



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **United Nations Visit**

Charles Sturt University social welfare researcher Dr Manohar Pawar believes it is possible to alleviate poverty in the world provided there is political will and commitment.

Dr Pawar, who is based at the University's Wagga Wagga campus, has just returned to Australia after visiting the offices of the Poverty and Development and Emerging Social Issues divisions at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) in Thailand.

Dr Pawar said he was heartened by UN ESCAP officials' interest in his research project on communities' informal care and welfare practices and their willingness to use it in their training programs. Dr Pawar was an invited member of a panel of eminent scholars discussing "Achieving the Millennium Development Goals - empowering the poorest of the poor" organised by UNESCAP at the United Nations Conference Centre to mark the International Day for Eradication of Poverty on October 17.

In his speech Dr Pawar argued that while money and economy are crucial, they, in themselves, were not adequate to empower poor people. He presented six prerequisites for achieving empowerment which included the end of exploitation, respecting poor people rather than blaming and distribution of resources rather than concentrating them in a few hands.

"The deplorable scene of poor people collecting leftover food from meal plates thrown in bins and feeding their children and themselves on such food is not only dehumanising to those people who are into that situation, but also distressing, depressing and disturbing to those who view it," Dr Pawar said. "Poverty eradication is not our altruism, but our own self interest to feel good about ourselves and our fellow wo/men."

While overseas, as co-convenor of the Asia-Pacific branch of the International Consortium for Social Development, Dr Pawar developed a significant partnership between CSU and Thammasat University (Thailand) academics to organise an international conference on globalisation, development and human security in the Asia-Pacific region, from 18 -20 October 2006.

Dr Pawar, a principal researcher with the University's Institute for Land, Water and Society, also went to India as a visiting professor at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, where he addressed tertiary teachers and social work educators on the role of communities' informal welfare practices in contemporary contexts.

"Reactions and responses of the audience demonstrated that the training manual I have written is effective in stimulating people's thinking about their informal welfare practices," he said.

Dr Pawar also undertook field visits to flood affected areas and said he returned with greater insights in regards to complexities and dilemmas in delivering aid to the neediest and how professional social workers can play a pivotal role in post-disaster situations.

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For further information, to arrange an interview and/or a photograph of Dr Pawar contact the ILWS communications coordinator Margrit Beemster on 02 60 519653. (Australia); +61 26051 9797 (International)