

X-Presidential Powers



**Three former Heads
of State add powerful
voices to global calls
for action.**



HUNGERING FOR ACTION

Nelson Mandela calls on groups around the world to unite and fight poverty together.

As you know, I recently formally announced my retirement from public life and should really not be here. However, as long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality persist in our world, none of us can truly rest.

Massive poverty and obscene inequality are such terrible scourges of our times—times in which the world boasts breathtaking advances in science, technology, industry and wealth accumulation—that they have to rank alongside slavery and apartheid as social evils.

The Global Campaign for Action Against Poverty can take its place as a public movement alongside the movement to abolish slavery and the international solidarity against apartheid.

In 2005, there is a unique opportunity for making an impact.

In this new century, millions of people in the world's poorest countries remain imprisoned, enslaved, and in chains. They are trapped in the prison of poverty. It is time to set them free. Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings.

And overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life. While poverty persists, there is no true freedom.

The steps that are needed from the developed nations are clear.

The first is ensuring trade justice. I have said before that trade justice is a truly meaningful way for the developed countries to show commitment to bringing about an end to global poverty.

The second is an end to the debt crisis for the poorest countries.

The third is to deliver much more aid and make sure it is of the highest quality.

In 2005, there is a unique opportunity for making an impact.

In September, world leaders gather in New York to measure progress since they made the Millennium Declaration in the year 2000. Do not look the other way; do not hesitate... Act with courage and vision.

That declaration promised to halve extreme poverty. But at the moment, the promise is falling tragically behind. Those leaders must now honour their promises to the world's poorest citizens.

The G-8 leaders (who met in Scotland in July) have already promised to focus on the issue of poverty, especially in Africa. I say to all those leaders: do not look the other way; do not hesitate. (*See story, page 16*).

Recognise that the world is hungry for action, not words. Act with courage and vision.

Sometimes it falls upon a generation to be great. You can be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom.

Of course the task will not be easy. But not to do this would be a crime against humanity, against which I ask all humanity now to rise up.



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Make Poverty History in 2005. Then we can all stand with our heads held high.

Nelson Mandela was the first democratically-elected President of South Africa and served from 1994-1999. Since his retirement in 1999, he continues to be an advocate for a variety of social and human rights organizations.

Mr. Mandela pledged his support for the anti-poverty campaign in an address in London's Trafalgar Square, February 2005. He has also expressed his support for the ONE Campaign which forms part of the international "Make Poverty History" movement.

For more information, visit: www.makepovertyhistory.com



WORLDS APART by Jimmy Carter

COME TOGETHER

The most serious and universal problem facing the world today is the growing chasm between the richest and poorest people on earth.

Today, citizens of the ten wealthiest countries are at least 75 times richer than those who live in the ten poorest ones, and the chasm is widening. This extreme poverty is linked intricately to a wider web of problems, including terrorism, economic instability and disease.

The problems of extreme poverty can seem incredibly remote, even unreal. The US is a nation of unprecedented bounty and a society bombarded by media images of health, affluence and success, where the average household earns well above \$100 a day. In contrast, 1.3 billion people, more than one-fifth of humanity, will try to survive this day on less than \$1.

My wife, Rosalynn, and I were in Mali on business for the Carter Center's project to assist Malians with development planning. Mali is one of the ten poorest nations in the world, with 91% of its citizens living on less than \$2 per day. The illiteracy rate is 59%, and the infant mortality rate is 126 per 1,000 births.

A nation of farmers, Mali cannot get ahead because exorbitant cotton subsidies for mega-farms in the US cost Mali far more than all its aid from rich nations. Malians produced more cotton last year than any other African country, and it is their No. 1 export, but they had to sell it at little or no profit to compete with the heavily subsidized US crop.

People who live in grave poverty are just as intelligent, creative and hardworking as you or I. They love their children just as much, and they have the same hopes that those children will live healthy, productive, meaningful lives. In my travels to 120 countries, I have been constantly inspired by their courage and faith, their judgment and wisdom and their accomplishments when given a chance to use their innate abilities.

But the world's wealthy nations have demonstrated a tragic lack of concern for those enduring lives of extreme poverty. For example, although the USA ranks first in gross domestic product, it ranks last among the world's 22 richest nations in the percentage of GDP it provides in financial assistance to developing nations.

Part of the answer also lies in a growing number of private efforts. For example, Better Safer World,



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a non-governmental coalition formed in the aftermath of 9/11, is working to educate Americans on the root causes of poverty. The nine-member coalition, which includes CARE, Oxfam America and World Vision, has called for the US to commit at least 1% of

its annual budget to global humanitarian and development assistance and to grant debt relief to poor nations, which would free large sums for humanitarian purposes.

These are important steps, but the battle against extreme poverty — and, by extension, against terrorism, economic instability and disease — can be waged successfully only with strong leadership.

World peace hangs in the balance.

Former US president Jimmy Carter is chair of The Carter Center, a not-for-profit organization advancing peace and health worldwide. This essay has been adapted from an op-ed which first appeared in "USA Today", February 2004.



A NEW GLASNOST FOR THE PLANET

Nobel Laureate **Mikhail Gorbachev** *Sees the World's Security in New Light*

20 years ago, when glasnost — openness — was used to launch the process of Perestroika that transformed the Soviet Union, no one believed that it was doable. But I was driven by the need to “wake up” those people who had “fallen asleep” and make them truly active and concerned; to ensure that everyone felt as if they were master of the country, of their enterprise, office or institute: to get the individual involved in all processes.

Today I am convinced that the citizens of the world need a reformulated glasnost to invigorate, inform and inspire them to put the staggering resources of our planet and our knowledge to use for the benefit of all citizens of the earth, not go back to the days of prolific military spending and fear of people whose ways are different from our own. People cannot long tolerate living on a planet where millions of children have no clean water to drink and go to sleep

hungry once they know that they have the power to change it.

Conspiracy of Silence

As the stakes rise higher, with the permanent damage we are doing to our planet and the erosion of global security, there is no time to be lost in addressing the three principle and inter-linked challenges of sustainable development: peace and security, poverty and deprivation, and the environment.

In the face of international terrorism, the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and frequent local armed conflicts, continuous efforts are needed to ensure peace and security. The existence of enormous poverty-stricken areas in the world is morally unacceptable and provide the breeding grounds for extremism, violence and organized crime uncon-

strained by any borders. We are risking our future for an ephemeral, pollution and exploitation- based prosperity. Disaster, in the form of an oil spill, chemical leak or even nuclear accident like Chernobyl, could strike any day with little being done in the way of prevention. In order not to let this happen we must put an end to the conspiracy of silence of those who are unwilling to change their lifestyles or risk disturbing the foundations of the economic system that pays their bills, and expose the terrible moral cowardice of those politicians who cover this conspiracy up, refusing to recognize the true extent and nature of modern challenges.

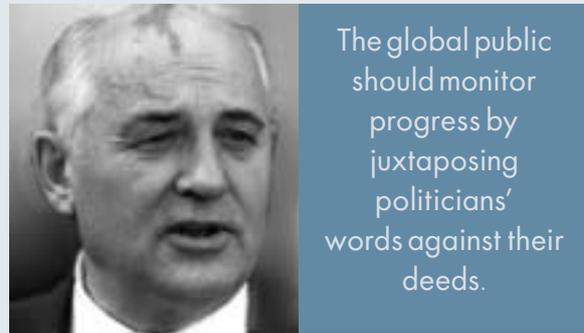
Conflict and Contradiction

There are clear links between the three sustainable development challenges, both in terms of origin, repercussions and the imperatives they dictate to human kind. One cannot counteract bigotry, crime and terrorism or ensure global security without combating poverty. One cannot address poverty without protecting our human right to fulfil our basic needs, and ensuring both environmental protection and equal access to natural resources for all. Human development and environmental protection are interdependent objectives.

Reflecting upon this, one cannot help wondering what caused the situation we now have on our hands? If the causes are unclear, no rational solution is possible. Our world is becoming rife with conflicts and contradictions, problems with a long heritage whose preconditions have been amassing during the evolution of human civilization.

Today, these conflicts have reached truly global proportions and stand to jeopardize the basic security of human kind. And globalization, as the prevailing force in world development, must be held responsible. Globalization lays bare and intensifies all the conflicts and contradictions of the past, and drives them to dangerous degrees.

Is there an alternative to the existing situation? It is my conviction that our history is not predetermined and there is room for an alternative in any situation. It was this pursuit of an alternative development model that led to the elaboration of a sustainable development program for the world. Agenda 21 was supported by the United Nations and endorsed by the Heads of State and government of most States in 1992. For the first time in history, the world community managed to map out and agree on a general strategic plan designed to address people's vital problems. However, serious obstacles emerged as implementation started. The governments of indus-



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trialized countries chose to retract from their commitments, in particular regarding increasing their development aid, in favour of the philosophy of economic liberalism, deregulation and accelerated economic growth.

Making a Difference

So, what can we do to make a difference? First of all, we need to scrutinize the structural factors inhibiting the transition to sustainable development. We need to better understand the mechanisms of globalization that are directing development on such a dangerous course. We need to bridge the gap between our moral consciousness and the challenges of time. Consumerism and national egocentrism continue to pose a serious threat to achieving sustainable development goals. A turnaround will not be possible unless the breach between the objective need to reverse currently prevalent behavioural patterns and the subjective unwillingness of states, communities and individuals to do so is crossed. This turnaround must begin with changes in the human spirit, a reprioritization of our value system, including relations between people and the human nature interrelationship.

Glasnost could be put to service as a catchall phrase for all of these weapons in the struggle for transparency and awareness. Glasnost is more than transparency; it is a demanding, long-term process of awakening which inevitably lead to calls for fundamental changes. In the field of sustainable development, such a process is needed to combat apathy, to engage the people to the task of choosing more equitable and sustainable lifestyles, and to address the dominance of short-term interests and lack of transparency at the decision-making level. A process of glasnost would tackle both aspects of this dangerous blend of indifference and concealment, and ultimately rebuild trust between people, business and government, desperately needed if we are going to stand any chance in achieving the Millennium Development Goals to combat poverty, disease and deprivation by 2015.

The New Global Ethic

The escalation of global problems is in many ways attributable to world politics lagging behind the real processes unfolding in the world. World politics is skidding, proving to be incapable of responding to the challenges of globalization. I am personally enormously disappointed that, more than a decade after it was given a new lease of life with the end of the Cold War, multilateralism is foundering. We have squandered much of the capital of trust and cooperation that emerged at the end of the 20th Century. I am convinced that contemporary world politics is not to be based on the conventional principle of balance of powers, but rather on the balance of interests, and that dialogue between cultures and civilizations must become its primary tool. Politics should concentrate on avenues of cooperation and ways to break through deadlocks by promoting just and long-term real-world solutions, not quick-fixes or inequitable compromises.

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generational aspects.**

For several years, a number of prominent civil and political leaders have gone to great lengths to develop moral frameworks for sustainable development. These efforts bore fruition in the form of the Earth Charter (2000), a code of ethics for the planet. Under current circumstances, it is becoming an extremely pressing task to have this code of basic moral principles observed by governments, business and NGOs simply in order give future generations and our planet a chance to survive. In a world increasingly besieged by corruption, greed and self-interest, we need leaders who have the moral courage to ground their decisions in this new global ethic and sustainable development principles.

Among these principles, solidarity takes a special place. The principle of solidarity has played a vital role at all times, especially in small groups, communities and social movements, but in this day and age, the imperative of global solidarity moves to the foreground. This means solidarity of a higher order, to meet the requirements of globalization as the dominant trend of modern world development. It is solidarity that presents itself as the pillar of sustainable

development in all its human and inter-generational aspects.

In the Millennium Declaration adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2000, world leaders reaffirmed their support for sustainable development principles and registered concern over the obstacles that developing countries have to face in trying to mobilize resources for sustainable development funding. The Declaration underlines the significance of solidarity as one of the essential values relevant for international relations in the 21st Century. The Millennium Development Goals formulated in the Declaration with specific targets and timeframes serve as a specific demonstration of this commitment.

To achieve these development goals and end the growing scourge of poverty and disease, we will first have to address one of the most important problems discussed throughout the world today—global governance, and in particular governance over globalization. It must be based on internationally recognized moral precepts: “Only through broad and sustained efforts to create a shared future, based upon our common humanity in all its diversity, can globalization be made fully inclusive and equitable,” says the Millennium Declaration.

Beautifully and rightly said, but it is important that these words be put to life. The global public should monitor progress by juxtaposing politicians’ words against their deeds. “Judge not by words, but by deeds” should be our mantra. That is precisely why we need a new glasnost to inspire citizens to become actively involved in the struggle for a better tomorrow. I believe in people and will remain an optimist, but one calling for action and positive change.

Mikhail Gorbachev was President of the Soviet Union (1990-1991). During his presidency he announced a new series of domestic reforms, including expanded freedoms and the democratization of the political process, all of which were to be achieved through his policies of social and economic restructuring, or perestroika, and openness, or glasnost.

Gorbachev is the winner of the 1990 Nobel Peace Prize. He is the Chairman of the Board of Green Cross International, which he has led since its creation in 1993 (www.greencrossinternational.net).

This essay was adapted from an article which appeared in April 2004 in The Green Cross Optimist (www.optimistmag.org).