

MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

SEVEN VANS FOR SEVEN MINISTERS

MAKE POVERTY HISTORY URGES G7 MINISTERS TO DROP THE DEBT

When Finance Ministers from the world's seven richest nations (France, Germany, Canada, Japan, Italy, USA) meet in London on the invitation of Gordon Brown this Friday, there will be no escaping the challenges laid down by the **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** campaign.

Billboards line the route from the airport to the finance ministers' hotels, urging them to cancel the unpayable debts which keep poor people trapped in poverty. The coalition is not leaving anything to chance, though. If the ministers happen to be looking the other direction as their limos pass the adverts, they surely won't miss the seven white poster vans cruising the capital and parked outside their embassies displaying the ministers' mugshots and the campaign's challenge – 'Make Poverty History'.

That evening, the G7 summit will start at Lancaster House with a working dinner, where ministers will be joined by the former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela. Mr Mandela will be bringing a message from the thousands of supporters who met him at Trafalgar Square on Thursday, urging the finance ministers to make sure that debt cancellation is high on the agenda at the G8 summit in Scotland in July, along with trade justice and increased and improved development aid.

As the G7 finance ministers arrive at Lancaster House, the World Development Movement (WDM) - members of the Make Poverty History coalition - will start a giant 'Drop the Debt' digital counter opposite the gates. The digital counter will record the number of children around the world who die needlessly as a result of poverty while the G7 are meeting - one every three seconds. From the time the ministers arrive for dinner on Friday until they depart on Saturday 26,700 will have died. WDM and the Make Poverty History campaign are demanding the urgent cancellation of all unpayable debts, without any damaging free market economic conditions, to address this awful death-toll.

MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY spokesperson, WDM's Martin Powell said: "The current level of debt cancellation delivered by the international community is shamefully inadequate, while the economic conditions attached to debt relief have been shown to make developing countries poorer. This year the G7, chaired by the UK, has a real opportunity to change this. If they want to halt the crime of one child dying unnecessarily every three seconds, they must cancel 100% of the unpayable debts owed by the world's poorest countries, without imposing failed policies such as privatisation and free trade."

The **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** campaign is also gearing up in the other G7 member countries as part of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty. Adverts will appear in the press today in Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States with similar messages, urging the finance ministers from those countries to cancel poor countries' debts.

People can support this year-long campaign or get a white band, by signing up at www.makepovertyhistory.org. They can make their voices heard and exert pressure on Tony Blair and the UK government by sending a 'white band message', by text, email or post, calling on the government to reverse the injustice of poverty in 2005.

On July 2, **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** expects 100,000 people to gather in Edinburgh to welcome the G8 leaders and urge them to deliver trade justice, debt cancellation and increase and improve development aid.

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NOTES FOR EDITORS:

1. You can download hi-res images from the **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** campaign at:
www.makepovertyhistory.org/private
Username: comic
Password: 12qwklm
- 2 To download a copy of the report issued to Tony Blair, please go to www.makepovertyhistory.org/makehistory.html
- 3 For more information on sending a white band message (by card or email) go to www.makepovertyhistory.org
- 4 White bands are available:
Online: at www.makepovertyhistory.org
On the High Street: at Oxfam shops
By phone: by calling Save The Children on 0800 0273270, Action Aid on 01460 238027 or Christian Aid on 08700 787 788
- 5 There are currently over 223 organisations working together to Make Poverty History.