

Born in Yorkshire, England, **Dr. Paul Collier** is Professor of Economics and Director of the Centre for the Study of African Economies at Oxford University. He formerly served as Director of Research at the World Bank and as an advisor to the British government's commission on Africa. He is one of the world's leading experts on African economies, and is the author of [Breaking the Conflict Trap](#), among other books.

In [The Bottom Billion](#), Collier sees 980 million people around the globe living in "trapped countries clearly heading towards a black hole." Many of these people are in Africa, but there are large pockets of severe poverty in such places as Bolivia, Cambodia, East Timor, Haiti, Laos, North Korea, Myanmar, Yemen, and elsewhere.

Collier asserts the challenge of lifting them out of poverty is akin to rebuilding Europe after World War II, requiring not only immediate aid but also trade and security effectively promoted by such multilateral institutions as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. The sad fact of the new millennium, Collier writes, is that, even as rich countries are getting richer, the bottom billion is sinking into intractable poverty that will have disastrous consequences for future generations. Solving the poverty puzzle, Collier contends, will require practical—and sometimes controversial—policies, including the use of selective military interventions to resolve costly civil wars and corrupt governance.