

PRESS RELEASE



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Third Forum on Human Development marks the start of a crucial year for development

Top-level researchers and decision-makers to meet at the Forum in Paris from 17 to 19 January

Paris, 17 January – Personalities in the development field known the world over will be meeting in Paris from 17 to 19 January 2005 on the occasion of the Third Forum on Human Development, organised this year by France and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) under the patronage of **Mr Jacques Chirac**, President of the French Republic. The meeting marks the start of a crucial year for development, the "last chance" year for achieving by 2015 the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), one of which is to halve poverty worldwide.

"At the start of a year marked by the tragedy suffered by the tsunami victims, the urgent need for massive investment in medium- and long-term development is more obviously essential than ever. Without it, although disasters of this kind affect people of all conditions, the short- and long-term impact is disproportionately greater for those who are poorest, living in areas of precarious housing, on marginal land – the most vulnerable become trapped in a spiral of poverty", said UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown.

The Forum will be opened by Mr Malloch Brown and the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Michel Barnier, and the inaugural speech will be given by the Nobel economics prize winner Amartya Sen. Discussions will be led by people of the calibre of Mary Robinson (former President of Ireland and former High Commissioner for Human Rights), Pascal Lamy, Bernard Kouchner, Marie Angélique Savané (Senegalese sociologist, founder of the Association of African Women for Research and Development, currently with NEPAD), Adrian Lovett (director of Oxfam's "Make poverty history" campaign) and Francisco Sagasti (Peruvian co-author of the study on "the multilateral system of development financing").

During the three days the Forum will last, top-level politicians, famous researchers and representatives of civil society and the private sector from all over the world, representing both North and South, will be looking at conceptual work and the most advanced practices concerned with human development.

Their conclusions could be a contributory factor in influencing essential political decisions that States will have to take in the course of a year that is a particularly important one for development and international cooperation, with the publication of the Millennium Project in January, the Forum on harmonisation of international aid in February, the G8 meeting in July, and the end of the Doha Round in December. The

high point of the year's agenda will come at the UN's 60th General Assembly in September, with the Summit on implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

"Achievement of the Millennium Goals is a necessity that answers both the South's survival imperatives and the North's security imperatives", UNDP's Administrator also said. "In that respect, 2005 is the last chance for achieving the MDGs. If the good intentions that have been expressed are not turned into a general mobilisation, generating action on the same scale as what is at stake, it will not be possible to achieve the MDGs by 2015."

The Millennium Development Goals, a "road map" for mankind, lay down a precise schedule for achieving eight specific objectives, including halving extreme poverty and hunger by 2015, really getting to grips with HIV/AIDS, ensuring the provision of primary education for all, gender equality, a sustainable environment, and a global partnership for development.

The first two Forums were held in New York in 1999 and in Rio de Janeiro in 2000.

The 2005 Forum is being organised by France and UNDP's Human Development Report Office in collaboration with the *Institut pour le Développement Durable et les Relations Internationales* (institute for sustainable development and international relations - IDDRI) and the *Institut d'Études Politiques* (institute of political studies in Paris - the "Sciences Po" faculty). Those involved hope that the Forum will promote a concept of development that is based not only on economic performance but also, and more importantly, on the fate of each human being and on the values of equity and freedom. This approach to development, promoted by UNDP since 1990 through the annual publication of Human Development Reports (HDRs), has made a substantial contribution to a major change in thinking that places the individual and his or her freedom at the heart of development.

The hindrances to human development include the various forms of exclusion and discrimination inflicted on many groups within their own societies, and the persistence of excessive inequalities between and inside countries. The Forum will therefore cover the subject of "cultural identity, democracy and global equity", seen particularly from the viewpoint of the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals, aid to development, commercial exchanges and the international financial system.

Discussions will be based in part on the conclusions contained in UNDP's 2004 Human Development Report (HDR) entitled "Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World", and on current research for the next HDR, to be published in 2005 under the title "Reshaping international cooperation – aid, trade and security in an unequal world".

Matters concerning cultural diversity and respect for ethnic identities are by no means unimportant. According to the 2004 HDR, the 200 countries that make up the world contain almost 5 000 ethnic or religious groups. In two-thirds of these countries there are minorities that represent at least 10% of the population. The world's current total population is approximately 6 billion, 1.2 billion of whom live in extreme poverty on less than one US dollar a day, while the wealthiest 1% of its inhabitants earn as much as the poorest 57% of the world's population. To make it possible to achieve the MDGs it is necessary not only to increase public development aid to an appropriate level, strengthen the competences of the public authorities and the various private players involved in development, but also to take into account the human development approach both in national policies and in measures concerning international cooperation and governance. The Forum will therefore base its work on all the analyses contained in the fifteen HDRs produced to date, each of which addresses a different aspect of human development.

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ABOUT THE REPORT: Every year since 1990, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has commissioned the "Human Development Report" by an independent team of experts to explore major issues of global concern. A worldwide advisory network of leaders in academia, government and civil society contribute data, ideas, and best practices to support the analysis and proposals published in the report. The concept of Human Development looks beyond per capita income, human resource development, and basic needs as a measure of human progress and also assesses such factors as human freedom, dignity and human agency, that is, the role of people in development. The HDR argues that development is ultimately "a process of enlarging people's choices", not just raising national incomes.

UNDP is the UN's global development network. It advocates change and connects countries to knowledge, experience and resources to enable their people to build a better life. We are represented in 166 countries, helping them to devise their own solutions to the national and global challenges they have to face in terms of development. To back up their capacities, these countries can call at any time on UNDP's staff and its wide range of partners