

Record-breaking 173 million people take stand with UN against poverty



Banners against poverty in the UK (file photo)

21 October 2009 – Smashing a Guinness World Record, more than 173 million people around the world joined forces with the United Nations to call on global leaders to stamp out poverty and take action to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (**MDGs**) by their deadline of 2015.

Over 3,000 events were held in more than 120 countries in the fourth year of the “Stand Up, Take Action, End Poverty Now!” campaign over the weekend. Nearly 60 million more people took part in the festivities this year compared to 2008.

“We know that if we take a stand – if we act – we can end poverty in our lifetimes,” said Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who was joined by 1,500 schoolchildren at the UN International School (**UNIS**) in New York on Friday in calling for an end to hunger, which currently afflicts 1 billion people worldwide.

At least 100 million people in Asia took part in the campaign, while Africa saw the participation of almost 40 million, the Arab region over 30 million, Europe more than 2 million, Latin America and North America some 200,000 each; and Oceania more than 170,000.

“We have seen citizens determined to show their governments that they will hold them accountable for keeping their promises to end hunger, improve maternal health and abolish trade-distorting agricultural subsidies,” said Salil Shetty, Director of the UN Millennium Campaign.

“They will not accept excuses for breaking promises to the world’s poorest and most vulnerable, who have already been hardest hit by the global food, economic and climate crises they had no role in causing.”

Despite the deadly typhoons which recently slammed into the Philippines, over 35 million people took a stand in that country, while the Irish rock band U2 brought 50,000 concertgoers to their feet during a show in the United States.

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