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## New UN photo contest focuses on fighting poverty, spurring development



14 May 2010 – The United Nations today co-launched its second annual photo contest spotlighting efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that seek to slash a host of social ills by 2015, including extreme hunger and poverty, maternal and infant mortality and lack of access to education and health care.

Co-sponsored by the Olympus Opto-digital company and the French news agency Agence France-Presse (AFP) Foundation, the contest, entitled 'Picture This: We Can End Poverty,' is open to amateurs and professionals, who may submit up to three photos focusing on progress towards one of the eight MDGs, preferably in a developing country.

"Through the photo contest this year we want to show that the MDGs can be reached, even in the poorest and most disadvantaged countries," UN Development Programme ([UNDP](#)) Administrator Helen Clark [said](#) at the launch ceremony in Johannesburg, South Africa.

"We hope that the contest will bring much needed attention to the quickly approaching deadline for achieving the MDGs, and motivate people and governments in developed and developing countries to redouble their efforts in the fight against extreme poverty."

This year's competition is particularly important as it coincides with the UN Summit on the MDGs in September in New York, when world leaders will seek to boost

progress against poverty and commit to a concrete action agenda to achieve the eight targets by 2015.

"We are at a defining moment in the fight against poverty," said UNDP Goodwill Ambassador and internationally-acclaimed actor Antonio Banderas, one of the contest's five judges. "The challenges of achieving the MDGs cannot be overcome by a single person, organization or government. All sectors of society need to be mobilized in a call to action for the big push to 2015.

"This photo contest is the type of initiative that will bring all these different groups together in order to focus attention on the urgency of achieving the MDGs."

An exhibit featuring the winning photos will be held during the Summit to put a human face on the MDGs. The other four judges are Alexandra Avakian and John Isaac, both award-winning photographers, Mark Garten, Head of UN Photo, and Paola Messina, AFP Bureau Chief in New York.

In addition to three winners in each of the professional and amateur categories, there will be one 'People's Choice' award selected by the public, who can vote on entries displayed on the Picture This website.

The top three photos in each category and the 'People's Choice' winning image will be displayed on the sponsors' websites and shown in at least two exhibitions in Japan and the United States. The first prize winners and the 'People's Choice' winner will be flown to an awards ceremony and launch of an exhibition in September in New York.

"We believe it (the contest) will give an opportunity to amateur and professional photographers everywhere to show the world how ordinary people around the world are dealing with achieving their most pressing development challenges," AFP Foundation Director Robert Holloway said.

Olympus President Tsuyoshi Kikukawa voiced the hope that people around the world will be inspired by "images showing that the simplest of actions, no matter who you are or where you live, can make a real difference in the effort to halt extreme poverty."

The 2009 Africa-centred Picture This: Caring for the Earth competition, focusing on the environment, resulted in an international travelling exhibit in Geneva, Johannesburg, New York, Osaka, St Louis in Senegal, and Tokyo, and extensive media coverage for the contest itself, its winners and participants, and the issue of climate change and environmental degradation in Africa.

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