



## PARIS DECLARATION

### of the International Committee for October 17 at its Ninth Biennial Session in June 2022

We, the Members of the International Committee for October 17, having met in Paris, France from 7th to 10th June 2022, and looking to building forward towards the next 30 years of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty:

1. *Recall* our Rome Declaration at the seventh biennial meeting in 2018 in which we called upon all world leaders to ensure they translate their commitments into effective implementation to end poverty in all its forms and to build peaceful societies. Recall the Declaration at the eighth biennial meeting in July 2020 in which we called for inclusive recovery from the pandemic.
2. *Reiterate* our full support for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 to end poverty in all its forms everywhere and its pledge to “leave no one behind, reaching the furthest behind first”. These global goals are a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for the people and the planet.
3. *Note with grave concern* that inequality is on the rise and each year the gap between the rich and poor gets even wider. Whilst millions struggle every day for survival, the past year recorded the sharpest increase in the wealth of billionaires and in corporate power alongside erosion of jobs and worker rights.
4. *Note* that a cascade of crises from COVID-19 pandemic and conflict to climate emergency is putting in jeopardy progress of the past two decades in reducing poverty. In 2021, the United Nations reported that 1.3 billion people still live in multidimensional poverty with almost half of them children and youth, and nearly 85 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. In a world where we produce enough food to feed everyone, 811 million people

still go to bed hungry each night, 2 billion people still live without safe drinking water and 3.6 billion without safely managed sanitation.

5. *Note* that the recent COVID-19 pandemic has exposed structural inequalities and socio-economic, gender and other discrimination that deepen and perpetuate poverty as well as failures of social protections systems. The pandemic has disproportionately affected people in poverty, women and children, and the structural and systemic asymmetries are leading to very divergent recoveries.
6. *Note* that the climate emergency constitutes a new violence against people living in poverty with the poorest communities also bearing the heaviest burden with increased occurrences of natural disasters and the destruction of homes, crops, and livelihoods. Lack of urgent and inclusive action will push millions more people into poverty by 2030.
7. *Recall* that on October 17, 1987, one hundred thousand people from all backgrounds came together at the Plaza of Human Rights and Liberties in Paris, where the historic Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed in 1948, to commemorate the first World Day for Overcoming Extreme Poverty and the unveiling of the “October 17 Commemorative Stone” which reads *“On the 17th of October 1987, defenders of human and civil rights from every continent gathered on this plaza. They paid homage to the victims of hunger, ignorance and violence. They affirmed their conviction that human misery is not inevitable. They pledged their solidarity with all people who, throughout the world, strive to eradicate extreme poverty. ‘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. Joseph Wresinski.”*
8. *Note* with pride that the October 17 Commemorative Stone, inaugurated first in Paris in 1987, has been replicated and enshrined at the global headquarters of the United Nations in New York and in over 50 regional and local communities around the world as a universal symbol of human rights and human dignity. We urge that this call to action, with its key messages of solidarity and the primacy of human rights and human dignity, are clearly enshrined in national constitutions, promoted and protected in national laws and policies.

9. *Recall* that on 22 December 1992, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 47/196 and declared 17 October as the **International Day for the Eradication of Poverty** and invited all States to devote the Day to presenting and promoting concrete action to end poverty and destitution. Since then, on the 17th of October each year, we have come together to demonstrate the strong bonds of solidarity between people living in poverty and to renew our commitment to work together to end extreme poverty and abuse of human rights through our individual and shared commitments and action.

The year 2022 marks the 35th anniversary of the World Day to Overcome Extreme Poverty and the 30th anniversary of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. On this occasion, we, the members of the International Committee for October 17:

10. *Celebrate* the many achievements won with this day in breaking the silence of poverty, denouncing the violence, social and institutional maltreatment suffered and, in particular, the dignity and pride felt by people living in poverty in speaking out loud and being heard of the world they wish to build with more justice.
11. *Pay tribute* to the dignified resistance of people living in poverty who have come together to fight the threat of the conflict, climate change, COVID-19 and other challenges facing them to overcome extreme poverty, despite pervasive stigmatisation, marginalisation, systemic violence and disempowerment.
12. *Reaffirm* that extreme poverty is structural violence against people in poverty constituting a violation of their fundamental human rights. Ending the violence of poverty means ending the objectification of poverty, ending the talk/action about poverty without involving people with lived experiences, and recognising that poverty and its persistence result from disempowerment, structural discrimination and the ill-designed policies that violate the political, economic, social, and cultural rights of people living in poverty. The silent and sustained violence of poverty makes it harder for people in extreme poverty to escape poverty and live in dignity.

13. *Reaffirm* that a life in dignity is a fundamental human right to be enjoyed by all everywhere and urge the global community to break the vicious cycle of poverty by removing the structural inequalities and discrimination that perpetuate poverty and oppress and hinder progress. In defending the dignity of people living in poverty, we urge all governments to renew their commitment to respect, protect and fulfil their human rights obligations, including the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other relevant international human rights instruments.
14. *Warmly welcomes and supports* the theme of “Dignity for all in practice” selected for the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty for 2022-2023 through a fully participatory process. Viewing poverty through the lens of dignity places human beings at the centre and recognises their equal rights to live in peace in a sustainable planet. Dignity is about self-worth, respect, personal agency and the freedom to make informed choices and participate meaningfully in decision making processes that directly affect our lives. Using the lens of dignity moves us beyond the macro to the personal, from purely monetary measures of poverty to the multidimensional. It does not blame the poorest for their poverty but sheds light on the unjust system of laws, policies and actions that fail to respect, protect and fulfil their rights, and denies them of their dignity. Extreme poverty is not a personal failure but a collective failure to create the conditions in which everyone can enjoy their rights.
15. *Call on* joining forces with academics and professionals to enrich our understanding of poverty. We commend the “Hidden Dimensions of Poverty” participatory research jointly carried by Oxford University, ATD Fourth World and other partners, that recognises the knowledge of the poorest populations themselves, and brings together people living in poverty, grassroots workers and academics from eight countries. We urge all Governments and the United Nations to incorporate the final findings of this research into their efforts to end poverty in all its dimensions, in particular to end institutional mistreatment and to take into account the suffering and resistance of people living in poverty.

16. *Urge* governments to make special efforts to reach the poorest and the most marginalised who are not being heard or at risk of being left behind and draw attention to the *UN Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights* that provide guidelines and practical tools to ensure that public policies reach the furthest behind first.

We, the Members of the International Committee for October 17, recognizing that the 2023 mid-term review of the Sustainable Development Goals represents a critical step towards achieving the global goal to eradicate poverty everywhere:

17. *Urge* Governments, in preparing their Voluntary National Reviews of the SDGs, to make the direct links between the implementation of the country's human rights obligations and the progress made towards the global goals, as well as to recognise the role of National Human Rights Institutions to monitor progress towards the global goals from a human rights lens.
18. *Call* for the establishment of a mechanism at the United Nations to include the voice and ensure the effective, inclusive and meaningful participation of people living in poverty, including children and young people, in the SDG process.
19. *Urge* all Governments to take urgent action against climate change, recalling that on 8 October 2021, the UN Human Rights Council adopted resolution 48/13 recognising that a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is a human right, and that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recognizes that for people in vulnerable situations, a human rights-based and inclusive approach to environmental action can make a real difference in their lives while also supporting better environmental outcomes. We commend the more than 150 countries that recognise and protect the right to a healthy environment through their constitutions, national laws, judiciaries or ratification of international instruments.

20. *Urge also* Governments to undertake human rights-based inclusive climate action to ensure that people in poverty are able to benefit from training and job creation in the just transition to a green economy; that they are able to actively and meaningfully participate in designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating strategies that affect their lives and to ensure that nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA) developed by Parties to the Paris Agreement improve the lives of the most vulnerable communities, particularly those living in poverty.
21. *Urge further* all governments to establish social protection systems guided by principles of dignity, equality, solidarity and inclusion, designed with the people most affected by climate change and based on a broad conception of social protection, which not only protects people against a wide range of risks, but also supports them in their income-generating activities or in accessing employment.
22. *Pledge* our full and unqualified support to the call of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for a “renewed social contract anchored in human rights”, included in his proposed "Our Common Agenda". In rebuilding trust, and in ensuring inclusion, protection and participation, we urge governments to fully embrace the human rights framework that prioritises human dignity at the heart of policy and action and transforms systems and power relations to deliver justice.
23. *Pledge also* our full commitment to working together with all Governments and all stakeholders to build a future where no one is left behind and all people living in poverty everywhere are actively encouraged and supported to be in the forefront, engaging in informed and meaningful participation in decision making processes that directly affect their lives. In building forward, we must recognize, value and be enriched by the wealth of wisdom, energy and resourcefulness people living in poverty can contribute to the well-being of our communities, our societies and, ultimately, of our planet. In building forward, let us all pledge to work together in solidarity with the most vulnerable and the furthest behind to achieve dignity for all.

Paris, June 2022

International Committee for October 17

## To know more

The International Committee for October 17 was established in 2008 with the following goals: to promote the 17 of October as International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, as recognised by the United Nations, uniting those who are striving together to end poverty; to promote the observance of the 17 of October in its original spirit; and, to promote opportunities where people from a variety of backgrounds, including those whose lives are most difficult, can work together in the fight against extreme poverty as a violation of Human Rights.

(<http://overcomingpoverty.org/article/international-committee-for-october-17>)

The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty was first celebrated as the World Day for Overcoming Extreme Poverty at a major public rally held on the 17 of October 1987 in Paris, where one hundred thousand people from all backgrounds responded to a call from Father Joseph Wresinski, founder of ATD Fourth World, to gather at the Plaza of Liberties and Human Rights. On this day, a declaration was engraved on a Commemorative Stone proclaiming that extreme poverty is a violation of human rights and affirming the need for all people to unite to ensure that these rights are respected.

(<http://overcomingpoverty.org/article/history-of-october-17>)

In 1992, the United Nations proclaimed the 17th of October as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. Since then, governments, local authorities, members of civil society and the private sector have recognized the importance of this International Day, which has become a key rallying point for a growing number of citizens and organizations from all backgrounds, in the fight to eradicate extreme poverty.

(<http://www.un-documents.net/a48r183.htm>)

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