

NEWS RELEASE

30 December, 2004

Embargoed until 1 January, 2005

CAMPAIGNERS AND CELEBRITIES JOIN FORCES TO MAKE POVERTY HISTORY IN 2005

2005 is *the* year to Make Poverty History, according to a huge year-long, global campaign launched today. Over 100 charities, unions and faith groups have come together with celebrities in the UK to launch **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY**, calling on Tony Blair and other world leaders to deliver trade justice, debt cancellation and more and better aid for the world's poorest countries.

Big names have already been spotted wearing the global symbol for the campaign, a simple white band. Jamelia, Fran Healey of Travis, Busted, the Sugarbabes, Graham Norton and Steven Fry alongside U2's Bono, actress Scarlett Johansen, supermodel Claudia Schiffer and Archbishop Desmond Tutu are among those who have signed up to **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY**, which already has the support of organisations that represent millions of people in Britain.

"No one can be oblivious or ignorant to the plight of the poor, nor to the responsibility our governments have as architects of their poverty. We must take this opportunity in 2005 to **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** once and for all", said Fran Healy, who has recently returned from a trip to Africa with Save the Children, one of the members of the Make Poverty History coalition.

This week, the **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** coalition issued a challenge to Tony Blair to tackle the issues of trade, aid and debt and ensure the year delivers action rather than just words. The coalition is part of a global call to action, set to bring together campaigners from over 100 countries.

This year the UK government is uniquely positioned to be the driving force for change, and to encourage other countries to follow suit. The meeting of leaders of the 8 most powerful nations (UK, US, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, Canada and Russia) – the G8 – takes place in Scotland in July. In February, the finance ministers of the G7 nations meet in London to set the agenda for the G8. And later in the year, the UK holds the EU presidency, giving Tony Blair unprecedented influence over European policy, just as critical world trade negotiations reach their climax.

How the UK public can get involved.

Between January and July, **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** will increase the pressure on decision makers by engaging a wide range of media, building a strong online campaign and organising a series of mass public events to build awareness of the issues affecting developing countries and put pressure on politicians for change.

After a mass public event on the streets of Edinburgh on 2 July in advance of the G8 meeting in Scotland, the campaign will keep up the pressure right through to the end of 2005.

The global symbol for the campaign is the white band. With hundreds of celebrities wearing it the world over, the white band is set to become the fashion-accessory-with-a-purpose in 2005. People can get one from Oxfam shops around the country or online at www.makepovertyhistory.org.

People can also 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.

The public can find out how they can get involved at www.makepovertyhistory.org.

MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY and Band Aid

This Christmas saw the release of Band Aid 20. Over the past 20 years, the Band Aid Trust has raised millions of pounds for projects that help the poorest people across Africa.

As founder of Band Aid and supporter of **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY**, Bob Geldof urged, “This is about firing the starting pistol to the year of 2005 when Britain is the chair of the G8 and the president of the EU. The reality is that only politics created this dilemma and only politics can resolve it”.

MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY is a campaign about justice not charity. The coalition is calling for more aid that works better for poor people, world debt to be cancelled and poor people to be put at the centre of trade negotiations.

Bono, who was involved in the Band Aid recording and is a supporter of **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** campaign, said, “We can make extreme poverty history, I really believe that. The kind of stupid poverty where kids are dying for the lack of an immunisation that costs 20 cents, or for lack of food in a world of plenty. Don’t we want to be the generation that says no to that?”

- ends -

For further information, please contact
Bruce Whitehead at **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** on
020 7561 7614 mobile 07944 928 702
email: bruce.whitehead@actionaid.org

or

Nicky Wimble at **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** on 0207 820 6943 or 0774 578
3478 or n.wimble@comicrorelief.org.uk

White Band Celebrity Photographs

Pictures taken by Rankin of Jamelia, Busted and Travis are available on PA.

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. To download a copy of the report issued to Tony Blair earlier this week, please go to www.makepovertyhistory.org
2. For more information on sending a white band message (by card, text or email) go to www.makepovertyhistory.org
3. 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
4. The organisations that are currently working together to Make Poverty History are:

ACORD, ActionAid, ACTSA, Action on Disability and Development, African Initiatives, AMREF, African Refugee Community Health and Research, Bakers, Food & Allied Workers Union, BOND, Book Aid International, CADAni, CAFOD, CamFed, CARE International UK, Catholic Institute for International Relations, Christian Aid, Church of England, Church of Scotland Board of World Mission, Comic Relief, Commonwealth Human Ecology Council, CONCERN, DATA, Development Education Association, Development in Action, FARM-Africa, Find Your Feet, Garden Africa, Grow Up Free From Poverty Coalition, Harvest Help, Health Unlimited, Help the Aged, IMPACT Foundation, interact Worldwide, Intermediate Technology Development Group, International Care & Relief, International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS, International HIV/AIDS Alliance, International Rescue Committee – UK, iThemba AIDS Foundation, International Service, Jubilee Debt Campaign, Jubilee Scotland, Justice & Peace Scotland, Leicestershire AIDS Support Services, LEPRO, The Leprosy Mission, Mercy Corps Scotland, Methodist Church, Methodist Relief & Development Fund, Micro Loan Foundation, Musicians Union, National Board of Catholic Women of England and Wales, NCVO, NIDOS, Ockenden International, One World Action, One World Week, Opportunity International United Kingdom, OXFAM, Peace Child Charitable Trust, People & Planet, Plan UK, POWER International, Rainbow Development in Africa, RESULTS, Save the Children, SCIAF, Sense International, Sight Savers International, Skillshare International, SPEAK Network, St Mathew's Children's Fund, Stop AIDS Campaign, Student Partnerships Worldwide, Tearfund, The Fairtrade Foundation, The International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS, The Leprosy Mission, The Mother's Union, TIDAL, Tobin Tax Network, Tools For Self Reliance, Tourism Concern, Trade Justice Movement, Traidcraft Exchange, Trocaire, Tropical Health and Education Trust, TUC, UK Coalition of People Living with HIV and AIDS, UNAIS, UNICEF UK, UNISON, Unitarian & Free Christian Churches, United Nations Association-UK, United Reformed Church, Village AiD, Viva Network, Voluntary Services Overseas, War on Want, Wateraid, Welsh Centre for International Affairs, Welsh Overseas Aid Group, World Development Movement, World Emergency Relief, World Medical Fund, World Vision UK, Y Care International