eight Millennium Development Goals," Bollinger said. "The Forum will examine various strategies for achieving these goals."

Earth Institute director Jeffrey Sachs is to host a key event in the Forum’s first week focusing on the pathbreaking approaches that countries are taking to tackle basic needs like food production, health, infrastructure and economic development.

Sachs is the leader of the UN Millennium Project, an independent task force created to advise the UN on methods of executing its ambitious development agenda. In January of this year, the Project released a report, "Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals," prepared by a team of 205 of the world’s leading development experts, including several Earth Institute scientists. The report specifies cost-effective measures that together could cut extreme poverty in half and radically improve the lives of at least one billion people by 2015.

World Leaders Forum events are open to Columbia University students, faculty, staff and guests of the University. Reservations are required (see details at right).

Students who want to participate should have the opportunity to interact with them.

Many of the leaders you’ve invited to Columbia in September will be in New York anyway for the UN World Summit. What is the advantage of holding events for them at a major university?

We have found that leaders often like to visit Columbia during the General Assembly meetings to be able to reach different audiences—including their own nationals who live in the New York area. This is one of the advantages of Columbia’s location, and leaders around the world are well aware of it. They also welcome the chance to bring up different sorts of issues than they might in the formal UN setting—talking more about the economic opportunities their countries offer, for example, or strides they are making in resolving domestic conflicts or in instituting democratic reforms. Some of them, of course, simply want to educate Columbia students. Never underestimate the appeal of Columbia students as an audience!

As the dean of SIPA, you are constantly interacting with leading foreign affairs thinkers and world leaders. What in your view are the big issues the world will be grappling with in the coming year?

Development is clearly a major focus for the foreseeable future. Questions about the global environment will become increasingly important. For the next few years, though, the dilemmas posed by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the threat of terrorism will preoccupy many world leaders. Are these problems best addressed by unilateral actions by states or by concerted efforts of the world community? Can terrorist attacks be predicted or prevented? What are the costs and benefits of different approaches to conflict and humanitarian crises?

What is the work for next year’s World Leaders Forum? Have you decided on a theme yet?

We expect to focus next year’s forum on human rights. Like development, this is a topic one in which Columbia is very deeply involved—not only SIPA but also the Law School, Public Health, Journalism and many other schools. It will be another opportunity to showcase what Columbia faculty, students and alumni are doing to enrich a field of crucial importance to the world’s future.