

Transparency International and poverty fighter Geldof join forces

Berlin, 13 February 2006 --- Transparency International (TI) and Sir Bob Geldof, a leader of the global fight against extreme poverty, met today in Berlin to strategise on how to hold the Group of Eight nations accountable for implementing their commitments - made at last year's Gleneagles Summit - to ensure that development assistance reaches those in desperate need.

In a meeting today with the staff of Transparency International, Geldof announced that he would urge British Prime Minister Tony Blair to appoint Peter Eigen, founder and former Chair of Transparency International, to a small group of influential individuals who would take on the mantle of monitoring the G-8's progress in fulfilling its commitments.

Eigen stated, "Today we have started a dialogue between a champion of the global fight against poverty and the worldwide organisation at the vanguard of the anti-corruption movement. This cooperation has the potential to save millions of lives and improve the quality of life for millions more."

Blair's 2005 Commission on Africa Report foresaw the creation of a committee of two influential figures to monitor the delivery of development assistance. Geldof and DATA, the civil society organisation founded by activist and pop singer Bono, advocate creation of an independent monitoring group with six or seven high-profile members, people "who cannot be bought". It is now essential, Geldof said, to focus on the Gleneagles commitment to fighting poverty, stating, "It will not be possible to beat poverty without fighting corruption."

Geldof said that the committee must "have an understanding of corruption and how it works", and that if a massive rise in aid flows does occur, structures would need to be in place to ensure that assistance gets to those who need it. Eigen's role on the committee will bring his considerable knowledge and decades of expertise in fighting corruption to this important task.

Cobus de Swardt, TI's Director of Global Programmes, stated, "Corruption is a major obstacle in the reduction of poverty. In monitoring the Group of Eight's follow-through on Gleneagles, this independent committee will hold them accountable for turning their words into actions."

Also discussed was the important role of civil society and, in particular, TI's national chapters in the wider processes of monitoring delivery of anti-corruption commitments.