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Cooperate Globally in 2005

New Vision (Kampala)

NEWS

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Kampala

Jeffrey D. Sachs is professor of economics and director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University. He says this year, the world's richest countries should do more to help the poor.

It is time for new year's resolutions, and this year's are obvious.

When the Millennium started, world leaders pledged to seek peace, the end of poverty, and a cleaner environment.

Since then, the world has seen a lot of violence, terrorism, famine, and environmental degradation.

In 2005, we can begin to change direction.

When SARS hit China last year, the World Health Organisation coordinated actions to control the crisis.

When the World Agroforestry Centre discovered that a certain tree could help African farmers grow more food, they introduced an approach to overcoming Africa's food crisis.

Unfortunately, such examples of global cooperation are as rare as they are impressive. With our knowledge, science and technology, the horrible living conditions of the world's poorest people could be improved. Millions of people could be spared malaria, AIDS, hunger, and life in slums. The problem is not lack of good solutions, but failure to cooperate globally to put those solutions into practice.

United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan has honoured me by making me his special adviser on the Millennium Development Goals. He asked me to lead a group of scholars and development experts in identifying practical steps to reach the goals by 2015.

This effort, known as the UN Millennium Project, will issue its report to Annan on January 17, 2005.

Our study, *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*, will be available for free around the world at www.unmillenniumproject.org.

We learned this. For every major problem, hunger, illiteracy, malnutrition, malaria, AIDS, drought and others, there are practical solutions that are proven and affordable.

These investments in turn, would strengthen the private sector and economic growth. Yet they require global partnership between the rich and poor countries.

Most importantly, the world's richest countries need to do more to help the poorest countries make use of modern science and technology to solve these problems.

The US, for example, spends around \$450b annually on its military, but less than \$15b to help the world's poorest countries.

This is a mistake, because military approaches alone cannot make America safe. Only shared prosperity can truly make the planet secure. The US should be investing more in peaceful economic development.

Germany, Japan, and other rich countries are also doing less than they should and less than they promised the poor countries.

In 2002, all donor countries committed to 'make concrete efforts' to reach 0.7% of national income in development aid to poor countries.

2005 will offer many opportunities for citizens around the world to insist that their leaders keep their Millennium promises.

Nothing would be wiser for the world's rich countries than to fulfil their pledges to the world's poor. Therein lies the path to sustained peace.

2005 is the year that words can become reality, and the world can begin to fulfil its hopes for our new millennium. Let us make our leaders aware that we aspire to shared peace and prosperity. Let us pledge that the rich and powerful should take real actions to help the poor, the weak, and the suffering.

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