

Manifesto: international action to defeat poverty

1. **Introduce and develop schemes to fulfil fundamental right to social security** (Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). To be implemented by introducing or extending social security and especially public provision of social insurance and/or basic income for all citizens.
2. **Legally enforce right to adequate standard of living** (Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). To be implemented by adoption of state-defined minimum earnings in conjunction with state-defined minimum cash benefits for those not in paid work, including the equivalent value of benefits (goods and services) in kind.
3. **Introduce or strengthen legal right to child benefit** (Articles 25 and 27 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child). Provision to be made for every child of a monthly cash benefit, or the equivalent in value included of goods and services, which is universally adequate, to surmount material and social deprivation.
4. **All developed countries to adopt legally binding minimum level of 1% GNP overseas development assistance.** To be introduced first by the EU, immediately in the case of some member states, and in stages by the poorer member states, and extended to all OECD countries.
5. **Establish universal right of access locally to publicly provided basic health care and education services** (with reference to Articles 21, 25 and 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but also such objectives as agreed by governments at the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development). The purpose here is to clarify and give tangible support for the provision in all countries of a network of geographically accessible institutions and services, and check annually about introduction and coverage. National plans to be underwritten jointly by governments and the UN. Easy access to safe drinking water and sanitation must be included in the provision within a defined number of years of “equal access to public service” (Article 21).

6. **Provide temporary and permanent public housing units for homeless people and people living in seriously substandard accommodation.** The aim must be to prioritise the housing needs of the poorest 10% of the population by means of national and local ownership and administration of minimally adequate standard accommodation. The needs of immigrant, asylum-seeking and resident families must be balanced fairly in the programme.
7. **The UN with other international agencies and national governments to agree action plan for staged greater equalisation of resources within and between countries** (with particular reference to Commitment 2 of the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development). Just as the 1945 target of 0.7% GNP for overseas development assistance on the part of the developed countries will be replaced by a 1.0% target (see Manifesto 4), every government will adopt an upper limit of income inequality; for example, a standard of 0.4 on the Gini coefficient.
8. **Extend measures for full employment and set up an International Full Employment Agency** (Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). Where unemployment and under-employment is most severe and extensive, the UN – in agreement with governments – must devise plans to curb the scale of job losses and promote alternative employment. This will be funded, along with child benefit (see Manifesto 3) by the new international financial transactions tax (see Manifesto 12). Action against specific violations of human rights, like the eradication of child labour and of the abuse of street children, will be a key part of the new agency's role.
9. **Agree a new operational specification of fair trade.** Representatives of each world region to agree the terms of a framework plan, to be endorsed by a majority of the UN and agreed in stages over 10 years. This will necessarily involve removal of protective agricultural subsidies in rich countries to allow fair trade and the subsequent removal of tariffs and other barriers to trade on the part of poor countries. Domestic food production and a fair price standard for food commodities produced in the developing countries to become rules operated by the World Trade Organisation.
10. **Introduce new international company law.** The priority must be the introduction of a new international law requiring transnational corporations (TNCs) to curb anti-social activities and curb excessively high profits from poor countries.

11. **Rebuild and/or strengthen tax administration.** Taxation systems to be introduced and strengthened where necessary, and to be answerable to representatives of national electorates, who should have independent powers to monitor policies and outcomes. Monitoring by an independent international inspectorate will also become necessary.
12. **Introduce an international financial transactions tax to be administered by the UN.** In the first instance a tax at a rate of 0.2% would be payable on all currency exchanges at banks and currency exchange offices. Half of the gross revenue would be administered by the UN to subsidise the establishment of child benefit in developing countries.
13. **Reconstitute international financial agencies.** Membership to be automatically open to all countries, funded by an agreed percentage of national GDP, for example 0.3%, with equal regional representation on governing councils and committees, and five-year circulation of chairmanship. Terms of reference to be subject every five years to majority vote at the UN.
14. **Transnational prospectus to be agreed.** Each TNC will be required to draw up policy statements both for employees (including employees in subsidiary companies), and for countries in which the TNC has operations of significant scale. The former to include specification of employment conditions and rights for all types of employees. The latter policy statement to be subject to approval by a consultative body representing the TNC, the national electorate in the 'headquarter' country and the governments of the countries from which overseas profits are derived (one third representation each).
15. **Further democratisation of the UN.** Representation of populous countries, and of the poorest 100 countries, to be increased on UN committees, especially powerful economic and social committees. The objective will be to progress in stages to equal representation of regions by population size.
16. **To establish strong regional policy alliances.** Collaborative working relationships between regional or global non-government organisations (NGOs) and governments must be introduced and strengthened, as part of improved democratisation. The UN must play a leading role, and the provision of a legal framework is one option.
17. **To agree an international poverty line.** An international poverty line that defines a threshold of income (including the value of income in kind) – ordinarily required in different countries to surmount material and social

deprivation – must be a priority. The defined line will be subject to demonstrable scientific, not politically convenient, consensus.

18. **To monitor the success of anti-poverty policies.** Further steps to be taken to fulfil the agreements of the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development of 1995, and to regularise the publication of annual anti-poverty reports by governments, but also by the UN and the other principal international agencies. This process must involve regular evaluation of the quantitative contribution of different national and cross-national policies to reduce poverty.

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