



UN Unveils New Action Plan On Poverty Today

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By Kunle Aderinokun and Julcit Onigbogi with agency reports
Abuja

History would be made today, as the world leading development experts unveil, at the United Nations (UN), an action plan to combat poverty.

The action plan contained in a report: "Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals," which is the work of UN Millennium Project, would be presented to UN Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, by experts as cost-effective blueprint for achieving Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Meanwhile, Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), an agency of the UN, has stressed the need to raise awareness in the wake of the Tsunami disaster in Asia on gender issues among decision and policy-makers to ensure that women's and men's different needs are reflected in policies, practices and resource through the phases of relief, rehabilitation and development.

According to UN, the package proposed by a "blue-ribbon" team of 265 world leading development experts is the most comprehensive strategy ever put forward for combating global poverty, hunger and disease. It is a package of scores of specific cost-effective measures that together could cut extreme poverty in half and radically improve the lives of at least one billion people in poor developing countries by 2015.

The project's research and reports were submitted for review and recommendations to experts from other major institutions, including World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

The UN Millennium Project's report is being released as the Asian Tsunami disaster focused global attention on the need, scale and effectiveness of aid to the world's poor. The enormously generous response to the tragedy sent a powerful message that ordinary citizens in wealthier nations do in fact support such aid-if they clearly see the need and if they believe the funds they provide would reach and help the people in need.

The project's plan addresses these legitimate concerns and shows that targeted investments in essential public services such as health, education and infrastructure make poor communities less vulnerable to such disasters and to the hardships of disease, hunger and environmental degradation.

The report, according to UN, leads off a yearlong series of global initiatives aimed at making the goals a reality including a report to its member states from the Secretary-General in March, which would draw heavily on the project's recommendations. With world leaders gathering at the G8 meeting in July and again at UN in September to accelerate progress towards the goals, 2005 has become the key year for mobilising international support for the fight against poverty and disease, UN officials stressed.

The Millennium Project is an independent advisory body to UN Secretary-General. The project drew on the contributions of a veritable "who's who" of development thinkers and doers that included Ernesto Zedillo, former President of Mexico; Mari Pangestu, Minister of Trade, Indonesia; MS Swaminathan, World Food Prize Laureate; Amina J Ibrahim, National Coordinator for Education for All at the Federal Ministry for Education, Nigeria; Pedro Sanchez, winner of the MacArthur Genius Award and World Food Prize laureate; Agnes Binagwaho, Executive Secretary of the National Commission to Fight AIDS, Rwanda; Awash Teklehaimanot, Director of the Malaria Program at Columbia University; Yolanda Kakabadse Navarro, President of World Conservation Union; Albert M Wright, Chairman of the Africa Water Task Force, Yee-Cheong Lee, President of World Federation of Engineering Organisations, and Calestous Juma, former Executive Secretary of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

The Project's work includes 13 separate, extensive reports by specialised task forces in subjects ranging from education to malaria to hunger.

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