



**People in extreme poverty,
absent partners in the Millennium Development Goals**

Due to the economic crisis, some 100 million people throughout the world have joined the ranks of those already living in extreme poverty.

Over the last 20 years, the richest and the emerging nations have reaped the rewards of a very unequal economic growth, which has disproportionately benefited the rich compared to those living in poverty. The persistence of extreme poverty is a challenge for every country, because it reveals a basic failure in our approach to development and building equitable societies.

To deliver humanity from extreme poverty, “an abject and dehumanising” phenomenon, and to meet the Millennium Goals adopted by 189 Heads of State and Government in September 2000, the fight against poverty must remain central to addressing today's global challenges. New partnerships between all stakeholders must be established, and they must be mutual and based on equality - and not on dependence or power relationships.

The success of public policies must be judged on the basis of their impact on the most deprived

Despite the contempt to which they are often subjected, they are the first to act to change their situation. They are stakeholders with an experience and knowledge that are indispensable to a development founded on social justice and sustainability.

They must be considered as partners in meeting today's challenges: inclusive growth, access to decent work and quality services, mitigating climate change, building peace and sharing knowledge.

*Nina Lim-Yuson
President*

*Eugen Brand
Director General*

**Four courses of action to meet the
Millennium Development Goals**

Reach those people in extreme poverty without leaving anyone out

Policies must make the most vulnerable a priority, so that the *reduction of the extent* of extreme poverty is not achieved at the expense of an *increase in its intensity*. This would not be true progress in the eradication of extreme poverty. Our experience has shown that policies that begin with the most enterprising people just beneath the poverty threshold, never reach the hard core of extreme poverty.

Access to Human Rights for everyone

The Human Rights Council is currently examining draft guiding principles on extreme poverty and human rights (resolution A/HRC/RES/12/19, September 2009). Poverty is a consequence of human rights violations. Basing the MDGs on human rights would enable the identification of those who do not have access to their rights due to extreme poverty and to promote effective access to rights for everyone.

Ensuring that everyone can participate

People who are socially excluded have an essential contribution to make in understanding the vicious cycle of extreme poverty. Often without legal status and poorly represented politically, it is essential to promote, with them, new forms of governance and participation at all levels.

Evaluating the impact of the MDGs with people

The framework for MDG evaluations by donors and states should include feedback from disadvantaged populations about the benefits to them of development policies. Growth rates and quantitative indicators do not provide information on what they have gained in terms of freedom and dignity, and what they have lost.

Join those who refuse to accept poverty by signing the call **Striving Together to End Poverty**

<http://www.atd-fourthworld.org/sign-call-to-action.html>

Numerous programmes exclude many families in extreme poverty because they are not thought through or prepared in light of the conditions and the particular needs of very deprived areas, even though these families are officially the targets of these programmes.

For example, one month after the earthquake, no international aid had reached the residents of the Grande Ravine area of Port-au-Prince. The residents of this district (15,000 to 20,000 people) had managed on their own to get the injured survivors out of the rubble, to bury the dead and to survive by sharing the food and shelter that they had or that they had got by going to other parts of the city. Their living conditions had become even more fragile after 12th January.

The aid did not reach them because the neighbourhood is very isolated. Roads and tracks suitable for vehicles stop at the bottom of the neighbourhood, built illegally along ravines and on hillsides. Just like other isolated and poor areas, it was invisible to many stakeholders in international solidarity who already had so much to do in known and visible areas.

Humanitarian institutions and organisations have to meet targets (e.g. distributing so many tens of thousands of kits, rations or tents in a short time). These quantitative targets require considerable logistics that are not suited to the area and the social realities of neighbourhoods where it is difficult to have an accurate estimation of the number of residents and the make-up of the families and to depend on community leaders.

The residents of disadvantaged areas wonder why they are not consulted. Our societies are wrong to deprive themselves of their experience and thought, because they can help us to find development methods which are truly effective in eradicating poverty and ensuring everyone has a future.

In the context of the consultation "One Voice for the People" on the reconstruction and future of the country, around fifty residents of the area prepared a document "Haiti Tomorrow" so that the Haitian people's voice could be heard at the donor conference which took place in New York at the end of March.

The residents expressed their conviction that Haiti can rebuild, but that there are some essential conditions:

- the solidarity that people demonstrated since the earthquake must continue bring about a change in mentality for all Haitians;
- international aid must arrive, but Haitians must stay on the front lines of the reconstruction efforts;
- the Haitian state must play its role, exert its authority and act in the interests of all;
- each person must be taken into account, including those at the very bottom - those who are most affected by extreme poverty.

They also emphasised the importance of relying on young people in this reconstruction process – whether deprived young people or those who are studying at university too – because they have said that they wanted to contribute.

Projects committed to people

"Two years ago, none of us had touched a computer. Some of us had never even seen one. We just wanted to be like other young people. But we had to leave school because of our difficulties. For years we were aimless and we didn't know what to do. Now we want to succeed. We want to be able to lift ourselves up because our families are still in need. Some have to sort rubbish while others look for water or food.

Lots of us used to be ashamed, but today we dare to talk to people and share our ideas with them. We've learnt to study. We want to make it out of poverty. In society some people put us down, they don't think we've got any skills and they say that the poor and the unwashed don't deserve to learn to use computers.

We're pleased that we can prove them wrong. Our lives have a future now."

Testimony by a delegate of a group of 40 young people in an IT training project "Miasa Mianatra Miaraka" ("Working and Living Together") in Antanarivo, Madagascara, whose principle is to provide whatever support is needed so that none of the young people drop out."

ATD Fourth World has signed the **Open Letter to the Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon in response to his report, "Keeping the promise"**

http://www.un-ngls.org/IMG/pdf_English.pdf

Have a look at the Millennium Campaign's information by region

<http://www.endpoverty2015.org/en/countries>

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