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## **New UN-backed business pact aims to bring clean energy, health care to millions**



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Nine million poor people in Africa, Asia and Latin America will have access to clean energy sources and improved health care through commitments made by three companies to the United Nations-backed initiative that enlists the private sector in the fight against poverty.

The three companies – Nuru Energy, Dimagi and Por ti, Familia – announced their commitments yesterday to Business Call to Action, a global initiative supported by the UN Development Programme ([UNDP](#)), the corporate responsibility scheme known as the UN Global Compact and several other organizations and governments.

“The private sector is a strong partner in our collective drive to reduce poverty and achieve inclusive growth,” UNDP Assistant Administrator Sigrid Kaag said in a [news release](#).

“Continued commitments and innovative partnerships are key,” she added in response to the new pledges, which were made during a meeting with top corporate leaders to discuss how the private sector can create more business opportunities to fight poverty.

Nuru Energy, currently with offices in Canada and Rwanda, committed to making its portable, rechargeable light-emitting diode (LED) devices available to up to 1.8 million rural households in Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.

This will help lower energy costs by up to 85 per cent and reduce dependency on kerosene, an inefficient, polluting, costly and unsafe energy source.

In India, where up to 70 per cent of the rural population lacks access to basic health services, United States-based technology firm Dimagi will promote access to health care for seven million people in rural areas over the next three years through mobile phone-based applications.

Its application, CommCare, will provide 70,000 community health workers in areas lacking basic medical care with patient information and the ability to monitor at-risk patients.

Meanwhile, in Peru, where only between 39 and 49 per cent of the people suffering from diseases actually seek health care, Por ti, Familia – a small chain of health centres – committed to provide up to 270,000 of the country's urban poor with access to affordable, high quality health care by 2015.

The organization plans to open up 100 new health centres around the capital, Lima, that provide low-income patients with vital services, as well as on-site laboratory testing, medical imaging diagnostics and a pharmacy that charges much less than private hospitals.

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[Millions of poor people will have mobile phone numbers under UN-backed scheme](#)