

**PRESS RELEASE - *Revised Edition***

Events on October 17, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty<sup>1</sup>, at the United Nations headquarters:

- **Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the UN, will receive a delegation of the International Movement ATD Fourth World<sup>2</sup> including persons living in extreme poverty who have come from Guatemala, Haiti, the Philippines, Tanzania, France, and the United States *at 3:30 pm.***
- A press conference organized by the UN Department of Public Information will be held at *11:15 am.*
- A commemorative stone placed in the garden of the UN (46<sup>th</sup> Street and First Avenue) to honor the victims of extreme poverty will be the site of a ceremony from 1:15 to 2:45 pm. The commemoration is organized by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the UN Department of Public Information, the Permanent Missions to the UN of France and Burkina Faso, and the International Movement ATD Fourth World.
- The NGO Sub-committee for the eradication of poverty will host a reception on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor of the UN Church Center (Corner of 44<sup>th</sup> Street and First Avenue) *from 3 to 5:30 pm.*

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At the recent New York World Summit the international community and heads of state renewed their commitment to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Now it is essential that a dialogue begin between the Secretary General and persons who themselves experience extreme poverty.

In fact, on all continents, adults, young people, and children with whom International Movement ATD Fourth World is working constantly ask us whether they are condemned to be left behind by development or whether the world will one day listen to them and trust them to contribute to their societies and to peace in the world.

The Fourth World Movement seeks to open a dialogue on the following points:

- Day by day, the first ones to struggle against poverty are the disadvantaged themselves, and often they must do so without resources. **Building a partnership with the most underprivileged** which takes into account their effort, their thought and aspirations is the only possible way to reach the MDGs and achieve a world that is more just and secure for all.

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- **Family ties are broken by poverty.** On every continent parents and children are separated from each other by the conditions of extreme poverty. How can the efforts of these families to reunite and stay living together be recognized and placed at the center of political action against poverty?

- **How can the dynamism created by the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty be reinforced?** Joseph Wresinski inaugurated the Day in 1987 by declaring, “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.”

- **How can we support the long term commitment** of the persons who act alongside the poorest in order to end the exclusion that separates them from the rest of their communities--local, national, and global?

**Previous meetings between Secretaries General and ATD Fourth World** have led to significant progress in several areas. The meeting with Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar was the starting point for the United Nations study of the relationship between human rights and extreme poverty, followed by the recognition by the UN of the 17<sup>th</sup> of October: The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. The meeting with Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali made a direct contribution to the World Summit on Social Development (Copenhagen 1995), notably on the necessity to promote comprehensive, coherent, and forward-looking policies against extreme poverty and social exclusion.

In the course of the New York World Summit, the heads of government affirmed that “development, peace, security, and human rights constitute the foundations of security and collective well-being . . . that they are inseparable and mutually reinforcing.”

**In order that security and collective well-being be shared by all, and in particular by those who live in extreme poverty, it is necessary that the struggle against extreme poverty be recentered on a partnership with the poorest.**

It is our desire that the United Nations establish this partnership wherever it is possible.

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<sup>1</sup> The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty was celebrated for the first time in 1987 and officially recognized by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1992. It is the occasion for the general public to hear the voices of persons living in extreme poverty and to ask what commitments we, as citizens, can make to refuse poverty. See [www.oct17.org](http://www.oct17.org)

<sup>2</sup> The International Movement ATD Fourth World is a non-governmental organization which invites persons and institutions to join the very poor in their daily struggle to liberate themselves from extreme poverty. The goal of ATD Fourth World is the well-being of every human being and the progress of society in its entirety. It was founded in 1957 on the outskirts of Paris by Joseph Wresinski (1917-1988) whose own family lived in deep poverty. Today ATD Fourth World is active in 30 countries. Through the “Permanent Forum on Extreme Poverty in the World,” a network of shared experience and communication, the Movement has correspondents in more than 100 countries.