



Picture This: We Can End Poverty

Working globally to achieve the Millennium Development Goals



PRESS RELEASE

UNDP launches “We Can End Poverty” photo contest

Antonio Banderas judge; winning images to be exhibited during world leaders’ Millennium Development Goals Summit in September

Johannesburg, 14 May 2010— The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership with Olympus Corporation and the Agence France-Presse (AFP) Foundation, launched the second annual *Picture This* photo contest today in Johannesburg, South Africa. The contest, titled *Picture This: We Can End Poverty*, seeks to show the inspirational work that is being done in many countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), eight goals agreed on by world leaders to halve extreme poverty by 2015.

“Through the photo contest this year we want to show that the MDGs can be reached, even in the poorest and most disadvantaged countries,” said Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator, at the launch of the contest. “We hope that the contest will bring much needed attention to the quickly approaching deadline for achieving the MDGs, and motivate people and governments in developed and developing countries to redouble their efforts in the fight against extreme poverty.”

This year’s competition is particularly important, as it coincides with the UN Summit on the Millennium Development Goals to be held in September in New York. The Summit will bring together world leaders to boost progress against poverty and commit to a concrete action agenda to achieve the MDGs by 2015.

UNDP Goodwill Ambassador and internationally-acclaimed actor Antonio Banderas is one of five judges who will choose the winning photos. “We are at a defining moment in the fight against poverty. The challenges of achieving the MDGs cannot be overcome by a single person, organization or government. All sectors of society need to be mobilized in a call to action for the big push to 2015. This photo contest is the type of initiative that will bring all these different groups together in order to bring attention to the urgency of achieving the MDGs.”

An exhibit featuring the winning photos will be held during the Summit to put a human face on the MDGs. The contest is open to amateur and professional photographers worldwide. Contestants may submit up to three different photographs, focusing on progress towards one of the eight MDGs, preferably in a developing country.

The eight goals are:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary education
- Promote gender equality and empower women

- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Develop a global partnership for development

The deadline for entries is by midnight EST 16 July, 2010.

The other four judges who will choose the winning photos are professional photojournalists: Alexandra Avakian and John Isaac, both award winning photographers, as well as Mark Garten, Head of UN Photo and Paola Messana, AFP Bureau Chief in New York.

In addition to three winners in each of the professional and amateur categories, there will be one “People’s Choice” award. The winner of this category will be selected by the public, who can vote on the photo entries displayed on the *Picture This* website. The top rated three photos in each of the professional and amateur categories, as well as the “People’s Choice” winning image will be displayed on the sponsors’ websites and shown in at least two exhibitions in Japan and the United States.

The first prize winners in the professional and amateur categories and the “People’s Choice” winner will be flown to an awards ceremony and launch of an exhibition in September in New York.

“The AFP Foundation is once again very pleased to support this photo contest,” said Robert Holloway, Director of the AFP Foundation. “We believe it will give an opportunity to amateur and professional photographers everywhere to show the world how ordinary people around the world are dealing with achieving their most pressing development challenges.”

President of Olympus, Tsuyoshi Kikukawa, said from Tokyo, “We hope that through this initiative, people around the world will be inspired by images showing that the simplest of actions, no matter who you are or where you live, can make a real difference in the effort to halt extreme poverty. The time has come for the world to realize that we all have a role to play to achieve the Goals, and that regardless of where we live or what we do, we all have the potential to contribute to human development in our countries, communities and villages.”

The 2009 Africa-centred *Picture This: Caring for the Earth* competition resulted in an international traveling exhibit (Geneva, Johannesburg, New York, Osaka, St Louis in Senegal, and Tokyo), and extensive media coverage for the contest itself, its winners and participants, as well as the issue of climate change and environmental degradation in Africa. [Picture This: Caring for the Earth](#).

For more on the 2010 Picture This: We Can End Poverty photo contest, visit: <http://picturethis.undp.org>

For more on the Millennium Development Goals and the September MDGs Summit, visit: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

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For more information please contact:

In Kabul: Fezeh Hosseini, Tel.: +93 (0) 20 212 4098; fezeh.hosseini@undp.org

In Tokyo: Toshiya Nishigori, Tel.: +1 81-3-5467-4875; toshiya.nishigori@undp.org

In Johannesburg: Maureen Munde, Tel.: + 27 11 6035513 or Mobile: + 27 716718734;
maureen.munde@undp.org

In New York: Sandra Macharia, Tel: + 1 212-906-5377; sandra.macharia@undp.org

Olympus Corporation: Established in 1919, Olympus manufactures and sells precision machinery and instruments for medical and healthcare, imaging and information, and industrial applications. Its core competency is Opto-digital technology, which is a fusion of traditional optical technology with advanced digital and fine processing technologies. As a global corporation Olympus recognizes its social responsibility and the necessity to bring about improvements in the quality of human life and livelihood. www.olympus.com.

The AFP Foundation was set up by Agence France-Presse in 2007 to train young photographers and reporters, especially in developing countries. It exists in the belief that free, independent and responsible media can help people make informed decisions about their lives and thus help reduce poverty, promote development and defend human rights. It seeks to raise journalists' professional standards in accordance with its code of conduct and to promote press freedom. The AFP Foundation supports efforts to improve the working conditions of journalists and the protection of those working in combat zones and other dangerous areas, especially freelance reporters and photographers. It also supports efforts to elevate the status of women in the news media. <http://fondation.afp.com/english/>

UNDP is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. We are on the ground in 166 countries, working with them on their own solutions to global and national development challenges. As they develop local capacity, they draw on the people of UNDP and our wide range of partners. www.undp.org