



Together for Equality

**Renewing the Call:
The Beirut Platform from the Global Call to Action against Poverty**

15th March 2006

Preamble

- 1. At the start of the 21st century more than a billion people are trapped in a situation of abject poverty and gross inequality. 70% of them are women. We face an AIDS and Malaria emergency, with 40 million people infected by the disease. 104 million children are denied access to school and 860 million adults. (70% of them women) cannot read or write. Millions of people are unemployed or working in precarious jobs with deteriorating conditions of labour. Neither have a secure income to sustain their families. Children and young people make up half of the world's population and suffer from the lack of inclusion and provision of basic services. Hunger is a daily reality for many. In parts of the world, the death of mothers in childbirth and infant children are still routine - deaths that could be prevented by the availability of simple healthcare. 1.4 billion people don't have access to safe water. We draw inspiration from their persistent daily struggles to realise their rights to livelihoods, resources, assets and basic services. Today the world has enough resources, knowledge and technology to eradicate poverty.*
- 2. This poverty is a violation of human rights on a massive scale. Poverty continues to intensify due to increasing militarism, environmental degradation, the lack of democratic governance and processes and the exclusion of groups of people on the basis of class, caste, gender, disability, age, race and religion.*
- 3. Armed conflicts, wars and their consequences destroy livelihoods, undermine democratic processes, human rights including the right to self determination - and divert resources that should be directed to development and social equity. Investing in human security best prevents conflict and builds peace. The protection of people is a universal obligation of all states and international democratic institutions. Growing militarism and rearmament reduces political space and public accountability of states, diverts development financing and ultimately, renders lasting peace illusive and unrealisable. War and conflict disproportionately affects the security, dignity and future of women and children.*
- 4. Overcoming poverty will not be possible without challenging patriarchy, capitalism and the current model of development, which puts profits before public goods, human security and welfare. Furthermore, implementation of a fairer distribution of land is necessary to overcome rural poverty.*
- 5. International human rights instruments protect the rights of all people to an adequate standard of living and well-being, including food, clothing, housing, clean water and medical care. Unjust governance, debt and aid conditionality and trade practices are undermining these rights.*
- 6. To date, the pledges required to meet the Millennium Declaration efforts to tackle poverty, inequality, injustice and deliver sustainable development have been grossly inadequate. Governments too often fail to address the needs of the people within their territory, the quantity and quality of aid from rich countries is inadequate and promises of debt cancellation have not yet materialized. Rich countries have yet to act on their repeated pledges to tackle unfair trade rules and practices. We have the means to turn this situation around. It is high time governments took action.*

7. *Galvanised by this imperative, a group of civil society actors including NGOs, international networks, social movements, trade unions, women's organisations, faith based groups and other civil society actors met in Johannesburg in September 2004. They launched the Global Call to Action Against Poverty which targeted 2005 as the year when governments could take decisive action to deliver on their promises of the Millennium and make poverty history.*
8. *Over 2005, we contributed to some of the successes against our policy demands namely:*
 - *European commitments to increase ODA to 0.56% by 2010 and 0.7% by 2015;*
 - *Renewal of G8 pledges to double aid;*
 - *Agreement to cancel the debts of 18 Heavily Indebted Poor Countries and Nigeria;*
 - *A commitment by the G8 that they will no longer force Poor Countries to liberalise their economies.*
9. *We recognise that this political will has been generated by tremendous global mass action and public opinion change on poverty. We therefore renew our call to action.*
10. *The Global Call to Action against Poverty embraces a growing number of civil society actors and people in both the South and North. Any civil society organization willing to support the values, core message and joint action is invited to participate. This is not based on membership.*
11. *The last few years have seen great global fragmentation and division. People all over the world feel less secure and less safe than ever. We believe that the world can unite again in solidarity against poverty. We have agreed to undertake joint action and mobilization at key times in 2006 and 2007. We plan to link our actions symbolically by the wearing of a white band.*
12. *We call on governments to act against poverty immediately and decisively. We call on civil society to pressurise governments and mobilize the political will needed to achieve our goals. We call on people to wear a white band to express their support for the global call. We invite organisations to actively participate, co-operate with each other and coordinate their activities, particularly at national level to promote participation, mobilisation and people centred advocacy.*

Public Policy Change Objectives

13. There is great diversity among our group, but we know that we will be more effective when we work together. We do not endeavour to reach absolute agreement on detailed policy, but we do want to pressure governments to eradicate poverty, dramatically lessen inequality, and achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

We demand:

- Public accountability, just governance and the fulfilment of human rights
- Trade justice
- Debt cancellation,
- A major increase in the quantity and quality of aid and financing for development

14. We demand gender equality be recognized as a central issue for poverty eradication. We further demand that upholding the rights of children, youth, women and other excluded groups, as well as ensuring their equal participation, be recognised as fundamental to the achievement of these goals.

15. While specific objectives will be determined by national priorities and contexts, the following text reflects the outcome of our policy discussions.

Public Accountability, Just Governance And The Fulfilment Of Human Rights

16. All governments must fulfil their commitments. They must be fully accountable to their peoples and transparent in the use of public resources. Governments, institutions, and civil society groups must ensure the causes of corruption are aggressively fought, including in the private sector.

17. Governments are obligated under international law to enforce human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights. They must meet this responsibility by delivering economies that are equitable and work for the poorest people, delivering quality universal public services and ensuring decent work for all.
18. In the formulation of aid, debt or trade and investment bilateral and multilateral agreements, governments should neither impose nor accept externally driven conditions making the implementation of the rights above impossible.
19. Governments should:
 - Ensure gender equality, social justice and stop all forms of violence against women and uphold women's rights including their political participation and access to resources.
 - Deliver comprehensive legal, physical, social and economic protection of children
 - Enshrine existing and new policies and budgets with mechanisms that ensure equity such as land reform, progressive taxation and poverty reduction strategies.
 - Implement policies that ensure full and productive employment with special attention to youth employment.
 - Actively involve civil society including the poor, women, children, people with disabilities, dalits, indigenous peoples and other socially excluded groups in formulation, decision-making and implementation of international and national development priorities, policies and plans.
 - Ensure young people are partners, not only targets, in development and decision-making.
 - Ensure civil society participation on budgetary processes
 - Enforce and support freedom of expression including freedom of the press and association.
 - Develop pro-active national anti-corruption strategies consistent with international conventions on anti-corruption.
 - Ensure quality, universal public services for all (health and education, water and utilities) and stop privatisation where it causes deprivation and poverty.
 - Emphasize preventive and reproductive health in their policies and actively combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic and diseases associated with poverty.
 - Ensure adequate housing.
 - Fully support effective peace-building and conflict prevention strategies and ensure that post conflict reconstruction programmes enshrine social and economic justice, poverty eradication and public accountability.
20. Governments must commit themselves to achieving and surpassing the MDGS and immediately develop national MDG based Plans.

Trade Justice

21. Developing countries must have the right to determine their own trade and investment policies, putting their peoples' interests first. International trade rules and national trade policies should support sustainable livelihoods, promote the rights of women, children and indigenous people, and lead to poverty eradication. However trade rules and policies and the imposition of harmful economic policy conditionalities have become the vehicle for the indiscriminate liberalization of developing country economies, undermining sustainable development, increasing poverty and inequality.
22. Therefore, we remind national governments of their international human rights obligations, and call upon them to use their influence at the World Trade Organization, the International Financial Institutions and in regional and bilateral trade agreements to:
 - Ensure developing countries are not forced to open their markets and have the flexibility to use tariffs for sustainable economic development.
 - Protect public services from enforced liberalization and privatisation.
 - Ensure a fair price for commodities, particularly for poor producers.
 - Support the right to food and equitable access to land and natural resources.
 - Immediately end subsidies that lead to the dumping of cheap produce on international markets.
 - Secure affordable access to essential drugs.

- Increase transparency and accountability to grassroots constituencies in the formulation of international trade rules and national trade policies, while ensuring consistency with respect for workers' rights and human rights more broadly.
- Reject harmful regional and bilateral free trade agreements.
- Ensure developing countries have the flexibility to regulate foreign investment in the interests of their own development priorities.
- Regulate corporations to make them accountable to people and governments for their social, environmental and development impacts.

Debt Cancellation & A Major Increase in The Quantity And Quality Of Aid And Financing For Development

23. Donor governments and international institutions must urgently provide the major increase in the quality and quantity of resources necessary for the eradication of poverty, promotion of social justice, achievement of the MDGs, gender equality and to guarantee the rights of children and youth. These resources must also support sustainable development, the rights of workers and migrants and the interests of marginalized groups including indigenous peoples. Resources must work to rebuild, not undermine governments and the public sector, enabling them to deliver on the rights of their citizens.

24. We call on donor governments and Institutions to:

- Meet and exceed the 0.7% aid target by directing resources to achieving community and country defined poverty eradication and sustainable development priorities.
- Implement innovative international taxes and mechanisms for raising finance for development which is additional to 0.7% ODA-obligations.
- Implement and improve the Paris Declaration to deliver long-term, predictable, harmonised and effective aid. Aid should not be tied to contracts with companies of donor countries or linked to economic conditionalities that harm people, communities and the environment.
- Ensure gender sensitive progress assessments, performance monitoring and indicators for aid effectiveness.
- Meet international pledges on Education for All, Polio, Malaria, TB and the universal access to HIV/ AIDS, prevention, treatment and care, including through funding of the multi-lateral Fast Track Initiative and Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria.
- Immediately and without externally imposed conditionalities, cancel the odious, illegitimate and unpayable debt of poor and middle income countries through a fair, democratic and transparent process to free up resources for human development. Where debt cancellation measures are inadequate or failing to enable poor countries to reach the MDGs and provide basic social services, we support collective developing countries strategies for the repudiation of all odious and illegitimate debts.
- Identify and repatriate stolen assets and thus, reverse the flight of capital from poor countries by taking action against tax havens, financial institutions, multinationals and others facilitating this resource leakage.
- Establish a fair and just world order in which International Financial Institutions (especially WB, IMF and WTO) operate within the broad principles enshrined under UN commitments and human rights obligations to better regulate world economy.

Joint mobilisation

25. Over 2006, we agree to launch a month of mobilization on the 16th September (to coincide with the IFI Annual Meetings) building up to a climax on a global white band day on the 17th October.

26. The white band will remain our symbol and expression of solidarity against poverty. We want the white band to become the globally recognized symbol of the fight against poverty (like the red-ribbon is to HIV/AIDS). We actively encourage as many people as possible to wear and use the white band during 2006-7.

27. The month will be launched with highly visible public awareness-raising street actions, stunts and media events. During the month, national coalitions will undertake actions appropriate to their own contexts. These actions will culminate in a global white band day of mobilization around October 17th (the International Day on Eradication of Poverty). This climax could see

white band demonstration (e.g. human white band chains) with local music (e.g. drumming). National coalitions will decide on their 'political policy' messages and targets (e.g. conditionality and the international finance institutions) for the month of mobilisation.

28. National coalitions commit to handing over mass forms of communications (e.g. petitions, cards, letter) or evidence of the number of actions taken over the month to key policy-makers.

In addition, GCAP recognizes key dates in the international civil society calendar where we can support and participate in the actions that are already planned during 2006-7 such as the global weeks of action for trade and education.

29. After appropriate consultations on our global white band day of action for 2007, we shall announce this date by October 2006. We are considering a date encompassing 16th June (Day of the African Child), G8 in Germany and the halfway point in the MDGs (2000-2015). We shall launch our 2007 GCAP mobilisation during the World Social Forum in Nairobi, January 2006.

Support for national coalitions

30. National coalitions are the base for our action and cooperation. National activities are home grown and designed around national priorities and demands. They will continue to build on existing initiatives. Mass mobilization, grassroots advocacy and global solidarity are key to the campaign. Through our experiences, we have seen that issues are with and closest to the people on the ground are the most important. We need to internalize GCAP among those affected by poverty and externalize their struggles to national, regional and global levels. Advocacy and campaigning under local and national ownership will strengthen GCAP.
31. Further, we need to increase the scope of those involved. National coalitions will encourage and provide space for other civil society sectors, grassroots organizations and local groups -- particularly youth, women and marginalized groups -- to play larger roles in the campaign. We shall ensure adequate resources for actions and activities to promote women's rights as well as for youth and children.
32. GCAP campaigners are encouraged to support each other and national coalitions by sharing experiences, best practices, knowledge, analysis, materials and tools in a way that we mutually benefit from the complementarity of our diversity. These will include:
- Planning packs, educational materials, translation of documents into local languages and the production of materials, including flyers, brochures, posters among others.
 - Media relations, information and communications technologies such as an online library and forum where national coalitions and international partners can deposit and retrieve resources - such as policy briefs and awareness-raising materials - and discuss opportunities for collaboration.
 - Monitoring the progress of nations towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals
 - Best practices and tools for holding national coalition meetings, lobbying, mobilisation, advocacy and campaigning and monitoring and evaluating the impact of our campaigns

Future structure, coordination and communications

33. The national campaigns and coalitions shall become the focus of action and mobilisation in the next two years. Greater devolution of global co-ordination functions to regional and national co-ordination mechanisms shall lead to a leaner and more flexible global co-ordination structure.
34. The main level for co-ordination, advocacy work and mobilisation will be national platforms and then regional forums. However there is a need for facilitation and information exchange on the global level. GCAP global co-ordination should be guided by nine principles. Global facilitation and co-ordination should:
- Enable not limit those supporting the Call to Action.
 - Serve to strengthen national coalitions.
 - Represent the interests of the call as a whole and not only their own constituencies
 - Enshrine a transparent process to be followed by all supporting organisations contributing resources to GCAP processes

- Happen at the most appropriate level for its effectiveness and as close to the point of action as possible.
- Be flexible, light and allow us to act and react quickly.
- Create the momentum we need for our joint efforts by aiming at the maximum possible participation and transparency for all.
- Consult with the appropriate national coalition when planning any global GCAP initiatives at national level or directed at a nation's constituency or decision makers.
- Coordinate our work until the end of 2007, which is the current mandate of this mobilisation.

Global Action Forum

35. The Global Action Forum will be made up of all civil society actors and citizens who are interested in taking part in the global co-ordination and linking the global campaign to national and regional networks. The Forum should be regularly informed and consulted on key plans and decisions. Involvement will continue to be organised through a list serve that allows information exchange on national and regional activities as well as information and consultation on the global co-ordination.
36. There will be one face to face meeting of national platforms and other supporting regional and international organisations in January 2007 before the World Social Forum in Nairobi.

Regional

37. Regions must be left to decide the most appropriate ways of inspiring and supporting national coalitions, translating global policy platforms to regional contexts and co-ordinating any other regional functions. In deciding the above regions must be transparent and accountable to national coalitions. We need to encourage the participation of women's organisations and associations at the regional level.

International Facilitation Team

38. The co-chairs structure is dissolved and an International Facilitation Team (IFT) is created. The main task of the International Facilitation Team is to inspire and promote co-operation and mutual support between the participating regional/national coalitions and networks. The mandate of the group is defined by the above policy objectives and mobilisation plans. IFT's mandate shall run until the end of the year 2007 when it will be renewed. Its key tasks are listed below. The tasks at a global level are to:
- Facilitate outreach to encourage a wide range of organizations to become involved in GCAP in order to help widen and deepen the call.
 - Facilitate the promotion of GCAP's policy demands through sharing information on lobbying opportunities.
 - Facilitate work relating to the Call to Action including preparation of materials, media work, website and other communications
 - Facilitate the international planning of the global month of action.
 - Identify spokespeople for the global call when required, with gender, youth, and regional balance.
 - Facilitate smooth and transparent flow of information across the global call including by providing regular updates to the Global Action Forum and facilitating the organisation of face to face meetings.
 - The IFT will *not* play a grant making role.
39. All existing Standing Working Groups are dissolved and only specific global task forces on global functions/actions and constituencies can be formed. Any constituency based task force must encourage full participation and be accountable to all of their constituencies who support the Call.
40. A small (1-2 people maximum) IFT support team will report to the International Facilitation Team and work with a particular focus on communications, website, information sharing and in general to service the IFT.

41. The IFT will be established on the basis of proportional representation of the number of active national coalitions in each region and population size, diversity and with a clear consideration of gender parity and a small quota for International networks and organisations playing an enabling role.
42. The IFT must be Southern/Developing Country Led and the following proportions will apply
- Africa - 4
 - Asia and Pacific - 4
 - Latin America and Caribbean - 3
 - Europe -3 (1 from outside EU i.e. Eastern Europe)
 - North America - 2
 - Middle East - 1
 - International - 6
 - Women's Movement 1
 - Youth and Children - 1

Each proportion needs to include the following minimum number of women – Africa 2, Asia and Pacific 2, Latin America and the Caribbean 1, Europe 1, North America 1, International 3.

The composition of the IFT is an interim structure and will be reviewed within the next three months (by June 2006) based on regional feedback. Regional representation of children and youth in the IFT is encouraged

43. Any person on the IFT should be nominated by and fully accountable to those in their category who support the Call to Action.
44. The Global Call to Action against Poverty will work in strategic partnership with a number of other actors and these strategic partners can be invited as observers to the IFT.

Ends.