed the need to learn from people living in poverty. He said that the poorest families struggle daily to survive. He described two main issues that often come up in the face of a precarious life: the necessity of depending on one another, and the importance of education. Families living in poverty often describe neighbourhood solidarity, as well as solidarity with complete strangers as necessary for physical survival. Sometimes, asking a neighbour is the only way to get food for the day. This solidarity is also an expression of dignity.

Mr. Petidor also described the importance of education for a better future, and the efforts and sacrifices that families make to educate their children in spite of other pressing needs (such as food) that may seem more urgent.

He noted that many people living in poverty have a strong will and desire to look for alternative routes out of poverty, particularly avoiding blaming a failing government or aid that they have heard about but not received. These actions make the efforts and dignity of everyone visible.

Mr. Petidor also discussed October 17, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. The most important aspects of October 17 are gathering together, talking, being heard, and listening to people that we do not normally listened to. Mr. Petidor also described the importance of the testimonies of people living in poverty that deconstruct the idea of poverty as inevitable, and also to help the non-poor understand better the realities of living in poverty. Very poor families feel that their testimonies allow them to be heard by people that they might not have met otherwise.

Despite the effectiveness of the testimonies, Mr. Petidor also acknowledged the impossibility for someone who is not poor to fully understand poverty. To actually learn from people who are living in extreme poverty, one must pay attention to the ways in which they live and communicate. This is because the transmission of their knowledge is not always verbal.

Dr. Quentin Wodon noted that there is a growing interest within international institutions in reaching the poorest through programmes and policies. Yet this is difficult not only for practical and implementation reasons, but also because of a lack of in-depth knowledge of extreme poverty. Beyond traditional quantitative analysis, it is important to take into account the knowledge of the very poor themselves, and of those engaged at their side to fight extreme poverty. The presentation also discussed issues that need to be considered carefully when evaluating the effectiveness of programmes and policies aiming to reach the extreme poor, whether in developing or developed nations.

The main concern is that in some cases traditional techniques used to measure poverty and assess the potential impact of policies on the poor might not work for extreme poverty. There are a lot of challenges in clarifying what extreme poverty means and how to translate this knowledge into appropriate policies.

There are a number of issues in analyzing extreme poverty:

- Under or overestimating the number of the extreme poor and changes in extreme poverty; some of the measures used for poverty measurement may not capture well enough the numbers of the extreme poor;
- Not recognizing the multidimensionality of extreme poverty; here, apart from stating that there are multiple dimensions of poverty, which is obvious, what is more important is to understand the interactions between different dimensions of poverty, given that it is these interactions which make extreme poverty much more difficult to attack than poverty;
- Not understanding the chains of events leading to extreme poverty – for example some apparently irrational decisions made by household members may be actually perfectly rational once the situation of the individuals concerned is better understood;
- Setting targets without enough concern for the extreme poor. For example, the MDG 1 aims to halve the number of people living in poverty; hence it is legitimate to ask what is supposed to happen to the other half of the population. Those left out of the initial efforts to reach the MDGs are probably the poorest. Indeed, in some cases, pressures to show progress towards reducing the number of the poor may lead governments to favour policies helping those who are just below the poverty line as opposed to poorer households;
- Although poverty cannot be overcome without economic growth, economic growth does not necessarily lead to strong reductions in poverty, as has been seen in some African countries – reducing inequality is also important;

- Not recognizing the consequences of risk for the extreme poor. First, as already mentioned, small shocks can dramatically affect the most vulnerable. But in addition, substantial variations in income have a negative impact by themselves, and the poor tend to suffer from larger variations in income than the better off;
- Imposing conditionalities to assistance programs that may hurt the extreme poor. It is important to recognize that certain social programmes may have the best intentions but some conditionalities, for example the need to send children to school for a certain period of time (say, for 85 per cent of the classes) in order to qualify for cash transfers, are often very difficult to follow for the extreme poor who lack basic resources. This type of conditionalities may prevent the very poor from participating in social programs;
- Not targeting enough so that scarce resources are not channelled to those who need them the most, or targeting too much in which case there may be stigma associated to some programs
- Analyzing the impact of programs and policies on the poor, but not the extreme poor. To better understand the impact of policies on the poor, data on the distance separating the poor from the poverty line is needed (or the square of that distance for example);
- Forgetting that the fight against extreme poverty is also about empowerment, and not only about indicators such as income, consumption, employment or housing. The very poor suffer from social exclusion, and the impact of programs and policies on exclusion must also be assessed.

After presenting these risks, Dr. Wodon suggested that the definition of extreme poverty that was proposed by Joseph Wresinski, and which makes an explicit connection between extreme poverty and human rights, does in fact capture many of the issues outlined above. This definition is as follows:

“A lack of basic security is the absence of one or more factors that enable individuals and families to assume basic responsibilities and to enjoy fundamental rights. Such a situation may become more extended and lead to more serious and permanent consequences. Extreme poverty results when the lack of basic security simultaneously affects several aspects of people's lives, when it is prolonged, and when it severely compromises people's chances of regaining their rights and of reassuming their responsibilities in the foreseeable future.”

Dr. Wodon concluded that three types of knowledge are required to design better Poverty Reduction Strategies. In addition to academic or scientific knowledge we also need to rely on knowledge from the real life experience of the very poor, and on action-oriented knowledge from those who are engaged with the very poor in fighting extreme poverty.

Prof. Iulia Motoc, Professor of International Law and member of the United Nations Human Rights Committee, of the Geneva United Nations Sub-commission for the promotion and protection of human rights. Prof. Motoc has been involved in the process that led in August 2006 to the adoption of draft guiding principles on extreme poverty and human rights (A/HRC/2/2 resolution 2006/9). This process included consultations with people living in extreme poverty and of those working closely with them. Prof. Motoc commented on the process, and on the impact that the input of the poorest of the

poor had on the final outcome. The guiding principles affirm in particular that extreme poverty persists everywhere in the world and constitutes a negation of the full range of human rights. It is therefore necessary to move towards the re-establishment of all rights (civil, economic, cultural, political, and social). The guidelines also affirm that the international community must make a concerted effort to foster partnership with people living in extreme poverty so that they are able to participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of all initiatives that concern them directly.

For a long time the issue of extreme poverty was not conceived and understood in the human rights context, it was considered in the context of charity and humanitarian help. Starting in the 1980s and 90s the question of extreme poverty began to be perceived as a question of human rights. At the beginning of 2000 the Sub-commission on Human Rights was asked to work in the field with people living in extreme poverty. The challenge was how to transform the language of lawyers and politicians into the terms of those living in extreme poverty.

Prof. Motoc stated that sometimes the poor cannot express themselves in another kind of language or even, they cannot express themselves at all. Experts have to go and meet people, be with them and live with them to understand them. The Working Group of five experts of the Sub-commission with the help of NGOs working in the field went around the world and met people living in extreme poverty to bring their voices to the forefront of the discussion. People living in extreme poverty asked experts to speak in their language.

After five years of effort the Working Group drafted the guidelines. Twenty six members of the Sub-commission debated on the duties of states regarding these guidelines. The first dilemma addressed was how to give the very poorest states the means to reinforce their rights. The second dilemma was who to address in the guidelines - only public actors, or only private actors. The important achievement of the Working Group is that it succeeded to convince colleagues that all parties should be included in the discussion around the eradication of poverty, especially those living in extreme poverty.

The Sub-commission's definition of poverty is not substantially different from that of Fr. Joseph Wresinski. The Sub-commission defined poverty as a violation of human rights and a threat to fundamental rights and freedoms but also as a lack of basic security, and lack of access to one or more life resources that creates the situation of chronic poverty. Thus, extreme poverty is seen as a violation of civil, political, social and cultural rights.

One of the major elements mentioned in the first part of the guidelines is the participation of the poor. All of the programmes created for the poor must involve the poor. The poor must be heard in their own language by people with different kinds of education. It is a great challenge to learn how to work with the poor in a participatory way because communities of the poor are not the same.

Stigmatization and discrimination is another important aspect addressed in the guidelines. The poor are often discriminated against not only on the grounds of poverty but also race and gender as well. Thus it is crucial to see these discriminations as complex. In addition the poor are routinely stigmatized because of the places in which they live.

Prof. Motoc described some of the rights emphasized in the draft guidelines. In order for people living in poverty to gain civil and political rights they must first be recog-

nized as persons by the law. Sometimes the poor do not have formal identification or official document papers and that prevents people from exercising their political rights. The right to support their children and maintain the family is also a basic civil right. Prof. Motoc said that in the drafting group's communications with the extreme poor they saw how difficult it is for the very poor to maintain their families due to the absence of basic resources and rights.

Other fundamental rights are the right to food, health care, education and ownership of land, which the poor often lack. Also, because of corruption in certain countries the poor sometimes do not have access to humanitarian aid. Another important right often overlooked is that of culture. Culture is very important for the poor and serves as a source of dignity in the face of other adversities. There should be special programmes to maintain their rights to dignity and culture.

A number of important questions were raised following the discussion such as the need for various types of measurement tools when defining poverty, the policy implications of redefining extreme poverty eradication in the human rights context, and the role of women in the fight to eradicate poverty.

In particular the limitations that a "\$1 a day" definition of poverty place and the need for a more expansive model, such as country-specific poverty lines already used by various institutions (e.g. the World Bank and UN).

In addition, the guidelines proposed by the Sub-committee include not only the specific rights of the poor such as the right to participation but also the need to stop the exploitation of the poor. The issue becomes afterward how governments can and will implement these rights through policy decisions.

Finally, in order to have a significant impact, policies must take into account the tremendous responsibility women living in extreme poverty within vulnerable areas such as Haiti have both at home and in society.

## **Conclusions/Recommendations**

- A human-rights based approach is essential for combating poverty;
- In order to develop effective poverty eradication strategies it is crucial to learn from people living in poverty;
- To actually learn from people who are living in extreme poverty, one must pay attention to the ways in which they live and communicate. This is because the transmission of their knowledge is not always verbal;
- Traditional techniques aimed at poverty eradication might not work for extreme poverty;
- Our knowledge of poverty should be redefined to include academic/scientific knowledge, real life experience and the action-oriented knowledge of those engaged with the very poor in fighting extreme poverty.

**CLOSING PLENARY SESSION**  
**Thursday, 16 November 2006**  
**17:45 - 18:00 Conference Room 2**

**Chair**

H.E. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, President, General Assembly

**Speaker**

Mr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Assistant-Secretary General for Economic Development, DESA

**Session Summary**

H.E. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa noted that much progress had been made over the past ten years in efforts to eradicate poverty, although she recognized that more needs to be done. The President offered praise for the strategies put forward during the forum by many of the experts in attendance. She announced that she would work to further progress towards achieving the MDGs during the 61st Session of the General Assembly, and would hold an informal thematic debate at the United Nations on the 27th of November, involving donors, partner countries, the private sector and civil society to review practical measures and strategies which could advance efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. In her final statement she thanked all involved for attending the forum and expressed her support for a Second Decade for the Eradication of Poverty.

Mr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram expressed concern for the uneven progress made in poverty reduction during the previous decade. He called for international support to further the work of the United Nations in this area. It was pointed out that more official development assistance was needed, and while amounts had increased since the end of the 1990s, the countries that received most of the assistance, such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel, Egypt and Colombia, were not of the poorest that needed it most.

Mr. Jomo emphasized some of the highlights of the Forum during the closing:

- A special event on overcoming poverty traps was held and the possibility of moving from vicious to virtuous cycles was discussed. Enhancing productive capacities was called for, and to ensure that the necessary resources to do this were made available.
- In session two, good policies to eliminate child poverty were identified. It was found that over one-half of the world's children suffer from some form of deprivation and the distinctions between child poverty and adult poverty were highlighted. The spread of HIV/AIDS has led to the loss of parents for many children, fundamentally changing the experience of childhood.
- During session four, obstacles and constraints to the empowerment of women were identified, and special attention was given to the specific problems of female children.
- In session five, challenges to mainstreaming decent work into poverty reduction strategies were discussed. Improving conditions of work for the most vulnerable was recommended and indulging in the race to the bottom should be avoided.
- In a special session on the Millennium Villages Project, the success of the methods used was discussed and it was found that ways to scale up the program were needed.
- Session seven discussed challenges posed by technology, and innovative approaches to bridging the gap such as the Grameen Phone and the One Laptop per Child pro-

gramme were presented.

Mr. Jomo reviewed the main points made by the panelists over the course of the forum and called for a combination of social and economic policies to maximize poverty eradication efforts and stressed the importance of addressing inequality. He stated that each country should have national ownership of their strategies to be able to discover and use policy space in the most effective way. Mr. Jomo also expressed his hope that the General Assembly would recognize the importance and lend its support for a Second Decade for the Eradication of Poverty.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES FOR SPEAKERS

**Gemma Adaba** is the Representative of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) to the United Nations. Since 1980, she has been a staff member of the Brussels-based ICFTU, a Confederation of national trade union centres in 150 countries and territories on all five continents, with a total membership of 158 million workers of whom 40 per cent are women. A native of Trinidad & Tobago, Ms. Adaba's trade union work began in the teaching sector, where she was an active member of the Trinidad and Tobago Teachers' Association in the late 1960's. She joined the Economic and Social Policy Department of the ICFTU in 1980 as a research officer, and in that capacity was responsible for research and policy on a range of social and industrial relations issues during the period 1980 to 1994. These included: The social impact of change in developing countries and the trade union response; Environment, development, living standards, food security in Africa; The debt crisis and its consequences for workers in developing countries. She also serviced the ICFTU/International Trade Secretariats\* (ITS) and coordinated strategies and advocacy in response to the negative impacts of multinational companies on basic workers' rights. From 1994-1999, she was Director of the ICFTU/ITS Washington Office. She supported the policy and advocacy work of the ICFTU and ITS on the social dimensions of globalization, structural adjustment and reform, maintaining a liaison function with the Washington-based International Financial Institutions (the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Inter-American Development Bank). Ms. Gemma Adaba holds a Masters' Degree in Sociology from the University of Western Ontario, Canada.

**Claude Kwaku Akpokavie** is Senior Adviser in the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities. He coordinates the work of the Bureau in two main areas: Poverty Reduction Strategies and the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Prior to his appointment in the ILO, he worked for some 12 years in the trade union movement, at both national and international levels. He was successively responsible for workers' education, international labour standards and economic and social policy. He holds a PhD in Political Science (development studies option) from the Université Catholique de Louvain and comes from Ghana.

**Sharon Altendorf** is Executive Director of the NGO, International Presentation Association Sisters of the Presentation whose mission statement reads: "...The cry of those made poor and the cry of the Earth call us to continue the mission of Jesus to bring forth a sustainable society founded on respect for earth, universal human rights, economic justice and a culture of peace." She has been Secretary for the NGO Committee on Social Development and is presently the Secretary for the NGO Committee on the Status of Women. Also she is active in the NGO sub-committee on Poverty Eradication, the NGO Committee on Financing for Development, and the NGO Committee on the United Nations International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples. Her professional experience includes: Executive Director and Main NGO Representative of the IPA from July 2000 – Present, Coordinator of Guadalupe Project with a 1000 member family Latino community receiving a Human Rights award, Leadership team - Fargo Presentation Sisters, Pastoral Ministry and Human Development Ministry in South America: 5 years in Tacna, Peru and 8 years in the Andes Mountains in Peru, and University and Newman ministry – Grand Forks, University of North Dakota. Sharon Altendorf has a Bachelor of Science in Education –Social studies with a concentration in Sociology from the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, N.D. and a Mas-

ters in Religious Education from Seattle University, Seattle, WA. She speaks Spanish and learned Quechua while working in Peru.

**David Beckmann** is President of Bread for the World, a faith-based grassroots advocacy movement in the United States. Bread for the World mobilizes more than a quarter of a million constituent contacts with Congress annually on issues that are important to hungry and poor people in the United States and worldwide. Bread for the World lobbying has helped to increase U.S. funding for poverty-focused development assistance from \$4 billion in 1999 to \$10.2 billion in 2006. At the same time, Bread for the World has helped to protect funding for nutrition programs that help struggling U.S. families. Beckmann is also the founder of the U.S. Alliance to End Hunger, which engages diverse institutions -- religious bodies, charities, corporations, universities and foundations -- in building the political will needed to overcome hunger.

**Roberto Bissio** is executive director of the Instituto del Tercer Mundo (Third World Institute), a non-profit research and advocacy organization based in Uruguay. He is head of the secretariat of Social Watch, an international network of citizen organizations from seventy countries that reports every year on how governments and international organizations implement their commitments on poverty eradication and gender equity. He is also a member of Third World Network's international committee and of the civil society advisory group to the UNDP administrator. He serves on the board of WEDO (Women's Environment and Development Organization, based in NY) and of the Montreal International Forum. He is a journalist and editor working on development issues since 1973. He was the creator of "The World Guide", a reference book with a Southern perspective, published in English by New Internationalist (Oxford).

**Solveig Buhl** is Senior Poverty Expert and Social Development Advisor with the GTZ. For the last 7 years Solveig Buhl has been working as a social development advisor for GTZ in Germany, Asia and the Middle Eastern Region. Currently she is responsible to advise the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development in poverty monitoring and evaluation. In this function, she is also an active member of the OECD DAC Task Team on Poverty Impact Monitoring. Before, she worked for a Sino-German GTZ project advising the China Poverty Reduction Offices to set up a participatory Poverty Monitoring System for China's 10-Year Rural Poverty Alleviation Plan. She has done extensive field work in Africa, mainly Burkina Faso. Solveig Buhl holds a PhD in Anthropology from University College London, UK.

**Martha Chen** is a Lecturer in Public Policy at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University and Coordinator of the global research-policy network Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO). An experienced development practitioner and scholar with a doctorate in South Asia Regional Studies from the University of Pennsylvania, her areas of specialization are gender, poverty, and the informal economy. Before joining Harvard University in 1987, Dr. Chen had resident experience in Bangladesh working with one of the world's largest non-governmental organizations (BRAC), and in India where she served as field representative of Oxfam America for India and Bangladesh. Since joining Harvard University in 1987, Dr. Chen has undertaken four major field studies in India; spent three years as a Visiting Professor at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study; and co-founded the global research-policy network WIEGO (see [www.wiego.org](http://www.wiego.org)). She is the author of numerous books including, most recently, *Progress of the World's Women 2005: Women, Work, and Poverty* (which she co-authored with five colleagues from the WIEGO network), *Mainstreaming Informal Employment and Gender in Poverty Reduction* (which she co-authored with Joann Vanek and Marilyn Carr), *Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture* (which she co-authored with Joann Vanek) and *Perpetual Mourning: Widowhood in Rural India*.

**Anwarul Karim Chowdhury** is the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. Mr. Chowdhury was Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations in New York (1996-2001), and also served as Bangladesh's Ambassador to Chile, Nicaragua, Peru and Venezuela, as well as Bangladesh's High Commissioner to the Bahamas and Guyana. During his tenure as Permanent Representative, Mr. Chowdhury served as President of the Security Council, President of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Executive Board, and, for more than 10 years, as the Coordinator for the Least Developed Countries in New York. In May 2001, he led the negotiations on behalf of the least developed countries at the Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries, which adopted the comprehensive Brussels Programme of Action for the present decade. Mr. Chowdhury also chaired the Fifth (Administrative and Budgetary) Committee of the General Assembly in 1998-2000. He served as Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council in 1997 and 1998. From 1990-1993, Mr. Chowdhury was the UNICEF Director in Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

**Iftekhhar Ahmed Chowdhury** is Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations. He earned Ph.D. and MA degrees in International Relations at the Australian National University in Canberra, Australia. Earlier he had obtained a First Class first degree with B.A. Honours in Political Science from the Dhaka University, Bangladesh. In a diplomatic career that spanned across 36 year, he was, prior to his current appointment, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations in Geneva (1991-2000). Before that he was Bangladesh's Ambassador to Qatar (1994-1996). He also served as the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Chairman of the WTO Committee on Trade and Development, the Chairman WTO Trade and Policy Review Body, the President of the Conference on Disarmament, and the Chairman of the Second Committee of the United Nations at 59th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

**Augusto de la Torre** has worked for The World Bank since October 1997. As Senior Regional Financial Sector Advisor for Latin America and the Caribbean, he provides technical and conceptual leadership to World Bank financial sector operations and research in the Region and is actively involved in the joint IMF-World Bank Financial Sector Assessment Program. He also works closely with the Office of the Chief Economist for the Latin American and the Caribbean Region, focusing on macroeconomic and financial sector linkages and issues. He headed the Central Bank of Ecuador during 1993-96. In November 1996, he was chosen by Euromoney Magazine as the year's "Best Latin Central Banker." He is a member of the Carnegie Network of Economic Reformers. From 1986 to 1992 he was an Economist with the International Monetary Fund and during 1991-92 was the IMF's Resident Representative in Venezuela. De la Torre earned his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Economics at the University of Notre Dame and holds a Licenciatura in Philosophy from the Catholic University of Ecuador.

**Haoua Dia** is a Member of Parliament from Senegal, where she also serves as the President of the Senegalese Women's Council (COSEF) and the Association of Women for Development (AFD). In addition, she is a member of the African Network of Working Women (RAFET) and several additional civil society groups that work to strengthen the role of gender in social and economic development. Over her 25-year career in public service, Ms. Dia has participated extensively in regional and international conferences and summits, most recently in capacity-building workshops for the Network of Women Ministers and Parliamentarians in Africa (REFAMP) regarding leadership and resource mobilization. She also participated in the 60th and 61st Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations. Ms. Dia received a Master's Degree from the University of Dakar in human geography and has teaching experience at both the Collège Samba

Guèye de Dakar and the Collège Moustapha Mbacké de Diourbel.

**Tracy Dolan** has worked with children and youth, both domestically and internationally for over 10 years. In her native Canada, she worked with indigenous youth, street youth, and youth in detention, teaching peer counselling, sex education and HIV prevention. Ms. Dolan has worked primarily in Africa with vulnerable children and related child protection activities as a field based technical officer in Malawi with Save the Children US and as a headquarters based HIV specialist with Christian Children's Fund (CCF). Recently, as CCF's Child Participation Advisor, Ms. Dolan has begun leading CCF's efforts to integrate child and youth agency into its programs worldwide. She is currently developing Standards of Practice and related training material for promoting the leading role of children in all aspects of CCF's work.

**Cheryl Doss** is the Director of Yale University's Graduate Studies MA Program in International Relations and a Lecturer in the Department of Economics. In addition, she serves as the University's Associate Chair of the International Affairs Council. Professor Doss's research interests centre around household decision-making in rural households in Africa, with a particular focus on how changes affect the dynamics of decision-making within households. Currently, she is co-editing a special issue of *Feminist Economics on Women and the Distribution of Wealth*, entitled "The Gender-Asset-Asset Gap: What Do We Know and Why Does it Matter," in which the authors specifically examine the causes and implications of the unequal distribution of wealth by gender. She received a Ph.D. in Applied Economics from the University of Minnesota, an M.A. in International Relations from Yale University, and a B.A. in Political Science from the University of California, Riverside.

**Chinwe A. Effiong** is Africare's Regional Director for East and Anglophone West Africa and is responsible for providing technical and administrative support to Africare programs in this region. Prior to this, she was Senior Program Manager in the Office of International Development at Africare, Washington, D.C. and served in Nigeria from 2000 to 2005 as Africare's Country Representative. While in Nigeria, she initiated and implemented several groundbreaking projects to assist the most needy and vulnerable groups of Nigeria such as HIV orphans and their caregivers, rural populations of women and children under five years old affected by malaria and low income young urban women, who are most vulnerable to sexual exploitation and HIV/AIDS. She has designed and raised funds for the implementation of several innovative projects such as the Women's Initiative for Sex Education and Economic Empowerment (WISE). Through her drive and commitment, the WISE project has received recognition by both President Obasanjo of Nigeria and President Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia, who has requested a replication of the project in the city of Monrovia. Prior to joining Africare, Dr. Effiong was Acting Chair and Assistant Professor of Political Science at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. She has a Masters and PhD in International Relations and African Political Economy from the University of Delaware, and a BA in Literature from the University of Calabar, Nigeria. Dr. Effiong has received numerous awards including, the CAM Award celebrating African motherhood; Who's Who Among America's Teachers (1998); Dorothy Danforth Compton Doctoral Fellowship (1994-95); and the Chinua Achebe Literary Award for highest graduating G.P.A., University of Calabar (1987). Outside of her professional work, she is a creative writer and a motivational speaker.

**Elizabeth D. Gibbons** is currently the Chief of Global Policy in UNICEF's New York headquarters, responsible for the development and application of human rights approaches to poverty reduction as well as the development of analytical tools and advocacy strategies for placing children at the centre of social, economic and juridical policies. Her career in social development and humanitarian affairs has spanned close to 25 years, during which she lived and worked in

Togo, Kenya and Zimbabwe, and served as head of UNICEF's offices in Haiti and in Guatemala. A graduate of Smith College and Columbia University, Elizabeth D. Gibbons is the author of *Sanctions in Haiti: Human Rights and Democracy under Assault*, and a contributing author to several other books.

**David Gordon** is currently the Director of the Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research. Professor Gordon has combined his background in biology and geology with anti-poverty policy, while helping to find safe public water supplies in the South Pacific. He has researched and published in the fields of the scientific measurement of poverty, crime and poverty, childhood disability, area-based anti-poverty measures, the casual effects of poverty on ill health, housing policy and rural poverty. The Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research is dedicated to multi-disciplinary research on poverty in both the industrialized and developing world. The Centre has been established by the University of Bristol in response to the United Nations First International Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1007-2006) and in recognition of the work of Professor Peter Townsend. The University sector can support the goal eradicating poverty by providing high quality interdisciplinary research into effective anti-poverty policies. His latest books are *Poverty and Social Exclusion in Britain: the Millennium Survey* (with Christina Pantazia and others, 2006), 'Ascertaining the prevalence of childhood disability', *Child: Care, Health and Development* (with Hutchison and Townsend, 2004).

**Charles G. Gore** is Chief for Research and Policy Analysis, Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programs of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). He received his Ph.D. degree in Economic Geography from Pennsylvania State University, and M.A. and B.A. degrees in Geography from Cambridge University. He has held numerous important senior positions at UNCTAD including director for The Least Developed Countries Report, Technical Adviser for Macro-economic and Development Policies Branch, Division on Globalization and Development Strategies (UNCTAD), Research Adviser for International Institute for Labour Studies, and Economic Affairs Officer for Division of Least Developed, Landlocked and Island Developing Countries (UNCTAD). From 1976 to 1991 he was a Lecturer in Development Studies at the University of Wales. He has also been a member of academic institutions and professional organizations and participated in numerous programs and projects. He is the author and the editor of numerous publications, commissioned studies, and official reports.

**Caren A. Grown** is a Senior Scholar and Co-director (with Diane Elson) of the Gender Equality and the Economy program, the Levy Economics Institute of Bard College. Her current research focuses on gender equality, public finance, and international trade and investment. Previously, Dr. Grown directed the Poverty Reduction and Economic Governance team at the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW). During her term at ICRW, she served as Senior Associate of Task Force 3 of the United Nations Millennium Project on gender equality and women's empowerment. She has edited and authored several books and numerous articles on gender equality including *Taking Action: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women* (Earthscan Press 2005). She holds a PhD in economics from the New School for Social Research and a BA in Political Science from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA).

**Wahu Kaara** is a renowned Kenyan educationist and a Global Social Justice Activist of international repute. She taught History and Kiswahili in numerous High schools in Kenya, rising to the position of a Principal in a Girl's High School before she retired to devote her time and energy to civic engagement. She is the Ecumenical Programme Coordinator for the Millennium Development Goals at the all Africa Conference of Churches, and has been involved in numerous processes around Debt, Trade, Aid, Human Rights and Sustainable Development. She has been a cen-

tral figure in the formation of numerous civil society organizations and entities in Kenya related to Human Rights, Governance, Economic Policy, Democratization and Gender; she is founding Coordinator of the Kenya Debt Relief Network. She serves on the council of the Africa Social Forum and the Africa Women Economic Policy Network. She is also involved in the creation of the Africa Mother's Foundation, a continental body that will serve to document the richness of women's contribution in the development of Africa. Breaking the global media silence usually visited on them. She has played a central role in bringing the World Social Forum to Nairobi in January 2007. With Brazilian President Lula da Silva, she launched the Global Call to Action against Poverty in Porto Allegre, Brazil in January 2005. Wahu is a Nobel Peace Prize nominee for the year 2005.

**Jo Maher** is a global health specialist and heterodox economist specializing in HIV. Her work in the NGO sector over the past 7 years has focused particularly on the impact of HIV on children and the economy in southern Africa. Jo has campaigned for and been active in local and international social justice issues for over a decade on issues including pluralist economic responses to economic inequality and gender disparity. She has recently completed her postgraduate studies in Development Finance at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. Recent publications include an article on the impact of HIV on older women and men in AARP's Global Ageing Magazine. Jo is based in London where she is currently the HIV & AIDS Coordinator at HelpAge International.

**Stefania Marcone** is Director of the International Relations Office of Legacoop. In this function Stefania Marcone works directly with the national Board and the sectoral associations of Legacoop. Her areas of activity include internationalization, cooperation to development, and institutional representation. In 1997 she was elected as Board member of the International Cooperative Alliance, representing the three Italian Apex Cooperative organisations, ICA members (AGCI, *Confcooperative e Legacoop*). In this position she was involved in gender equality policy, in the establishment of a global network of young co-operators, cooperation to development projects, organizational and financial issues, relations with international institution and the United Nations agencies, and promotion of collaboration among cooperatives. In October 2001 she was re-elected for a second term on the ICA Board. In September 2005 she was elected chairperson of the ICA Gender Equality Committee. Prior to joining Legacoop, she was External Relations officer at *Cassa per il Credito alle Imprese Artigiane* (ARTIGIANCASSA), and President of a cooperative society, located in Rome and active in the service sector.

**Iulia Motoc** is Professor of International Law at the University of Bucharest and Senior Fellow at Yale School of Law. She was the President of the United Nations Sub-Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, (2000-2001). Since 2001 she is Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Commission of Human Rights for the Democratic Republic of Congo. Since 2002 she has been President of the Working Group on Administration of Justice United Nations Sub-Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. She was member of the United Nations Working Group for Extreme Poverty. She was elected member of the Human Rights Committee. She published articles and books in area such as theory of international law, *Teoria relatiilor internationale - sursele filosofiei morale si politice* (Theory of International Relations: the moral and political philosophy traditions) (2001); theory of European Integration, *Uniunea Europeana Dreptul si politica extinderii la Est* (The European Union: the law and the politics of Eastwards Enlargement) (2001); use of the force, *Interprete la guerre: les exceptions de l'article 2&4 de la Charte ONU dans la pratique du Conseil de securite* (1997). Professor Motoc received her law degree from the University of Bucharest, a DEA and a Doctorate in International Public Law from the University of Aix-Marseille III and a habilitation in law for University Paris XI. She

also possesses a Doctorate in Moral Philosophy from the University of Bucharest.

**Patrick Mulvany** is senior policy adviser to Practical Action on agriculture, biodiversity and technology issues. From 1980 to 1996, he developed and managed the organization's work on agriculture, livestock and fisheries across the world and subsequently its work on policy and institutional relations. Since then he has focused on the governance of food and agriculture as well as agricultural biodiversity. This involves him in policy, advocacy and project work in all continents. He chairs the UK Food Group, the principal UK network of civil society organisations concerned with global food, farming and food sovereignty policies. He has been a trustee of Oxfam, Action Aid and CIIR and adviser to many other international NGOs. He was a founder editorial board member of *Development in Practice* journal. He is an active participant in the civil society lobbies at the Food and Agriculture Organization and the Convention on Biological Diversity with special interest in the implementation of the International Seed Treaty (IT PGRFA). He writes occasional articles on topical food and agriculture issues, most recently concerning the 10th anniversary of the World Food Summit. He holds a Masters degree from Oxford University and is a chartered member of the Institute of Biology.

**Patrick Mutuo** is the on-site coordinator of the Millennium Villages Project and is based in Kisumu, Kenya, 27 miles from Sauri, the first Millennium Village. Dr. Mutuo received a Bachelor's degree in forestry and Master's degree from in environmental sciences from Moi University in Kenya. He went on to receive a Ph.D. in soil science from Imperial College, University of London in the United Kingdom. Additionally, he holds an honorary diploma from Imperial College and postgraduate certificates in environmental impact assessment and data management and analysis for agroforestry experiments. Dr. Mutuo has experience in integrated soil fertility management, management of natural resources, biodiversity conservation, ecological monitoring (including GIS), research methods, biotechnology, environmental services of agroforestry systems (especially carbon sequestration and greenhouse gases), and modelling of nutrient cycling. Dr. Mutuo's professional experience includes working as a research assistant for UNESCO's Tropical Soil Biology and Fertility (TSBF) Programme. There he assisted in coordination of network experiments in Southern and East African regions, managed and analyzed data for various projects, managed field experimental trials for soil fertility management, and supervised laboratory analyses of soil and vegetation samples. He recently worked as a consultant at the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) to develop a training material on measurements of carbon sequestration in sub-humid agroecosystems. He has 8 years of experience conducting research in western Kenya, including experimental sites in Sauri. Dr. Mutuo is the author of a number of articles in refereed journals, book chapters and proceedings.

**Nicholas Negroponte** is founder and chairman of the One Laptop per Child non-profit association. He is currently on leave from MIT, where he was co-founder and director of the MIT Media Laboratory, and the Jerome B. Wiesner Professor of Media Technology. A graduate of MIT, Nicholas was a pioneer in the field of computer-aided design, and has been a member of the MIT faculty since 1966. Conceived in 1980, the Media Laboratory opened its doors in 1985. He is also author of the 1995 best seller, *Being Digital*, which has been translated into more than 40 languages. In the private sector, Nicholas serves on the board of directors for Motorola, Inc. and as general partner in a venture capital firm specializing in digital technologies for information and entertainment. He has provided start-up funds for more than 40 companies, including *Wired* magazine.

**José Antonio Ocampo** has a BA degree in Economics and Sociology from the University of Notre Dame, and a Ph.D. in Economics from Yale University. Former Executive Secretary of the

United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), he became the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs on 1 September, 2003. As such, he heads the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), which is responsible for the follow-up to the major United Nations Summits and Conferences, and services the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly. He also chairs the United Nations Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs. Prior to assuming his present position in the United Nations, he held a number of posts in the Government of Colombia, including those of Minister of Finance and Public Credit, Director (Minister) of the National Planning Department, and Minister of Agriculture. As an academic, he has been Director of the Foundation for Higher Education and Development (FEDESARROLLO), Professor of Economics at Universidad de los Andes and Universidad Nacional de Colombia, and Visiting Professor at Cambridge, Yale and Oxford Universities. He is the author or editor of a number of books and monographs, and has written several scholarly articles on subjects such as macroeconomic theory and policy, international financial and monetary issues, economic development, international trade, and Colombian and Latin American economic history. Mr. Ocampo has received a number of personal honours and distinctions, including the Alejandro Angel Escobar National Science Award.

**Rajul Pandya-Lorch** is head of the International Food Policy Institute's (IFPRI) 2020 Vision for Food, Agriculture, and the Environment Initiative, a global initiative that seeks to identify solutions for meeting world food needs while reducing poverty and protecting the environment. She concurrently serves as Chief of Staff in the Director General's Office. Before taking her current position, Ms. Pandya-Lorch was special assistant to IFPRI former director general, Per Pinstrup-Andersen. An IFPRI staff member since 1987, she has focused her research on trends in and prospects for global food security and on policies to alleviate and prevent food insecurity, poverty, and environmental degradation, with particular emphasis on sustainable development in Sub-Saharan Africa. She has facilitated two major international conferences on (1) "Sustainable Food Security for All by 2020", in Bonn, Germany on September 4-6, 2001; and (2) "Assuring Food and Nutrition Security in Africa by 2020", in Kampala, Uganda on April 1-3, 2004. In recognition of her achievements, the American Agricultural Economics Association presented Ms. Pandya-Lorch, along with Per Pinstrup-Andersen and Mark Rosegrant, with its 2002 award for Distinguished Policy Contribution. Pandya-Lorch, a Kenyan citizen of Indian origin, earned a Master's degree in public and international affairs from Princeton University.

**Joe Robert Pemagbi** is Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations. He received his master's degree in linguistics from the University of Leeds and his bachelor's degree in education from the University of Sierra Leone. Later he served as the Dean of Njala University, Sierra Leone. From 1994 until his current appointment, Mr. Pemagbi was a member and, from 1999, the Chairman of the National Commission for Democracy and Human Rights in Sierra Leone. From 1997 to 1998, he was the Volunteer Project Manager for the Campaign for Good Governance in Guinea. His wide-ranging experience with international organizations included his work in the Literacy and Conflict Resolution Project in the Kaliah Refugee Camp in Guinea. During the 1990s and 1980s, he participated in numerous international programs and projects.

**Jan Peterson** is founder and Chair of the Secretariat of the Huairou Commission, a global coalition that forges strategic partnerships to advance the capacity of grassroots women worldwide to strengthen and create sustainable communities. She also currently serves as a member of the Advisory Committee of the High-Level Commission on the Legal Empowerment of the Poor, which aims to make the link between poverty and the inability of the poor to access acceptable, legal

structures to protect economic assets and support economic activities. Ms. Peterson has over 30 years of community development experience, working as a groundbreaking leader in producing innovative community structures led by grassroots women and has pursued the empowerment of women both locally in New York and also on a global scale. Ms. Peterson has taught in the faculty of Adelphi University School of Social Work, the Pratt Institute, LaGuardia Community College and more recently at the New School Graduate Program in International Affairs program. Under the Carter administration, she worked as the Associate Director in the office of public liaison in the White House, as well as the Office of Policy and Planning and Action, with Peace Corps and Vista.

**Jacques Petidor** has worked for the past ten years at the Ministry of Education for Literacy in Haiti where he is the head of the department for central coordination. He is a trained Social worker, and his specialized studies were based on the “Comparative Analyses of the industrial relationships” in French-speaking African countries, Haiti, Belgium, in the International training centre in France, and in Turin, Italy. He is the former coordinator of the World Christian Workers’ Movement for the Caribbean and central American region, former national secretary of the Catholic Worker Action (ACO) in Haiti and founding member of the Collective for Education and Alternative Development (CEDAL). For the last three years he has been a member of the advisory committee of friends of the International Movement ATD Fourth World.

**Prabhu Pingali** is the Director of the Agricultural and Development Economics Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Pingali is also the President of the International Association of Agricultural Economists (IAAE) for the 2003-06. He was the Vice-President of the IAAE from 1997-2000 and chairman of the program committee for the 24th International Conference of Agricultural Economists. He co-chairs the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Panel’s working group on Future Scenarios. He is also the editor of the newly established e-Journal of Agricultural and Development Economics (e-JADE). Pingali has over twenty five years of experience in assessing the extent and impact of technical change in developing country agriculture in Asia, Africa and Latin America. An Indian national he earned a Ph.D. in Economics from North Carolina State University in 1982. He was Director of the Economics Program at CIMMYT, Mexico from 1996-2002. Prior to joining CIMMYT, he worked at the International Rice Research Institute at Los Baños, Philippines from 1987 to 1996 as an Agricultural Economist, and prior to that at the World Bank’s Agriculture and Rural Development Department from 1982-1987 as an economist. He was a visiting scholar at Stanford University, Food Research Institute, and an Affiliate professor at the University of the Philippines at Los Baños. Prabhu Pingali has authored six books and over ninety referred journal articles and book chapters on technological change, productivity growth and resource management issues in Asia, Africa and Latin America. He has received several international awards for his work, including two from the American Agricultural Economics Association: Quality of Research Discovery Award in 1988 and Outstanding Journal Article of the Year (Honourable Mention) in 1995.

**Iqbal Z. Quadir** is Founder Director of the Program in Developmental Entrepreneurship at MIT. During 2001-2005, Quadir has been a fellow and lecturer at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, teaching graduate classes on how technologies can effect change in developing countries. Quadir develops economically sustainable ways for common people to adopt technologies so that they can produce, distribute and consume the benefits of such technologies. Such technological empowerment scales up organically, and contributes to strengthening democratic forces and making economies more equitable and progressive. Quadir is currently involved in projects of this nature with regard to electricity, potable water, and market information. During 1993-1999, Quadir conceived, designed and organized GrameenPhone

which has provided virtually universal access to telephony in his native Bangladesh and self-employment opportunities for its rural poor. After developing a vision for universal access to mobile phones in Bangladesh while working in Wall Street, Quadir persuaded Grameen Bank and the Norwegian telephone company, Telenor, to create GrameenPhone and remained actively involved in the board and management of the company through 1999. Today, GrameenPhone is a profitable venture with more than six million subscribers, the largest telephone company in Bangladesh. At the same time, it has created self-employment opportunities to more than 200,000 Grameen Bank borrowers, giving telephone access to more than 80 million people. Quadir's work has been recognized as a successful development model by leaders and organizations around the world. He appeared on CNN and PBS and was profiled in feature articles in *The Economist*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Financial Times*, and *The New York Times*, and in several books. The World Economic Forum, based in Geneva, Switzerland, selected him as a Global Leader for Tomorrow in 1999. He received an MBA (1987) and an MA (1983) from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and a BS with Honours (1981) from Swarthmore College.

**Michael Samson** is the Director of Research at the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI), South Africa, and is also an Associate Professor of economics at the Williams College Centre for Development Economics in the United States. He serves on the Board of Directors of EPRI and directs all research projects. He provides capacity-building support for parliamentarians, provincial and national governments, NEDLAC, church and non-governmental organisations, and academic institutions. He specializes in financial and macroeconomic aspects of economic development.

**Pedro Sanchez** is Director of Tropical Agriculture and Senior Research Scholar at the Earth Institute of Columbia University in New York City. He serves as Co-Chair of the Hunger Task Force of the Millennium Project, an advisory body to the United Nations. Sanchez served as Director General of the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya from 1991-2001. He is also Professor Emeritus of Soil Science and Forestry at North Carolina State University, and was a visiting professor at the University of California, Berkeley. In April 2006 he was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He was named a MacArthur Foundation Fellow in 2003, and received the World Food Prize in 2002. A native of Cuba, Sanchez received his BS, MS and PhD degrees from Cornell University, and joined the faculty of North Carolina State University in 1968. Sanchez is author of *Properties and Management of Soils of the Tropics* (rated among the top 10 best-selling books in soil science worldwide), and author of over 200 scientific publications. He is currently writing the second edition of this book. He is a Fellow of the American Society of Agronomy and the Soil Science Society of America. He has received decorations from the governments of Colombia and Peru and was awarded the International Soil Science Award and the International Service in Agronomy Award. In February 2001 the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium awarded him a Doctor Honoris Causa degree for his work on tropical soils in Africa. In August 2001 Sanchez was anointed a Luo Elder with the name of Odera Kang'o by the Luo community of Western Kenya, in recognition for his assistance in eliminating hunger from many villages in the region.

**Johan Schölvinnck** is currently Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, a function he assumed in February 2002. Since joining the United Nations in 1980 at UNCTAD in Geneva, he has held various positions in the Secretariat, including Chief of the Population and Development section in the Population Division, Chief of the Policy Coordination Branch in the Division for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary-General for Development Research and Policy Analysis as well as Information Officer in the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa. He was

also a member of two Security Council Missions to Kuwait and Iran in 1991 concerning damage assessments. In his current function, his main responsibilities include guiding the various activities of the Division technical cooperation, issues pertaining to aging persons with disability, youth, and the family as well as providing substantive support to the Commission for Social Development, to the Economic and Social Council and the Third and Second Committees of the General Assembly. In this regard the World Summit for Social Development, its five year review, the Millennium Declaration and the recently concluded Second World Assembly on Ageing form important guide posts especially in connection with poverty eradication and social integration, two essential elements in the work of the Division. Mr. Schölvinc holds an engineering degree from the Agricultural University of Wageningen, the Netherlands, and M.S and Ph.D. degrees in Agricultural Economics from Cornell University, USA. Prior to joining the United Nations, he was Assistant Professor in Environmental Economics at Rutgers University, USA.

**Stephen C. Smith** is Professor of Economics and International Affairs at George Washington University. He received his Ph.D. in economics from Cornell University and has been a Fulbright Research Scholar and a Jean Monnet Research Fellow. Smith is the author of *Ending Global Poverty: A Guide to What Works* (Palgrave Macmillan 2005), and the co-author with Michael Todaro of a leading textbook, *Economic Development* (9th Ed., Addison-Wesley, 2005). In addition, Smith is co-editor with Jennifer Brinkerhoff and Hildy Teegen of a forthcoming volume, *NGOs and the Millennium Development Goals: Citizen Action to Reduce Poverty* (Palgrave Macmillan). Smith is also author or co-author of over three dozen journal articles and many other publications. Smith organized and served as first director of the GWU International Development Studies Program. He has done on site research and program work in developing countries on four continents including Bangladesh, China, Ecuador, India, Peru, Uganda, and Former Yugoslavia. Smith has been a consultant for the World Bank, the International Labour Office (ILO, Geneva), and the World Institute for Development Economics Research (UN-WIDER, Helsinki), among other agencies.

**Jomo Kwame Sundaram** is Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations. He was visiting senior research fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, founding chair of International Development Economics Associates, and professor in the applied economics department, University of Malaya, until 2004. He was born in Penang, Malaysia and studied at the Penang Free School, Royal Military College, Yale University and Harvard University. He has taught at Science University of Malaysia, Harvard University, Yale University, National University of Malaysia, University of Malaya, and Cornell University. He has also been a visiting fellow at Cambridge University. Jomo has authored more than 35 monographs, edited more than 50 books, and translated 11 volumes, in addition to writing many academic papers and articles for the media. He is also on the editorial boards of several journals.

**Peter Townsend** is Professor of International Social Policy at the London School of Economics, where he continues to teach postgraduate students about human rights, development and social policy. He is AcSS and FBA and has 9 overseas and UK honorary doctorates. In 1963 he was appointed Professor of Sociology at the University of Essex upon its foundation and in 1982 moved to the University of Bristol, where he is now also Emeritus Professor. He has worked lately with UNICEF, DFID and the ILO and was consultant to the United Nations at the time of the World Summit for Social Development at Copenhagen in 1995. In the UK he helped to found the Child Poverty Action Group in 1965 and the Disability Alliance in 1973, was Chair of each of these organisations for 20 years and continues to be President of both. He is Vice-President of the Fabian Society. His latest books are *Poverty and Social Exclusion in Britain* (with David Gordon and oth-

ers, 2000); *Breadline Europe: The Measurement of Poverty* (co-editor, 2001); *Targeting Poor Health* (2001); *World Poverty: New Policies to Defeat an Old Enemy* (co-editor with David Gordon, 2002); *Child Poverty in the Developing World* (with others, 2003); *Inequalities of Health: The Welsh Dimension* (2005); and *Social Security: Building Decent Societies* (ed., forthcoming, ILO, 2007).

**Bharat Wakhlu** is the President of Tata Incorporated, New York. Tata Inc., a company set up in New York in 1945, has been engaged in trade and commerce with the Americas, on behalf of the Tata Group, ever since. Mr. Wakhlu has worked extensively with companies in the Tata Group in India. Before moving to the US, in 2003, he was with Tata Steel, where he headed the company's vast Supply Chain. He also has extensive experience, as a leader, in the areas of Manufacturing, Total Quality and Performance Improvement, Human Resources, Corporate and Community Relations, and E-commerce. In each of these areas he has demonstrated exemplary leadership capability, and excellent results. In his current role, he has developed new and profitable lines of business for Tata Inc., and has assisted in focusing on new opportunities for investment by the Tatas, in North and South America. Bharat has had his education in India, France and the US. He is the author of a best-selling book, "Total Quality – Excellence through Organization-wide Transformation" published first by Wheeler in 1994, and being reprinted in 2006. He also has over forty published papers and articles to his credit, covering topics in Leadership, Quality and Performance improvement, Corporate Social responsibility and Public Administration, among others. He is a regular speaker and seminar leader, and has coached over ten thousand senior executives from some of India's leading blue-chip corporations. He is a Senior Member of the American Society for Quality, and assists the U.N. Global Compact's Committee for the 10th Principle. Bharat speaks extensively on issues related to enhancing corporate Competitiveness, Sustainable Business, Globalization, Poverty Alleviation, and the role of the Private sector in the management of HIV/AIDS. His speeches and writings suggest ways in which corporations, NGOs and people around the world stand to benefit from economic activity and trade, when amalgamated with visionary leadership, good planning, coupled with flawless execution and when conducted in a spirit of collaborative partnership. He is fluent in six languages, including German and Kashmiri. He is an avid squash player, and a golfer, and is happily married to Savita, a well-known trainer and HR consultant, and the Managing Director of her firm, Jagriti Communications.

**Kadmiel Wekwete** has worked for more than 20 years in various areas of governance, including development policy, planning, management and administration. After receiving his PhD in Regional and Urban Planning from the University of London in the United Kingdom, Dr. Wekwete worked for four years as a planning officer for the government of Zimbabwe, nine years as a Professor and Dean of Social Sciences at the University of Zimbabwe and since 1993 as an international United Nations Technical Advisor. A Zimbabwe national, Dr. Wekwete also holds a Master of Arts in Development and Environment Planning from the University of Nottingham and a Bachelor's degree in Geography and Economics from the University of Leeds. He currently is the Director of the Local Governance Unit at the United Nations Capital Development Fund, where he is responsible for ensuring high quality technical programme and management services. In this capacity, Dr. Wekwete also provides strategic guidance in project preparation, project monitoring and project appraisal to ten senior technical advisors at UNCDF, six programme managers and more than 60 field staff in 30 Least Developed Countries.

Rabeya Yasmin has been working with BRAC in Bangladesh since 1995. She currently serves as Program Coordinator of an integrated Poverty Reduction Program for the poorest of the poor called "Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction: Targeting the Ultra Poor; Targeting Social Constraints" (CFPR) with a budget of US\$ 75 million for five years. 1,725,000 ultra poor

families are being reached over the five year period between 2002 and 2006. Rabeya holds expertise in the design and implementation of comprehensive livelihoods development programs for the destitute, social protection for the poorest, food aid and development, human resource development, project monitoring and evaluation, and fund management.

**ANNEX**  
**FORUM PROGRAMME**

| <b>PROGRAMME</b>                                       |  |
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| <b>WEDNESDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2006</b> [Conference Room 2] |  |
| 10:00 - 11:15  | <p><b>OPENING AND PLENARY SESSION</b><br/>                     Chair: <i>Mr José Antonio Ocampo</i>, Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, Department of Economic and Social Affairs<br/> <b>GUEST SPEAKERS</b><br/> <i>H.E. Ms. Tiina Intelmann</i>, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Chair of the Second Committee<br/> <i>Prof. Peter Townsend</i>, Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research<br/> <i>Ms Wahu Kaara</i>, Ecumenical Coordinator for the Millennium Development Goals, All Africa Conference of Churches &amp; Feminist Task Force of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP)<br/>                     [Conference Room 2]</p> |
| 11:15 - 12:45  | <p><b>SESSION 1: REDUCING HUNGER AND EXTREME POVERTY</b><br/>                     Moderator: <i>Mr. Prabhu Pingali</i>, Director, Agricultural and Development Economics Division, FAO<br/> <i>Ms. Rajul Pandya-Lorch</i>, Head, 2020 Vision for Food, Agriculture, and the Environment Initiative, and Chief of Staff, Director General's Office, International Food Policy Research Institute<br/> <i>Mr. David Beckmann</i>, President, Bread for the World<br/> <i>Mr. Roberto Bissio</i>, Executive Director, Third World Institute; Coordinator, Social Watch<br/>                     [Conference Room 2]</p>   |
| <b>SPECIAL EVENTS</b><br>13:30 - 14:45                 | <p><b>ON OVERCOMING POVERTY TRAPS</b><br/>                     Moderator: <i>Mr. Johan Scholvinck</i>, Director, Division for Social Policy and Development, DESA<br/> <i>Prof. Stephen C. Smith</i>, Professor of Economics and International Affairs, Director, Research Program in Poverty, Development and Globalization, George Washington University<br/> <i>Ms. Rabeya Yasmin</i>, Program Co-ordinator, BRAC, Bangladesh<br/> <i>Ms. Chinwe Effiong</i>, Regional Director, East and Anglophone W. Africa, Africare<br/>                     [Conference Room 2]</p>   |
| 13:30 - 14:45  | <p><b>ON GOOD PRACTICES IN POVERTY ERADICATION INITIATIVES</b><br/>                     Moderator: <i>Mr. Roberto Bissio</i>, Executive Director, Third World Institute; Coordinator, Social Watch<br/> <i>Ms. Solveig Buhl</i>, Social Development Advisor, GTZ<br/> <i>Ms. Cecile Reinhart</i>, ATD 4th World; Co-founder, Croisement de Savoires<br/> <i>Ms. Tracy Dolan</i>, Child Participation Adviser, Christian Children's Fund<br/>                     [Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium]</p>   |
| 15:00 - 16:30  | <p><b>SESSION 2: ELIMINATING CHILD POVERTY AND BREAKING THE INTERGENERATIONAL CYCLE OF DISADVANTAGE</b><br/>                     Moderator: <i>Ms Elizabeth Gibbons</i>, Chief, Global Policy, Division of Policy and Planning, UNICEF<br/> <i>Prof. Peter Townsend</i>, Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research<br/> <i>Prof. David Gordon</i>, University of Bristol and Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research<br/> <i>Ms. Jo Maher</i>, HelpAge International<br/> <i>Prof. Michael Samson</i>, Economic Policy Research Institute, Cape Town<br/>                     [Conference Room 2]</p>  |
| 16:30:18:00  | <p><b>SESSION 3: BUILDING PRODUCTIVE CAPACITIES AND FACILITATING ACCESS TO FINANCIAL RESOURCES</b><br/>                     Moderator: <i>Mr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram</i>, Assistant-Secretary General for Economic Development, DESA<br/> <i>Mr. Charles Gore</i>, Chief for Research and Policy Analysis, Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programs, UNCTAD<br/> <i>Mr. Augusto de la Torre</i>, Senior Regional Financial Sector Advisor Latin America &amp; the Caribbean, World Bank<br/> <i>Mr. Kadmiel Wekwete</i>, Director, United Nations Capital Development Fund, Local Governance Unit<br/>                     [Conference Room 2]</p>   |

| <b>THURSDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 2006</b> [Conference Room 2] |  |
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| 10:00 - 11:20   | <p><b>SESSION 4: EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN: ACCESS TO ASSETS</b></p> <p>Moderator: <b>Ms. Caren A. Grown</b>, Senior Scholar and Co-director of the Gender Equality and the Economy program, The Levy Economics Institute<br/> <b>Ms. Haoua Dia MP</b>, President Senegalese Women's Council<br/> <b>Ms. Jan Peterson</b>, Chair, Huairou Commission and Member, High-Level Commission on the Legal Empowerment of the Poor<br/> <b>Prof. Cheryl Doss</b>, Professor of Economics, Yale University<br/> [Conference Room 2]</p>   |
| 11:20 - 12:45   | <p><b>SESSION 5: MAINSTREAMING DECENT WORK INTO POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGIES</b></p> <p>Moderator: <b>Mr. Riswanul Islam</b>, Director, Economic and Labour Markets Analysis Department, ILO<br/> <b>Prof. Martha Chen</b>, Harvard University<br/> <b>Mr. Claude Akpokavie</b>, ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities<br/> <b>Dr. Ladislaus Columban Komba</b>, Permanent Secretary of Labour, Tanzania<br/> [Conference Room 2]</p>   |
| <b>SPECIAL EVENTS</b><br>13:30 - 14:45                | <p><b>ON THE MILLENNIUM VILLAGES PROJECT</b></p> <p>Moderator: <b>Mr. Johan Scholvinck</b>, Director, Division for Social Policy and Development, DESA<br/> <b>Prof. Pedro Sanchez</b>, Director, Millennium Villages Project, Director, Center for Tropical Agriculture and the Rural Environment, The Earth Institute, Columbia University<br/> <b>Dr. Patrick Mutuo</b>, Science Coordinator, Millennium Villages Project<br/> [Conference Room 2]</p>  |
| 13:30 - 14:45   | <p><b>ON RIGHTS, PARTICIPATION AND POVERTY ERADICATION</b></p> <p>Moderator: <b>Ms. Sharon Aitendorf</b>, PBVM, International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation<br/> <b>Mr. Quentin Wodon</b>, Lead Poverty Specialist for Africa, World Bank<br/> <b>Dr. Iulia-Antoanella Motoc</b>, Member, United Nations Sub-Commission on Promotion and Protection of Human Rights<br/> <b>Mr. Jacques Petidor</b>, Informal education technician, Ministry of Education, Haiti<br/> [Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium]</p>  |
| 15:00 - 16:20   | <p><b>SESSION 6A: BREAKING THE CYCLE OF POVERTY: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF LDCS</b></p> <p>Moderator: <b>Mr. Anwarul K. Chowdhury</b>, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked and Developing Countries and Small Island States (UN-OHRLLS)<br/> <b>H.E. Mr. Joe Robert Pemagbi</b>, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Sierra Leone to the United Nations<br/> <b>H.E. Mr. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury</b>, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations<br/> <b>Mr. Charles Gore</b>, Chief for Research and Policy Analysis, Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programs, UNCTAD<br/> [Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium]</p> |
| 15:00 - 16:20   | <p><b>SESSION 6B: WORKING TOGETHER, BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS</b></p> <p>Moderator: <b>Mr. Amir Dossal</b>, Executive Director, United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP)<br/> <b>Mr. Bharat Wakhlu</b>, President, Tata Inc., US<br/> <b>Ms Wahu Kaara</b>, Ecumenical Coordinator for the Millennium Development Goals, All Africa Conference of Churches &amp; Feminist Task Force of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP)<br/> <b>Ms. Stefania Marcone</b>, Director, International Relations Office, Legacoop<br/> [Conference Room 2]</p>   |
| 16:20 - 17:40   | <p><b>SESSION 7: THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX, INNOVATIVE APPROACHES</b></p> <p>Moderator: <b>Mr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram</b>, Assistant-Secretary General for Economic Development, DESA<br/> <b>Prof. Nicholas Negroponte</b>, Founder, One Laptop per Child<br/> <b>Prof. Iqbal Qadir</b>, Founder Director, Program in Developmental Entrepreneurship, MIT<br/> <b>Mr. Patrick Mulvany</b>, Senior Policy Adviser, Practical Action<br/> [Conference Room 2]</p>   |
| 17:45 - 18:00   | <p><b>CLOSING PLENARY SESSION</b></p> <p>Chair: <b>H.E. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa</b>, President, General Assembly<br/> <b>Mr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram</b>, Assistant-Secretary General for Economic Development, DESA<br/> [Conference Room 2]</p>   |