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Double aid, end hunger, U.N. told

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NEW YORK -- Global poverty can be cut in half by 2015 and eliminated by 2025 if the world's richest countries including the United States, Japan and Germany more than double aid to the poorest countries, hundreds of development experts concluded in a report Monday.

At stake is life or death for tens of millions of impoverished people, it said.

The report spells out the investments needed to meet the U.N. goals adopted by world leaders at the Millennium Summit in 2000 to tackle poverty, hunger and disease and promote education and development, mainly in Africa and Asia.

"What we're proposing is a strategy of investment to help empower the lives of very poor people that lack the tools and sometimes even the basic means to stay alive, much less be productive members of a fast-paced world economy," said Professor Jeffrey Sachs, head of the U.N. anti-poverty effort and lead author of the report.

In 1970, the world's nations agreed to provide 0.7 percent of their gross national income for development assistance, and that figure was reaffirmed by a U.N. conference in Mexico in 2002.

So far, only five countries have met the target -- Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. *AP*

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