



PRESS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES,
LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

GLOBAL MEDIA COMPACT TO BOOST AWARENESS OF DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES FACING WORLD'S POOREST COUNTRIES

United Nations, 25 October 2006: In a bid to create greater awareness of the challenges facing the world's 50 poorest nations, the United Nations envoy for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Anwarul K. Chowdhury today launched the 'Global Media Compact' in partnership with the media company, MediaGlobal at a gathering of Ambassadors of UN Member Countries and the media at the United Nations Secretariat in New York.

The 'Compact' aims to encourage international and local media companies to increase their coverage of developmental issues in vulnerable countries through innovative media initiatives. A Web-based Development Channel **mediaglobalTV.org** was also launched on the occasion.

Mr. Chowdhury appealed to editors and owners of newspapers to feature stories that would raise international awareness on issues of poverty, disease and hunger in Least Developed Countries.

“It is unfortunate that the voice of the LDCs continues to get marginalized. There is, indeed, a need for increased focus on the everyday challenges facing millions of impoverished people in the LDCs. Their needs ought to be placed at the forefront of the global development agenda,” he said.

“A Global Media Compact would bring together editors of newspapers to advance the cause of human development and help their readership understand the suffering of the poor,” said Nosh Nalavala, Executive Director of MediaGlobal.

“Today much of the media offers an unbalanced coverage of developing countries in Africa and Asia. With this Compact we hope to engage powerful media organizations as partners,” he added.

MediaGlobal is one of the world's leading providers of information on global development issues facing vulnerable countries of Africa and Asia. MediaGlobal's message reaches leaders of developed countries, the global media, policymakers in donor countries, non-governmental organizations and key personnel in the United Nations Secretariat, its agencies and managers in the field worldwide.

SEVEN POINT PROGRAMME

Today, the Under-Secretary-General asked that major media companies commit themselves to expand public knowledge and understanding about the suffering of the Least Developed Countries. Specific efforts that media companies are encouraged to undertake include:

- Making alleviation of poverty, disease, and hunger in poor and vulnerable countries a vital corporate priority by media organizations.
- Featuring stories and devoting primary space to articles and editorials about development issues.
- Focusing on issues of poverty, disease, and hunger in poor countries and providing current coverage.
- Reporting stories without bias or prejudice about these vulnerable countries and dealing with the constraints of these countries in a fair manner.
- Training reporters and correspondents to increase their knowledge of development issues and encouraging them to report on human-interest stories.
- Supporting the development of films, documentaries, web sites, and multimedia programs related to poverty, disease, and hunger initiatives.
- Encouraging newspapers, newswire agencies, broadcasters, and networks to make development content available to other media outlets without a rights fee.

The Global Media Compact will be a “network” of newspapers contributing to informed perceptions of these vulnerable countries to the rest of the world. MediaGlobal will work towards increasing the level of media participation and bring in media leaders to work towards this initiative.

The Compact is not a regulatory initiative. It relies on editors and broadcasters to recognize the constraints of poor people in vulnerable countries and give coverage in their respective media - print or electronic.

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