



United Nations Development Programme

Communications Office

PRESS RELEASE

UNDP HONOURS ZAMBIA FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT

*Award for “Excellence in Support of Millennium Development Goals”
to be Presented at New York Ceremony; Hunger Eradication is the Focus*

NEW YORK – 15 December, 2004 -- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will honour Zambia for its Report on eradicating hunger at a special ceremony in New York on 15 December, 2004. Zambia was one of seven winners of the 2004 Awards for Human Development, as selected by a panel of distinguished judges. The Report, **Eradication of Hunger in Zambia: An agenda for Enhancing the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals**, will be presented with the “**Excellence in Support of the Millennium Development Goals Award**,” to be accepted by **Muyunda Mwanalushi**, Chancellor of Copperbelt University in Zambia.

Despite its relatively liberal economy and natural resources such as copper and emeralds, three-quarters of Zambia’s people still struggle in poverty, and two-thirds face food insecurity. The Zambia Report examines this paradox and finds that poverty and hunger, while still predominantly rural phenomena, are now rising in urban areas. A weak economy and inadequate access to infrastructure are largely to blame, though drought, livestock disease and the ravages of HIV/AIDS are also contributing factors.

Rather than suggesting mere palliative measures to ease hunger in Zambia (i.e., foreign food aid), this Report examines the deeply embedded roots of malnutrition and poverty – chronic problems throughout Southern Africa -- and proposes feasible methods to eliminate their causes, rather than simply treat their symptoms. “To adequately address poverty and hunger requires a very clear understanding of who the poor and hungry are, where they live, and why they are in this situation,” explained **Dennis Chiwele**, a development economist and a lead author of the Report.

The economic fortune of many Zambians has reversed quickly and dramatically, but there is still reason for hope, the Report concludes. Poverty and hunger are neither inevitable nor irreversible in Zambia. “The recommendations made are coherent, concrete and feasible,” Mr. Chiwele said. They focus on attacking hunger at the root, such as: improving the domestic environment to support the growth and recovery of agriculture to prevent recurrence of famines in the future; increasing resource mobilisation for the reduction of poverty and hunger; containing the spread of HIV/AIDS and reducing its devastating impact; promoting resource conserving farming technologies; and providing safety nets for the poor and hungry.

The impact of the Report is already being felt. It was widely circulated to all key decision makers in Zambia, including the President, all the government ministries, Parliamentarians, civil society organisations (churches, NGOs, academic institutions) and the donor community, both within and outside Zambia. The findings of the Report are often quoted in the country’s important documents, including President’s 2004 Budget Address. Copies were provided to the University

of Zambia, with many students and researchers requesting additional copies. Various parliamentary committees, as well, use the Report for reference during their debates.

Also at the 15 December ceremony, the **Mahbub ul Haq Award for Outstanding Contribution to Human Development** will be presented to **Mr. Fazle Hasan Abed**, founder of the BRAC organisation in Bangladesh. BRAC has continued its success in advancing food security, health, education and micro-finance, disbursing some \$2 billion to the landless, the rural poor and others with no collateral, with a 98% repayment rate.

The other awardees this year are: **Colombia Report 2003**–“The Conflict, A Way Out;” **Argentina Report 2002** – “Contributions to Human Development;” **West Bengal Sub-National Report 2004** – “Land Reform and Decentralisation;” **Latvia Report 2002-2003** – “Human Security;” and **Roma in Central and Eastern Europe 2002**: “Avoiding the Dependency Trap.”

“The goal of human development is to put people back at the centre of the development process,” said **UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown**, who will host the proceedings on 15 December, along with **Juju Chang**, the Emmy Award-winning correspondent for ABC News and “20/20” reporter. “It is about expanding choices for people, to enable them to enjoy long and healthy lives, knowledge, fair access to the resources and the ability to participate in the life of the community.”

UNDP has helped more than 135 developing countries and five regions to produce their own national and regional Human Development Reports. These reports, written by local experts, spur public debate and bring political attention to pressing development needs. They propose concrete solutions to mobilise the resources, policies and political will to overcome poverty and bring about growth, equality, investment in people’s basic needs, and freedom. They also help donor governments measure the impact of aid dollars.

UNDP is the global development network of the United Nations. UNDP advocates for change and connects countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. It is on the ground in 166 countries, working with people on their own solutions to global and national development challenges.

Muyunda Mwanalushi, Chancellor of Copperbelt University, will accept the award at the **New York Historical Society on Wednesday, 15 December, 2004, from 6:30-800 PM**. The audience will include important figures from the business, diplomatic, media, philanthropic, United Nations and university communities, and Southern Africans living in the United States.

Additional information on the UNDP Awards for Human Development is available at <http://hdr.undp.org/aboutus/nhdr/awards/>.

For interview requests with Mr. Mwanalushi, with Report authors, or UNDP officials, please contact David Kirby at 212-906-3693 or david.kirby@undp.org.