



## Country Backgrounds

### **United States of America**

- The U.S. government has its own organization that strives to reduce poverty around the world called the US Agency for International Development (USAID).
- USAID tries to eradicate extreme poverty by helping communities "feed, power, and educate themselves" through many different projects:
- The Feed the Future initiative brings together scientists, companies, and impoverished countries to help decrease poverty and malnutrition.
- The New Alliance for Food Security initiative has helped raise over \$ 3.5 billion from companies around the world to invest in African farms to help lift 50 million people out of poverty within 10 years.
- The Room to Learn initiative aims to improve the reading skills of over 100 million primary school children so they can find good jobs later on.
- Though the United States is the largest aid donor in dollar terms, in 2012 it gave just 0.2% of its gross national income, far short of its 0.7% pledge
- "We believe we can succeed because we've seen the progress made toward eradicating extreme poverty in recent years, in part because of the UN Millennium Development Goals. I don't have to quote the statistics to you: more than 600 million people moved out of extreme poverty in just 15 years." - Ambassador Samantha Power, August 27, 2014

### **United Kingdom**

- The UK government focuses on food and nutrition in their strategy to eradicate extreme poverty around the world.
- The UK joined the "Scaling Up Nutrition" movement, along with 33 developing countries, which helps countries get access to nutritious food for their citizens.
- The prime minister of the UK has also led an international initiative to meet the World Health Organization (WHO)'s goal of reducing the percentage of children who are stunted by malnutrition by 40% by 2015.
- The United Kingdom met for the first time in 2013 its pledge to give 0.7% of its gross national income in development aid.
- "Over a billion people still live on less than \$1.25 a day. Getting to the point where no one at all is that poor is no longer a pipe dream. It can and should be one of the great achievements of our time. And it means that by 2030 everyone will have what we in Britain already consider our birthright – drinking water, electricity, healthcare and a place at school." - Prime Minister David Cameron, 5/26/2013

### **Nigeria**

- Nigeria has many natural resources, including oil, which have helped boost its economy. However, political corruption has slowed economic progress and contributed to extreme poverty of its citizens.
- In Nigeria, most food is grown by small farms and it is difficult to store and process this food. This has led to widespread malnutrition and poverty.
- In 2008, Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Agriculture started a National Food Security Programme, to make food more affordable for all Nigerians. The programme is designed to increase food growth by shifting away from old methods of farming and using new, more effective ones.



- "Nigeria is not a poor country. Nigerians are the most travelled people. There is no country you go that you will not see Nigerians. The GDP of Nigeria is over half a trillion dollars and the economy is growing at close to 7 per cent." - President Goodluck Jonathan, May 1, 2014

### **Albania**

- In Albania, over 40% of young people are unemployed because they lack workplace skills and education, which contributes to extreme poverty.
- In 2009, the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, along with the UN Development Programme (UNDP), started a project aimed to improve youth employment opportunities in three regions with the highest levels of unemployment.
- The program targets young people with disabilities, who usually have the least access to jobs.
- "Poverty and extreme poverty in Albania had increased in recent years. Some 14.3 per cent of the population now had a low income. The population living in extreme poverty was 2.2 per cent and comprised both urban and rural populations. The capital Tirana had experienced a significant increase in poverty levels." - Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 11/6/2013

### **Mauritania**

- Mauritania is a very poor, desert nation whose GDP (gross domestic product) is among the lowest in Africa.
- Since the sun is so strong in Mauritania, the government is focusing on ways to use solar energy to produce more food and reduce poverty.
- A recent project has helped 300 women learn how to build and use solar ovens. This strategy helps to empower women and also reduce hunger and poverty in their communities.
- "The increase of absolute poverty, especially in the most destitute parts of society, made it difficult for developing countries to reach the Millennium Development Goals as their deadline approached. Conditions, such as decreases in overseas development assistance, volatility of commodity prices and increases in death rates of newborns and mothers, had devastating consequences on the populations of developing countries." - H.E. Mr. Hamady Ould Hamady, Minister for Foreign Affairs, 9/27/11

### **Democratic Republic of Congo**

- Despite being rich in valuable minerals like coltan (used in electronic devices), the DRC is one of the most impoverished and politically corrupt nations in the world. Most Congolese people are still living in extreme poverty.
- The ongoing civil war in the DRC has claimed 3 million lives so far due to direct violence and malnutrition.
- The fighting is fueled by small militias around the country who all want control of the country's mineral resources.
- The DRC government is working with the UN to implement farming projects that will use cattle to do the work that people had traditionally done, specifically women, like transporting food to the market.
- By providing relief for women in these roles, the DRC can improve life in its poorest communities and women can be empowered to take other jobs and contribute to the economy in other ways.
- "All together, we must safeguard our territorial sovereignty and integrity, as well as peace, to break with the Congo of old, synonymous with wars and extreme poverty." - President Joseph Kabila, July 16, 2006

### **Cambodia**



- Cambodia is no longer in need of significant foreign aid from developed countries. It is rich in natural resources and has a large garment industry which employs nearly half a million people.
- However, political corruption is rampant in Cambodia, so about a third of the population still lives on less than \$1 per day.
- Most of the Cambodian workforce is employed by rice farming, specifically along the Mekong River.
- In 2012 the government approved the construction of a dam that would increase hydroelectric power along the river to help increase rice yield.
- "From a nation whose entire population once faced abject poverty and hunger after emerging from protracted wars and genocide in 1979, Cambodia now has the number of its people living below national poverty line drop steadily from 47.8% in 2007 to 19.8% in 2011 based on a redefined approach of measurement. Therefore, Cambodia is well on track if not well ahead in attaining its poverty reduction goal of 19.5%." - Sea Kosa, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Cambodia, October 1, 2013

### China

- China has the second largest economy in the world, having enjoyed remarkable economic growth over the last 30 years.
- The economic boom has not reached many of the rural parts of China, so there is a large disparity in wealth between urban and rural Chinese.
- Many rural dwellers are from ethnic minority groups and more than 40 million of them are still living in extreme poverty.
- The government has encouraged projects that help bring traditional handicrafts from these minority groups to an international market, helping them start successful businesses.
- "Poverty is the main factor that impedes the development of countries and causes conflicts and crises. The international community should continue where the MDGs have left off, set the total eradication of poverty as the core task of the post-2015 development agenda, encourage countries to strive for inclusive development, eliminate inequality and advance economic, social and environmental development in a balanced manner." - Ambassador Liu Jieyi, Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, July 8, 2014

### Argentina

- Argentina has one of the world's largest economies, although it suffered through a severe economic collapse in 2001 which left more than half the population in poverty.
- Argentina received an important loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and has slowly been recovering since then.
- Unemployment is still high, though a special government program helped employ nearly 2 million people after the collapse in 2001. This helped decrease the poverty rate from 9.9 percent that year to 4.5 percent in 2005.
- "Since the sovereign default in the year 2001, which was also the largest in our history, Argentina has renegotiated 93% of its debt with the holders of Argentine bonds and has, at the same time, experienced record growth even in the last year. After the countercyclical measures that we adopted in 2009 and late 2008, we have achieved 9% growth in our economic activities in the last 12 months and have brought down the unemployment rate to 7.9%. We have also managed to further reduce our rates of poverty and abject poverty to unparalleled levels in our country." - President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, September 25, 2010



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## Bangladesh

- Bangladesh is one of the world's most densely populated countries, which contributes to its high rate of extreme poverty.
- However, Bangladesh has halved its poverty over the last 20 years by focusing on reducing population growth and increasing access to education.
- The country also is trying to industrialize in order to attract foreign investors in the manufacturing and energy sectors.
- "Against the odds, Bangladesh lifted 16 million people out of poverty in the last 10 years and also reduced inequality; that is a rare and remarkable achievement." - Johannes Zutt, World Bank Country Director for Bangladesh, 6/20/13