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### International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

U.N. Secretary-General

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## **International Day for the Abolition of Slavery**

**By U.N. Secretary-General**

**Statement posted online by the United Nations at: <http://www.un.org/>.  
United Nations Secretary-General  
Department of Public Information  
News and Media Division, New York.  
SG/SM/10745, OBV/594.  
November 17, 2006.**

*Contemporary Forms of Slavery Flourishing, says Secretary-General.*

**The following is the message by the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery:**



**On 25 March 2007, the world will mark the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade in the British colonies. This landmark will be a powerful reminder of centuries of struggle and progress in combating slavery -- but also of the fact that we still have not managed to eliminate it completely. Contemporary forms of slavery -- from bonded labour to human trafficking -- are flourishing as a result of discrimination, social exclusion, and vulnerability exacerbated by poverty. Because of our failure to alleviate poverty, defend the human rights of all, and address impunity effectively, potential victims are unable to protect themselves against exploitation and abuse.**

**The movement against slavery was the first campaign to bring together the international community in the struggle against gross human rights violations. It demonstrated how effective the mobilization of public opinion can be, when the cause is compelling enough, and leaves no room for compromise.**

**Today, we must carry on the struggle. I call on States to ratify international instruments against slavery, and to cooperate fully with all relevant international human rights mechanisms. I urge on them to make greater use of existing tools, such as the Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking. I appeal to them to contribute generously to the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, so we can continue providing assistance to victims. I implore them to step up measures to eliminate the entrenched poverty, which continues to render our fellow human beings vulnerable to enslavement. And I encourage people everywhere to hold their Governments accountable.**

**On this International Day, let us pledge to draw on the lessons of history to free our fellow human beings from slavery.**