



Ground-breaking Poverty Hearings at United Nations Activists Demand 'The World We Want'

THE UNITED NATIONS, 14 JUNE 2010 -- Prominent and grassroots anti-poverty campaigners from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, Latin America and North America marched to Dag Hammarskold Plaza outside the United Nations today to demand urgent and concrete actions to reach and exceed the Millennium Development Goals.

The activists are in New York to participate in ground-breaking hearings at the United Nations, where for the first time civil society, private sector and government delegates are meeting together on the floor of the General Assembly. The interactive meetings are being held ahead of a high-profile summit at the UN in September, where global leaders are expected to take measures to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

"Governments seem to be suffering from a collective inflection – memory loss," says Lysa John, Campaign Director of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP). "They agreed on a framework and concrete targets to dramatically reduce extreme poverty by 2015. But with less than five years to go, we are way off track. We urgently need legally binding mechanisms to ensure that governments keep their promises alongside a global breakthrough plan to end extreme poverty."

Ms. John joined international campaigners outside the UN in signing a giant letter of demands, addressed to the U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon. The letter, which was also signed by more than 120 civil society groups across the globe, calls for greater accountability, measures to increase gender equality and reduce social exclusion and concrete urgent steps to achieve MDG8, a global partnership for development focused on justice, sustainability and fair trade.

Anti-poverty campaigners are also demanding an increased focus on social exclusion and discrimination as well as legally binding accountability mechanisms.

"We are calling for the World We Want 2015 because we are not happy with the World we live in today," says Gemma Adaba of the International Trade Union Confederation, "a world where children are denied the opportunity to go to school and neoliberal policies dictate that education is a service that must be paid for. The World We Want is a world where there is education for all, health, water, decent work, universal social protection floor and dignity for all."

"We need Governments to be accountable to the citizens of the world and fulfil the internationally agreed commitments they have made," adds Mr. Irungu Houghton, Oxfam's Pan-African policy advisor. "Poverty has reached emergency proportions. Urgent action is needed. We can not afford a business-as-usual approach."

Leaders from 189 countries signed The Millennium Declaration in 2000, setting out eight clear cut time-bound commitments to end poverty. While some progress and significant achievements have been made, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are not on track to be achieved by the 2015 deadline, due in part to the feminisation of poverty, the ever more apparent affects of climate change and the global financial and food crises. In 2009 alone, an estimated 90 million people – mostly women and girls - were pushed into poverty.

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About GCAP

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 platforms. GCAP is calling for action from the world's leaders to meet their promises to end poverty and inequality. In particular, we demand solutions that address the issues of:

- Public accountability, just governance and the fulfilment of human rights
- Trade justice
- A major increase in the quantity and quality of aid and financing for development
- Debt cancellation
- Gender equality must also be at the heart of eradicating poverty
- Climate Justice
- Peace and Security

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