

Global Future

MAKE POVERTY HISTORY



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MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY

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This is it

This year, 2005, has been labelled the year to make poverty history. The nexus of events this year – the G8, the UN Millennium+5 Summit and the World Trade Organisation Ministerial – points to an unprecedented window of opportunity for the international community to tackle the “big three” that are critical to eradicating poverty: **aid, trade and debt**. Seizing the day, civil society groups have united in the Global Call to Action Against Poverty to press governments on these critical issues.

This edition of *Global Future* asks: Will this year achieve the hitherto unachieved? Will we really render poverty a thing of the past? What do governments need to do to achieve that? Our contributors are unanimous and upbeat: it's **do-able**. It's starting to happen. Actions and mind-sets are equally critical.

Jeffrey Sachs steers us away from taking refuge in abstract notions of poverty. Tackle it now, with some very practical interventions. It has a price tag. The MDGs are currently off-track, so just get on with it. Sharing this spirit, Mark Malloch Brown highlights strong recent progress. Just keep the promises we've **already** made. Be bold! Push for what the MDGs need. Ruth Levine urges: keep aid consistent. Don't let the poor down when they need it most. Other contributors specify the poverty needs of women, and of tsunami-devastated countries.

Poverty is killing; it's time for righteous anger and action, to paraphrase John Samuel. "Who can sleep well knowing that thousands, even millions, go to bed without food, sleep on pavements, and die without the medical treatment they need?" asks Cecil Laguardia. Let the race to end poverty take precedence. That race is now as close to centre-stage as it has ever been – and we are all responsible to keep it there, until we win it.

– Heather Elliott

The year of development

Jeffrey D Sachs

PHOTO - DAVID WARD / WONDERSION



These villagers in Phulpur, like millions of others in Bangladesh, live in extreme poverty – they endure chronic malnutrition, a literacy rate of only 20% and repeated destruction from floods and cyclones.

THIS YEAR MARKS A PIVOTAL

moment in international efforts to fight extreme poverty. Following the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000, 189 countries adopted the Millennium Development Goals to address extreme poverty in its many dimensions – income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion – while promoting education, gender equality and environmental sustainability, with quantitative targets set for the year 2015. We are now at the five-year juncture with a stark realisation: many of the poorest regions of the world, most notably in sub-Saharan Africa, are far off-track to achieve the Goals. Yet the MDGs are still achievable. The lives of hundreds of millions of people could be dramatically improved and millions could be saved every year, but only if the world takes bold steps in 2005.

In impoverished countries where governance is adequate, and there are dozens of such countries, the key to

achieving the MDGs is a scaling-up of investments in targeted sectors and regions. The key lesson from the UN Millennium Project task forces is that sound, proven, cost-effective interventions indeed exist that can ameliorate, and often eliminate, the underlying causes of extreme poverty. Some real breakthroughs are possible, if these proven technologies can be implemented at scale in the poorest parts of the world. Good science and practical experience have identified core technologies that can deliver increased food production, disease control, and access to basic infrastructure such as safe drinking water.

Scale-up at country level

When these basic investments are in place, people's health, nutrition and skills improve and allow them to raise their productivity and income. By raising income levels above subsistence levels, households begin to save for the future, and thereby further increase in their incomes. Of

course, the increased public investments need to be accompanied by sound policies. Scaling up education systems, for example, requires significant investments in schools, teachers and supplies, but it also needs management systems that allow greater transparency to track budgets, policies that encourage parental involvement and oversight, and more decentralised school-based management. Similarly, investments for gender equality need to go hand-in-hand with legislation to guarantee property and inheritance rights for women and girls and to protect them from violence.

In some aspects of the MDGs, there are potentially huge Quick Wins in which simple interventions can make a profound difference to survival and quality of life, even before breakthroughs in public management, major expansions of professionals, or infrastructure. Increased coverage of immunisations, replenishment of soil nutrients with chemical or organic fertilisers, the mass distribution of insecticide-treated bed nets to fight malaria, and expansion of locally-produced school meals programmes to improve school attendance and performance, all can be accomplished rapidly and on a very large scale. The UN Millennium Project urges a rapid scale-up and financing of such Quick Wins in many sectors. In many instances, non-governmental organisations will be best-placed to deliver rapid scale-up.

The UN Millennium Project's core operational recommendation is that every developing country with extreme poverty should adopt and implement a national development strategy that is ambitious enough to achieve the MDGs. The country's international development partners – bi-lateral donors, UN agencies, regional development banks, and the

Bretton Woods institutions – should give all the technical and financial support needed to implement the country's strategy. In particular, official development assistance should be adequate to pay for the financing needs – assuming that governance limitations are not the binding constraint and that the receiving countries are making their own reasonable efforts at domestic resource mobilisation.

Most national strategies have not been ambitious enough to meet the MDGs

An existing successful instrument is the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), which has focused the development efforts of governments and is the main country-level framework used by the international development agencies. However, as the central strategy document at the country level, the PRSP must be aligned with the MDGs. So far, most national strategies have not been



Jeffrey Sachs

ambitious enough to meet the MDGs, especially in low-income countries, and have instead planned around modest incremental expansions of social services and infrastructure on the basis of existing budgets and amounts of donor aid. Instead, MDG-based poverty reduction strategies should present a bold, 10-year framework aimed at achieving the quantitative target set in the MDGs. They should spell out a financial plan for making the necessary investments, then show what domestic resources can afford and how much will be needed from the donors. Although poverty reduction is mainly the responsibility of developing countries themselves, achievement of the MDGs in the poorest countries will require substantial increases in official development assistance.

The core challenge of the MDGs is in the financing and implementation of the interventions at scale – for two reasons. One is the sheer range of interventions needed to reach the Goals. The second is the need for national scaling-up to bring essential MDG-based investments to most of the population by 2015. Scale-up needs to be carefully planned and overseen; the planning is much more complex than for any one project and requires a working partnership between government, the private sector, non-governmental organisations and civil society. Previously, scaling-up has been immensely successful when governments are committed, communities participate in the process, and long-term, predictable financing has been available.

The finance gap

According to our estimates, the total donor cost of supporting the MDG financing gap for every low-income and middle-income country would be US\$73 billion in 2006, rising to \$135 billion in 2015. In addition to these direct investments in the Goals, there are added national and international costs: in emergency and humanitarian assistance, outlays for science and technology, enhanced debt relief, increased technical capacity of bilateral and multi-lateral agencies, and other categories of official development assistance.

The increased aid required to meet MDGs has been promised, though not yet delivered. In March 2002, governments world-wide adopted the Monterrey Consensus at the International Conference on Financing for Development, which strengthened the global partnership needed to achieve MDGs. The international community recognised the need for a new partnership of rich and poor countries based on good governance and expanded trade, aid, and debt relief. Donor countries re-affirmed their pledge to reach 0.7% of their income in official development assistance, compared with the current developed-world average of about 0.25% of gross national product (GNP). With the combined donor-country GNP at roughly US\$31 trillion, 0.7% of GNP would be about \$220 billion per year – compared with present aid flows at about \$80 billion per year. The UN Millennium Project's findings show that ramping up additional aid to an extra \$130 billion per year by 2015 would be more than enough to scale up the critical interventions needed to achieve the MDGs in well-governed developing countries.

Since Monterrey, the drama has been whether the rich world would finally meet the 0.7% target

Since the Monterrey Consensus in 2002, the great drama has been whether the rich world would finally meet the long-standing 0.7% target, to enable the poorest countries to break out of the poverty trap and thereby achieve the MDGs. Until recently, only six countries had declared a timetable to reach 0.7% of GNP by the year 2015: Belgium, Finland, France, Ireland, Spain and the United Kingdom. Adding these six to the five countries (Denmark, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden) that have a long-standing success in achieving 0.7% brought the total of committed countries to 11 – exactly half of the 22 donor countries that are members of the rich world's "donor club" known as the Development Assistance Committee.

In early April this year, Germany took a step of great international leadership by announcing a timetable for increasing its ODA to 0.7% by 2014. That brings the total number of countries on a timetable for 0.7% to 12, or more than half of the 22 donor countries. And of course, now that Europe's biggest economy is on track to reach 0.7%, it is very likely that all 15 of the European Union donor countries will soon announce a timetable to achieve 0.7% of GNP. The 15 EU donor countries as a group, indeed, are likely to set a shared timetable to reach 0.5% of their combined GNP by around 2009 and 0.7% by 2014.

Germany deserves special congratulations for honouring its international commitments at a moment of tremendous fiscal strain. Germany still bears the heavy fiscal costs of unification, as well as the mounting pension costs of an ageing population. The government has been working hard to keep budget deficits under control. Yet Germany's leadership has recognised something of fundamental importance: increased aid is not merely a matter of convenience for the world's poor, but a matter of life and death. And by choosing to help the poorest of the poor, Germany has chosen to help ensure global stability as well, since extreme poverty is one of the major risk factors in causing political upheavals and violence. The other countries around the world that have not set a timetable to reach 0.7%, including Australia, would do well to follow Germany's example.

Breakthrough now critical

This year, 2005, must bring a major increase in effort. Fortunately, two world leaders, the UK's Tony Blair and France's Jacques Chirac, building on a far-thinking plan of Gordon Brown, the British Chancellor, have promised exactly that. They have pledged to make 2005 a breakthrough year. To lay the groundwork, President Chirac commissioned Jean-Pierre Landau to report on innovative financing mechanisms for development. Prime Minister Blair similarly appointed a high-level Commission for Africa, which issued its report in March and identified an immediate African



PHOTO - BRIAN JONSON / WORLD VISION

The lives of hundred of millions of people can be improved through the successful implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

absorptive capacity of at least \$25 billion per year.

A successful G8 summit in Scotland in July will see developed countries commit to at least doubling official development assistance in the next few years, reaching 0.5% of GNP by 2010 and 0.7% by 2015. This would provide the backdrop for world leaders at the UN General Assembly in September 2005 to commit to a series of specific actions to lay the foundation for a decade of rapid growth and social improvements in the most impoverished places on the planet.

In 2005, the world needs desperately to follow through on its commitments, taking practical steps at scale before the Goals become impossible to achieve. The credibility of the international system is at stake.

Without a breakthrough in 2005, well-governed poor countries will not be effectively supported in pursuing an MDG-oriented strategy, and the already-dwindling faith in international commitments to reduce poverty will probably vanish. If we do not act now, the world will live without development goals, and it will be a very long way to the next Millennium Summit in the year 3000. ■

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Within our grasp – decisive action on poverty

Mark Malloch Brown

PHOTO - NIGEL MARSH / WORLD VISION



Africa's elderly bear much of the burden of caring for children orphaned by AIDS. These three women, with a total age above 200, provide for eight orphans.

2005 IS INCREASINGLY BEING recognised by the United Nations, governments and concerned citizens alike, as the year when the world has an unprecedented opportunity to put in place the policies and resources needed to fight global poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In September, world leaders will meet at UN headquarters in New York to review what progress has been made since all UN Member States agreed to “spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanising conditions of extreme poverty, to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected” – a commitment set out in the *Millennium*

Declaration and later crystallised in the eight time-bound, measurable targets, the MDGs.

While the Goals – which include targets to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty, remove hunger, put every boy and girl in school, stem the spread of infectious disease such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis and halt the crisis in the environment by the year 2015 – are undoubtedly ambitious, they are nevertheless eminently achievable. For the first time in human history we have the knowledge and the track record – extreme global poverty actually halved between 1980 and 2000 – to halve poverty again. The

question is: do we have the political will and determination, and hence the resources, to achieve the MDGs by 2015 and help build a more just, safe and prosperous world for all?

We now have the knowledge and track record of halving poverty; we can do it again

This vision, as encapsulated in the MDGs, is achievable only if we end the business-as-usual approach and dramatically accelerate action to achieve the Goals. For developing

countries, this means putting in place the domestic reforms to focus resources on poverty reduction, tackle corruption and promote good governance and the rule of law. Equally, developed countries need to keep the commitments they made in the *Millennium Declaration*, and subsequently at the International Conference on Financing for Development at Monterrey in 2002 and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, to increase levels of development assistance, reform world trade so that poor countries can earn their way out of poverty, and also take the necessary action to lift the debt burden on developing countries.

When I became Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1999, it was far from clear that we could combine an ambitious call for a much-enhanced global development effort with a broad consensus of development actors. The *Millennium Declaration*, and the MDGs that were derived from it, have helped change that. The MDGs have provided a clear focus and targets for the policy reforms developing countries are undertaking to meet their side of the Monterrey bargain: prioritisation on the task of poverty reduction; democratic governance; the fight against corruption; transparency in policies; and the establishment of the rule of law. And, where just a few years ago development was viewed as a low political priority and an even lower priority in terms of budgetary allocation in too many donor countries, today development – and the specific time-bound targets encapsulated in the MDG agenda – are at the centre of mainstream politics in much of the developed world. This has been driven, in part, by new campaigning activities which have seen the MDGs move from being “just another declaration of another meeting of the UN” to being **the** framework for development for the next decade.

MDGs – what role for the UN?

The UN, UNDP, the Millennium Campaign, the agenda-framing activities of the Millennium Project, and crucially, the mobilising action of

NGOs, civil society groups and newly-active coalitions such as the Global Call to Action against Poverty, have all played an important role in advancing this agenda. But while we and our partners can take some justifiable pride in having helped frame so much of the agenda for 2005, putting it there has been the easy bit. Delivering will be much trickier and will require decisive action by developed and developing countries – this year – to address the challenges involved in achieving the MDGs within the next decade.

No country meeting its Monterrey “good governance” goals should lack resources to meet the MDGs

The UN, through its operational country-based agencies, has an important role to play in delivering on the promise of the MDGs at national and local levels. While our contribution may not be that of a traditional donor, the UN is uniquely placed to facilitate the convening of all stakeholders; to help to manage negotiations; to provide solid, evidence-based policy advice with a legitimacy based on the UN's international experience, normative and human rights-based work, and access to best practice – these in addition to our role in helping to build the capacity of national actors in their vital ownership and management roles in achieving the MDGs.

Today, with the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) the principal vehicle for translating national priorities into a coherent funded programme, we now have the challenge of ensuring that PRSs are bold enough to achieve the MDGs – that they are, in essence, MDG-based poverty reduction strategies as advocated in the Millennium Project Report. The United Nations Development Group (UNDG), a committee consisting of the heads of all UN funds, programmes and departments working on development issues, has been leading the UN system in developing ways to help support national PRSs, and is committed to strengthening this

framework. Re-positioning the UN system to provide effective support to national MDG-based PRSs is, therefore, a core challenge. And going hand-in-hand with this is the need to ensure that no country that is meeting the Monterrey Consensus goals of good governance lacks the external resources necessary to meet the MDGs.

This vision requires that the full knowledge and experience from across the UN systems be accessible to support these processes. Nothing short of a full mobilisation of the resources and expertise available throughout the UN development system is acceptable. And at the heart of that vision lies both advocacy – using our UN platform to speak out for the development agenda in an articulate manner focused on the MDGs – and capacity development, the key to both scaling up and replicating successful development interventions.

In some ways, this takes us back to our roots: for many decades, the United Nations Technical cooperation system undertook pre-investment and feasibility studies to lay the groundwork for sustainable investments. Particularly in a context where budget support and sector-wide approaches (SWAP) mechanisms increasingly dominate donor efforts at reform at country level, the UN's role must increasingly be to support national capacity to lead and manage those instruments. Tomorrow's capacity development programme is yesterday's pre-investment project, with the UN at its heart.

Resolving aid, trade, debt issues

As we approach the September Summit at the UN, it's clear that there are real opportunities, choices, and an unprecedented momentum to make the necessary policy decisions and reforms that can break the back of extreme global poverty once and for all. The UN Secretary-General's report published in March 2005, *In larger freedom: Towards development, security and human rights for all*, is an ambitious yet achievable agenda that will be put before heads of state and governments at the Summit with a set



A Mexican boy sits in a trash filled building. Poverty and unemployment affect large numbers of Latin American young people.

of proposals to tackle the inter-related challenges of poverty, security and human rights, as well as to reform the UN system itself. In his report, in addition to the call for every developing country to adopt and start to implement a national development strategy by 2006 that is bold enough to meet the MDG targets by 2015, the Secretary-General has also called for developed countries to move on three issues critical to achieving the MDGs: aid, trade and debt.

If we are to achieve the Goals, international development assistance must be more than doubled over the next few years. The good news is that this does not require new pledges from donor countries, but meeting the pledges that have already been made. Each developed country that has not done so already should set a timetable for achieving the 0.7% target of gross national income for official development assistance by no later than 2006, and reach at least 0.5% by 2009. This increase should be “front-loaded” through an inter-

national finance facility, with other innovative sources of financing to supplement this considered in the longer term.

To achieve the Goals does not require new pledges but meeting those already made

Several years ago, if I had suggested it possible that donor countries representing between them a large proportion of ODA would be on the verge of committing to a timeline for achieving the 0.7% target by 2015, (and getting steadily closer to a doubling on current levels by 2010), I would have been deemed guilty of wishful thinking by the UN. Now we have a realistic chance of achieving it. With 10 of the 25 European Union (EU) states having already achieved the 0.7% target or having set a deadline to do so before 2015, half of the members of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee

(DAC) are now moving towards a level of development assistance that would have seemed utterly unattainable a few years ago. Thus, in the same way that Monterrey provided a deadline which elicited big commitments on development assistance by both the EU and the United States, the pledges and commitments made at the G8 Summit in Gleneagles and other fora this year can be similarly geared towards securing a success at the UN Summit. Decisive action is within our grasp – an opportunity that we have not had for more than a generation.

Similarly, it is vital to secure a deal on wider, deeper, faster debt relief which would also quickly increase the resources available to invest in MDG-focused areas such as health and education. Here it is imperative that debt sustainability be re-defined as the level of debt that allows a country to achieve the MDGs without an increase in debt ratios. And on trade, the Doha round of trade negotiations needs to fulfil its development promise and be completed by no later than 2006. As a first step, developed countries are being asked to provide duty-free and quota-free market access for all exports from Least Developed Countries.

Across all these issues, and in a world where every day HIV/AIDS kills some 6,000 people and the deadly virus infects another 8,200 people; where every 30 seconds a child in Africa dies of malaria – more than one million child deaths a year; where more than 800 million people go to bed hungry every night, 300 million of whom are children; achieving the Millennium Development Goals is literally a matter of life and death. Working together to achieve them is the challenge and opportunity of our generation. In this critical year, it is a challenge we cannot afford to miss. ■

Mr Mark Malloch Brown is Chief of Staff to the UN Secretary-General, and was Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme from 1999 to 2005.

From aid dependency to dependable aid

Ruth Levine

IF THE LEADERS OF THE world's richest nations can do one thing to promote achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through development assistance policies, it is this: **make aid dependable.** Advocates, citizens, policy wonks and technical experts can come up with a vast list of programmes, projects, indicators and initiatives – all of which, if funded and implemented as planned, might go a good distance toward achieving the MDGs. But without external funding that is far more reliable than is now the case, the list is but wishful thinking.

A review by the Center for Global Development of 17 national, regional and global successes in international public health, documented in our 2004 publication *Millions saved: Proven*

successes in global health, identified “predictable funding” as a key element contributing to the achievement of tremendous health gains, particularly in the poorest countries. In the programme to reduce the impact of river blindness in Africa, for example, donors made and lived up to 15-year funding commitments, permitting programme managers to plan strategically, recruit and retain highly-skilled staff, and build the programme carefully toward success.

Volatile aid flows

But long-term, reliable aid funding is the exception rather than the rule. Development assistance is a notoriously undependable source of public finance in poor countries. According to International Monetary Fund analysts Ales Bulir and A Javier

Hamann, aid is 20 times as volatile as government revenue as a percentage of GDP, and 40 times as volatile as government revenue in constant US dollars *per capita*.

This means that those who count on development assistance do not know whether next year's (or next month's) deliveries of essential drugs will arrive, or whether the funding will be in place to build schools, health centres and rural roads – or even to finish the investments already started. Moreover, it means that governments cannot be efficient in procuring drugs, vaccines and other commodities because they cannot commit to long-term contracts. And they may be unable to implement reforms that have short-term costs but long-term gains, such as privatisation and



PHOTO - ALISON PRESTON / WORLD VISION

In southern Sudan, where wild larrob fruit became the staple diet for displaced families, World Vision, with European Community funding, distributed family survival kits.

restructuring of state assets, tariff reform, trade liberalisation and civil service reform. These reforms cannot be undertaken unless aid flows are more certain over a number of years.

Aid fluctuates in a particularly unfortunate pattern. Aid flows follow what economists call a “pro-cyclical” trend, meaning that on average aid is higher when the economy is on the upswing, and falls in times of economic down-turn – precisely the opposite of what would protect the poor against economic shocks. This is because of the conditions that donors place on their funds, including that recipient countries maintain IMF-prescribed macro-economic policies that are designed to keep inflation relatively low and trade relationships open. When those policies are not in place or are not implemented – or when donors and private investors lose confidence in the face of allegations of corruption – countries simultaneously confront economic down-turn and less external aid.

Even when aid is promised, it often isn't delivered. On average, less than 60% of the aid promised, or “committed”, actually makes it to programmes. That does not even take into account the share of aid that fails to make it to developing countries because of the expense associated with government contractors and other “middle-men”.

There is evidence that donors' track record of living up to commitments has actually become worse in the past five to 10 years, despite efforts like “donor harmonisation” and Poverty Strategy Reduction Papers. This unpredictability greatly limits the ability of developing-country governments to plan sensibly, and makes a mockery of donor calls for greater “accountability” by poor countries.

The poorest hit worst

Worse, aid is the least predictable in the poorest countries, which have the fewest other sources of public finance. These countries, which have *per capita* GDPs of less than US\$1000 per year, are so strapped for domestic funding that they use external funds



PHOTO: JOHN KISHIKI / WORLD VISION

Somali communities have received funding from the Netherlands government for health projects run by World Vision in Somalia.

for the most basic government services. Donors happily take on the funding for those very essential services – primary education, immunisation and other essential child health services, and the provision of safe water to poor communities – because they are targeted at the poorest citizens. So, for example, in many sub-Saharan African countries, half or more of all basic health sector funding comes from development assistance, and donors buy all the vaccines for many poor countries.

Aid flows fall during economic down-turn – precisely when the poor need most protection

But these are the types of services that require the most reliable sort of funding, yet they are disrupted when funding is suddenly reduced or terminated. The consequences of losing funding for classroom teachers and textbooks, or the purchase and distribution of vaccines, are immediately and directly devastating to those in the greatest need.

Making aid more dependable would require some aggressive and creative leadership on the part of wealthy countries. For example, it might require removing a portion of the aid budget from the annual appropriations process; or sorting out the

real-world details of proposals such as the UK's International Finance Facility, and France and Germany's aviation and other taxes.

Hard to do, yes. But surely not as difficult as many of the conditions we put on the grants and loans to low-income countries: “reform your judiciary”, “privatise your utilities”, “introduce completely new budget processes”, and so on. If wealthy countries cannot sort out how to make multi-year aid commitments and stick to them – particularly given the reality that aid represents, in most cases, less than 1% of GNP – it's hard to imagine how countries with far less experienced and more vulnerable public administrations can undertake difficult reforms.

“Minimise aid volatility” is an unlikely candidate for the next banner or arm-band. But without actions to improve the reliability and predictability of aid, larger commitments of development assistance are unlikely to benefit people in poor countries as much as supporters might hope. New financing mechanisms that could increase predictable flows merit close attention and support. And advocates should pay a little less attention to getting large commitments, and a little more attention to getting long-term, binding commitments. ■

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MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY

– the people's agenda

Kel Currah

“WHERE SOME PEOPLE ARE very wealthy and others have nothing, the result will either be extreme democracy or absolute oligarchy...” Aristotle was referring to ancient Athens, but his words accurately reflect the state of affairs in today's global system of nation-states.

There are many wealthy people in the world, but many, many more who live in poverty, with some two billion living on less than a dollar a day. This inequality of wealth is matched by the inequality of power. While most of the wealthiest nations themselves have strong and vibrant democracies, power at the global level is an oligarchy of rich countries, which control the global political agenda – through the G8, through the World Bank and IMF, or through the UN Security Council and other key global institutions.

My father, an experienced businessman, says – a little less eloquently than Aristotle – “he who counts first, counts best” and this relates to the global agenda as much as to business transactions. As this small group of rich nations decides which issues are debated, prioritised and resourced at the international level, the key question of tackling poverty – a pressing concern for the majority of the world's population – is not often high on the agenda, set aside for concerns more pressing to richer nations, like interest rates and currency transactions.

Campaign to end poverty

The Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP), known as **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** in numerous countries, aims to change this in 2005. GCAP is a significant global movement, bringing in over 60 national platforms working for the same development policy changes:



PHOTO - JON WARREN / WORLD VISION

Boys scavenge around the streets of Phnom Penh in a daily struggle to survive.

substantial increases in aid; 100% debt cancellation for the poorest countries; equitable trade rules for the poorest countries; and finally, policy change by Southern governments that promote ending poverty and reaching the MDGs, transparency, anti-corruption and citizen participation in decision-making.

This coalition of thousands of civil society organisations is building on the legacy of the Jubilee movement of the late 1990s that first put debt relief onto the global agenda. Jubilee was successful in ensuring that debt relief was constantly on the agenda as an issue that had to be tackled. GCAP, its successor, looks at the totality of development issues, the development policy “triangle” – aid, trade and debt – and aims to make sure that these items are not only on the global agenda, but are actually decided and implemented.

By combining thousands of civil society organisations, mobilising millions of people throughout the world, and focusing the wide array of civil society voices into four clear policy demands – aid, debt, trade and national strategies to reduce poverty – GCAP has ensured that these issues are on the global negotiating table.

The global agenda

To date, it has proven successful. The issue of development has become a political issue in a number of rich countries. Three G8 countries have agreed a timetable to meet the 0.7% target by 2015 at the latest, while the European Union's older member states now have a target of 0.51% by 2010. Debt cancellation was high on the agenda at the last two G7 meetings of finance ministers, and one individual finance minister's efforts have led to new proposals for innovative financing, such as the International Finance Facility. Clearly, change will happen when more individual ministers and governments take the issues seriously and begin to champion them.

But the global agenda is still dominated by the needs and wants of the big seven countries, and so far,

national and institutional agendas have blocked a substantial agreement on the development policy triangle. The World Bank does not support multi-lateral debt forgiveness unless it will receive new funds, as it is concerned about its own long-term viability as an institution. Individual G7 governments are showing reluctance on various fronts: either they will not agree to innovations such as the International Finance Facility for fear of locking in future budgetary commitments; or they have increased aid but not agreed to debt relief; or they have not committed to a timetable to reach 0.7% despite having a budget surplus.

National and institutional agendas have blocked solid agreement on development policy

In each case there are viable national justifications for not making an agreement on the development policy triangle. This is why the work of civil society must continue to give these politicians the mandate from voters to prioritise these decisions. Unfortunately, politicians today will not take political risks without strong lobbying or unless the issues are linked to national concerns – hence the link between security and poverty that many development professionals consider a critical one to make.

At the global level, the security agenda looks to dominate the UN Summit, with the proposed changes to the Security Council trumping the critical decisions on the actions necessary to meet the Millennium Development Goals. The trade debate remains deadlocked due to the inability of Northern governments to tackle the political issue of subsidising their own farmers at the expense of those in poor countries. The G8 in Gleneagles may be more about currency revaluation and trade imbalances of the most powerful countries than about debt relief. While the US\$50 billion needed in debt relief may be small change compared to the trillions in daily currency trading, it is key to development.

Standing firm

When the G8 meet and sit down at the table in Gleneagles in July, however, they will be sitting with billions of people watching. The Global Call to Action and the **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** campaign will ensure that as much of the global public as possible is aware of the actions these leaders need to take: writing the cheques necessary for debt cancellation and increased ODA to meet the MDGs. This is the force of civil society to converge on a set of definite and targeted policy changes; the pressure for advancement is high.

Civil society, for its part, must stand firm and remain united around the three key development issues. Without trade justice, for example, any advances in debt cancellation and aid increases will be for nought. Equitable pro-poor country trade policies will allow developing countries to help themselves to create sustainable economies.

The momentum generated for the G8 meeting in Gleneagles must be maintained for the UN Millennium Summit and the World Trade Ministerial. So the pressure is on both the rich countries and on civil society to keep focused throughout the whole of 2005 in order to keep the pro-poor agenda on the global negotiating table. ■

Mr Kel Currah is Head of Poverty Reduction Policy for World Vision International. See: www.global-poverty.org

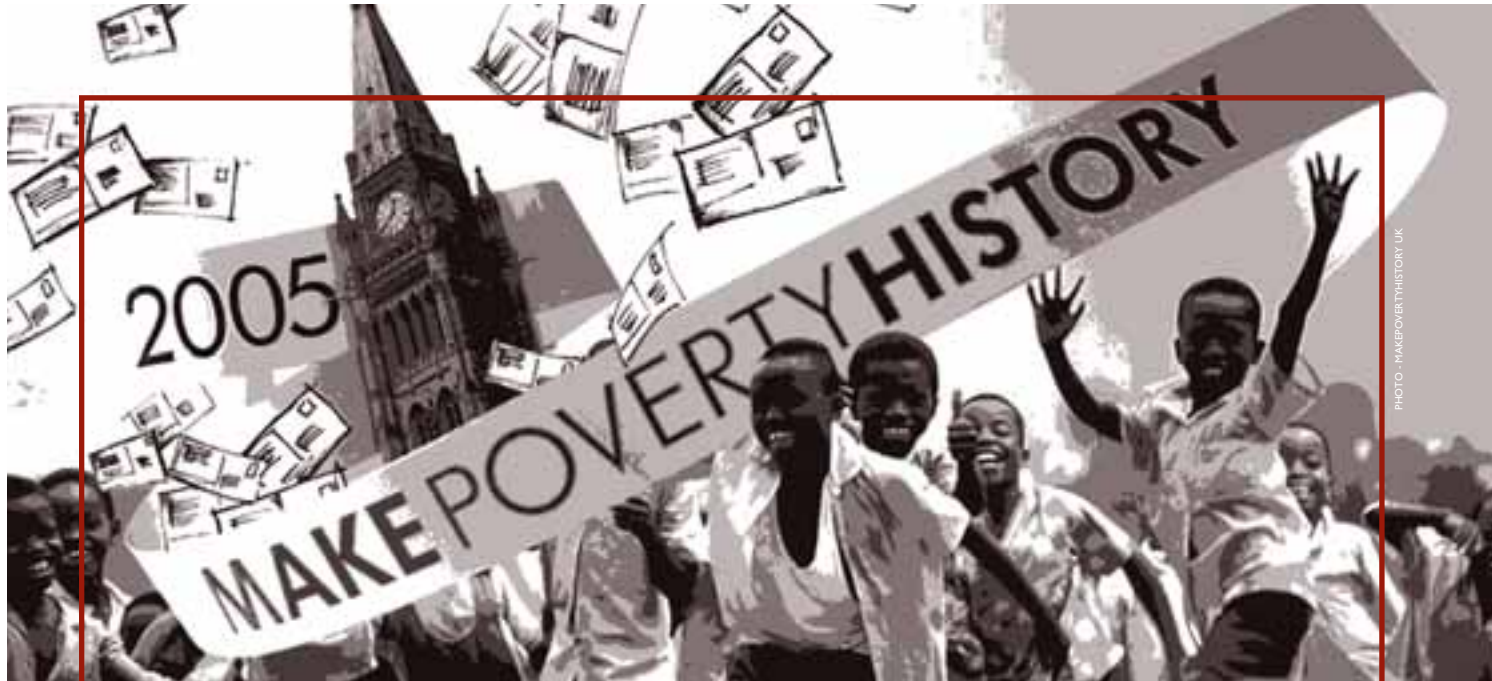


PHOTO - MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY.UK

Want to **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY?**

*Join forces with the **Global Call to Action against Poverty!***

Every three seconds a child dies from poverty-related causes.

Even while you are skim-reading this page,
a child will die...and another...and another...
30,000 children still die each day from disease, hunger,
unclean water and other poverty-related causes.

- **EVERY DAY, 24,000 people die from hunger.**
- **EVERY DAY, more than 100 million children miss out on school.**
- **EVERY DAY, 1.1 billion people have to drink polluted water.**
- **EVERY DAY, 8,200 people die due to HIV/AIDS.**

It doesn't have to be this way.
This is preventable. If we choose to act...

- we can **INCREASE AID**
- we can **CANCEL DEBT**
- we can **HAVE FAIR TRADE**
- we can **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY!**

It's time for all of us to **SPEAK OUT TOGETHER.**

- **Wear a white band**, the symbol of the campaign.
- **Urge your President/Prime Minister/Head of State** to act in 2005 to end poverty.
- **Get involved in your country's coalition** - go to:
www.whiteband.org or www.whiteband.org/national, or e-mail info@whiteband.org

AND CHECK OUT...

these **World Vision websites for info, action tips, and World Vision white bands!****

Canada: www.worldvision.ca/home/get-involved/make-poverty-history/

UK: www.worldvision.org.uk/getinvolved/makepovertyhistory/default.asp

USA: www.worldvision.org/worldvision/guest.nsf/onecampaign_wv?OpenForm&lid=onecampaign_photo&lpos=subf3

** These wrist bands were made in Europe

The Global Call to Action Against Poverty is a high-profile campaign of over 60 national coalitions working to keep aid, trade and debt on the agenda in this key development year of 2005. GCAP (known as **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand and the UK; the ONE Campaign in the USA; and other names elsewhere) is campaigning to pressure Northern governments to end poverty by making and implementing key decisions on **aid, trade and debt** – the “development triangle”. Supported by celebrities including Bono, Brad Pitt, Kylie Minogue and Nelson Mandela, GCAP is actively campaigning through the media, concerts, films, texting, and e-mail and postcard petitions. The campaign urges people everywhere to wear **white wrist bands** to symbolise ending poverty.



PHOTO - MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY.UK

The tyranny of empty bellies

John Samuel

I STAND HERE WITH A DEEP sense of agony and anger. Because I bear bad news; news that will make you angry. Imagine someone very close to you is dead; it could have been your little child who was playing in the field, it could have been your beloved partner, mother or father. Imagine that I had to convey the news of his or her death and also tell you that he/she actually died of unnatural causes.

Even before I finish the next sentence, hundreds of people, who could have been your brothers or sisters or girlfriend or children, are dead. They are forced to die. Right now 50,000 such funerals are happening across the world. One million people must be standing in graveyards attending the funerals of their loved ones as I speak. All of them will share my agony and anger.

Yes, 50,000 people die every single day due to poverty or poverty-related causes in this world of plenty. The blood of our brothers and sisters is screaming from the earth – screaming for justice, peace and rights in this world. Their bones in the dirty graveyards tell thousands of tales of deprivation and deceit; stories of broken promises, stories of charred dreams, and stories of empty stomachs.

What kind of world?

Let's face it! There are at least 1 billion people who have such stories to tell you and me. They are in our own neighbourhoods. Do you care? Even by conservative estimates, 800 million people go to bed hungry. Would you allow this to happen if they were your own children? Yes, 30,000 children die every single day before they reach the age of five – just because they do not have enough food or medicine. Every 3.6 seconds another person dies of starvation. They are born to die. Is this

the kind of world we want to pass on to our children and grandchildren?

At the same time, the world spends \$1 trillion a year to make bombs and guns and to prepare for war. This is obscene. This is criminal, and this is sin. Is this the kind of world we want to live in?

I come from India. I came here from the midst of the tsunami. I do not have words to describe it. I can still feel the stench of death and destruction that I have seen in different countries of Asia. People across the world showed solidarity by extending all the support they could. Can we show such solidarity to the millions dying in Africa, Asia and Latin America?

Nature has an ironic way of dealing with people. In this tsunami, both the rich holidaying in the five-star resorts of Thailand and the fisherfolk of Sri Lanka died. Nature did not discriminate on the basis of caste or class or gender. But a man-made – and I mean man-made, not woman-made – tsunami is happening every single day in this world: women are raped, children are killed, and 6,000 people are allowed to die every day of HIV/AIDS. Poverty has colour, gender and smell: the smell of tears and blood. They are broken people: *dalits*, women, Africans...

How can we afford to keep quiet? The media is too busy to notice such tsunamis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (where violent conflict has claimed over four million lives since 1998), or Rwanda, or other sub-Saharan countries. The world's most powerful countries are in the business of making, selling and dropping bombs and parachuting "freedom" – wholesale and retail. When poverty is exported wholesale from the ports of rich countries to Africa, Asia and Latin America, what are we supposed to

do? Watch CNN and have our dinner and go to sleep?

A wake-up call

As Martin Luther King said, injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. The biggest terror in the world is the tyranny of an empty stomach. How can we be preoccupied with the security of the few when 800 million people live with the tyranny of empty stomachs?

The Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) is a wake-up call. A wake-up call to people like you and me, to awake from our slumber and act: act for justice, peace and rights. It is also a wake-up call to the presidents and prime ministers to tell them they are sleeping on their jobs.

GCAP is one of the largest coalitions of organisations working across the world; from the grassroots and community-based organisations to international trade unions, hundreds of human rights and development organisations and global networks. GCAP has emerged through various campaigns like the **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** campaign, the Global Campaign on Education, the Trade Justice Movement, and from the experience of the Jubilee campaign against unjust debt. Around 100 people involved in these campaigns met in Johannesburg in September 2004 to build a global platform for joint action. Hundreds of participating organisations and key campaigns across the world have agreed to work together on four key issues:

- **Trade justice.** Rich nations must stop dumping and stop the unjust agricultural subsidies that deprive millions of people in poor countries of their lives and livelihoods. The unjust trade regime of the WTO and unequal trade rules pushed onto countries in

Africa, Latin America and Asia must be stopped.

- **Debt cancellation.** Every day poor countries are paying rich countries and their cronies like the IMF and World Bank more than US\$100 million. This must be stopped; cancel the unjust debt immediately.
- **More and better aid.** A major increase in the quality and quantity of aid, without unjust conditional ties: the agreed-upon 0.7% of GNP for development by the rich countries.
- **National and international efforts** to eliminate poverty from the face of the earth and to achieve the *Millennium Declaration* and Development Goals in a democratic and accountable way, and stop the enforced liberalisation and privatisation of public services like water, health and education.

There will be peoples' action from New Delhi to New York, Lanka to London, Brazil to Belgium and Mombasa to Melbourne, in hundreds of thousands of villages and cities across the world. Every single person anywhere in the world can join this movement by a single act: wearing a white band. By wearing a white band you are in solidarity with a global movement to fight poverty; by wearing a white band you are committed to questioning injustice; by wearing a white band you are saying that you would like to make a difference and that you support this global movement. The white band is a symbol of solidarity, justice and peace.

Three milestones in 2005 will impact the issue of poverty in the world: the G8 meeting on 5 July in the UK, the Millennium+5 Summit of the UN in September, and the WTO Ministerial on 13–18 December in Hong Kong. Millions of people across the world will be wearing white bands to express solidarity and join the movement for justice in July, September and December. There will be concerted efforts world-wide in 2005.

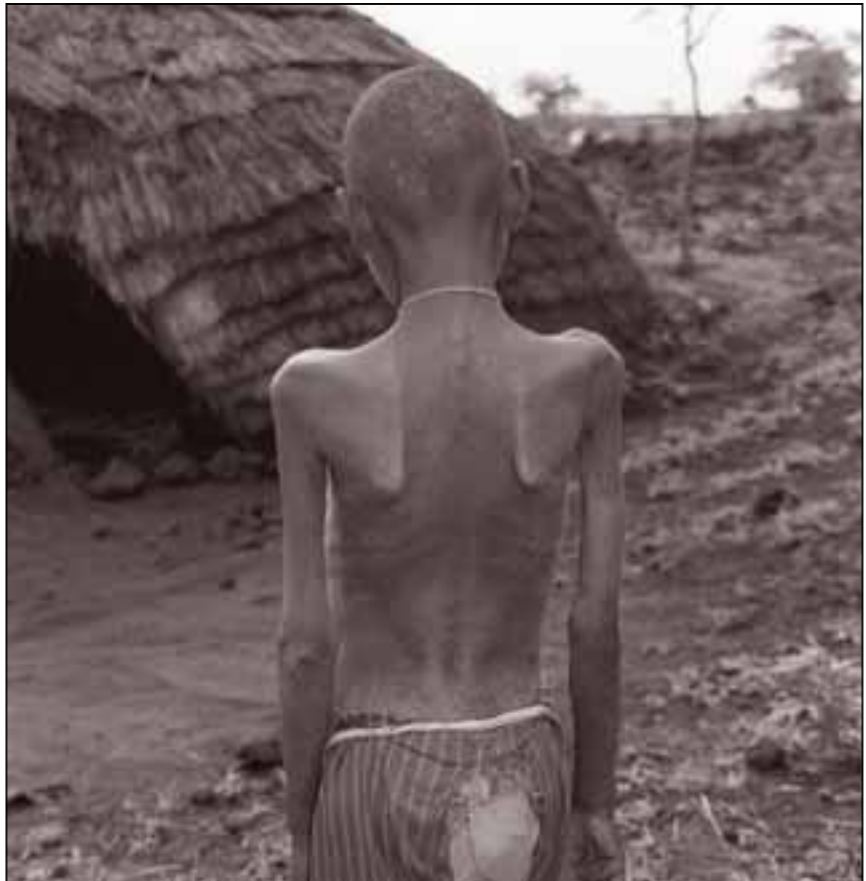


PHOTO - B. GEZU G. DINKU / WORLD VISION

This 12-year-old boy in Ethiopia is so weak from hunger that he cannot even walk properly. This photo was taken 20 hours after his last meal, a handful of roasted dry maize.

Together we can move mountains: mountains of poverty and deprivation, mountains of debt, mountains of dumped materials in our ports. Mountains of injustice and inequity that stand in the way of freedom: freedom from fear and freedom from want!

Poverty is not an accident – it is created every day by unjust relationships

Poverty is not a historical accident. Poverty is created every day by unequal and unjust power relations between and within countries and societies. Poverty is created by the cynical few or the rich and powerful countries which are in the business of extracting resources and exploiting natural resources in the poorer countries of the world.

We still dare to dream: of a world without poverty where every person can live with freedom and dignity. But we have to make the world move in that direction. Because policy-makers cannot sit in an ivory tower forever; they will have to come to the street; they have to listen to the millions. Wake up, friends! On behalf of this emerging global movement, I call upon each and every one of you and all organisations to join the movement to end poverty now. **Let us make change happen. ■**

Mr John Samuel is International Director of ActionAid International, and is one of the founding members of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty. This article is an adaptation of his keynote address at the January 2005 launch of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty during the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

The challenge of global poverty – can it ever end?

Charles Badenoch

WHY IS IT ALWAYS THE poorest people who are hardest-hit when things go wrong in the world? That was the question that hit me day after day, in January 2005, as I toured devastated areas of southern India in the wake of the tsunami.

Despite the resilience of the people and the truly amazing efforts of aid workers from World Vision and many other organisations; despite the speed and generosity of the response by people the world over; despite moves by governments of the rich nations to freeze debt payments from tsunami-hit countries – despite all these very positive steps, it's not enough.

The vulnerability of the people living in absolute poverty will not be fully eliminated until the world takes firm, positive, long-term action that involves so much more than money.

A tall order? An impossible task? I don't think so. Nor do the 300-plus organisations, including World Vision, that have joined together under the banner to make poverty history, to fight for a better deal for the world's poor.

At **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY**'s heart is the knowledge that a tsunami of sorts happens every week around the world: every single day, 30,000 children die needlessly in the world's poorest countries – that's 210,000 every week. Millions perish from starvation; thousands succumb every day to malnutrition and diseases which are at best preventable and, at the very least, treatable; millions of people are uprooted from their homes because of civil conflict or natural disasters.

But something can be done – and something must be done. And it doesn't seem so impossible, when you consider that the three richest people

in the world control more wealth than 600 million people who live in the world's poorest countries. The world can afford to end this poverty – and this year, public opinion is rising up like never before to demand that it does.

Understanding and trust

Money is not the real story here. It's more about a greater understanding of the complex reasons behind the poverty crisis. It's about justice as well as cash. And it's about a willingness to let poor countries have more of a say in how they get themselves out of poverty.

A tsunami of sorts happens every week – 210,000 children needlessly die in the poorest countries

The British Prime Minister's Commission for Africa – part of his agenda-setting for the G8 summit in July – has published its report and found the condition of Africa to be an affront to the dignity of all mankind.¹

As part of its original remit, the Commission said it would “listen to Africa”. World Vision is urging decision-makers not only to listen, but to **trust** Africa with its own development, allowing the nations who know best what they need to deduce the best solutions for overcoming poverty within their own countries.

The report made a number of recommendations for changing the situation, including calling for a new kind of partnership between Africa and the developed nations. The word “partnership” has eluded many previous discussions amongst rich governments and world leaders

during their attempts to deal with poverty. But it is only through more-equal partnerships between developing countries and donor nations that real headway can be made.

Trade, debt, aid – intertwined

The **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** campaign describes three primary measures to eradicate poverty: trade justice, debt cancellation, and more and better aid. These three steps, intertwined, can make a real difference to the lives of millions of people. But to be successful, any efforts must involve genuine partnership and real trust.

Fairer trade laws, for example, would mean that rich countries have to stop pushing poor farmers out of business and allow them to become partners in the global marketplace, cutting out the unfair trade barriers that keep them out of the running and swamp their markets with subsidised produce from richer nations.

Dropping unpayable debt means releasing essential funds to pay for basics like education and health care, instead of using scarce money to meet interest payments. But this is a two-way street. In return for debt relief, recipient countries must undertake to ensure that the extra resources are channelled legitimately to those most in need. The G7 Finance Ministers took some small steps at their last meeting, promising to review debt relief on a case-by-case basis. It's not enough. There's still a long way to go.

And while more money is needed, the aid also needs to be better quality. The gap between the promise of aid and the reality of its implementation has already, in effect, cost Africa billions. Improving the mechanisms for channelling aid and persuading donor governments to work alongside developing countries in partnership



Sixty indigenous apiculturists supported by a World Vision Mexico programme have had their honey sold in Mexico City and exported to Europe through a Fair Trade initiative.

will enable these countries to plan their future development on a long-term basis.

Far too often, aid is given with one hand and taken away with the other. Financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund attach conditions to aid that in many cases are detrimental to economic development. Conditions should simply guarantee that the aid gets to the people who need it.

There can be no doubt that the world can afford to eradicate poverty. The

British Government has shown it has the will to take some vital first steps. To prove that it is serious, it must now **deliver** on its commitment of US\$2 billion towards the gap in funds to meet the Millennium Development Goals, and should **upgrade** its promise to meet the target of 0.7% of GNP spent on aid by 2013, and strive to meet it by **2010**. It must also make sure that its policies across the board do not undermine progress in eradicating poverty.

Now is the time for the rich world to take a giant leap forward. Global

poverty eradication is on the agenda; world leaders must agree that putting an end to the “silent tsunami” is a cause worth fighting for. That's the challenge in 2005. ■

*Mr Charles Badenoch is Chief Executive of World Vision UK. See: www.worldvision.org.uk, or for more information about **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** go to: www.makepovertyhistory.org*

¹ *Our common interest: Report of the Commission for Africa, www.commissionforafrica.org*

Investing in women is smart

Ritu Sharma

ENDING POVERTY AROUND

the world is entirely possible; we just need our world leaders to step up to the plate to help make it happen.

And this year, leaders of the world's wealthiest nations have a tremendous opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of the poor by tackling head-on some of the pressing global issues of our time: aid, trade and debt. With the year 2005 labelled **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY**, and a series of upcoming high-level international events with global poverty as their main focus – beginning with the July G8 Summit in Scotland – world leaders can do just that.

Simply put, if the world wants to eradicate poverty, we need to start by first investing in women, who constitute the vast majority – more than 70% – of the world's poorest people.

Start at the bottom rung

Why do women make up the majority of the poor? One simple reason: discrimination. Discrimination keeps the world's women on the bottom rung of the social ladder – often with little help to move up. Women are the **poorest** of the poor because men clearly have a distinct advantage: in many countries, women cannot own their own land, so they have no assets. With no assets, women cannot borrow money to start income-generating businesses or grow their farms. And more often than not, women around the world have less control over money when they do earn it.

Because of women's family role in taking care of their children and households, most do not have as much time to work in the economy and when they do, are forced to take less secure or lower-paying jobs. All over the world, women earn 20–50% less than men.

Moreover, while education is a critical factor in overcoming poverty, millions of girls are routinely kept out of school and forced to work in the house, on the farm, and in the factory, while boys are sent to school. Many poor parents reason that sending their boys to school incurs less direct cost than would losing girls' labour and income. Today, of the more than 120 million of children out of school, over 65 million are girls.

Financing women's development

These reasons alone should be enough to push wealthy nations to make vital investments in women to encourage freedom, self-sufficiency and lasting change. But if the statistics above don't convince leaders, this should: investing in women brings enormous pay-offs for whole families, communities and nations. Women tend to put any money they have back into their family's education, health, and welfare – helping to break the cycle of poverty.

Investing in women brings enormous pay-offs for families, communities and nations

Women's freedom and economic viability are key to our collective global well-being. By offering poor women around the globe the basic tools and skills for success, they can be empowered to better their lives and their children's, as well as to invest in their countries' future.

We know that smart and targeted investments in critical areas such as health and education will pay off many times over and will empower millions of people to lift themselves out of poverty. For example, for each year of

schooling a girl receives, her own children are 5–10% less likely to die as infants.

That's why we, at the Women's Edge Coalition, are pro-actively advocating to the United States Congress and the White House on economic policies and human rights that support poor women in their actions to end poverty in their lives, communities and nations. We take their issues, their voices and their needs and present them to the decision-makers in Washington who hold the purse strings on the almost US\$20 billion spent annually on humanitarian and development assistance.

Women's Edge is working with key US law-makers to co-sponsor the *Global Opportunity for Women Act (GO4Women Act)*. This proposed legislation would channel US development assistance into projects designed to help poor women around the world become economically viable.

Fairer trade rules

Yet international assistance alone is not enough to end poverty. Effective international assistance will help poor countries to enter and benefit from the global economy, but once they are engaged in the global economy, trade rules must be fair to allow poor countries to compete on a level playing field.

Globalisation, trade, investment, economic growth, technology and innovation certainly have the potential to close the gap between rich and poor, but only if we consciously examine them and make sure that they close the gap; it doesn't happen on its own. That's why it is so important to **make sure** that women and their specific issues are at the table from the beginning.

Thus, the Women's Edge Coalition developed a tool called the Trade Impact Review (TIR) to uncover how trade agreements may affect the poor – especially women, who make up the majority of the world's poor – and forecast their potential impact on development, prior to high-level trade negotiations. The TIR uses readily-available data and academic research to provide policy makers and advocates with information about the potential consequences that new trade rules may have for the poor. Armed with this data, we can change trade commitments that may harm the poor, before the agreements are completed.

The TIR framework does not presume that all those living in poverty will be losers; instead, it assesses both the positive and negative potential effects of a change in trade or investment policy. The review tool also identifies local laws – including those that benefit the poor or women – that may be lost in a country's compliance with the new trade agreement.

We must do more to ensure that trade agreements benefit men and women living in poverty. An extra dollar a day for many women would change the futures of millions of families.

Cancelling debt

The massive debt in impoverished countries also continues to hit women, the majority poor, the hardest. Because poor countries must spend more money in debt service payments to rich creditors, they are not able to make desperately-needed investments in health and education for their own people. Cancelling loans for countries committed to good governance is not only the right thing to do, it's smart. And a little debt cancellation can go a long way: in Tanzania, for example, \$3 billion in debt relief is helping to send 1.6 million children to school, while debt cancellation enabled Uganda to make primary education free for every child, helping more girls get into classrooms.

When the international community comes together to cancel the debts of



PHOTO - PATRICO CUEVAS / WORLD VISION

This Chilean woman, the head of her household, owns a fish and seafood store. With hard work and a little training, she has managed to "make poverty history" for herself and her family.

the world's poorest countries, we can make a difference in the lives of current and future generations. In a world where a mother dies every single minute of every single day, due to fully-preventable reasons, debt relief would allow impoverished countries to make critical investments in maternal and reproductive health care to save women's lives.

Wealthy nations can start by showing their commitment to investing in women. The best investment that you can make, the highest return that you will get for your money, is to invest in women and girls. If we offer women an opportunity to gain freedom and

self-sufficiency, we will be working to end global poverty, while making real and lasting changes in their lives, communities and nations. ■

Ms Ritu Sharma is Co-Founder and President of the Women's Edge Coalition, a Washington DC-based coalition of more than 40 organisations and 15,000 individuals. See: www.womensedge.org

Aid for grassroots food security in Kenya

Sarah Gillam

NASALINA KAARI GREETES US with enthusiasm as we arrive at her *shamba* and rushes away to find chairs before settling us in the shade.

It's the first time she has sat down today after a round of collecting water, weeding, cooking and cleaning. Five years ago, Nasalina's husband died; now she's looking after her children alone, growing her own food. She's thin and looks older than her forty years but is pleased to talk about the improvements she is making.

Nasalina has three acres (1.2 hectares) of land planted with maize, beans and sorghum, which keeps the family fed for six months of the year. She also has bananas, mangoes and avocados. To produce all this requires a huge amount of effort. All her children go to primary school, though she doubts she'll be able to afford the fees for secondary education. She struggles to buy new uniforms, shoes and exercise books as it is.

Goats for self-sufficiency

After her husband's death, Nasalina found it hard to keep the family alive, so she joined a village group that was investing in goats, courtesy of the international non-governmental organisation FARM-Africa. Because of her situation, the group selected her to look after the breeding station. FARM-Africa built her a goat house, supplying a Toggenburg buck and four does, and seedlings of protein-rich plants for fodder. When her goats kidded, she gave the first four kids to other people in the community, as a way of repaying her "loan". After that, Nasalina was free to sell subsequent goats. Since pure Toggenburgs (an exotic goat) fetch up to three times the price of local goats, she's reaping the benefits of all her hard work.

Other group members are benefiting too. Each has been given two local

does, which are crossed with the male Toggenburg. Once a female kid has matured, it is crossed with another Toggenburg, producing a 75 to 25 ratio of Toggenburg to local goat – the ideal mix for a hardy dairy goat, producing up to four litres of milk a day. So that more and more people benefit, farmers are required to pass on the first two female kids to another poor family.

Investment at the grassroots is now paying off. Nasalina says her life is finally improving: "When I sold three goats, I was able to build a house with a corrugated iron roof. I'm getting a lot of milk for my family and I'm selling some too." One of her children broke his arm and she sold one of the goats to pay the 3000-shilling (US\$32) hospital bill: "At least I had a goat to sell, otherwise it would have been very difficult." But one of the main problems, she said, is the shortage of fodder for goats in the dry season. "We have to go to the river banks and cut and carry the fodder for the goats."

Aid must prioritise grassroots farmers, not inefficient government bureaucracies

Altogether the Meru Dairy Goat project has benefited 2,500 families, with a further 55,000 families using services resulting from it. It benefits the poorest in the community, particularly households headed by women and smallholder farmers with very few resources to produce food or generate income to improve family welfare.

Farmer representatives have formed the Meru Goat Breeders' Association (MGBA), which is responsible for

registering all the pure Toggenburg animals with the Kenya Stud Book, coordinating buck rotation (to avoid in-breeding) and marketing the cross-bred dairy goats. It is also taking a growing role in training activities. Another local institution, the Meru Animal Health Workers' Group (MAHWG), allows community-based animal health workers, animal health assistants and veterinarians to discuss emerging issues and obtain loans to expand their businesses. Both associations are contributing to the development of livestock and animal health policies in Kenya.

As a result of the success in Meru, FARM-Africa is now expanding its work to south-eastern Kenya where it aims to help 3,500 group members, with a further 6,000 households benefiting from access to improved goats and private livestock services. The aim is to create sustainable improvements in people's livelihoods and to develop community-based organisations that will, along with government extension staff, be able to manage the breeding system and veterinary work long after FARM-Africa's intervention concludes.

Priorities for aid

FARM-Africa, as a member of the **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** campaign, is lobbying hard for more and better aid. This means aid supporting the poor wherever they are and whatever they are doing. With 80% of Africans reliant on agriculture, priority needs to be given to men and women farmers and their organisations, as well as civil society groups, working so hard at the grassroots – as opposed to aid exclusively channelled through inefficient government bureaucracies via Direct Budget Support.

Access to land and water resources are also a priority if farmers are to respond to new market opport-

unities. At the moment, Africa's irrigation potential is grossly underdeveloped. Even modest techniques, such as rainwater harvesting, can help.

In some countries, inequalities in land distribution have to be addressed. Where land is scarce, agricultural development efforts should target middling and better-off smallholder households – nearly all of whom are still poor by most criteria – and look for ways to assist the semi-landless through the rural non-farm economy.

Years of decline in agricultural extension services must be reversed; support services such as information, inputs, credit and market access must be better delivered. These services will need the coordination of government ministries, the private sector and NGOs.

Improved rural infrastructure is critical for expanding market opportunities for producers, improving linkages with traders and reducing the cost of inputs and service delivery. Roads, communications, water management and markets all need improvement.

Trade, agriculture reforms

But bigger-picture change is needed too. Reform of Northern agricultural and trade policies is essential. Industrialised countries must be pressed to reform protectionist policies and to accept that special treatment – in trade negotiations, for example – must be given to agricultural development in developing countries. Smallholder producers need investment so they can respond to opportunities created by higher prices.

Assured and reasonable return on agricultural innovation and investment is another urgent need. There is a strong case for measures that stabilise and, in some cases support, domestic prices.

All such actions need to be coordinated by ministries of agriculture, but these are generally under-resourced, ineffective and unaccountable to farmers. Reform of

agriculture ministries and implementation of coherent rural development strategies are pre-conditions for large additional investments in the agricultural sector in most African countries.

Strategies must involve all stakeholders, including the private sector. This would encourage investment and give donors the opportunity to invest in African agriculture without necessarily having to work through national ministries of agriculture or other government agencies.

“Agriculture is the backbone of the economy” is a mantra for many African governments. Unfortunately, it usually gets only a small share of government expenditure and farmers often have little say in deciding how money is spent or services delivered.

FARM-Africa's call. FARM-Africa is calling on donor governments and organisations, African governments, the United Nations and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to:

- increase the aid budget spent on agriculture, ensuring a balance of support between national governments, civil society and NGOs;
- to ensure that concern for international trade issues does not distract attention from local and regional markets;
- to explore new approaches to supporting rural livelihood by funding experimental programmes for evidence-based policy and practice;
- to make the case for investment in the smallholder agricultural sector;
- to encourage innovative, farmer-led initiatives, empowering smallholder farmers and herders, and
- to encourage other donors to re-engage in natural resource development with appropriate, coordinated and long-term commitment.



PHOTO - FARM-AFRICA

Nasalina Kaari with one of the goats that has brought immediate financial relief to her family, and increased community wealth.

The sun is going down as we bid Nasalina and her children goodbye. There are still many things that her family need and they won't come quickly. But with a small amount of investment and training and a lot of hard work on her part, she has been able to keep them in food and shelter, pay for medical bills and school materials – in other words, to keep her family afloat.

FARM-Africa has withdrawn from the Meru project now after eight years and the community is running it successfully – proof that investment at the grassroots really does bring progress. ■

Ms Sarah Gillam is Press Manager with FARM-Africa, a UK- and Africa-based NGO that works with small-scale farmers and herders, prioritising pastoral development, community forest management, smallholder development and land reform in East and South Africa. See: www.farmafrika.org.uk

Economic recovery in tsunami-affected countries

Peter Acfield and Laurence Gray¹

PHOTO - KEVIN COOK / WORLD VISION



In Banda Aceh, Indonesia, many people like this old woman and boy have roamed the streets in search of anything of value still to be found in the ruins of the tsunami.

GLOBAL MOMENTUM TO “make poverty history” is growing. But what does that mean in the face of cataclysmic events like the December 2004 tsunami? It took not just lives, homes and landscapes, but left people and economies even more vulnerable to poverty.

As at early March 2005, the estimated total cost of aid and recovery from the tsunami was just under US\$14 billion, with most of the damage and losses suffered by Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

In Indonesia, the National Development Planning Agency and donors led by the World Bank assessed total damages and losses at almost \$4.5 billion, with housing, agriculture and

fishing the worst-affected areas, and damages and losses in Aceh province wiping out 97% of local gross domestic product (GDP).

Sri Lanka's damage and losses over the next two years will be up to \$1.3 billion, according to a preliminary assessment by the Asian Development Bank, the Japan Bank for International Cooperation and the World Bank.

The Indian Government estimated reconstruction costs at \$1.5 billion, not counting the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. In Thailand, the biggest impact is expected to be on the tourism industry, which generates 5.1% of the country's GDP. And in Myanmar, in early January 2005, Government figures were that 61

people were dead, 43 injured, one missing and 3,205 displaced; and an estimated 592 houses in 17 villages were destroyed.

Initial Asian Development Bank assessments put increased poverty as potentially the most serious consequence of the disaster. The implications are two-fold: absolute poverty will increase as people affected by the tsunami fall below the poverty line, and the level of misery will increase if those already below the poverty line lose what earnings they had before the tsunami and slide even deeper into poverty. The number of newly impoverished across the tsunami region is expected to rise by up to two million people. More than half of the two million “new

poor” will be in Indonesia, the remainder mostly in Sri Lanka.

Towards recovery

The extent to which the tsunami-affected countries can recover, and continue fighting poverty, depends largely on the responses of the international community. There are several big challenges ahead.

Rehabilitating fisheries and aquaculture. The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has estimated direct losses in the fisheries sector in the nine affected countries to be nearly half a billion dollars. The estimated cost includes replacement or repair of 110,000 fishing vessels, replacement of 1.7 million units of fishing gear, and repair or replacement of 36,000 marine engines. The additional cost of repairs to harbours and aquaculture projects is expected to be around \$100 million.

The FAO has warned of the folly of concentrating on the re-building of the tourism industry at the expense of fishery reconstruction. Fisheries and agriculture supply villagers with food and income, but are also essential to contribute to the supply of food to tourists. Therefore, tourism and food production must be revived simultaneously in order to complement each other and remain sustainable.

The FAO's Asia-Pacific regional headquarters in Bangkok has set up a consortium to restore shattered livelihoods in tsunami-devastated nations. The key partners are the Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation, the Network of Aquaculture Centres in the Asia-Pacific, the South-East Asia Fisheries Development Centre and the World Fish Centre.

The FAO has also called for the rehabilitation of severely affected mangroves, which provide fuel for cooking and heating, timber and thatch for houses as well as nutrients and spawning grounds for fish and shellfish. However, the FAO has warned that such rehabilitation should not be attempted *ad hoc* but should be part of a comprehensive coastal

regeneration plan.

Reclaiming farmland. Farmland must be rehabilitated quickly to restore the production capacity of farmers and to ensure food security in rural areas. To that end, the FAO has proposed a Framework for Reclamation Action Plan for damaged farmland. The strategy is aimed at classifying inundated fields into three damage levels, quantifying the ability of individual farmers to progressively restore production capacity, and planning of short- and long-term measures needed to aid reclamation.

Two million people are likely to fall below the poverty line, and countless people below it to fall further

It has been estimated that the tsunami, which in some places swept inland as much as five kilometres, damaged around 30,000 hectares of farmland in Indonesia and about 5,500 in Sri Lanka. Damage to fields includes erosion, the depositing of debris, sedimentation, residual flooding and salinisation.

In Indonesia, 40% of the inundated land is classified as “highly damaged”, which means that farming will be disrupted for at least this year and will have to be diversified or abandoned. A further 30% is “medium damaged”, requiring the cultivation of salt-tolerant varieties of rice until the land returns to normal. In Sri Lanka, there is no highly damaged land, but the FAO has estimated that 70% of the affected land has suffered “medium damage”.

It is estimated that almost all of the farm animals near the coast in tsunami-hit areas have been lost. This leaves people in those regions without any food stock, breeding stock or draught animals to assist with heavy farm labour.

Re-stocking with animals from other villages or regions would provide the perfect breeding ground for outbreaks of animal diseases and

animal deaths from stress. The FAO has said that before re-stocking, veterinary services must be restored to provide early warning and treatment of the main diseases. Care must also be taken to ensure proper precautions such as animal vaccinations are taken.

Reviving tourism. In February 2005, the World Tourism Association's executive council met in Phuket to adopt the so-called Phuket Action Plan, which focuses on saving jobs, re-launching small businesses and encouraging tourists to return to the region. Aimed at Thailand, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and the Maldives, the plan deals with re-building the livelihoods of survivors in tourism destinations of affected countries and re-building visitor numbers. It encompasses marketing, community relief, professional training, sustainable development and risk management. Re-building of infrastructure, including hotels and resorts, is being handled by insurance companies and other aid agencies. Secondary goals include setting up systems to strengthen the sustainability of the affected destinations and to work with the United Nations on a disaster reduction strategy.

A vital complement to the strategy will be a campaign to lobby governments of tourist source countries to exercise restraint in issuing travel advisories. Several of the tsunami-damaged countries were further handicapped by advisories warning of dangers that did not eventuate.

The International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private-sector arm of the World Bank, pledged \$2.5 million in aid to the tourism sector; South Korea pledged \$500,000 for rehabilitation of the sector (over and above its budgeted \$200,000 for training and infrastructure), and other commitments are expected. Aid is forthcoming in response both to need and to the perceived strength of the formal economy. Confidence in tourism-related businesses in Sri Lanka, Thailand and the Maldives has eased access to assistance, whereas other sectors are still grappling with issues of legitimacy and control.

Other key issues need addressing:

- Transparent and equitable measures must be employed to resolve issues of land control and ownership, a critical issue in promoting economic recovery. Failure to address these could result in unrest and stagnated economic growth.
- Social and livelihood considerations are considered “colossal” in affected areas and local communities, while they are “moderate” to “slight” for the nation as a whole; this disparity needs to be recognised.
- Families and communities should be informed of their options, with reconstruction taking the lead from them.
- To revive trade, industry and finance in the recovery strategy, Indonesia's National Development Planning Agency BAPPENAS² and the World Bank are calling for employment-intensive investment in infrastructure and labour-intensive public works.
- A pressing challenge for the Indonesian Government is to meet the country's massive investment needs. There is a need for “greater predictability and clarity” towards different administrative responsibilities and a “consistency in implementation” of the legal and regulatory framework.

Economic recovery is key for quality of life in affected communities, and many have a part to play. But good coordination between the players is critical. The World Bank has outlined its three principles of tsunami recovery:

- Governments of affected countries/regions play a central role and have ownership of reconstruction projects.
- Reconstruction is planned and executed by locals in such a way as to break local poverty cycles.

- International coordination of relief and reconstruction efforts ensure efficient and effective use of donor funds.

The Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP), representing governments, multi-lateral agencies and private organisations from 28 countries, has stressed the need for relief operations and sustainable development to be kept separate, but to be designed to complement each other. CGAP, which includes the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the Japan Bank for International Cooperation and the US Agency for International Development, has also said that micro-finance agencies should maintain a commitment to sustainable operations and customise solutions to client needs.

Global economic policy response

Clearly, poverty reduction in the tsunami-affected countries has suffered a severe set-back. What could the **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** campaign platform promise for these countries?

Debt relief. Debt relief would be welcome for tsunami-affected countries that owe to multi-lateral institutions (\$70 billion to the IMF, World Bank and Asian Development Bank). Each country spends millions a year to repay these institutions. A debt moratorium is one proposed solution, but this may mean more debt in the long term.

Fair trade. Trade negotiations are of increased importance to help countries affected by the tsunami. The European Trade Commissioner has stated that trade policy can be used to assist countries in their relief and recovery efforts, improving access to markets, reducing protectionism and removing trade barriers.

More and better aid. Consistency is needed between a donor country's aid and trade approaches. For example, the United States International Trade Commission voted unanimously on 6 January to impose punitive tariffs on imports of shrimp

from six countries – including Thailand and India, whose shrimp farms are badly damaged by the tsunami. At the same time, the US is providing recovery support for tsunami-affected countries.

The tsunami was truly colossal – in terms of the energy released, lives lost and areas affected. It also released a tide of compassion and generosity, where public fund-raising motivated (or embarrassed) governments to dig deeper. This generosity has been a source of national pride, not a burden.

Before, on and since 26 December 2004, other humanitarian crises have been consuming people. Fatalities and suffering, whether caused by a massive wave, armed insurgents, or chronic poverty, are still fatalities and suffering.

Can the public out-pouring of compassion and generosity prompted by the tsunami extend to compassion and generosity for all human suffering? Will governments again be upstaged and moved to act by a generous motivated public, to make poverty history? ■

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¹This article includes a summary by Peter Acfield of *Economic recovery needs in tsunami-affected countries*, a consultant's report commissioned in 2005 by Laurence Gray, World Vision's Asia-Pacific Director for Advocacy and Child Protection. Statistics in that report draw on sources including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, United Nations Development Programme and the US International Trade Commission.

²Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional

The battle against poverty is for all of us

Cecil Laguardia

IN THE PHILIPPINES, AS IN most of the developing world, for a majority of people poverty has gone from bad to worse. What's more, it seems that most Filipinos accept that poverty is part of life.

In the outskirts of Maguindanao, one of the country's poorest provinces whose poverty has been aggravated by a decades-old insurgency (or the other way around), many children like eight-year-old Mohammed Hashim dream of finishing school not just to pursue their dreams but "to earn salary" and help put food on their tables. "I want to help improve the living condition of my family." Although so young, he has learned to shoulder the burden of his family, which he has seen since he first opened his eyes in this world.

As 12 million Filipinos once more tighten their belts to get by on a US\$1 a day income, the gulf between Mohammed and his dream has widened by leaps and bounds.

The child labourers of Leyte province see work as their duty. Eleven-year-old Maricris works on the sugar-cane plantation in the morning and goes to school in the afternoon. Daily food for her is a "lump of rice and dried fish...our parents cannot afford better." She said many of them accept their fate. "We are used to it. It is a way of life for us."

Facing the bleak scenario

The Food and Nutrition Research Institute reports that eight out of 10 Filipinos are hungry. It is not unusual for children to go to school without having breakfast, have only a few spoonfuls of rice for lunch (made bearable by a pinch of salt), and go through the night with the same menu. Experts are worried that the base diet for many poor Filipinos – rice with fish sauce, coffee, pork oil or



PHOTO - CECIL LAGUARDIA / WORLD VISION

In the Philippines, it is not unusual for children to go to school without breakfast, and to continue the day with little more in their stomachs.

sodium-laden instant noodles – could lead to more serious health problems. As medical anthropologist Michael Tan¹ has lamented, malnourished children are "slowly being wasted away by hunger".

Figures from the National Statistics Office are jarring: five million Filipinos are unemployed with another six million under-employed – earning this country the unfortunate distinction of one of the highest unemployment rates in Asia and the world. This bleak scenario is visible from the cities to the countryside.

In a 2000 survey by the Social Weather Station, a non-profit social research institution, 54% of Filipinos rated themselves as poor. In 2001, that perception increased to 59%. And with three babies born every minute, the Philippines' near-80 million population could double in 29 years.

The burning question now is: how can we end poverty? From a Christian perspective, God promising us the riches of His kingdom surely means that poverty can be conquered – even though it has been with us for ages. There must be a way. There **is** a way.

Hope in partnerships

This country that has toppled two presidents through "people power" seems not to have found the right formula for doing that to poverty...yet. Deeply rooted in the heart of every community, poverty seems to have stuck like glue; even those who have succeeded in wiping it out of their lives are scarred forever. Yet there are voices of hope. Like that of one local government employee, in a newspaper opinion page: "We alone have allowed this adverse condition we live in. How much we want of tomorrow depends on what we do now." He will need all the help he can get.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, on starting her six-year term in 2004 and presenting her 10-point programme to fight poverty and bring peace, underscored the acute need for unity to make things happen. She appealed to all Filipinos: “If we could only now fight together with the same energy and conviction to preserve our freedom and advance our nation’s progress.”

People power has toppled presidents, but hasn't yet found the way to do that to poverty

As Richard Ondrik, country director of the Asian Development Bank for the Philippines, noted,² poverty is “an extremely complex problem with many causes and many outcomes”. He added that fighting it is not just the job of one entity or sector of society but needs the combined forces of all stake-holders – the poor themselves, governments, the private sector and organised civil society, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and labour unions and networks.

Indeed, it takes partnership to relentlessly pursue solutions to the problem that – alongside terrorism – sends shivers of dread across the globe. (Who can sleep well knowing that thousands, even millions, go to bed without food, sleep on pavements and die without getting the medical treatment they need?) Poverty cuts sweepingly from education, health and nutrition, environment, economy, peace and order, culture, and practically everything under the sun. This giant cannot be tackled single-handedly. The battle will be fought and won if we all work together.

Journalist Charles Buban³ notes a global consensus on key elements for progress that include: encouraging local participation in decision-making, addressing equity concerns including gender equity and income differentials, and creating partnerships that include the private and the public sectors. Everyone involved and accountable could break poverty.

Bolt of lightning needed?

The next-hardest thing about tackling poverty is getting everyone’s acts together. This is difficult but surely is possible. Describing the Philippines’ two “people power” revolutions, writer José María Montelibano commented: “Both were induced by popular movements orchestrated by man, but both were triggered to erupt by *force majeure*, by an act of God.”

While those uprisings had a “bolt of lightning from heaven”, in Montelibano’s words, human initiative was critical. People from all walks of life, various organisations and institutions, simply saw what needed to end and did something. How could this **not** conquer poverty? History is replete with examples of people joining hands and achieving goals that once looked impossible.

Making poverty history means extricating ourselves from a mind-set that keeps us going around in circles. Jesus’ assertion that the truth shall set us free⁴ is useful here: the truth of what we can do, of what others can contribute, the truth in statistics, and the truth of seeing poverty in the raw, can free us to believe that poverty will end.

Members of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) Philippines have lamented that “current allocations for education in the country dropped to 15% while health allocation, as in the past two years, continues to hover at 1% from an already low 3% of previous years. An ironic contrast to the 33.24% allocated to debt servicing, which underscores the reality that the government has prioritised debt servicing at the expense of social spending”⁵. Another member notes that according to a study commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme, the country will need at least “P229 billion [US\$4.2 billion] to meet the targets for education, health, water supply and sanitation. Given the trend in budgeting for social spending, many civil society groups believe that the Philippines will most likely fail in its MDG commitment unless this situation is reversed.”⁶

GCAP – a new convergence

The convergence of social movements and civil society in GCAP Philippines is counting on seeing that reversal happen. Launched officially in April 2005, the coalition is campaigning “in a bid to compel policy-makers, both in the national government and multi-lateral institutions...to realise that it can no longer be ‘business as usual’, and to vigorously protest against policies that have led to the steady deterioration of the quality of life of the average Filipino...”⁷

As an active member of GCAP Philippines and its Coordinating Council, World Vision is mobilising alongside other stake-holders in events such as the Global Campaign for Education and a Children’s Congress focused on education, with many more in the pipeline.

As a GCAP Philippines proposal notes, “the demands for a better life for the poor and socially-excluded in terms of health, education and other indicators, flow from an understanding that these are entitlements enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”⁸ On that foundation stone, and on the Biblical one of God’s promised kingdom riches, there is no looking back. But the immense work will be done only if we start doing it. ■

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¹ Director of the NGO Health Action Information Network; associate professor at the University of the Philippines

² “It takes partnership to fight poverty”, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 16 July 2003

³ “Earth feeling the strain of population”, *Ibid.*, 7 Dec 2002

⁴ John 8:32, *The New Testament*

⁵ Social Watch-Philippines, *Making Good in MDG Commitments?* (2004), cited in GCAP Philippines Project Proposal, e-mail, 17 February 2005

⁶ Prof L Briones; this figure is for public corporations; the total public sector debt figure is not available at time of writing.

⁷ Social Watch-Philippines, *op. cit.*

⁸ Paper by R. E. Ofreneo, cited in GCAP proposal, *op. cit.*

Your personal response to 2005?

Andy Atkins

I believe the Global Call to Action Against Poverty will make history in 2005. Either we will win policy changes that reduce extreme poverty dramatically in the decade to come, or become the biggest campaign ever to fail so dramatically. The outcome depends on the response of millions of people. What's yours?

It's a year that calls for extraordinary action and reflection. If you believe, as I do, that 2005 offers unprecedented opportunities to demolish major blockages to poverty eradication, it follows that you will make unprecedented efforts to help seize those opportunities.

Or does it? How easy it is for us to get stuck in our individual or our institutional rut. Whether you are a foot soldier or a general in the war against poverty, try asking yourself:

► **What priority am I giving to seizing this moment?**

Then ask yourself:

► **How can I do more?**

Our options go far beyond what we can do in our professional capacity as workers in the development sector, because our relationships go far beyond our professional sphere. We have family and relatives. We have friends and contacts through our community, our church, our "hobbies", professional associations and other networks.

You can encourage anyone to support your national platform of the Global Call, to wear the white band, to write to their government representative, and so on.

If you are a person of faith, seek guidance, through prayer, on which avenues God wants you to explore. The heroes of the Bible are those who listened to God and dared to follow his lead.

Finally, ask yourself:

► **What are my motives?**

There are many good ones. But only one motive is guaranteed not to leave you disappointed.

That is the biblical imperative for followers of God to speak out for justice for the poor and vulnerable, because it is the right thing to do – whatever the chances of success.

Let this motive be our driver and compass as we experience setbacks as well as celebrations along the road. And if enough people do the right thing this year, we **will** make the right kind of history. ■



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WORLD VISION

is a Christian relief and development partnership that serves more than 85 million people in nearly 100 countries. World Vision seeks to follow Christ's example by working with the poor and oppressed in the pursuit of justice and human transformation. Children are often most vulnerable to the effects of poverty. World Vision

works with each partner community to ensure that children are able to enjoy improved nutrition, health and education. Where children live in especially difficult circumstances, surviving on the streets, suffering in exploitative labour, or exposed to the abuse and trauma of conflict, World Vision works to restore hope and to bring justice.

World Vision recognises that poverty is not inevitable. Our Mission Statement calls us to challenge those unjust structures that constrain the poor in a world of false priorities, gross inequalities and distorted values. World Vision desires that all people be able to reach their God-given potential, and thus works for a world that no longer tolerates poverty. ■



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