



INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR OCTOBER 17

Message for the World Day for Overcoming Extreme Poverty -
United Nations International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

17th October 2014

Leave No One Behind: Think, Decide and Act Together Against Extreme Poverty

People living in poverty know from experience that it is only when we work together that we are able to transform our lives and communities in order to build a more sustainable and equitable world for everyone.

Without genuine social inclusion, nothing will change.

Therefore, the new Sustainable Development Goals must ensure that the political commitments at the highest levels are translated into full and effective participation and implementation at the grass roots level.

The theme of this year's commemoration of October 17, which was developed in close consultation with people living in poverty, captures their vision and aspirations for the new development environment in the post-2015 period.

The call to "*Leave no one behind*" reminds us that we must eliminate discrimination, marginalisation and exclusion based on poverty, ethnic origin, gender, or economic and social status.

It reminds us that we need to actively reach out to the most impoverished and excluded groups in our societies.

It reminds us that our efforts to eradicate extreme poverty must uphold all human rights norms and standards, in keeping with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights.

The call "*To think, decide and act together against extreme poverty*" reminds us that people living in poverty must be full and equal partners in building a more just and sustainable world.

In this partnership, we must be able to create and share knowledge together; decide on strategies, policies and actions together; and act on or implement these decisions together.

For too long the experience, knowledge and wisdom that people living in poverty can contribute have been largely ignored.

Policy makers and experts talk about poverty but poor people have to struggle against poverty every single day.

Policy makers and experts are eager to propose solutions and strategies but they almost never consult with people in poverty about what works or doesn't work, or what is required to overcome poverty.

Corporations and celebrities are welcomed at public dialogues but people living in poverty have to struggle to be heard on the very issues that affect them directly.

Indeed, we gather on October 17 each year to demonstrate our partnership and solidarity with people living in poverty; to acknowledge and learn from their efforts to overcome poverty; and to defend their human rights and dignity.

Therefore, if we are truly committed to creating a just and sustainable world free of poverty, we must build and nurture a genuine partnership with people living in poverty.

We will leave no one behind.

Donald Lee,
President, International Committee for October 17



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The goals of the International Committee for October 17th are:

- To promote the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, which publicly unites all those who are striving together to end poverty and those who want to join them, whether at global, national or local levels.
- To promote the observance of this international day in ways that respect the original spirit and meaning of the day, first marked on October 17, 1987, as solemnly reflected in the words of Fr. Joseph Wresinski: *“Wherever men and women are condemned to live in extreme poverty, human rights are violated. To come together to ensure that these rights be respected is our solemn duty.”*
- To promote and safeguard spaces where people from very different backgrounds can be together in a unique way, to struggle against extreme poverty and violations of human rights, and to strive towards peace for all.

The composition of this committee is unique, with members drawn from different backgrounds, including people with first-hand experience of extreme poverty, all committed together against poverty and exclusion:

President:

- Mr. **Donald Lee** (Australia) Economist and Former Senior Civil Servant with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations;

Members:

- Ms. **Gemma Adaba** (Trinidad and Tobago) International Consultant
- Ms. **Huguette Bossot-Redegeld** (France) International Movement ATD Fourth World
- Ms. **Delloula Djamila Bouguessa** (France) ATD Fourth World
- H.E. Mr. **Boutros Boutros-Ghali** (Egypt) 6th Secretary-General of the United Nations
- Mr. **Antoine Corgier** (France) ATD Fourth World
- H.E. Mr. **Jean-Marc de La Sablière** (France) Former Ambassador of France
- Ms. **Belinda Nugent** (Ireland) Aftercare Worker
- Mr. **Titinga Pacéré**, Esq. (Burkina Faso) Lawyer, writer and poet
- Ms. **Isabelle Perrin** (Belgium) Director General, International Movement ATD Fourth World
- Mr. **Jacques Petidor** (Haiti) Educator - Ministry of Education
- H.E. Mr. **José Ramos Horta** (Timor-Leste) Nobel Prize 1996
- Ms. Jean **Stallings** (U.S.A.) ATD Fourth World
- Ms. **Aye Aye Win** (Myanmar) Co-founder and former co-director of Dignity International;
- Prof. **Yozo Yokota** (Japan) Chuo University Faculty of Law Tokyo
- Ms. **Nina Lim Yuson** (Philippines) President, International Movement ATD Fourth World

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In 1992, the United Nations General Assembly, through its resolution 47/196, recognized October 17th, World Day for Overcoming Extreme Poverty as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. In 2006, the General Assembly welcomed the UN Secretary-General's Report A/61/308 on the Observance of the International Day which recognize that people living in poverty are the first defenders of human rights and are agents of change. It identified lessons learned and ways to promote the mobilization of all stakeholders in the fight against poverty. The report emphasized the importance of a human rights-based approach and the true participation of people living in extreme poverty. It also calls for the active participation of people living in extreme poverty. Each year, the International Committee issues a message to mark the global observance of October 17.