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- [Lifestyle](#)
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News

UN report says millions need help to escape poverty, death

AP
 Tuesday, January 18, 2005

UNITED NATIONS (AP) - In the coming decade, more than 500 million people can escape from poverty and tens of millions can avoid certain death if the United States, Japan and other rich countries keep their promises to vastly increase development aid to the world's poorest countries, a UN-sponsored report said yesterday.

The report spells out the investments needed to meet UN goals adopted by world leaders at the Millennium Summit in 2000 to tackle poverty, hunger and disease mainly in African and Asian countries where 1 billion people live on a dollar a day or less and 1.8 billion more live on just US\$2 a day.

"The system is not working right now - let's be clear," said Professor Jeffrey Sachs, head of the UN anti-poverty effort and lead author of the report. "There's a tremendous imbalance of focus on the issues of war and peace, and less on the dying and suffering of the poor who have no voice."

"The overwhelming reality on our planet is that impoverished people get sick and die for lack of access to basic practical means that could help keep them alive and do more than that - help them achieve livelihoods and escape from poverty," said Sachs, who heads the Earth Institute at Columbia University.

As an example, he said, providing nets to cover beds and keep out mosquitos in impoverished African and Asian countries could save the lives of a million children this year who otherwise will die from malaria.

"We have the world's eyes focused on the tsunami of the Indian Ocean, but the world

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continues to overlook the silent tsunamis of deaths from malaria which take every month the number of people that died in the Asian tragedy," Sachs said. "Every month, 150,000 children in Africa, if not more, are dying from the silent tsunami of malaria, a largely preventable and utterly treatable disease."

UN report says providing nets to cover beds and keep out mosquitos in impoverished African and Asian countries could save the lives of a million children who otherwise will die from malaria

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