

17 October 2026

International Day
for the Eradication
of Poverty

**United for peace
and human rights**
Safe homes for all

<https://overcomingpoverty.org/>



LETTER TO FRIENDS AROUND THE WORLD SPECIAL EDITION 17 OCTOBER 2026

FORUM ON OVERCOMING EXTREME POVERTY



This year's theme:

"UNITED FOR PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS : SAFE HOMES FOR ALL"

Every 17 October, we unite to give a voice to those pushed furthest to the margins of society by extreme poverty. We come together globally because we believe in a world without poverty — one that leaves no one behind. It provides an opportunity to respond to Joseph Wresinski's appeal:

"WHEREVER MEN AND WOMEN ARE CONDEMNED TO LIVE IN EXTREME POVERTY, HUMAN RIGHTS ARE VIOLATED. TO COME TOGETHER TO ENSURE THAT THESE RIGHTS BE RESPECTED IS OUR SOLEMN DUTY."

On 17 October 1987, thousands of men and women gathered at the Trocadero Human Rights Plaza in Paris to honour the victims of hunger, violence and ignorance. This was the inception of the World Day for Overcoming Extreme Poverty, recognised by the UN, since 1992, as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

This year, members of the International Committee for October 17 gathered in Villarcieux, France, where they adopted a declaration reaffirming that poverty is not inevitable: it is produced by political choices, unequal power relations and institutional practices that deny people their human rights. It persists because of entrenched discrimination and disempowering systems. And it can be overcome through the co-design of policies with people living in poverty, the redistribution of power and resources, and stronger public services.

The 2026 theme, "United for Peace and Human Rights", and its focus on "Safe Homes for All", speak to something fundamental. A safe home is not only a roof. It is a place where people can live without fear, humiliation or exclusion, connected to rights, community, work, health and participation. Your October 17 commemoration makes that vision real.



HUMAN RIGHTS

«In the United Kingdom, the term 'human rights' has been stigmatized for many years. (This is done by right-wing tabloid media claiming that rights tools give advantages to terrorists and prisoners above others.) In response, a broad group of civil society here is trying to prioritise the term 'everyday rights' which applies to all economic, social and cultural rights. This is a term that helps the public to understand the link, for example, to the rights to housing and to food.» **Diana S., United Kingdom**

PEACE

«Peace comes first, so that we can live with dignity. In eastern DRC, extreme poverty means being unable to plant crops, harvest them, or send your children to school because you are constantly fleeing gunfire. 'Living with dignity' is the opposite of 'living on your knees' or 'crawling just to survive.' Rejecting poverty means demanding peace so that people can finally stand tall, look to the future, and cultivate the land without fearing for their lives. Peace is the foundation for everything else.»

Abel M., Democratic Republic of the Congo



HOMES

«A right to a home is to have not only a house to live in but also a safe place to live, assurance of long-term permanency, with access to the basic things such as clean water, work, electricity, and free from harassment, etc.

Housing is just a part of the whole. The government may provide housing but not permanently, nor has access to other basic rights.

What obstacles prevent people living in poverty from accessing a right to a home? The financialization/commercialization of housing; the complexities of acquiring a house due to legal and financial requirements and of the redtaping from the government.»

Ferdinand L., Philippines/United States

ENVIRONMENT

«I believe that having a physical home alone is not enough to live with dignity. Social housing projects developed over recent decades have often overlooked other rights that are essential to everyday well-being, such as access to clean water, green spaces, and the natural resources that provide good health and nutritious food.

Day after day, we see housing developments destroying nature, cutting down trees, and damaging the environment—at the expense of the air we breathe and the food we eat.»

Elvira C., Colombia



**Tell us about your projects for October 17!
Share them with us by post mail or e-mail, or by adding them directly on our Forum on Overcoming Extreme Poverty website.
Good luck with your preparations!**

The Forum on Overcoming Extreme Poverty is part of ATD Fourth World International but those who join it, do maintain their own status and identity.

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