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**AT MONTREAL MILLENNIUM MEETING, UN MILLENNIUM CAMPAIGN URGES CANADA TO LIVE UP TO ITS COMMITMENTS TO END GLOBAL POVERTY, AS NATION ASSUMES GLOBAL LEADERSHIP ROLE IN 2010**

*As host to the G-8 Summit and 2010 Winter Olympics, Canada – one of the world's richest countries but lower aid donors -- is urged to seize historic opportunity to reclaim leadership in the fight against global poverty and for the Millennium Development Goals*

As host to the 2010 G-8 summit and Winter Olympics, Canada will be in the global spotlight next year. At this week's [Montreal Millennium meeting](#), the UN Millennium Campaign is urging the country to use the high-profile opportunity of the year 2010 to fulfill its commitment to the globally-agreed target of providing 0.7 percent of Gross National Income for aid to developing countries – a target first outlined by former Canadian Prime Minister and Nobel Peace Prize winner Lester Bowles Pearson.

"Canada is one of the richest countries in the world, yet in direct contradiction to the perceptions and wishes of its own citizens, the country ranks as one of the lower aid donors," said Salil Shetty, Director of the United Nations Millennium Campaign.

"Canada gives a meager 0.32 percent of Gross National Income to developing countries, despite its promises to allocate 0.7 percent based upon the globally-agreed standard proposed by its own former Prime Minister. As host to the G-8 and winter Olympics next year, Canada has a responsibility to provide global leadership. The country must take action to meet its own aid commitments now if it is to be in a position to lead on these issues next year."

Canada has a long and proud tradition as a generous and compassionate country. The Millennium Campaign applauds the commitment Canada has made to double aid to Africa by 2010 and the country's increased aid levels last year. However, the Campaign is urging Canada to announce a five-year timetable to allocate 0.7 percent of Gross National Income for aid and to prioritize aid for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly for the world's poorest countries and peoples. The Campaign is also urging the country to demand that other G-8 countries meet their commitments to aid and to the Millennium Development Goals.

According to recently-released OECD data, Canada provides the 16<sup>th</sup> lowest

percentage of Gross National Income to aid amongst the world's 22 richest nations – below even much smaller economies such as Ireland and Switzerland. At 0.32 percent of Gross National Income, the country's aid allocation in 2007 was even lower than its contribution in 1969.

2010 can be Canada's year. In October of last year, more than 116 million people -- nearly 2 percent of the world's population -- participated in "Stand Up and Take Action" to demand that world leaders deliver on their promises to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. This year, "Stand Up and Take Action" will take place on October 16-18, 2009. The global movement in support of the Millennium Development Goals is growing. We refuse to stay seated in the face of extreme poverty and broken promises to end it.

For more information about the campaign for the Millennium Development Goals in Canada, visit [www.makepovertyhistory.ca](http://www.makepovertyhistory.ca).

For more information about the UN Millennium Campaign in North America, visit <http://www.endpoverty2015.org/news/region/northamerica>.

**Salil Shetty, Director of the UN Millennium Campaign, is available for interviews in Montreal on April 15 and 16. For more information or to arrange an interview, contact:**

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**Note to editors:**

The UN Millennium Campaign was established by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in 2002. The Campaign supports citizens' efforts to hold their governments to account for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Millennium Development Goals were adopted by 189 world leaders from rich and poor countries, as part of the Millennium Declaration which was signed in 2000. These leaders agreed to achieve the Goals by 2015. Our premise is simple: we are the first generation that can end poverty and we refuse to miss this opportunity. For more information, visit [www.endpoverty2015.org](http://www.endpoverty2015.org).