



WORLD LEADERS TOLD NOT TO LET FINANCIAL CRISIS DETRACT FROM ENDING POVERTY AND ACHIEVING MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

*Bono, Archbishop Tutu and Martin Luther King III Join Millions to Demand Governments Meet
Promises made at Millennium Summit in 2000*

New York, 16 October 2008 -- Beginning tomorrow, more than 67 million people are expected to mobilize under the slogan "Stand Up Take Action" at events around the globe to demand that world leaders do not use the financial crisis as an excuse for breaking the promises they made in 2000 to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

"From Friday to Sunday, in rich and poor countries, at concerts and sporting events, in universities and in houses of worship, millions of people will show that they will not remain seated in the face of poverty and broken promises to end it," said **Salil Shetty, Director of the UN Millennium Campaign**. "This mass mobilization will demonstrate to world leaders that citizens do not consider the global financial crisis to be an excuse for breaking promises, and they must commit to concrete plans of action now in order to eradicate extreme poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. The global financial crisis once again shows the urgent need for a radical re-thinking of the international financial architecture to make it more equitable and relevant to today's world."

Among the events, thousands of people will march to Government buildings in Pretoria, South Africa to present the new leadership with concrete policy demands to help the growing number of poor people.

"By standing together on this historic day you could be the first generation to end one of the greatest injustices and human rights violations in history: extreme poverty," said **Desmond Tutu**, Archbishop of Cape Town and Chairman of The Elders. "You join millions and share the vision of a more just and peaceful world."

The global movement in support of the Millennium Development Goals is growing. Last year, more than 43 million people Stood Against Poverty. This year, more than 67 million people –one percent of the world's population – is expected to mobilize.

"Four decades ago, my father, Martin Luther King Jr., proved that peaceful action of the masses can reverse the course of history, no matter how entrenched the status quo may seem," said human and civil rights leader **Martin Luther King III**. "This weekend, people across the globe have the opportunity to Stand Up and Take Action to be part of a movement just as powerful, demanding that world leaders end the evil and injustice of extreme poverty."

"If you want to stand by the poorest and most vulnerable, this is a chance to stand up and be counted," said **Bono**, lead singer of U2 and co-founder of The ONE Campaign. "You'll be in the company of more than 60 million others who hold the view that even in tough times we can't abandon our promises to the poorest to do more of what helps and less of what hurts."

"It is scandalous that we are not hearing our voices in the debate on the financial crisis. We are the majority who want to see a different wealth distribution system," said **Sylvia Borren, Co Chair of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP)**, who is in New York this week for Stand up. "We are the ones who call for that which has been given to those in the minority at the top of the social 'pyramid' to be given to the millions at the bottom. Then you will see real change."

During Stand Up, citizens of poor countries will demand that their governments:

1. Make the Millennium Development Goals the highest priority in budget allocation.
2. Put in place clear plans to achieve the Millennium Development Goals at the national, sub-national and local levels, adapted to local realities.
3. Aggressively fight corruption and set up mechanisms to end impunity.

Citizens of rich countries will demand that their governments:

1. Establish targets to deliver on existing aid volume commitments.
2. Commit to debt relief beyond existing aid commitments and ensure that it reaches the poorest countries without delay.
3. Announce concrete plans to complete the Doha Trade Round with an outcome that will help poor countries and the poorest people achieve the Millennium Development Goals, through the elimination of trade distorting agricultural subsidies, capping of domestic subsidies on products of importance to poor countries, and genuine market access to poor countries.

The mobilization comes at a time when:

1.4 billion people live on less than \$1.25 per day.

One woman dies every minute as the result of pregnancy and childbirth.

An estimated 40 million are living with HIV/AIDS.

The world spends \$1.2 trillion on weapons annually but cannot find the \$18 billion necessary to help meet existing overseas development assistance commitments.

For every \$1 in aid a developing country receives, over \$25 is spent on debt repayment.

Events are planned across Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, North America and Oceania. Click here for a list of sample global events:

<http://www.standagainstopoverty.org/en/node/878>

The final number achieved for this mobilization will be announced globally on October 22nd via an online press conference at 1:30GMT.

All Stand Up events will be registered on www.standagainstopoverty.org.

Visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PZ0M7tcff8> for a message from Archbishop Desmond Tutu and for higher resolution downloads visit <http://blip.tv/file/1343952>.

To schedule interviews and coverage and for more information contact:

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About the Campaigns:

The Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP) is a civil society alliance of social movements, international NGOs, trade unions, community groups, women's organizations, faith and youth groups, local associations and campaigners working together across more than 100 national coalitions/platforms. GCAP is calling for action from the world's leaders to meet their promises to end poverty and inequality. In particular, GCAP demands solutions that address the issues of public accountability, just governance and the fulfillment of human rights; trade justice; more and better aid; debt cancellation; and gender equality and women's rights. For more information, visit www.whiteband.org.

The UN Millennium Campaign was established by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in 2002. The Campaign supports citizens' efforts to hold their governments accountable for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The Millennium Development Goals, formally adopted by 189 countries in the year 2000, are a set of eight specific goals which commit rich and poor countries to work together to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, ensure all boys and girls complete primary school, promote gender equality, improve the health of mothers and children, reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, protect the environment, and create a global partnership for development by ensuring rich countries give more and better aid, debt relief and trade opportunities to poorer countries. For more information, visit www.endpoverty2015.org.