

# WRITING TO CANDIDATES ON BEHALF OF THE WORLD'S POOR

## What's the Problem?

The widespread problems of underdevelopment – poverty, disease, poor education and undemocratic government, are now being made even worse by climate change. It has recently been estimated that a least 1 billion of the 6.5 billion people alive today go to bed hungry. As the world recovers from the present recession this figure will at least double because as business confidence returns supplies of fuel will become scarce and this will cause their prices to rise. This in turn will put up the cost of food, putting it beyond the means of the poor. There is a real danger of world starvation.

## What are International Organisations doing about it?

1. The United Nations have set a target for developed countries to give **0.7% of their GDP in aid to developing countries.** (UK at present gives under .5%)
2. At the millennium the United Nations set targets **to halve poverty by 2015 ('The Millennium Development Goals' –MDGs).** It set eight goals including education, gender equality, child mortality and disease. Only limited progress has been made and this is now endangered by the financial crisis.
3. **The World Trade Organisation** has failed to reach agreement in the Doha round of talks and there is no overall plan for regulating trade between developed countries and their poorer neighbours.

## What do our General Election Candidates say they are going to do about it?

So far there are three candidates:

**Nigel Waterson:** current Conservative MP (House of Commons London SW1A 0AA)

**Stephen Lloyd:** Lib Dem Candidate (100 Seaside Rd, Eastbourne, BN21 3PF)

**David Brinson:** Labour Candidate (4 Central Court, South Street, Eastbourne, BN21 4 UJ)

They have been asked to state their parties' policies on the following matters affecting the world's poor – **Climate Change, Trade Justice and Aid.** Their replies can be found on the **Fairtrade Eastbourne** and **Hope for Eastbourne** websites. More concise statements will eventually appear in the party manifestos.

## Why should I write to the candidates?

All three parties undertake to go some way to alleviate the problems facing poorer countries while not putting at risk home comfort. However, we believe that often domestic issues can crowd out the pressing need to consider other people whose plight is far worse than ours. Writing to the candidates will show them that people in Eastbourne care about others not just themselves! It is important that individuals make their own comments in the light of their knowledge and experience and study of the stated policies. Don't be afraid to agree when you can! The following points could also be made:

- **Climate Change.** The necessary reduction in carbon emissions cannot be made unless developed countries are prepared to take active steps to curtail both aviation and car travel.
- **Trade Justice.** The World Trade Organisation must be made to recognise that equitable (fair) trade between rich and poor countries is of much greater benefit than handouts to them. The Doha round of talks should be concluded by rich countries conceding to the wishes of the poor ones without delay.
- **Aid.** The UK should set an example to the rest of the developed world and increase aid to **0.7%** of GDP without delay. (Not in 2013!)