

LETTER TO FRIENDS AROUND THE WORLD

FORUM ON OVERCOMING EXTREME POVERTY



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- LETTER N° 112 -

UNITED IN RESPECT AND SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES!

Dear friends

Thank you all so much for your energetic participation in our October 17 theme consultation process earlier this year. Your contributions, your thoughts, your words of wisdom are very much valued and they always inspire us in preparing our annual October 17 statement:

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In serving as a bridge between the Forum members and the United Nations, we do our best to make sure that your voices are heard at the highest levels and that the theme of the global commemoration is the one chosen by you. The process is not always easy but rest assured that slowly but surely, the political leaders are starting to talk about the issues you want to talk about.

As you know, poverty as people experience it is often unknown or not well understood by the decision makers. The current poverty measures (including the multidimensional poverty index (MPI) that still only focus on income levels, education and access to basic infrastructure services like drinking water and sanitation are woefully inadequate. You have shared with us about the importance of understanding the hidden dimensions of poverty and because of our joint work, we are able to start highlighting these hidden dimensions, particularly social and institutional maltreatment experienced by people living in poverty to the decision makers and the pressing need to end it.

Our focus in 2025 will be on “ensuring respect and effective support for families” so that children and people living in poverty can eventually escape poverty. The sad reality is that no matter how hard parents try, their children experience the same deprivation and poverty can sometimes lead to family separation. Extreme

poverty, hunger and destitution may drive children into the streets or force parents to entrust their children to orphanages or to work in domestic service. In some situations, a mother may have to leave her children unsupervised while she works long hours so that she can feed her family. Poverty is not neglect and yet in some countries children are removed from their home not due to physical abuse or parental wrongdoing, but because of financial hardship and deprivation. Despite the diversity in contexts and despite all the forces separating them, experience has shown that the majority of parents and children would prefer to stay together and support one another in the face of destitution. We hope that our 2025

focus on supporting families in poverty will help recognise the enormous efforts parents make for their children and in calling for respect and effective support for families.

In the consultation a number of you rightly reminded us that there are many hard-working and well-intentioned professionals within institutions who find themselves trapped - having to conform with regulations that are counterproductive and not helpful. There are also many wonderful people in our society who want to do good. When we talk of social

and institutional maltreatment, we are not apportioning blame, we are appealing for a better understanding. October 17, after all is a day for understanding and togetherness. A day that reminds us that we all need to work together. It's a day to energise and a day to mobilise. So, please tell us what you will be doing this October 17 – share your activities and photos with us. This way we know that we are not alone. Let us be inspired by our actions all over the world from the most remote villages and hamlets to the busy global cities of New York or Paris. October 17 is our day. Together we can and we will end poverty.



Aye Aye WIN,

President of the International Committee for October 17

A WORD FROM THE TEAM

Dear friends of the Forum,

In many parts of the world, individuals, families, and entire communities fight daily to have their dignity respected. They innovate, create, and resist. They refuse to let extreme poverty define their future, and they refuse to allow others to be abandoned, judged, or forgotten because of their living conditions.

These struggles, often silent, nevertheless carry a powerful vision of humanity. It is this vision that we share through the Forum on Overcoming Extreme Poverty. It is built on the deep conviction that no human being should be excluded, and that by listening to those who live with extreme poverty every day, we can build fairer, more united, and more humane societies.

Each year, on 17 October, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, we mark a special moment to make these voices heard, to come together, and to highlight the commitment of those who, often out of the spotlight, work tirelessly to ensure that no one is left behind.

This day does not belong to us alone: it is the work of all those who, in neighbourhoods, villages, towns, slums, and refugee camps – in all places of life, as you so often remind us – take the initiative to say no to injustice and yes to dignity. In 2024, the day came alive through gatherings, artistic creations, marches, “circles of silence”, shared testimonies, and intergenerational or intercultural exchanges... Every action taken, every word spoken on that day is a light in the darkness, a reminder that solidarity is real – and enduring.

Today, just a few months before 17 October, we write to you to say how much your commitment matters. Many of you are already preparing celebrations – sometimes with limited resources, but with great creativity and tremendous courage. You know the realities of your communities; you know what touches hearts; and you know how to give voice to those who are rarely heard.

We would love to know what you are planning for 17 October 2025. This would not only help us to support you better, but also to connect different initiatives, to echo them internationally, and to show together that the struggle to overcome extreme poverty is a global one, shared across the world. Please send us your initial celebration plans as soon as possible – even if they are simple or still being developed. This will help us build a shared momentum, true to the spirit of the Forum.

We know how demanding it can be to carry out these actions. But we also know that by supporting one another, by sharing experiences, challenges, and successes, we can keep going. The Forum is a space for listening and dialogue where no one should have to struggle alone.

Thank you for your commitment, your trust, and your continued involvement. And above all, thank you for what you bring to your communities: the conviction that no one should be condemned to live in extreme poverty, and that everyone has something to say and to contribute to this world.

**With all our friendship, gratitude, and commitment at your side,
The Forum on Overcoming Extreme Poverty team**

NEWS FROM SOME PREPARATIONS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY

Celebrations organised by APROJUMAP in Kigali

The Association for the Promotion of Twinning and Friendship between Peoples (Association pour la Promotion des Jumelages et de l'Amitié entre les Peuples in French, or APROJUMAP), based in Kigali, Rwanda, is pleased to share some updates on the preparations for the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, which will be celebrated on 17 October.

Initial preparations are already well underway, in a spirit of solidarity, recognition of human dignity, and collective mobilisation. This deeply symbolic day will be an opportunity to shine a light on the tangible actions carried out with and for those living in the most vulnerable conditions.

On the day itself, the activities will begin with an outdoor mass held on the lawn at Mbazi, bringing the community together in a shared prayer for peace, social justice, and solidarity. This will be followed by a parade of APROJUMAP beneficiaries, often referred to as the "poorest of the poor", who will bear witness to their restored dignity and courageous personal journeys.

Traditional dance performances by beneficiary groups will add a joyful touch and highlight local culture as part of the celebration. A key moment will be the presentation of certificates to participants who

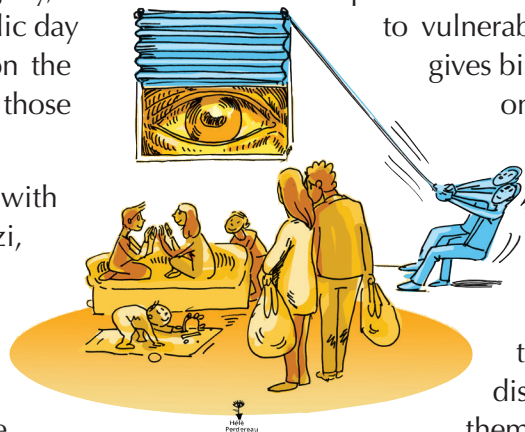
have completed their literacy training, as well as the distribution of starter kits to those who have finished vocational training, recognising efforts to build skills and promote self-reliance.

Another highlight of the day will be the symbolic repayment of livestock received through community projects, including goats and cows, locally known as Inka y'Akaguru. This expression literally means "the pillar's cow" and refers to vital support given to vulnerable families. When the first cow gives birth, part of the donation is passed on to another family in need, thus continuing a chain of solidarity and hope within the community.

The day will also include the distribution of school fees to children from extremely disadvantaged families, enabling them to access education – a key pathway out of poverty. Speeches from invited guests will punctuate the day, offering their support and encouragement for the efforts made on the ground.

Finally, the community will come together to share a moment of conviviality, in a spirit of mutual respect and solidarity.

**Cyprien U.,
Coordinator of APROJUMAP**



CELEBRATE THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 17 OCTOBER IN IRELAND

On 17 October 2025, the Irish 17 October Committee will mark 25 years of recognizing the UN day for the eradication of poverty with a special commemoration.

Gathering together at the poverty stone by the famine statues in Dublin we will listen to the stories and expertise of those with an experience of poverty. People in power and those from all walks of life will be there to listen and take heed of these words.

We will also have music, speeches and a special collective gesture.

We will reflect together on 25 years of marking the 17 October, the changes in Irish society during this time, while also looking to the future to address what urgently needs to change so that there is finally an end to persistent poverty.

We hope to have The Minister for the Department for Social Protection in attendance, with the Lord Mayor of Dublin and EX Ambassador David Donoghue Co-Facilitator of the UN negotiations on the SDGs will MC the event.

**Dann K.,
ATD Ireland National Coordination**

17 OCTOBER CELEBRATIONS IN CAEN (FRANCE)

The five associations most actively involved in recent years – ATD Fourth World, ASTI 14, Habitat et Humanisme Calvados, Cimade Caen, and Secours Catholique Caen – began meeting again in April. It became clear that all of them remain deeply concerned about issues of institutional maltreatment, such as the silence and unbearable delays from the prefecture, the need to reintroduce humanity into institutions, the need for professional training, and the importance of access to knowledge of rights at an early stage.

Last year, we chose to organise an exhibition showcasing personal stories. This year, we wanted to go a step further – keeping the focus on stories but adding three additional components:

- Documented statistics;
- A reminder of legal rights (drawing preferably from fundamental texts, but also from the Orientation Act on the Fight against Exclusion, dated 29 July 1998);
- Concrete proposals for change (clear enough to challenge institutions).

The diversity of our collective, and the different injustices faced by the various groups we work with, make it difficult to converge on a single issue. After much discussion, we decided to focus on five main themes: housing, health, education, decent work, and family life.

We are working in pairs to develop these themes across all four components. It's a significant intellectual task.

At the same time, we're also working on how to present this content. There was unanimous agreement that we wanted to do something in a public space again. We have selected a central square in Caen, and our discussions with the town council suggest there should be no issues securing the location.

To move beyond simply declaring rights – and to truly challenge passers-by, to make them think “things can change” or “I can do something about this” – we are imagining a dynamic format:

- Something like public readings or speeches delivered from small stepladders in the middle of the crowd (assuming there is a crowd!);
- A poster display, printed affordably on paper;
- A booklet to be handed out (as we did last year);
- And possibly a manifesto for people to sign.

We are still exploring how to create a more solemn moment at the end of the event – something that anchors the celebration in its history and global context, and gives guests a clear time to gather.

We had considered a partnership with the Tocqueville Media Library and had an excellent meeting with the director and his team.

However, it was clear that the calendar for October 2025 was already fully booked. That said, they were very open to collaborating for events in October 2026, and we plan to meet again at the end of October 2025 to begin working on that.

Jean V.,
ATD Fourth World in Normandy

