

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**More Than 116 Million People
– Nearly 2% Of The World's Population –
Stand Up and Take Action Against Poverty and Inequality**

Guinness confirm that World Record for Mass Mobilisation is Shattered

**Citizens Around the World Demand That World Leaders Keep Promises To
Achieve The Millennium Development Goals And Reduce Inequality**

22 October 2008

Anti-poverty campaigners today announced that more than 116 million people – nearly two percent of the world population – mobilised at events in 131 countries and on October 17-19 as part of “Stand Up and Take Action.”

The mobilisation - which broke the world record for the biggest mass action ever as ratified by Guinness Book of Records - sends a clear message to world leaders that people around the world are not indifferent to the breaking of promises to end poverty.

“In what was undoubtedly the largest mobilisation since Guinness began keeping records, citizens around the globe put their leaders at the national and global level on notice that their commitments to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 have to be met – no more delays or excuses are acceptable,” said Salil Shetty, Director of the United Nations Millennium Campaign.

“Already, world leaders are responding. Mass mobilisations have the power to change the course of history, and we will not stop mobilising and advocating for action until the Millennium Development Goals are achieved for the poorest people in the world.”

In Ireland, an estimated 7,000 people participated in 19 different events around the country to indicate that they want to take action to end global poverty.

“This is a new kind of action the world is seeing: it’s the local influencing the global. Women in villages in Africa are connecting and joining millions of citizens in other countries and young people are taking ownership of the Millennium Development Goals like never before. Thousands of actions, pictures and messages show a powerful groundswell of determination from ‘We the People’ and that a new global financial architecture must be about equality and gender justice,” said Sylvia Borren, GCAP Co-Chair of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) who attended Stand up events in the US this week.

“The largest Stand Up is truly an historic event and as keepers and adjudicators of world records we are delighted to ratify such an important record and make this official,” said Craig Glenday, Editor-in-Chief of Guinness World Records. “We congratulate every

individual for taking part in this initiative and welcome them to the family of Guinness World Records.”

The number of people who “Stood Up and Took Action” in each region is as follows:

Africa	24,496,151
Arab States	17,847,870
Asia	73,151,847
Europe	951,788
Latin America	211,250
North America	123,920
Oceania	210,803
Total	116,993,629

Key “Stand Up and Take Action” events included:

In Ireland:

- An estimated 450 people took part in a commemoration at the Famine Memorial in Dublin, where poor people from across Ireland and Europe were given a chance to voice their concerns and experiences.
(photos of this event are available at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/31550741@N08/>)
- Mary Robinson led a Stand Up event at an **Amnesty International** lecture in Belfast.
- At the annual **Gorta World Food Day event**, 170 people stood up to demonstrate their solidarity with poor people around the world, and to call on world leaders to keep their promises to eradicate poverty.
- The **Debt & Development Coalition** organised a Dáil lobby, to demand action against illegitimate debt.
- In classrooms and work places around the country, people stood up and read the [Stand Up Pledge](#)

Elsewhere:

- In the Philippines, more than 35 million people -1/3 of the population – took action through the Department of Education, universities, local municipalities and Government Ministries. Thousands of fishermen also took to the streets with GCAP Philippines on the morning of October 17 to demand a government program for food sovereignty and sustainability.
- In Ahmedabad, India, Indian Cricket League officials and cricket players from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and the West Indies led a “Stand Up” moment for 30,000 fans at a game of the Ahmedabad Rockets and the Mumbai Champs on October 17.
- Farmers in Pakistan took to the streets to decry rising food prices. Other Stand Up rallies urged government to check rising poverty as the number of poor in Pakistan rose from 60 million to 77 million this year.
- In Badarpur Khadar, a village 15 km from Delhi, India, with no electricity, water, sanitation or health facilities, 700 people Stood Up on October 18, when they opened the first school in the village’s 300-year history. The villagers plan to take up the issue of their denial of the fundamental constitutional right of primary education with the government.

- In Jigawa, Nigeria's poorest state, the Sultan of Sokoto, His Eminence Sa'ad Abubakar III -- the most powerful and respected traditional ruler in West Africa -- joined 20,000 people who Stood Against Poverty on October 18, in a Summit where they called on the government to empower women and other marginalised groups through skill acquisition programs, empowerment schemes and access to micro-financing.
- In Uganda, the entire Parliament stood on October 17, and members of the Parliamentary Committee on the Millennium Development Goals helped to clean the Kisenyi slum outside Kampala.
- In Jakarta and other cities of Indonesia, more than 450,000 Muslims in 1,500 mosques Stood Up after Friday prayers on October 17. Khatibs (preachers) explained the responsibilities of Muslims in accordance with Islamic values to fight poverty.
- In Bangladesh, over 13 million people Stood Against Poverty at events throughout the weekend, including a Millennium Development Goals Road Show and a policy seminar to engage political leaders in the upcoming national elections.
- In Nepal, over 1.5 million people Stood Against Poverty, at a convention of women members of the Constituent Assembly and many other events focusing on deepening participatory democracy as part of building a poverty and hunger-free Nepal.
- 400,000 students in the West Bank and 200,000 students in Gaza stood up against poverty as part of an annual programme to teach them about the Millennium Goals and involve them in holding their government accountable.
- In Thailand, the Royal Thai Government, represented by the Ministry of Interior, and the United Nations jointly pledged their commitment to eradicate poverty and inequality by launching a 180-day Roadmap for Poverty Eradication.
- Thousands of people in IDP camps in Baidoa, Somalia stood up in solidarity with all others around the world living in poverty, and determined to Take Action to improve their own situation.
- In Milan, Italy, more than 400,000 people Stood Against Poverty in the Italian Parliament and at an event attended by Italian foreign minister Franco Frattini and Letizia Moratti, Mayor of Milan.
- A poverty forum in Kabul saw delegates pledge to take action to end poverty in Afghanistan, where 85% of the population is deemed to be living in poverty. Parliamentarians and government officials, professors from Kabul University, civil society organisations, and religious leaders attended the event and stood up.
- In Germany, with hundreds of events across the country, more than 100,000 people demanded more and better aid and the implementation of fair world trade rules to realise the MDGs.

PHOTOS = <http://www.flickr.com/photos/standagainstopoerty/>

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About the Campaigns:

The Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP) is a civil society alliance of social movements, international NGOs, trade unions, community groups, women's organisations, faith and youth groups, local associations and campaigners working together across more than 100 national coalitions/platforms. GCAP is calling for action from the world's leaders to meet their promises to end poverty and inequality. In particular, GCAP demands solutions that address the issues of public accountability, just governance and the fulfillment of human rights; trade justice; more and better aid; debt cancellation; gender equality and women's rights; and climate chaos. For more information, visit www.whiteband.org.

The UN Millennium Campaign was established by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in 2002. The Campaign supports citizens' efforts to hold their governments accountable for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The Millennium Development Goals, formally adopted by 189 countries in the year 2000, are a set of eight specific goals which commit rich and poor countries to work together to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, ensure all boys and girls complete primary school, promote gender equality, improve the health of mothers and children, reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, protect the environment, and create a global partnership for development by ensuring rich countries give more and better aid, debt relief and trade opportunities to poorer countries. For more information, visit www.endpoverty2015.org.