

# Can the Rich Afford to Help the Poor ?

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Published July 06, 2008

<http://janebye.blogspot.com/2008/07/can-rich-afford-to-help-poor.html>

This is the title of Chapter 15 in Jeffrey Sachs' book *The End of Poverty*. It was written in 2005 but I finally read it recently! He talks about the goals to cut poverty in half by the year 2015 and to end extreme poverty by 2025. I was shocked to learn that if the "rich world" or developed countries would only contribute .7 percent of their GNP, extreme world poverty could be ended. Now, he is just talking about extreme poverty, not the many variations in living circumstances that we may use to define poverty in general. But STILL! .7%! In fact, most countries have already made this commitment, however, the US has not kept its promise to pitch in its part. How sad is that? I can't condense or summarize this book in a paragraph or two but it is very interesting reading if you want to learn more about his take on the causes of poverty and what can be done to alleviate it. His point is "the Millenium Development Goals can be financed within the bounds of the official development assistance that the donor countries have already promised." In other words, it wouldn't take anything over and above that which we have already SAID we would do. Why will we not just DO IT?

At the time the book was written, Sachs states, "the US spends as much in Iraq for two weeks of support for the war (about \$2.5 billion) as it does for an ENTIRE YEAR of economic development assistance in Africa."

Here are some websites with more info and ideas about what we can each do as individuals:

- [www.standagainstopoverty.org](http://www.standagainstopoverty.org)
- [www.one.org](http://www.one.org)
- [www.worldforworld.org](http://www.worldforworld.org)
- [www.endpoverty2015.org](http://www.endpoverty2015.org)

As a happy, healthy person who is not struggling to put food on my table or to heat my house and clothe my body, I feel that I do have a responsibility to take action to help those who may not even have a house or a table, much less food and heat. We have many blessings that we take for granted every day.