

global Eye

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Action on landmines

The British Government has signed a treaty at the Ottawa conference in Canada banning anti-personnel landmines (APLs). The treaty bans the use, production, trade and stock-piling of APLs and obliges countries to destroy all such mines under their control within four years. "This treaty is a vital step towards ridding the world of the scourge of landmines" said Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development. "These landmines kill and maim thousands of innocent people every year...We must also now work for a truly global ban to put a stop to this tragedy and redouble our efforts to clear those mines already laid" she added.

Forest fires

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) is calling 1997 'the year the world caught fire'. It claims that the fires in Indonesia alone have destroyed up to a million hectares of forest, which provided a valuable habitat for endangered species such as Sumatran tigers, orangutan and elephants. It is believed that it will take up to 100 years to reforest the area.

The impact of the fires, most of which began when land was cleared for agriculture, has been worsened by prolonged drought, and despite the recent rains, peat deposits below ground are still burning. It is expected that some of these underground fires will continue through to the next dry season, when they could flare up again.

Smog from the fires has also caused huge problems in Indonesia as well as neighbouring countries. The long term impact on health of the smoke is still unclear, but over 40,000 cases of illness have already been blamed on poor air quality. Income from tourism has dropped, and it is feared that the persistent dark skies may have disrupted the growing patterns of some crops.

Improving education

Britain is to provide £20 million to help the Ugandan Government introduce free primary education for all children. In 1996, the Ugandan Government pledged itself to provide free primary education for up to four children per family as part of its Poverty Eradication Plan. The British grant will help to increase primary school attendance from 2.45 million in 1996 to 5.2 million children in 1997, representing 86% of the eligible population.

£20 million has also been pledged over five years to support the Bangladesh Government's efforts to provide all children with access to a quality primary education. The project will provide assistance to improve academic standards and educational management in schools.

AIDS alert

ACTIONAID have launched a campaign to highlight the number of children world wide whose lives are effected by HIV/AIDS. New UN figures show that over 1,000 children die every day as a result of AIDS, and that a further 1,600 are infected with the HIV virus. Over 8 million children have already been orphaned by AIDS, and this figure is set to double by the year 2000.

The charity is calling on the British Government to review its overseas AIDS/HIV policy and ensure that sufficient funding for preventative education and community care is forthcoming.

Child labour

A British funded project to help children in Pakistan avoid child labour has been announced. The Government is to back a three year Save the Children Fund social protection programme to help thousands of children in Sialkot working in the football stitching industry start a new life. It is hoped that the project will protect over 7,000 children by working with the Government of Pakistan, local employers, trade unions and NGOs to:

- establish savings and credit schemes for families of displaced children
- establish women's stitching centres
- support access to education and vocational training for children and adults.

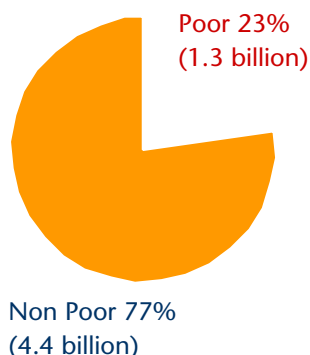
International development has been in the news recently. Following the election in May 1997 a new Department for International Development was created. In November 1997 the British Government published a **White Paper** on International Development entitled '**Eliminating World Poverty: A Challenge for the 21st Century**'.

Why should we be concerned about international development?

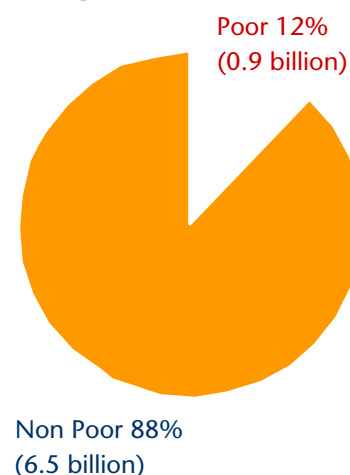
- We have a moral duty to help the poor and needy, and to try to create a more just world.
- It's in all our interests. Global warming, polluted oceans, disappearing forests, shortage of fresh water, more and more mouths to feed and not enough land on which to grow food—these things affect us all, rich or poor, wherever we live.

Numbers in poverty below US \$1 (65 pence) per day

Position 1995



Target 2015



Did you know that:

Nearly **one quarter** of the world's population live in extreme **poverty**, surviving on less than **65 pence** per day. They have no access to health services or schools. With over population and economic growth **destroying** the **environment**, the prospects of a better life for many people are getting worse.

Does international development work?

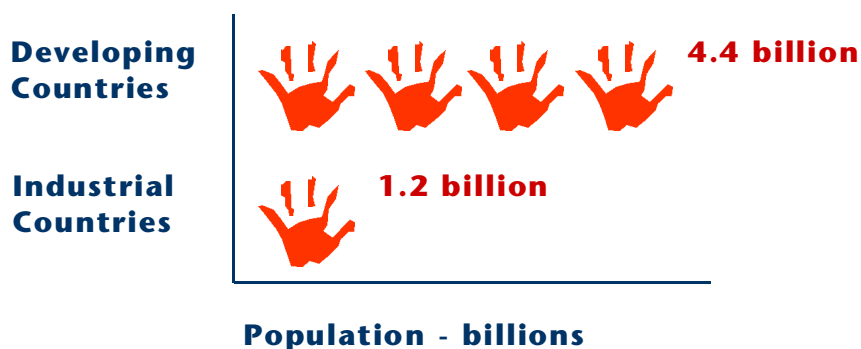
People experience vastly different lifestyles depending on where in the world they live. The majority of the world's wealth belongs to people living in industrialised countries but most people actually live in developing countries (see diagrams below).

There have been dramatic improvements in recent decades.

- On average people are in better health and live longer.
- Child death rates in developing countries have been cut by more than half since 1960.
- People have more food to eat.
- The percentage of the population with access to clean water has doubled to 70%.
- In the last 50 years more people have escaped from poverty than in the previous 500.

By building on such achievements even better progress can be made. However, much work still remains to be done.

The imbalance between North and South



A number of development targets have been set by the United Nations. The British Government has adopted these targets, and has published the first White Paper on International Development for 22 years. These are our targets shown below.



progress towards equality between men and women, and equality for girls and boys in primary and secondary education by 2005



strategies for sustainable development in use in all countries by 2005, to ensure that current trends in the loss of environmental resources are effectively reversed at both global and national levels by 2015



access to family planning services for all individuals of appropriate ages as soon as possible and no later than the year 2015



a reduction by two-thirds in the mortality rates for infants and children under age five and a reduction by three-fourths in deaths as a result pregnancy, all by 2015



universal primary education in all countries by 2015



reduce by half
the proportion of people
living in extreme poverty
by 2015

1998 is the **25th anniversary** of Britain's membership of the **European Union** (EU), and in the first six months of the year, the **UK** will hold the **EU Presidency**. Most of what we hear about the EU concentrates on the costs and benefits of membership to Britain. However, the EU also has an important role in the wider world. For example it is a market for more than **one-fifth** of developing country exports, and **42%** of aid received by developing countries is given by **EU citizens**.

The total EU spending on programmes to assist all countries during 1995 was £3,763 million. Britain's contribution to this total in 1996-97 was £699 million.

The EU has a number of programmes, specific to different geographic regions: African, Caribbean and Pacific - covered by the Lomé Convention (see page 8)

- Asia and Latin America programme
- Mediterranean programme
- Programmes for central and eastern Europe and central Asia (Phare and Tacis).

The EU also has programmes which apply across regions: for example for non-governmental organisations (NGOs), emergency aid, food aid etc.

UK Contributions to European Community 1995 (£ million)

Other



European Investment Bank (EIS)



Mediterranean



Food Aid



Asia and Latin America



Disaster Relief



Programmes for central & Eastern Europe & former Soviet Union countries (Phare/Tacis)



European Development Fund (EDF)



EU Presidency

Each member state takes it in turns to hold the EU Presidency for six months. The UK will do so between January and June 1998. During this period it will be at the centre of EU business.

During its Presidency, the UK wants to achieve a number of objectives for its EU aid programmes:

- agreeing the UK negotiating position for the next Lomé Convention after the current agreement finishes in the year 2000
- encouraging the EU to sign up to development targets, against which progress can be measured, such as halving poverty by 2015.

The Lomé Convention

The Lomé Convention is named after the capital city of Togo, the African state in which it was first signed in 1975. The Convention is an international aid, trade and political agreement between the EU and a large number of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states. It aims to 'achieve comprehensive, self-reliant and self-sustained development' in the ACP countries.

The Convention was revised and renewed in 1980, 1985, 1990 and 1995. It now links the 15 member states of the European Union and 71 ACP countries. This represents some 500 million people.

One of the most important parts of the Convention is its trade policy, designed to help ACP exports to Europe. A large proportion of ACP exports enter the EU free of tariffs but there remain barriers to exports of importance to ACP states such as cereals and milk products.

The EU is looking again at the trade aspects of the Convention. The key objective is to build the capacity of the ACP states to trade more effectively with the EU and the rest of the world.

Emergency aid

The European Office for Emergency Humanitarian Aid (ECHO) is in charge of humanitarian aid (food, clothing, shelter and medicines) for victims of natural disasters and wars, including refugees. Countries where help has been given in recent years include:

- Former Yugoslavia
- Azerbaijan, Georgia and Tajikistan
- Afghanistan
- Rwanda and Burundi
- Angola

15 Years of Friendship. Since 1982 students and staff at Ousedale School in Newport Pagnell have been involved in an educational and cultural exchange with Motilal Nehru School of Sport, Haryana, India. In March 1997 sixteen pupils and two staff set off for an unforgettable trip.

Culture shock We arrived at Delhi airport at around 11pm. The first thing that struck me was the heat. It was sticky, muggy and the air was barely breathable. Delhi airport was chaotic, manic and like nothing I'd ever seen before. My impression of India was completely different from what I'd expected. The one thing that struck me was the smell, India smelt of burning leaves, cigarettes, dust, sulphur, incense and tired, sweaty people. It was incredible. Although I was tired from the journey I felt I had to keep my eyes open on the bus journey to Rai, I didn't want to miss anything.

Something I noticed was that despite being close to midnight the roads were still busy with scooters carrying whole families and tiny Suzuki Maruti cars. The atmosphere was very alive, even at that time. It was quite a culture shock to see India for the first time, but I knew that, the minute I did see it, I would love it.

Sarah Cagney

Happy Holi. The strangest day we had was when the Indians held a festival called Holi, the festival of colours. Handfuls of coloured powder are thrown at innocent victims. We ended up covered from head to toe in many colours, the powder was shortly followed by buckets of freezing cold water. The powder soon reacted as a dye and white tee-shirts, as well as hair, ended up shades of pink and green. We were still laughing by the end of it, it was a strangely wonderful and hugely funny experience.

Lindsay Thomas