

ACTION ALERT:

Help put the Focus Back on Global Poverty

The Church, committed to a “preferential option for the poor,” strongly supports the Millennium Goals of halving the number of people in poverty by the year 2015.

Pope John Paul II, July 3, 2004

The Church Supports Millennium Development Goals

Pope John Paul II was a strong supporter of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and Catholic Bishops’ groups and Catholic organizations all over the world have been voicing their support of these important goals. Many other faith-based groups, such as the World Council of Churches, have also been promoting these internationally recognized goals as a very important step in bringing to an end to the extreme poverty of billions of people throughout the globe. (See page 2 of this resource for details on the MDGs and a prayer for them that is being said in many countries.)

An important United Nations Summit meeting to review progress toward the MDGs is being held in New York, September 14-18, 2005. The leaders of 175 nations will be attending this Summit, hoping to ratify a Summit agreement that focuses on solving the problems of poverty.

The Vatican’s Caritas Internationalis, a world-wide confederation of Catholic charities and relief organizations, is chairing a pre-UN Summit meeting, September 7-9, of 3,000 non-governmental non-profit organizations (from around the world) who support the MDGs and the UN’s work for peace and development. Days of prayer will be a part of this effort of civil society to raise their voices in support of all those in poverty.

New U.S. Opposition to Millennium Development Goals

The current U.S. United Nations delegation, under the new leadership of John Bolton, is now proposing drastic cuts to the Summit’s draft agreement document, taking out any reference to the Millennium Development Goals. Indeed, the U.S. administration has publicly complained that the Summit agreement’s section on poverty is too long.

TAKE ACTION

Please take action and call or email the White House, urging President Bush to order the U.S. delegation to the United Nations Summit to “**put global poverty back on the UN Summit agenda and affirm the Millennium Development Goals.**” Mention that you are responding from the Catholic Social Teaching perspective.

Phone the White House: 202-456-1111

E-mail the White House: comments@whitehouse.gov
(Put “Affirm MDGs” in the attention line.)

Reducing Poverty By Half—A Global Challenge

The Millennium Development Goals were adopted by the United Nations Millennium Summit in September, 2000. Leaders from countries around the globe agreed to set these goals to reduce by half the number of people in the world whose income is less than a dollar a day and to restore basic quality of life to these women, men, and children.

The promotion of human dignity is a central tenet of Catholic Social Teaching, so it was fitting that Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the Vatican's Secretary of State, spoke to the Millennium Summit in 2000 in order to promote the adoption of the Millennium Goals: *"It is unacceptable that a large part of the world's population still lives in conditions of misery which are an offense against human dignity. The Millennium Development Goals are a crucial step in addressing this misery and promoting the dignity of all the children of God."*

The Millennium Development Goals propose, by 2015, to:

- Reduce extreme poverty and limited access to food by half;
- Achieve primary education for every child around the world
- Promote gender equality and empower women;
- Reduce children's deaths by two-thirds;
- Reduce mothers' deaths in child-birth by three-quarters;
- Reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB;
- Ensure environmentally safe development: lessen by half the one billion people without access to safe drinking water and improve the lives of 100 million slum dwellers around the world;
- Develop equitable global partnerships for development.

Prayer for the Millenium Development Goals

In a world where so many go hungry,
 Let us make the fruits of Creation available for all.

In a world where one billion people do not have safe drinking water,
 Let us help the waters run clear.

In a world where so many children die so young,
 And so many mothers die in childbirth,
 And so many families are ravaged by disease,
 Let us bring health and healing.

In a world where women carry such heavy burdens,
 Let us recognize and restore the rights of all.

Let us join together, with a new sense of global community,
 A new awareness of our need for one another
 And for this fragile planet,
 To meet the clear challenges of the Millennium Goals,
 To bring hope as substantial as bread,
 To make human dignity as visible as wheat in the fields.

Sunday, September 11 is the National Day of Prayer for the Millennium Goals.
Join other people of faith by saying this prayer on the 11th and during the UN Summit, Sept. 14-18, 2005

