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**SECTIONS**

- Front Page
- News
- Sports
- Opinion
- Arts & Entertainment
- Basketball Preview 2004
- Columbia 250
- Manhattanville Expansion
- 125 Years Of Spectator

**SEARCH**

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SPECTATOR

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- Classifieds
- Advertising
- Subscribe
- About Us
- Archive

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- Wireless Services

**FEATURE SECTIONS**

**C250 COVERAGE**

>> [Top 250 Columbians](#)

**WEST HARLEM EXPANSION**

>> [An interactive guide to Columbia's plan to expand its campus northward.](#)



## News

### Sachs' UN Commission Tackles Global Poverty

*Earth Institute Director Jeffrey Sachs Struggles to Put Millennium Goals on Track for 2015 Deadline*

By Amanda Erickson  
*Columbia Daily Spectator*  
October 20, 2004

If Columbia's Jeffrey Sachs sometimes seems as if he has the weight of the world on his shoulders, it's because he does. As the head of the United Nations Millennium Project, he is in charge of coordinating the group creating a plan to reconstruct the way the world deals with poverty and suffering.

In 2000, the U.N. General Assembly gathered to write the Millennium Treaty, a document that describes the improvements that the world must make in the new millennium. The treaty set goals for tackling poverty, hunger, lack of education, discrimination against women, illiteracy, disease, and environmental degradation.

To take a more pro-active approach to realizing the Treaty's goals by 2015, Kofi Annan established the Millenium Project in 2002.

The project was established because, as Erin Torwbridge, the Project's communications director noted, not much had been done at the point to achieve the Treaty's goals. "The Secretary General realized if the world was to get on track, pretty dramatic action had to be taken quickly," she said.

Annan invited Professor Jeffrey Sachs, director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, to lead the project. Sachs spent the next three years bringing together scholars from all over the world to do research in the areas of poverty, hunger, economic development, gender equality, environmental sustainability, disease control, and improved technology. They will release a report of their findings in January to the U.N. General Assembly.

Many within the international community envision this report as the single most important document in re-organizing the way we fight global poverty.

"[This project is important] because there is nobody else doing it," Trowbridge said. She hopes the plan will allow the world to combat poverty better, "enabling the world and the U.N. to step back and re-orient."

Sachs also highlighted the sheer size of the project, which brought together 300 scholars. He said that "no effort of its scale has ever been taken before."

Dr. Allan Rosenfield, dean of the Mailman School of Public Health, is leading the task force on child welfare and women's reproductive rights. He hopes that "governments will put the priority on making the goals a reality."

Sachs believes the most important aspect of the plan will also be the most difficult to implement.

"The big problem is that the poorest countries cannot meet these goals without real partnership with the richest countries," he said.

"The United States ... gives the smallest amount of developmental aid," Sachs said. "This is a big mistake, and it makes the world more dangerous. We could so easily accomplish so many things for the world."

