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Press Release

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Note to Correspondents

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST POVERTY, STRESSING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

TO BE MARKED AT UN HEADQUARTERS EVENTS – MONDAY 19 OCTOBER

As the world commemorates the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, children living in poverty and their families will make their voices heard and call for full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child at public events at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 19 October.

“At a time of multiple global crises, the poorest and most vulnerable have a special claim on our attention,” said United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his message for the International Day. As this year’s observance coincides with the twentieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Mr. Ban is calling for the recognition that “investing in children and securing their rights is one of the surest ways to ending poverty”.

“We are at a critical juncture in the fight against poverty. Now is the time to amplify the voices of the vulnerable and ensure that the world follows up on its pledges,” the Secretary-General emphasized.

A full programme of activities is scheduled on 19 October at United Nations Headquarters in New York to commemorate the International Day, whose official theme for 2009 is “Children and Families Speak Out Against Poverty”. (The Day is usually observed on 17 October around the world, but that date falls on a weekend this year.)

On Monday morning, children and families living in poverty will share their challenges by talking about their contributions to eradicating poverty at a press conference at 11:00 a.m. in Room 226. They will be joined by Rachel Mayanja, the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, and representatives from the Mission of France to the United Nations and the International Movement, ATD Fourth World.

The press conference will be followed later in the afternoon (1:15-2:30 p.m.) by a commemoration in Conference Room 2 featuring statements from children, young people and adults, including from Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. Participants representing diverse voices from all over the world will talk about their personal experiences and efforts in fighting poverty and achieving human rights. The ceremony will also include musical performances by musician Adam Ezra and a video presentation of “Children as agents of change” from the Marymount School of New York.

The Day will conclude with an interactive panel discussion on the theme “Children: the future and the present — participation in poverty reduction and accountability for rights” at UNICEF’s Labouisse Hall (3:00-5:30 p.m.). Discussions will explore ways to promote the active participation of children and young people in efforts to tackle poverty. The panel event will also feature a dance performance by the Treehouse Shakers, a New York dance-theatre company.

The General Assembly designated the annual International Day in 1992 (by resolution 47/196), welcoming the fact that certain non-governmental organizations, on the initiative of the International Movement, ATD Fourth World, had, in many States, observed 17 October as World Day to Overcome Extreme Poverty. The observance aims to promote awareness of the need to eradicate poverty and destitution in all countries, particularly in developing countries.

The observance is organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the International Movement, ATD Fourth World, and the NGO Sub-committee for the Eradication of Poverty, in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

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