

www.atd-fourthworld.org

No. 7 - December 2007

"Call to Action: Ending Extreme Poverty, A Road to Peace"

Efforts to raise awareness of the links between human rights violations and extreme poverty made progress in many areas in 2007. The campaign around the "Call to Action" culminated on October 17th with the presentation of its results to Mr Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations. *"Today we are here with you, not only to speak about the poverty we experience or to evoke only the hardship we live. We are here to share with you the importance that this day has for us, a day where our voices are heard, a day to open our hearts and our minds to the suffering, struggles and courage of the poorest families. We are here to pledge our solidarity to all people who, throughout the world, strive to eradicate extreme poverty,"* declared Adonis Salas (ATD Fourth World Delegate, Philippines) to Mr Ban Ki-Moon during the Stand Up and Speak Out against Poverty event organized by the United Nations Millennium Campaign, on October 17, 2007 at UN headquarters in New York.



A short time later, Mr Ban Ki-Moon received the signatures of the campaign "Ending Extreme Poverty, a Road to Peace" during a meeting with a delegation from the International Movement ATD Fourth World. Over 160,000 people in more than 150 countries have signed the Call to Action to date, as well as organisations comprising of several million members (for example Amnesty International).

In his [statement](#) on the day Mr Ban Ki-moon emphasized, *"The world must refocus its attention, and its resources, on the places and people that are being left behind. As we do, we must bear in mind that none are more committed to ending poverty than the poor themselves. (Civil society) is sending messages or signing petitions that call on their leaders to keep their promises. They are calling for the actions of citizens to be matched by the actions of Governments, in developing and developed countries alike, in support of the Millennium Development Goals."*

In addition to many people with first hand experience of poverty who signed the Call to Action, other signatories include:-

Amnesty International London, International Secretariat - **Josep Borrell Fontelles**, President of the European Parliament - **Dalai Lama**, Buddhist spiritual leader - **Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne**, filmmakers, two-time winners of the Cannes Film Festival's Palme d'or - **Bronislaw Geremek**, Member of the European Parliament - **Boutros Boutros Ghali**, Former UN Secretary-General - **Nadine Gordimer**, Nobel Prize winning author - **Nina Lim Yuson**, President of the International Movement ATD Fourth World - **Federico Mayor Zaragoza**, President of the Foundation for a Culture of Peace and former Director General of UNESCO - **Titinga Frederic Pacéré**, lawyer, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda - **Guy Ryder**, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation - **Lilian Thuram**, soccer player - **Cassam Uteem**, former President of the Republic of Mauritius.

Comments of people that have signed the Call can be found online at www.oct17.org. This website remains an important site where people can sign up to supporting events and actions on October 17th and throughout the year.

October 17th, Around the World



Information on events that took place around the world on October 17th 2007 can be found here - <http://www.oct17.org/Discover-the-past-events-of.html>. October 17th has grown in importance with more and more people joining in events on the International Day. In several countries events were organised in partnership with the Global Call Against Poverty - GCAP (www.whiteband.org). We continue to work with this coalition on an international and national basis to coordinate our actions and share ideas. In partnership with the UN Millennium Campaign, GCAP organised events under the header “Standup and Speakout” whereby over 40 million people took part in mobilisation on October 17th. In diverse places such as Geneva and Thailand the International Movement ATD Fourth World worked with various UN bodies and partners to organise events that respected the original spirit of October 17th whereby people experiencing poverty themselves have the opportunity to talk of their efforts, and those of others, in tackling extreme poverty and exclusion.

See footnotes for some media highlights¹

Human Rights and Extreme Poverty



In 2007 the International Movement ATD Fourth World continued to organize meetings with people living in poverty themselves in order to ensure that their knowledge and opinions directly inform the UN Draft Guiding Principles “Extreme poverty and human rights : The rights of the poor”. Participatory meeting (in partnership with other civil society organizations) were held in Peru, France, Thailand, Senegal, Switzerland

¹ France Radio Internationale: rfi.fr/francais/actu/articles/094/article_57821.asp and rfi.fr/radiofr/editions/072/edition_7_20071017.asp

Message from Eugen Brand, Director General, International Movement ATD Fourth World: atd-fourthworld.org/Message-from-Eugen-Brand-Director.html

UN Webcast of October 17th, 2007, New York: webcast.un.org/ramgen/ondemand/specialevents/2007/se071017pm.rm

DPI/NGO*: NGO Briefing - Linking Human Rights to Extreme Poverty in observance of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (17 October): webcast.un.org/ramgen/ondemand/specialevents/2007/ngo071018.rm

and Poland.

On October 17th 2007 the International Movement ATD Fourth World presented an interim report of these consultations to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). You can download the report "**Dignity in the Face of Extreme Poverty**" here – www.atd-fourthworld.org/Dignity-in-the-Face-of-Extreme.html

A meeting was held in Geneva with the OHCHR on October 19th 2007 with representatives with first hand experience of poverty from the countries in which consultations were held. They presented the consultations, their opinions and concrete examples of human rights violations resulting from extreme poverty to government representatives and NGOs present in the debate.

A final report will be finalised early 2008.

In March 2008 the Human Rights Council will examine the Draft Guiding Principles and the International Movement ATD Fourth World will be investing in promoting their advancement. The text is already considered as "soft law" in international law, and it can be quoted and referred to.

Further Information - www.atd-fourthworld.org/UN-Draft-Guiding-Principles-of.html

Other ways forward in 2008

2008 will see a new Committee for October 17th, whose function will be to widen and promote the spirit of the International Day. Next year will also be busy year with several key important events on the calendar: -

- International Conference entitled "**Exclusion as a challenge to democracy, the actuality of Joseph Wresinski's thought**" which will bring together academics in a range of fields to explore the application of Joseph Wresinski's approach within the current international context – December 2008, coinciding with the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- United Nations Department of Public Information Annual Conference, Paris, on the theme of Human Rights and Extreme Poverty.
- UN Economic and Social Council ECOSOC – Annual Ministerial Review, Innovation Fair, Development Cooperation Forum etc. These new functions of ECOSOC will allow us to diversify our representation with the United Nations.
- Launch of Amnesty International's campaign on poverty and human dignity in 2008.
- Planned publication of book entitled "Abolishing Extreme Poverty", bringing together four monographs from the "north" and "south", and analysing efforts to tackle poverty nationally and internationally.

Thank you for reading this newsletter, if you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact our [International Secretariat](#).

We would like to wish you all our best wishes for 2008