



United Nations Development Programme

PRESS RELEASE

Antonio Banderas appointed as UNDP Goodwill Ambassador

***World renowned actor to advocate for ending poverty, empowering women
and protecting the environment***

Geneva/ New York, 17 March 2010—The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) today announced the appointment of Spanish actor Antonio Banderas as Goodwill Ambassador for the fight against poverty. In his new role as an advocate for the poor, Antonio Banderas will set his sights on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a set of eight globally agreed targets that seek to halve world poverty by 2015 by combating hunger, disease, illiteracy, environment degradation and discrimination against women.

“Poverty robs us of our potential as a people, preventing us from being all that we can be,” said Banderas. “This is why it is so important to mobilize all of our efforts to defeat it, especially if today we have the knowledge, the tools and the resources to do it.” Banderas said he will work with UNDP to spur action at all levels of society in pursuit of the MDGs with a particular focus on Africa and Latin America.

Banderas will also raise awareness globally of the activities of the MDG Achievement Fund, an international cooperation mechanism whose aim is to accelerate progress on the MDGs. Established in December 2006 with a generous contribution of €528 million Euros (\$US710M) from the Spanish Government to the United Nations system, the MDG-F supports national governments, local authorities and citizen organizations in their efforts to tackle poverty and inequality.

UNDP Administrator, Helen Clark said she looks forward to Antonio Banderas raising awareness globally on issues related to combatting poverty, particularly the MDGs. “UNDP is pleased to have Antonio join our group of Goodwill Ambassadors,” Miss Clark said. “His proven commitment to the causes of the less fortunate makes him an ideal advocate for our work.”

Banderas, who is a passionate football fan, said he is thrilled to join sports champions and UNDP Goodwill Ambassadors Didier Drogba, Ronaldo and Zinedine Zidane in their work with the organization. Other UNDP Goodwill Ambassadors include tennis star Maria Sharapova, Japanese actress Misako Kono and Crown Prince Khaakon Magnus of Norway.

Banderas was born in Màlaga, Spain, and is a much acclaimed actor, writer, singer and producer. His films include *Assassins*, *Evita*, *Interview with the Vampire*, *Philadelphia*, *the Mask of Zorro*, and *Mariachi*. Banderas will soon appear with Josh Brolin, Anthony Hopkins, Naomi Watts and Freida Pinto in in a new Woody Allen film and is concurrently writing, directing and producing a film about Boabdil (Abu Abdullah Muhammad XII), the last Muslim ruler of Granada, Spain.

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