

**October 2010**

**Background document from the International Movement ATD Fourth World to request support from the UN Secretary-General for a review to assess the impact the MDGs have had to date on those most affected by extreme poverty**

The International Movement ATD Fourth World strives for the voice of the poorest citizens to be heard at the heart of international institutions, in order that the viewpoint and aspirations of those living in extreme poverty be taken into consideration. This has led it to support the efforts of the United Nations to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) since their adoption in 2000, through its partnership with the world's poorest populations at local, regional and international levels

ATD Fourth World welcomes the comments made by the United Nations Secretary General in his address to the High Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the MDGs in September 2010, when he asked the international community to: *"Address inequality, both among and within countries. Even in countries that have registered impressive gains, inequality eats away at social cohesion."* He also made clear that: *"None of us can be truly fulfilled while so many lack the basics for a life in dignity."*

As recognized in the outcome document of the High Level Plenary Meeting, although progress has been made in reaching the Goals, success has not been equally distributed neither between nor within countries.

ATD Fourth World is therefore encouraged by the emphasis in the Outcome Document that States remain: *"Committed to making every effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 (...) thus improving the lives of the poorest people. (para.8)*. Similarly, it is pleasing to note that States have concluded that : *"Policies and actions must focus on the poor and those living in the most vulnerable situations (...) so that they benefit from progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. (para. 28)*

ATD Fourth World also views as positive the fact that States recognise the rôle of civil society including non-governmental organisations and that progress toward meeting the Goals can be achieved by: *"Supporting participatory, community-led strategies aligned with national development priorities and strategies."(para. 23(e))*

As a result of our work alongside people experiencing extreme poverty across the world, ATD Fourth World believes that, if progress towards the MDGs is to be accelerated between now and 2015, it is vital that the knowledge of people experiencing extreme poverty contribute to policies and strategies to meet the MDGs, at local, national and international level. This conviction is given greater weight by the conclusions of United Nations member states in their outcome document, as mentioned above.

**For this reason ATD Fourth World asks the Secretary-General to invite all relevant stakeholders to assess the impact of the MDGs to date on those most affected by extreme poverty, with the participation of people experiencing poverty at its core.**

The impact assessments undertaken by stakeholders would enable the United Nations

system to gauge the measures that have been effective to date in terms of efforts to improve the lives of the poorest people. A participatory approach to the assessments will capitalise on the expertise of people living in extreme poverty in order to better understand the obstacles to achieving the goals, as well the measures required in order to fill the implementation gaps which currently exist. Such assessments will also provide a vital resource for the special event during the 68th Session of the General Assembly in 2013 (as set out in paragraph 79 of the outcome document).

ATD Fourth World plans to undertake such an assessment, as of 2011, drawing on its long-term grassroots presence and action in countries including Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Philippines, Guatemala and Peru. Because extreme poverty continues to blight the lives of millions of people in Europe and North America as well (as recognised by the General Assembly in resolution 63/175), grass-roots groups in countries in these regions will also participate in ATD Fourth World's review.

The UN Secretary General's invitation to all stakeholders, including States, United Nations agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations, especially those working with people living in extreme poverty, to participate in such a review, would provide a greater wealth of information in order to better understand how to reach the very poorest populations in the context of the 2015 Goals, and beyond.

**ATD Fourth World therefore also asks the Secretary-General to offer his support to its impact assessment, including by encouraging United Nations departments and agencies to offer wherever possible their resources and expertise. Such support will facilitate ATD Fourth World's efforts to undertake this much-needed assessment to assess the impact the MDGs have had to date on those most affected by extreme poverty**