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UN to help small traders

UNITED NATIONS, Sunday

The United Nations launched a commission over the weekend that will seek to harness sr business as an engine for economic growth in poor countries.

Former Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo and former Canadian Finance Minister Paul M: co-chairmen of the Commission on the Private Sector and Development, which was conv Mark Malloch Brown, head of the UN Development Programme.

The commission is to report back by the end of the year with recommendations on the rol businesses, especially small businesses based in developing countries, can have in creat fighting poverty.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced the initiative, saying he hoped the commission provide "both a fresh analysis of these issues and practical proposals that can have an im

Annan called the UN-private enterprise partnership essential to achieving the Millennium Development Goals that UN member states hope to accomplish by 2015, among them cu the number of people living in extreme poverty, halting the spread of HIV/Aids and providi primary education.

The goals are "simple but powerful objectives," he said, but they cannot be reached witho involvement of private enterprise. Martin said the commission aims to place the ambitions small-scale entrepreneurs at the heart of efforts to spark economic growth.

"The entrepreneurial spirit is everywhere; it doesn't need to be imported," he said at a pre conference announcing the commission. "People want a hand up, not a handout. They wa chance."

Zedillo said the UNDP has asked the commission to think beyond foreign investment as a economic growth and come up with strategies "to allow developing countries to tap the en potential in the bottom of the pyramid." The commission, which will make practical recomr and run pilot programmes to test them, aims to determine "how to empower people to ove poverty," he said. — AP

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