

A Tsunami of poverty sweeps the globe. Millions of children are affected. At last world leaders are to come together to discuss the rescue operation. They ask the UN to set out a plan of action. They agree to meet at the most senior level. But they warn that expectations should not be raised too high and that change will take some time.

The children cannot wait. For every 3 seconds that action is delayed, another child will die of easily preventable causes; every day that passes 100 million of the poorest children will miss another day at primary school; and every night that the diplomats adjourn for another dinner on expenses, 300 million children go to bed hungry for yet another night.

'But the Children Cannot Wait', a briefing written by the convening committee of the Global Movement for Children for the debates of 2005, sets out some of the key decisions that governments must make this year if they really want to make child poverty history including:

1. Drop all fees and charges for children's education and basic health services, financed by increased domestic and donor resources for health. Include children in national and international HIV/AIDS treatment targets.
2. Meet the UN recommendation to spend at least 20 per cent of public budgets on basic social services, and be transparent about how this has benefited children.
3. Institutionalise, through legislation if necessary, the participation of children and young people in the making and implementation of policies that will affect them, including poverty reduction strategies.
4. Cancel 100 per cent of the bilateral and multilateral debt of the poorest countries where relief is needed to enable them to give their children access to schooling, health care and new hope.
5. Provide at least \$50 billion in aid immediately (in addition to existing aid budgets) to help the most disadvantaged children and accelerate progress towards the MDGs. Set binding

timetables in 2005 to ensure that the 0.7 per cent of GDP target is met in all donor countries by 2010.

6. Actively engage in building basic services for children in fragile states and conflict-affected countries.

7. Agree and implement a trading system that makes trade part of the solution to overcoming child poverty, not part of the problem. No child should have to work and abandon their education, for example, because rich country subsidies leave the world's poorest farm families on the edge of survival. No child should die or be orphaned because trade rules make life-saving medicine unaffordable.

Read 'But the Children Cannot Wait' [here](#).