

# **Brown: We are failing the world's poorest countries**

**By Andrew Grice, Political Editor in New York**

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Gordon Brown declared a "global emergency" yesterday as he launched a major new campaign to tackle poverty, ill health and poor education in the developing world.

Launching his first major foreign policy initiative since becoming prime minister, he admitted that world leaders had failed to live up to their promises to solve the crisis in the poorest nations.

His "wake-up call" won the backing of 12 other leaders, including President George Bush, and the bosses of 20 global companies, including Microsoft's chairman, Bill Gates. The campaign, to be run through the UN, will be based on a new partnership between governments, the private sector and faith and pressure groups.

It will mark a shift away from traditional financial aid to a new focus on improving health and education systems and economies. It also marks a departure from the annual summits of G8 leaders which, despite the success of campaigns such as Make Poverty History, Mr Brown believes have failed to make world leaders deliver on their pledges.

Unveiling his new "moral alliance" at the UN in New York yesterday, Mr Brown said the world was not going to hit the eight Millennium Development Goals it agreed in 2000, including a commitment to halve global poverty by 2015. He said that this generation must not go down as the one that "betrayed" its promises.

The Prime Minister said: "Seven years on, it is already clear that our pace is too slow, our direction too uncertain, our vision at risk." The goal of halving infant mortality by 2015 would not be met until 2050, while the target of ensuring primary education for every child by 2015 would at best be achieved by 2100.

"The calendar says we are halfway from 2000 to 2015. But the reality is that we are a million miles away from success," he said. "We cannot allow our promises that became pledges to descend into just aspirations, and then wishful thinking, and then only words that symbolise broken promises.

"If 30,000 children died needlessly and avoidably every day in America or Britain we would call it an emergency. And an emergency is what it is." He said the scale of the challenge was such that "we cannot leave it to some other time".

Mr Brown said: "I want to summon the greatest coalition of conscience in pursuit of the greatest of causes ... " He said he wanted to mobilise "people power", urging citizens to be "responsible consumers" and "active citizens".

Mr Brown held talks with Ban Ki-moon, the UN secretary general, their second meeting since he became Prime Minister last month.

It emerged last night that Mr Brown held a meeting with Bill Clinton, the former US president, only hours after saying farewell to Mr Bush on Monday. Mr Brown discussed world problems for 45 minutes with Mr Clinton at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York, where he stayed before his speech.

Brown aides, who did not tell the media about the Clinton meeting, denied the talks were a signal that the Prime Minister was privately hoping for a Democratic win in next year's US presidential election. They were at pains to point out that Mr Clinton was not accompanied by his wife, Hillary, a front-runner in the race for the Democratic Party's nomination.