



Overseas Development Institute

## News Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **UN COORDINATION ROLE IN INDIAN OCEAN WELCOMED – BUT TIME TO MOVE UN REFORM UP THE AGENDA**

Today's decision by the USA to abandon its plan for a four-nation core group to coordinate humanitarian aid in the Indian Ocean and pass the baton back to the UN was welcomed by aid specialists at ODI, Britain's leading independent think-tank on international development and humanitarian issues.

At the same time, they emphasised the importance of making the UN work better. Speaking in London, the Director of ODI, Simon Maxwell, drew attention to a speech on reform of the humanitarian system, made at ODI on 15 December by Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for International Development:

'Hilary Benn is right to say that the UN humanitarian system needs better coordination and stronger leadership. He has made an imaginative proposal to give the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs both stronger management authority over other UN agencies in major crises and more control over the funding of humanitarian operations. Other countries should support these proposals, the principles of which should be applied more widely to the whole of the UN development system.

2005 is tipped as a break-through year for global poverty reduction. Will it also be a break-through year in which we build a better, more effective UN?'

**Simon Maxwell is available for interview.**

**Please contact Diana Evans on 0207 922 0394 or 07968 116721.**

**Email: [d.evans@odi.org.uk](mailto:d.evans@odi.org.uk); [www.odi.org.uk](http://www.odi.org.uk)**

## Notes to Editors:

1. ODI is Britain's leading independent think-tank on international development and humanitarian issues. Details of its work can be found on the website at [www.odi.org.uk](http://www.odi.org.uk)
2. Hilary Benn spoke at ODI on 15 December on The Reform of the Humanitarian System. His speech can be found at: [http://www.odi.org.uk/speeches/Benn15Dec/Humanitarian\\_Reform\\_speech\\_final.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/speeches/Benn15Dec/Humanitarian_Reform_speech_final.pdf)
3. ODI hosted a series of meetings on UN reform in the summer of 2004. Summaries of the meetings, along with audio and video clips, can be found at: <http://www.odi.org.uk/speeches/un2004/index.html>. An overall summary of the meeting series can be found at: <http://www.odi.org.uk/speeches/un2004/summary.html>
4. An Opinion piece by Simon Maxwell, entitled 'UN Reform. How?' can be found at [http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/opinions/28\\_un\\_reform\\_oct04.html](http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/opinions/28_un_reform_oct04.html)

**Please contact Diana Evans on 0207 922 0394 or 07968 116721. Email:**

**[d.evans@odi.org.uk](mailto:d.evans@odi.org.uk); [www.odi.org.uk](http://www.odi.org.uk)**

**2 of 2**