Report on Civil Society Pre-2011 Deauville Summit
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Civil society organizations have been active in the lead-up to the 2011 G8 Summit. A wide range of non-governmental organizations, trade unions, and public policy institutions have publicized their priorities for the Deauville Summit, calling on world leaders to instigate change. They have responded to G8 and G20 Summit activities throughout the year, as well as releasing demands for the summit in May.

Many civil society groups have worked collaboratively to have their voices heard. In January of 2011, civil society organizations from across the globe met in France for the Global G8/G20 Working Group Meeting.¹ The meeting, which was organized by Coordination SUD — a coalition of one hundred and thirty French NGOs — was used to “share information, pool intelligence, agree on policy strategies, and lay groundwork for coordinated global campaigns and advocacy initiatives.”² Participating organizations included Oxfam America, Global Health Council, GAVI Alliance, PATH, Greenpeace International, One France, Save the Children UK, Family Care International, and Interaction.³

Civil society organizations have also joined forces to release a statement about the e-G8 Summit. In the statement, organizations called for G8 member states to push for more open internet access at a global level, characterizing such access as a key determinant of a “civil, political, and fundamental human rights.”⁴ They highlighted the recent trend of declining internet openness in countries experiencing robust movements for democracy, such as Egypt, Libya, China, Nepal, and Myanmar.⁵

In contrast to the heavy censorship of these nations, Brazil’s “Principles for the Governance and Use of Internet” was used as an example of a effective national internet policy, with its central tenant declaring that “All action taken against illicit activity on the network must be aimed at those directly responsible for such activities, and not at the means of access and transport, always upholding the fundamental principles of freedom, privacy and the respect for human rights.”


Civil society collaborations also took place in the form of protests. Several days prior to the summit, eight thousands individuals representing civil society gathered in Le Havre to protest. Le Havre, which is forty kilometers away from Deauville, has been mandated as the central location for NGOs, who have been denied access to the summit. Oxfam France director Luc Lampriére remarked that he was disappointed at the lack of civil society access at the summit. The groups included human rights organizations, trade unions, anti-nuclear and anti-globalization groups. According to Globalize Resistance, the protests were largely focused on anti-austerity messages, and remained largely peaceful.

Some disruptions did occur however, such as attempts to vandalize local banks, an act reminiscent of the 2010 G20 Summit in Toronto. Protesters took action through posting banners, chanting slogans, and marching through the streets. Of all the slogans, “G8 get lost, people first, not finance,” was the dominant message. Prominent speakers declared that “fed up with the eight puppets who close our plants and close our schools” and accused the G8 of dumping “the old in misery (and) the youth in a mess.”

Interaction, a coalition of NGOs in the United States, released a policy paper outlining their demands for the upcoming G8 Summit, directed at President Obama. The list of recommendations for the Obama team at the summit fell under the following categories: accountability; food security, agriculture, and nutrition; and maternal, newborn, and child health. For accountability, the focus was on inputs, comprehensive evaluation, terms of reference, and report releases. In the food security category, Interaction called on the G8 to fully fund the food security commitments made at the L’Aquila Summit in 2009, “rebalance donor funds to improve nutrition and reach small-scale producers,” and “integrate resilience to climate change and civil society partnerships into food security plans.” The main priorities for maternal, newborn, and child health were implementing the commitments made at the Muskoka Summit and the integration of health services with other development sectors. Participating organizations included ActionAid USA, Bread for the World, Global Health Council, CARE, Family Care International, Global Health Council, InterAction International, Medical Corps, Management Sciences for Health, Oxfam America, PATH, Population Action International, Save the Children and Trade Union Sustainability Development Unit.

Oxfam International has been particularly active in the lead-up to the summit. They mobilized campaigners in twenty-five countries to press for action on the “Robin Hood Tax,” discussed at the G20 Finance Ministers’ Meeting in February. The tax, which is levied on bankers, could, according to Oxfam’s partner tcktcktck, “generate hundreds of billions of dollars every year” that could alleviate climate change and global poverty. Oxfam protesters across the globe took to the streets earlier this year in order to generate momentum going into the summit and put pressure on world leaders. Attention was focused especially on French, German, and British embassies throughout the world. Protesters were active in Spain, the United States, Nepal, France, Germany, Senegal, Britain, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Burkina Faso, Brazil, Canada, Ghana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi, Norway, Rwanda, Mali, Mexico, the Netherlands and South Africa.


Oxfam International published an online article claiming that the G8 had failed to deliver on their aid promises and had altered the figures to deliberately mislead the public.\textsuperscript{25} In the Deauville Accountability Report, the G8 had claimed to deliver almost 49 billion (US) dollars, of the promised 50 billion. However, according to the OECD, which is responsible for measuring the official aid figures, the G8 had delivered just $31 billion.\textsuperscript{26} Moreover, of the promised $25 billion promised to Africa, only $11 billion had really been delivered.\textsuperscript{27} There is a $19 billion dollar shortfall in aid, which Oxfam contends is the same cost as seven days of G8 military spending, and 0.06 percent of the G8 nations combined national incomes.\textsuperscript{28} Both Canada and the United States complied with their commitments; however, Oxfam argues that they achieved this by pledging a small amount of financial support.\textsuperscript{29}

Italy, Germany, France, and Japan have all failed to provide the finances they had previously promised. Of these non-complying countries, Oxfam argues that Italy was the “worst offender.”\textsuperscript{30} The Italian government only provided 0.15 percent of its national income as aid, which is the lowest of all G8 countries and a substantive discrepancy from the UN target of 0.7 percent.\textsuperscript{31} In 2008, the G8 committed to investing $22 billion in agricultural productively with a particular focus on smallholder agriculture and women.\textsuperscript{32} The Accountability Report states that 50 percent of the aid pledged at L’Aquila has been scheduled for disbursement. However, Oxfam contends that there is little or no information regarding where this aid has been delivered, what it has been used for, and how effective it has been in achieving the needs of smallholder food producers.\textsuperscript{33}

The Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP) requested the nation coalitions in Egypt, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Senegal, and South Africa to do a special presidential lobby and deliver a letter to their Presidency or Minister of Foreign Affairs before their departure to the Summit in France.\textsuperscript{34} The core message of the letter is to share GCAP Africa’s position relating to Africa’s partnership with the G8, including their position on Economic partnership agreements.\textsuperscript{35} The letter also makes three recommendations for G8 leaders to consider. These are: 1) The G8 together with African governments should put in place a more robust, transparent and participatory process for promoting accountability on development commitments. 2) Economic Partnerships and Trade rules should be based on fairness to both Northern and Southern

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countries. 3) We urge you to encourage individual G8 Countries to support the permanent membership of the African Union on the G20.36

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) announced a new high-level panel prior to the G8 summit in France.37 The panel was promoted by GCE to provide attention and address the current education crisis. According to current forecasts, GCE believes that the 2015 target to achieve universal basic education will go unmet; and therefore, they have sought additional support through the creation of this panel.38 The panel announcement was made in conjuncture with the launch of Panel co-covenor Gordon Brown’s new report, “Education for All: beating poverty, unlocking prosperity.”39 This is the first in a two-part report which outlines the positive impact of universal education on facilitating and promoting growth in developing countries. This report will be presented to the members of the G8 countries before their summit meeting in Deauville.40

The panel is conveyed by both the Right Honorable Gordon Brown (MP) and Graca Machel (international advocate for women’s and children rights).41 The panel members include Queen Rania Al-Abdullah of Jordan, Kofi Annan (former secretary-general of the United Nations), Dr. Jan-Peter Balkenende (former prime minister of the Netherlands, professor at Erasmus University and a partner at Ernst and Young), Kevin Cahill (chief executive, Comic Relief), Angelique Kidio (recording artist and advocate), Paul Martin (former prime minister of Canada), Jens Stoltenberg (prime minister of Norway), Belinda Stronach (business and public leader) and Kevin Wall (founder of Live Earth, founder and CEO of Control Room). Additional members will be confirmed before the panel’s first meeting in July 2011.42

Greenpeace International has also been active in voicing their recommendations to the G8. Their main messages were the need for renewable energy, an end to the nuclear age, and more subsidies and liability caps.43 Greenpeace head Kumi Naidoo called for a shift in priorities when it comes to energy policies: “The ongoing Fukushima crisis has reminded us of the devastating legacy for public health and the environment caused by nuclear disasters. Fukushima tells us that when there is profit to be made, private finance will take a gamble and happily pocket subsidies, but in the event of a nuclear meltdown ordinary people pay both the health and financial costs.”44

Greenpeace pointed to the recent IPCC report on nuclear energy, which they characterized as a “landmark” document, and also praised the recent policy decisions made by Angela Merkel of Germany and Naoto Kan of Japan that are moving towards a “clean energy revolution.”

In addition, Greenpeace provided a “Climate and Energy Action Checklist” with the following items: a review of the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), making it a regulator that establishes and enforces nuclear safety standards and protects public health; phasing out caps on liability for damage caused by third parties in the cases of nuclear disasters, as well as new rules to hold the nuclear power industry accountable for accidents and radioactive pollutants; phasing out subsidies to the fossil fuel industry and creating effective frameworks to achieve renewable energy targets of 35% by 2020 and 50% by 2030. The final recommendation on the checklist called on G8 leaders to keep global temperature rises below 2 degrees Celsius.

Globalize Resistance, a UK-based group, has called for individuals and groups worldwide to protest against the policies of the G8 and the G20. They criticized the G8 for “no accountability, no democracy, no transparency,” and encouraged protesters to demand more action on tackling world poverty. They also provided readers with links to past G8 Summit reports and historical backgrounds on the G8/G20.

World Vision Canada has released a policy document entitled, “G8 Promises Must Improve Lives.” In the document, they called upon G8 leaders to “make collective commitments to fight poverty, promote peace and security, and tackle crises.” They were critical of the lack of accountability shown by the G8, and cited unkept promises such as the promise to double aid to sub-Saharan Africa by 2010 (made at the 2005 Gleneagles Summit), the L’Aquila Food Security Initiative announced in 2009, and the Muskoka Initiative for Women and Children’s Health made

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in 2010. World Vision applauded the G8 for releasing its first ever accountability report after the 2010 Muskoka Summit, but encouraged it to go further by showing how money is being spent and what results are being achieved. Their website also provided opportunities for readers to engage in the G8 issues, including links to write to the prime minister of Canada, and a link to G8 commitments.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has been very active in the lead-up to the 2011 Summit. A blog by former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, posted on the Foundation’s webpage, called for “another Gleneagles movement” at this year’s summit. Annan characterized the Gleneagles summit as unique for its “relevance, direction and ambition” and its “vision to the international community,” and called for similar action at the upcoming Summits in France. Another blog post on the website, by celebrity activist Bob Geldof, criticized the G8 leaders for failing to deliver on promises to help the world’s poor, and called on France to “lead where others failed.”

Bill Gates himself has pressed for action at this year’s G8 Summit. He visited Paris in April to help launch the “Living Proof Campaign” in partnership with ONE. A post on the Foundation’s website said that France had a “unique and powerful” position to keep up the “momentum and leadership in building a better world for millions.” Gates had the following to say in regards to the summit and the goals for child health: “Vaccines are one of the best long-term investments we can make to prevent disease and ensure children have a healthy start to life. They are a great example of smart aid, for just a few Euros per dose, a child can be protected for life. We hope that President Sarkozy will continue to champion vaccines and the need to use vaccines to reach a final end to polio at this year’s G8 summit.”