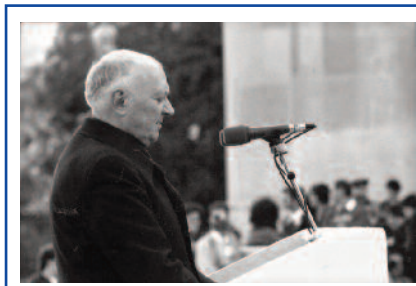


In 1917, **Joseph Wresinski** was born in an internment camp in France. His life was shaped by the experience of intolerable poverty. In 1957, working alongside residents of an emergency housing camp outside Paris, he founded what has become a worldwide movement.

In 1987, with 100,000 people, he launched a **call to action** carved in stone at the **Trocadero Human Rights Plaza in Paris**:



Joseph Wresinski – Trocadero 17 October 1987 – Paris (France) Photo ATD Fourth World ©

« Wherever men and women are condemned to live in extreme poverty, human rights are violated. To come together to ensure that these rights be respected is our solemn duty. »

This call to action, now engraved in more than fifty places on four continents, gave birth to the World Day for Overcoming Extreme Poverty, and is observed around the world each year. This call continues to inspire thousands of people from all backgrounds, from ordinary citizens to civic organizations to social movements to governments and politicians, to become part of a dynamic movement growing around the world.

In 2006, the A/61/308 report from the Secretary General of the United Nations the impact of this World Day affirmed that **people living in extreme poverty are human rights defenders and actors for peace**. In its **Conclusions and Recommendations**, the report identified ways to mobilise people in the fight against extreme poverty. It underlines the importance of having an approach founded on rights and the active participation of people living in extreme poverty.

Extracts from the Report of the Secretary General

The International Day has been observed around the world [...] as a day to remember and honour the daily struggles of people living in poverty [...] The participation of the poor themselves has been at the centre of the International Day celebrations since its very beginning [...]

The report proposes the following recommendations [...] :

Encourage Member States, the United Nations system and all stakeholders to ensure that human rights are mainstreamed into development discussions as a key tool in the eradication of poverty, [...] and to ensure that the International Day and its message are widely known by using a variety of means, including the media, the Internet and national campaigns.

Extracts of testimonies received for 17 October 2015



“If someone is hurting inside and hears what others say about suffering, they will take heart.”

Collective testimony – Central Africa

“Once we stop looking at other people as if they were different from us and see they are similar to us, there will be no more poverty. Change is within us.” Myriam, student - Mexico



When you carry placards showing sentences encouraging people to create peace, to respect others, to show solidarity.



And not just banners demanding a wage increase... You should know that you are fighting against extreme poverty.” Flora, Beitouna Centre - Lebanon



“Is it really possible to bring an end to extreme poverty without us, the people who suffer from it? How can we hope to succeed in building this long-term future that is so strongly desired without partnership between peoples, the inhabitants of the same village, the same city, the same neighbourhood, etc.? This is why we say ‘Let’s put our heads together to dare to have governance for peace’” Message from families in solidarity from Bukavu read to the Governor of the South-Kivu Province – Democratic Republic of Congo

“I was surrounded by violence. I was mistreated. As long as there’s poverty, you will never have peace. We don’t get openly angry. Our anger is silent. It’s deep inside us. You’ll have peace when you realise that the person opposite you is the same as you; a human being to be respected.” Michel B. - Belgium



“The authorities must keep their word. “Yes” must mean “yes”. We would like to say that school is more important than anything else. We need to have more state schools.” Collective testimony - Haiti

“Give us the chance for mothers and fathers to bring up their own children. For the new generation [...] to have jobs that bring pride and dignity to their lives. The Stone is hope.”

Extract of poem “The Stone, a reflection of our lives intertwined” by Madam Aporn Poompanna, Thailand

The “Forum on Overcoming Extreme Poverty” is a network of committed people who want to develop friendship and exchange knowledge about what poor and very poor people teach us, i.e. people who suffer from multiple disadvantages in the areas of education, housing, employment, health and culture; those who are criticised and rejected the most. This forum invites people to join a worldwide movement to overcome extreme poverty, to rebuild communities with people living in extreme poverty, inspired by their lives. This movement expresses itself in the **Letter to Friends Around the World**, which publishes the texts written by its correspondents three times a year, in French, English, Spanish and Portuguese. The Forum on Overcoming Extreme Poverty is run by the International Movement ATD Fourth World, an international NGO whose headquarters are in Pierrelaye, France. Those who join the Forum do so in their own right, and do not have to become members of ATD Fourth World. Our e-mail address is: [overcomingpoverty@atd-fourthworld.org](mailto:overcomingpoverty@atd-fourthworld.org) Internet: [www.overcomingpoverty.org](http://www.overcomingpoverty.org) Subscription \$8/8€ per annum - Support subscription: \$10/10€ per annum. Illustrations from Helene Perdereau, a long time friend and supporter of the International Movement ATD Fourth World - International Movement ATD Fourth World - Printed by ATD Fourth World - Méry-sur-Oise - N° 94 - June 2016

# LETTER TO FRIENDS AROUND THE WORLD FORUM ON OVERCOMING EXTREME POVERTY



[www.overcomingpoverty.org](http://www.overcomingpoverty.org)  
International Movement ATD Fourth World  
12, rue Pasteur - 95480 Pierrelaye - France

June 2016 – N° 94



Dear Friends,

In 2017, we will be celebrating the 30th anniversary of Joseph Wresinski's call to action and we've already started preparing for an extraordinary campaign which we would like to invite you to join in. Since the 17 October was recognised as the **International Day for the Eradication of Poverty**, by the United Nations in 1992, considerable progress has been made. The “UN Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights”, adopted in September 2012, affirm that extreme poverty is not merely a matter of a lack of income, it is also a question of human rights.

Following on from the Millennium Development Goals, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General, declared:

“[...]the world embarks on a bold new path towards a future of dignity for all guided by the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**” (17 October, 2015).

This year, the theme adopted by the UN is directly aligned with this agenda:

**Moving from humiliation and exclusion to participation:  
Ending poverty in all its forms.**

It echoes the words of Joseph Wresinski who, on 17 October 1987, entrusted us with a great responsibility: to reach out to the poorest as our brothers and sisters and ensure they are our primary partners in everything we do.

In this Letter to Friends Around the World, you will find **extracts of the 2006 Report** from the UN Secretary General on the impact of the International Day and **testimonies** from last year's 17 October events. We hope that this letter will help you promote and celebrate the day wherever you are.

Good luck and all the best for the 17 October!

The Forum on Overcoming Extreme Poverty Team

“To build our future, we want sustainable development where we will leave our footprint”.  
Collective testimony from residents of the Port-Louis night shelter – Mauritius



“We are not the only ones fighting. We know many families who are fighting every day (to have a better life)”. “Living in extreme poverty isn’t just a question of not having enough money. There are families who don’t have (electricity),

“Since I received your poster about the World Day for Overcoming Extreme Poverty, our Moroccan Mohammedia Scouts Organisation has prepared activities in 27 areas.” Moroccan Mohammedia Scouts Organisation – Morocco

“Persistent poverty is the world we were born into. It's a hard feeling not to be able to climb up the ladder little by little. It's hard to feel trapped and dependent. What keeps me going day after day? I suppose it's what is inside really, it's self-pride, it's inner strength, it's knowing that one day our voices will have to be heard.” Noleen F. - Ireland

access to (sanitation, and) basic services. Nobody asks them for their opinion. Nobody listens to them at school or at the hospital.” Testimony from three mothers from El Alto - Bolivia

“In our neighbourhoods and schools, bullying and discrimination happen a lot. As children, we want to stop discrimination and bullying, but it takes a lot of effort and responsibility. This means taking care of the things you have to do, and not asking or expecting other people to do everything for you.” Children's Message from the United Nations in New York

“To face up to all the crises we have to deal with here, we must live with the greatest of all treasures: the belief that each person is a human being. And put all our hopes in humanity”. Sandra A. - Portugal



Map of 17 October 2015 Events that we know of.



You can also share your own 17 October events  
via the website: [www.overcomingpoverty.org/oct17/2016/all-countries](http://www.overcomingpoverty.org/oct17/2016/all-countries)  
or by email: [overcomingpoverty@atd-fourthworld.org](mailto:overcomingpoverty@atd-fourthworld.org)