

## International Day for the Eradication of Poverty - 17 October

### *Recognition in 1992 by the United Nations*

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The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is celebrated every year on October 17 throughout the world. In 1992, it was officially recognised by the United Nations' General Assembly by resolution [47/196](#)<sup>1</sup>, designated this day to promote awareness of the need to eradicate poverty and destitution in all countries, particularly in developing countries – a need that has become a development priority.

The first commemoration of the event took place in Paris, France in 1987, when 100,000 people gathered on the Human Rights & Liberties plaza at the *Trocadéro* to honour victims of the poverty, hunger, violence, and fear. This call was made by Joseph Wresinski<sup>2</sup> (1917 – 1988) founder of the prestigious International Movement ATD Fourth World<sup>3</sup>.

The text engraved in the stone reads as follow:

*“Whereever men & women are condemned to live in extreme poverty, human rights are violated. To come together to ensure that these rights be respected is our solemn duty”*. - Joseph Wresinski (1917 – 1988) founder of the prestigious International Movement ATD Fourth World.

One of the main aims of the day is to make the voice of the poor be heard. To this end, commemorations often include testimonies from people living in poverty, describing their own experiences or those of people they know. In international perspective, at the [Millennium Summit](#)<sup>4</sup>, world leaders committed themselves to cutting by half by the year 2015 the number of people living in extreme poverty – people whose income is less than one dollar a day.

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution 47/196 – Forty seventh Session, Agenda item 81, 31<sup>st</sup> March 1993, Observance of an International Day for the Eradication for the Poverty.

<sup>2</sup> Fr. Joseph Wresinski (1917 – 1988) born into poverty, established major land marks throughout his life in the fight against the worst forms of poverty, in collaboration with the very poor themselves and other partners. He founded the International Movement ATD Fourth World in 1957. In 1987, he launched the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty 17 October, later recognised by the United Nations' General Assembly.

<sup>3</sup> The International Movement ATD Fourth World is a prestigious and well known non-governmental organization founded in 1957 in France by Joseph Wresinski. Its aim is to help families to understand how they become poor and to build projects to leave poverty. Today, the organization has teams in 25 countries and correspondents in 90, and involves 100,000 people worldwide. Retrieved on 17 October from [www.4thworldmovement.org](http://www.4thworldmovement.org)

<sup>4</sup> Millennium Summit – was a meeting among many world leaders lasting three days from 6 September to 8 September 2000. Its purpose was to discuss the role of the UN at the turn of the twenty – first century. Retrieved on 17 October 2009 from [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

The theme for this year's International Day for Eradication of Poverty – *“Working together out of poverty”* – highlights the need for a truly global anti poverty alliance, this notion also reveals through the message of Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary - General of the United Nations *“Today we recognised the daily struggles and contributions of those living in poverty and resolve to intensify efforts to eliminate the scourge once and for all. At a time of multiple global crisis, the poorest and most vulnerable have a special claim on our attention. We know that, in any recession, those hurt first – and worst are the poor ....”*

On this day, people of all backgrounds, beliefs and social origins have gathered every year to renew their commitment and show their solidarity with the poor. Through resolution [47/196](#) General Assembly invite all states to devote the Day to presenting and promoting as appropriate in the national context, concrete activities with regard to the eradication of poverty and destitution.

The resolution further invites inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations to assist states, at their request, in organizing national activities for the observance of the day, and request the Secretary General to take, within existing resources, the measures necessary to ensure the access of the Day's observance by the United Nations.

17 October presents an opportunity to acknowledge the effort and struggle of people living in poverty, a chance for them to make their concerns heard, and a moment to recognize that poor people are the first ones to fight against poverty. The commemoration of October 17 also reflects the willingness of people living in poverty to use their expertise to contribute to the eradication of the poverty.

One of the strong movement example, *Stand Up Against Poverty* – over 100 million mobilized people under the slogan *“Stand – Up – Take – Action”* at events in more than 100 countries around the globe between 17 and 19 October to demand that world leaders do not use the financial crisis as an excuse for breaking the promises they made in 2000 to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

In essence, Director of the UN Millennium Campaign, Salil Shetty states *“in rich and poor countries, at concrete and sporting events, in universities and in-houses of worship, millions of people showed that they will not remain seated in the face of poverty and broken promises to end it”*.