

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

--

MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY
FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY
17 October 2011

For decades the United Nations has worked to free people from poverty.

We have made great progress — but today those gains are in doubt.

Too many people are living in fear:

Fear of losing their jobs;

Fear of not being able to feed their families;

Fear of being trapped forever in poverty, deprived of the human right to live with health and dignity and hope for the future.

We can meet the challenges we face — the economic crisis, climate change, rising costs of food and energy, the effects of natural disasters.

We can overcome them by putting people at the centre of our work.

Too often in the debates that will shape our future, I see three groups missing. The poor ... the young ... and the planet.

As we work to avoid a global financial meltdown, we must also work to avoid a global development meltdown.

In the name of fiscal austerity, we cannot cut back on common-sense investments in people.

Malaria *can* be stopped. AIDS *can* be reversed. Millions of mothers *can* be saved from dying in child birth. Green investments *can* generate jobs and growth.

This is not theory. It is happening.

Now is not the time to slide backwards.

Now is the time to push harder to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

Now is the time to prepare to make the most of next year's crucial Rio + 20 conference on sustainable development.

Together, let us listen to people – and stand up for their hopes and aspirations.

That is how we will build a world free of poverty.