



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 14, 2004

**Commission for Africa is Launched by PM Tony Blair
Panel Discusses Brandt and Sets Development Agenda**

Philadelphia/Los Angeles — On May 4, 2004 British Prime Minister Tony Blair chaired the first meeting of the *Commission for Africa* in London. The high-level group of politicians and economists, representing thirteen industrialized and developing nations, will spend the next year analyzing the problems of underdevelopment in Africa and recommending new solutions to improve the economic and social conditions of the poverty-stricken continent.

Blair's team of experts reviewed the proposals of the Brandt Commission, a panel spearheaded by former German Chancellor Willy Brandt in the early 1980s, which set out a similar plan for global development. Unlike the Brandt Commission, which was an independent body of retired politicians, the new initiative is comprised of active political leaders. After the group's report is published next April, Blair intends to use Great Britain's presidency of the G-8 and EU summits in 2005 to petition those bodies for new development financing for Africa.

Current trends indicate that many African states — plagued with HIV/AIDS, low life-expectancy, and chronic poverty — will not meet their 2000 UN Millennium Development Goals for 2015. At its conference last week at No. 10 Downing Street, the *Commission for Africa* set an agenda for its future discussions, including conflict resolution and peace building, health and human development, AIDS, natural resources and agriculture, governance, education, culture, heritage, and participation. The commission will also focus on global trade and financial policies — like rolling back agricultural subsidies in developed nations, offering development bonds through the international capital markets, and expanding debt relief — to get Africa on track to meet its anti-poverty targets.

Like the Brandt Commission, the Blair Commission is linking various development issues to demonstrate their interdependence and the need for multilateral action to address them. With nine representatives from Africa, the new development panel is also following Brandt in its commitment to local participation and cooperative decision-making between rich and poor nations. The commission pledged its support for major programs involving public-private cooperation, including the New Partnership for African Development and the G-8 Africa Action Plan.

Blair announced that Bono, the rock singer and activist, may serve as a popular ambassador for the new commission. Members of the commission include Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown MP (UK), Finance Minister Trevor Manuel (South Africa), African Personal Representative Michel Camdessus (France), International Development Secretary Hilary Benn MP (UK), UN Economic

Commission for Africa Secretary K. Y. Amoako (Ghana), musician and activist Bob Geldof (Ireland), Prime Minister Meles Zenawi (Ethiopia), Chairman of the Uganda Investment Authority Dr. William S. Kalema (Uganda), Chairman of the FATE Foundation Fola Adeola (Nigeria), Central Bank Governor Linah Moholo (Gaborone), former Senator Nancy Landon Kassebaum Baker (USA), Aviva PLC Development Director Tidjane Thiam (Côte D'Ivoire), President Benjamin Mkapa (Tanzania), Finance Minister Ralph Goodale P.C., MP (Canada), and Executive Director of UN HABITAT Anna Tibaijuka (Tanzania).

A presentation on the Brandt and Blair commissions will be given on May 27th at UCLA by Dr. James Quilligan of Brandt 21 Forum, a division of the Center for Global Negotiations, which promotes social and economic dialogue between developed and developing nations. For more information on this lecture contact the UCLA African Studies Center at 310-825-3686, www.international.ucla.edu/africa, email <jscasc@international.ucla.edu> or www.Brandt21Forum.info.

###

Contact Information:
James Quilligan
Brandt 21 Forum
Phone: 215-592-1016