



## Press Report



# International Day For the Eradication of Poverty

"From Poverty to Sustainability: People at the Centre of Inclusive Development".

October 17, 2011

## Introduction

The problem of poverty in the world increases more with illiteracy, unemployment and poor use of natural resources. The number of poor and people in the world is greater than estimate. Economic, natural disasters, food insecurity, rising food and energy prices which are difficult to predict, are among the factors that pose threats and challenges to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Since 1993, the world celebrates the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on 17 October of each year, in order to consolidate efforts of all countries of the world in a serious attempt to eradicate poverty and alleviate its consequences which threaten many people in the world, especially in poor developing countries.

The General Assembly of the United Nations by its resolution 47/196 designated October 17th to promote awareness of eradicating poverty in all countries, particularly in developing countries, as one of the development priorities. World leaders at the Millennium Summit, agreed to work towards reducing the number of people living in extreme poverty, especially people who earn \$ 1.25 or less per day - by half by 2015.

The theme for this year's International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is "From Poverty to Sustainability: People at the Centre of inclusive Development"

The 2011 observance provides, an opportunity to recognize the efforts of people living in extreme poverty, and to have their voices heard as partners in achieving sustainable development. This Global Forum is the platform set to support consolidate efforts to break the cycle of poverty, and help attain environmental sustainability.

Topics of previous celebrations of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty are listed below:

- 2010 "From poverty to decent work. Bridging the gap".
- 2009 "Children and families speak out against poverty".

- 2008 "Human Rights and dignity of people living in poverty"
- 2007 "People living in poverty as agents of change".
- 2006 "Working together out of poverty".
- 2005 "Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Empowering the poorest of the poor".
- 2004 "How poverty separates parents and children".

### **The Millennium Summit (September 2000)**

At the Millennium Summit in September 2000, the largest gathering of world leaders approved the Millennium Declaration of the United Nations to force countries to establish a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty, and develop a series of time-bound targets by the deadline set in 2015. UN experts adopted these goals by consensus, with IMF, the OECD and the World Bank. Later these became known as the Millennium Development Goals.

### **Millennium Development Goals:**

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
2. Achieve universal primary education.
3. Promote gender equality and empower women.
4. Reduce child mortality.
5. Improve maternal health.
6. Combat HIV/AIDS Malaria and other diseases.
7. Ensure environmental sustainability.
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

The United Nations declared in its statement on poverty eradication the following:

- UN will spare no effort to free men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, where more than one billion people are currently subjected.
- Creating an environment conducive to development and poverty eradication at the local and global levels.
- The success of these objectives depends on several issues, including good economic and corporate governance, transparency in monetary and

financial systems, removal of trade barriers, the presence of an open non-discriminative multilateral financial trading system.

- Addressing the special needs of least developed countries, and inviting the industrial countries to:

- Adopt a policy to allow all least developed countries' exports to access markets, without imposition of duties or quotas on them.

- Implement the enhanced program for debt, to relief heavily indebted poor countries without further delay.

- Grant more generous development assistance, especially for countries that are making efforts to utilize their resources to reduce poverty.

- Address debt problems of low or medium income developing countries, and take measures at the local and international levels.

- Reduce the proportion of population living on less than \$ 1.25 a day by half by 2015, and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger, and the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water unable to pay for it.

- Enable children everywhere, both boys and girls to complete by 2015 a full course of primary education, as well as having access to education at all levels of on equal footing.

Extreme poverty is defined, as living on an average daily consumption of \$ 1.25 or less. The number of people living in extreme poverty has been declining since 1990. The largest reduction in the number of poor people was witnessed in East Asia and the Pacific, and South Asia. Although the region of the sub-Saharan Africa had not seen much progress during the nineties, but the number of people living in extreme poverty has went down.

The first of the "Millennium Development Goals" focuses on eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, through there are three pop-up targets for this goal which are:

- Reduction of the number of people who suffer from hunger by half between 1990 and 2015.

- Reduction of the proportion of people who earn less than \$ 1.25 per day, between 1990 and 2015.

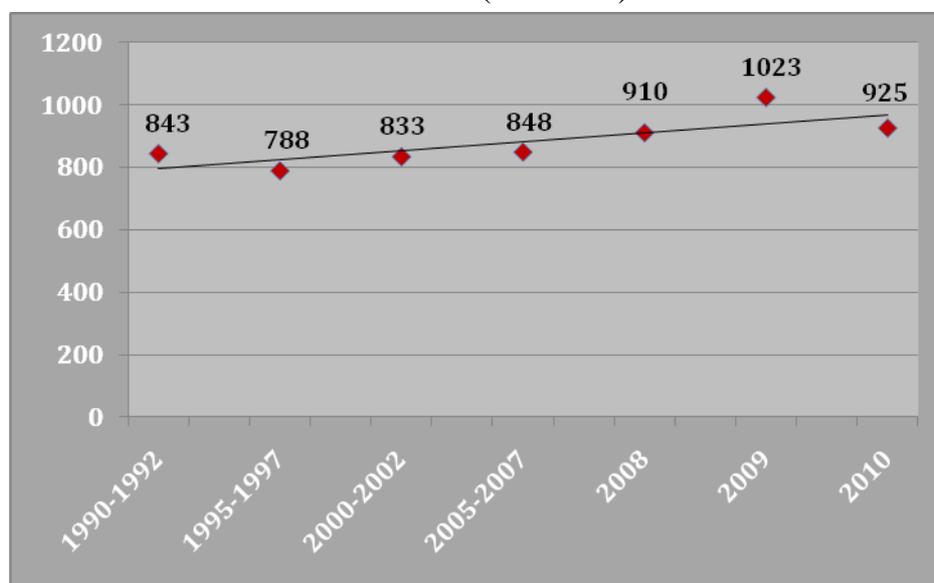
- Achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and youth.

The depletion and damage of natural resources spread of corruption and conflicts, absence of good governance and discouraging private investments, all t lead to the occurrence and increase of poverty among people. Although there are manifestations of poverty in many parts of the world, but there is progress in efforts to reduce its severity.

**Goal 1:** Reduction of the proportion of hungry people by half between 1990 and 2015.

The proportion of people who suffer from hunger in the world went down from 20% between 1990-1992 to 16% between 2005-2007, and stabilized at this rate until 2010. However; after the increase in percentage witnessed in 200, but it is still higher than that set by the Millennium Development Goals (MDG1). Based on this trend, in light of the economic crisis and high food prices, it will be difficult to achieve the goal of reducing hunger in many parts of the developing world.

Figure (1): The Number of Hungry People in the World from 1990-1992 to 2010 – (Millions)



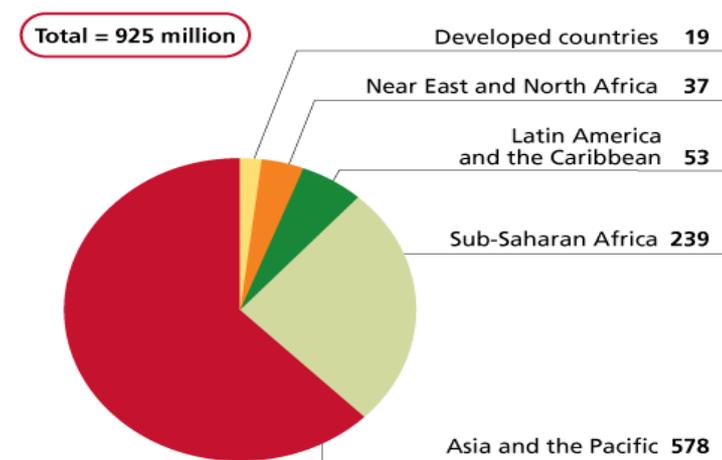
Source: FAO.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimated the number of people who suffer from hunger at 925 million people in 2010, compared to 1023 million in 2009. Most of the decline was in Asia and the Pacific (down by 80 million hungry people). However; it was noted that the

number of hungry people in 2010 rose more than it was before the food and economic crises in 2008 and 2009; and even remained higher than the level that existed when world leaders agreed to limit the number of hungry people by half at the World Food Summit in 1996.

The estimates for 2010 indicate that the number of people, who suffer from hunger, has decreased in the 2009 in all developing regions. However, most of those who suffer from hunger in developing countries live mostly in Asia and the Pacific, despite the drop in the number of hungry people from 658 million in 2009, to 578 million in 2010 by 12% as shown in the following figure:

**Figure (2): The Number of Hungry People in the World by Region - 2010 (Million)**



Source: FAO.

Most people who suffer from hunger live in developing countries, although two thirds of this number concentrate in seven countries (Bangladesh - China - Democratic Republic of Congo - Ethiopia - India - Indonesia - Pakistan), and more than 40% of them live in China and India. The sub-Saharan Africa is also one of regions with the highest number of hungry people, as they constituted 30% in 2010. Based on current trends, the sub-Saharan Africa region will not be able to achieve the goal of reducing hunger by 2015, especially after the recent disastrous famine in Somalia and the Horn of Africa in 2011, which is expected to have led to more hungry and dying people.

The economic and financial crisis that started in developed countries of North America and Europe in 2008 had resulted in slowing global growth in general. The World Bank estimates revealed that the increase in the number of extremely poor people as a result of rising food prices since June 2010, reached about 44 million people in low-and middle-income countries; and that the more people affected are those with high rates of poverty and malnutrition.

**Goal 2:** Reduction of the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day, between 1990 and 2015.

More than ten years elapsed since of the Declaration of the Millennium Goals to eradicate poverty, hunger, illiteracy. Economic growth in the early nineties resulted in reducing the number of people living on less than \$ 1.25 per day in developing countries - as it appears from the data table below – the number went down from 1.8 billion in 1990 to about 1.7 billion in 1999, and appeared to have declined more in 2005 as the number reached about 1.4 billion, which is the period that followed the Declaration of the Millennium Goals.

**Table (2): The Number of People Earning Less than \$ 1.25 per day - By Region – (million)**

Region	1990			1999			2005		
	Total Population	No. of Poor	%	Total Population	No. of Poor	%	Total Population	No. of Poor	%
East Asia & Pacific	1519.94	873.3	54.72	1788.39	635.06	35.51	1884.42	316.21	16.78
Europe & Central Asia	465.75	8.15	1.75	473.22	24.28	5.13	473.6	17.38	3.67
Latin America & Caribbean	438.09	49.64	11.33	507.73	55.95	11.02	550.43	44.14	8.02
MENA	225.57	10.02	4.44	273.53	11.54	4.22	305.23	11.11	3.6
South Asia	1120.09	579.2	51.71	1334.51	588.92	44.13	1476.4	595.58	40.3
Africa South of the Sahara	516.69	297.36	57.55	655.57	382.59	58.36	762.88	388.38	50.9
Total	4362.14	1817.65	41.67	5032.95	1698.34	33.74	5452.96	1372.8	25.18

Source: World Bank

East Asia is the fastest growing and largest declining in poverty rates, as illustrated by the data of the table above. China in particular, is expected to decrease the poverty rate to less than 5% by the year 2015. India also contributed by a significant in the reduction of the rate of poverty in the world,, where it is expected to decrease the poverty rate from 51% in 1990 to about 22% in 2015. The number of people living in extreme poverty in both China and India together between 1990.2005 were estimated at 455 million people, and it is expected that approximately 320 million people will add up by 2015.

The region of Africa - South of the Sahara forecasts, indicates the possibility reducing the rate of extreme poverty in the region to less than 36%.

The world leaders reaffirmed in the 2005 World Summit, their commitment to eradicating poverty and promoting economic growth, effecting sustainable development. The encouraging came from cases of poverty reduction observed recently in some countries. Leaders also expressed concern over the slow and uneven progress concerning poverty eradication, and achieving other development goals in some areas. Most of the important results of the 2005 World Summit focused in the following points:

- 1.4 billion people live on \$ 1.25 or less per day.
- 10 million die annually of hunger and hunger-related diseases.
- Rising food prices may lead to get 100 million people into poverty.
- Reducing percentage of children under five years of age suffering from malnutrition.

**Goal 3:** Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and youth.

After more than three years of the beginning of the economic financial crisis, the world economy began to recover, however; the world labor market witnessed an increase rates of unemployment, and started seeking new jobs opportunities both in the developed and developing countries that experienced higher economic growth, especially after the crisis.

The Millennium Development Goals report indicated that the proportion of employment to the total population in the developed regions decreased

from 56.8% in 2007 to 55.4% in 2009. The drop continued to 54.8% in 2010. This situation revealed the imbalance between economic recovery and the labor market in the region, as the economic revival did not lead to generate enough jobs to absorb people of working age. This is different from what happened in many developing regions, which witnessed in the beginning low employment rates in comparison to population. The employment rate in proportion to estimated population did not change in 2010 compared to 2007.

The United Nations attributes the slow progress made in poverty reduction, (according to the Report on the Millennium Development Goals 2011 ) to difficulties as a result of poor-quality surveys, and not conducting such surveys at regular intervals, as well as the delay in reporting the results, in addition to the difficulty of obtaining accurate basic information used to calculate poverty estimates. These difficulties are a barrier, particularly in Africa - South of the Sahara, which leads to lack of access to the data for conducting comparisons between the full range of the Millennium Development Goals except in less than half of the countries. This is quite evident, as all countries that had collected, analyzed and published survey data between 2007 and 2009, represented only 20% of the population of the region.

### **Emirates has achieved the Millennium Development Goals**

The UAE has made a success in achieving the Millennium Development Goals at the national level (United Nations report on the Millennium Development Goals). This gave UAE the opportunity to increase its contribution in assisting developing countries to achieve their goals. UAE was able to eradicate poverty, hunger and disease, raise the levels of education, empowerment of women, environmental sustainability and global partnership for development.

The United Arab Emirates - and Abu Dhabi Government in implementation of the economic vision 2030 – worked for utilizing oil revenues for development, diversifying sources of national income, development of human resources, increasing per capita national income, to reach the highest international rates, spreading of free education in all academic levels, application of equality and the empowerment of women and integrating environmental perspective in all development activities, including mitigating the effects of climate change.

UAE maintained the first place regionally and globally and the 32nd out of 169 countries included in the Human Development Report 2010, ahead by five rank compared to 2009. UAE was also classified as one of only two countries from the region in the category of high human development. This confirms the efforts made by the State on permanent bases since its inception in 1971, to improve the standards of living and work on the development of its citizens, taking into consideration that the citizen is the real wealth of the nation. This Policy dates back to the vision of the founder of the State, Late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, “Mercy be upon him”

According to the Human Development Report 2010, the United Arab Emirates also occupied the first place regionally and ranked 45th globally in the index of inequality which measures the gap between genders in areas of reproductive health, empowerment and participation in the workforce. Due to the equality between genders, where there is no legislation in the UAE that discrimination between men and women in areas of education, work or services provided. About 77% of adult women in the State attended secondary education, which is the same percentage for men. The report showed that between 1980 and 2010 the average life expectancy at birth in the UAE increased by 10 years. It also revealed that Annual GDP per capita has doubled since 1970 to reach more than US\$10,000, at the time when the poverty index - which sets out the disadvantages in areas of health, education and living standards - indicated that the Arab region is home to millions of poor people.

The UAE economy grew significantly and increased the contribution of non-oil sectors in GDP. The government promoting of formal education has led to raise indicators of education growth rates at all levels of education. The number of students increased accompanied by increasing of schools and teachers, in addition to augmenting of the education budget. UAE worked persistently on the development of the health sector and health care insurance, and achieving normal rates of natural population growth through the provision of maternal and child care.

## **UAE's efforts in alleviating the suffering of the world's poor.**

United Arab Emirates called on the international community to intensify efforts for a global partnership, contribute to the reduction of poverty and hunger in the world. The State actively contributes to many activities and programs of the United Nations. This is due to the many important initiatives taken by the State to combat poverty in different regions of the world, taking lead in the provision of humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of many developing and poor nations.

UAE since its inception provided, huge amounts of money in billions of dirhams to finance development projects and render assistance, through a number of institutions including, the Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Humanitarian and Charity Foundation, the Dubai Cares, and the UAE Red Crescent. UAE has worked to allocate a high proportion of the total national income for official development assistance to more than one hundred developing countries in the world. 95% of this assistance accounted for financial donations, and the rest for concessional easy loans. The establishment of the International Agency for Renewable Energy and of its quarters in UAE, reinforces the pursuit of achieving sustainable development, using of renewable energy and minimizing of adverse impacts to the environment.

The steady growth of the UAE economy over the previous years has resulted in generating millions of jobs in various sectors of economic activity, which has attracted a huge number of foreign workers. Those workers contributed to the implementation development projects as it also contributed to supporting the economies of countries of origin by converting their savings.

Despite the repercussions of the economic and financial crisis in many countries in the world, however; the UAE has been able to deal with its ramification, and at the same time fulfill its obligations, and allocate a proportion of its gross national income in aid to contribute to the developing countries needs. UAE also continued its humanitarian and development aid to many countries in various ways, either through direct support, or supporting for programs of international and regional organizations to alleviate the suffering of many countries in their fight against poverty and diseases, and in meeting the outcomes of rising food

prices. UAE in the recent period (2011) also made the concerted efforts to aid victims of drought and famine in Somalia, and was one of the first countries that responded to the crisis; and responded to calls by the humanitarian imperative to mobilize support and assistance to alleviate the suffering of the Somali people, in cooperation with humanitarian organizations that have worked in all directions to help those affected, and provide a better life for them .

At the level of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, we find that the voluntary work sector in one of the fastest growing sectors in the emirate, as a result the rapid increase in population growth; and the increased participation of society in form of individuals or institutions in all activities and social programs to meet the needs of the community, and alleviate suffering in disasters and crises within and outside the State. Many individuals are now volunteering to support and develop the community, as they change in many cases the small initiatives into large-scale projects, and work to help many groups in society such as orphans, the elderly, the disabled and victims both within the State to serve the local community and residents; or outside the State . All this lead to the deepening of social ties between the members of society.

The Emirate presents assistance through a variety of institutions, including the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development which was established to achieve the goal of cooperation with all regional and international bodies contribution to the financing of development projects in developing countries, poverty eradication, in addition to the one million volunteers campaign, the Emirates Academy of Volunteering and Zayed initiative of Giving..