

22. Kananaskis: An Assessment

Ella Kokotsis

Hello. I'm Ella Kokotsis, Director of Analytical Studies for the G8 Research Group. I'm speaking to you today from the G8 media centre in Calgary Alberta, just as the 2002 Kananaskis G8 Summit comes to an end.

With the leaders meeting now concluded, and with the reports by the world's media now coming to an end, it is time to ask: what did Kananaskis actually accomplish and what does it really mean for the world.

We can get an answer by going back 13 years, to the G7 Summit in Paris in 1989.

At Paris, developing world leaders who dined with the G7 at the start of the Summit, and Mikhail Gorbachev, who sent a letter at its end, first signalled that the long-separated "south" and the "east" of the old cold-war world finally wanted into the democratic and thus developed world. At Kananaskis in 2002, the G8 has finally delivered. It has thus ended the cold war and its destructive global legacy, and brought the G7's central democratic values to critical areas of the developing world. The Kananaskis G8 Summit has thus proven to be a strikingly successful summit, indeed one of the most successful ever held since the Summit started work 28 years ago. It will also, as United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan recognized, go down as a summit of historic significance, but only if G8 leaders and their new African partners stay the course in the years to come.

At Kananaskis, the G7 finally brought Russia fully into the new G8 club, by declaring that it would host the Summit in 2006. The G8 thus signalled that it intended to remain in business as an international institution, with its current membership, for the next 10 years, to provide effective global governance for a rapidly globalizing world. It further produced a new CA\$30 billion fund to dismantle and

disarm Russia's nuclear weapons, and do so in a way that ensures that the former Soviet Union's nuclear, chemical, biological and radiological weapons and materials do not fall into terrorist hands. It thus transformed Russia from a nuclear-laden rival into a full partner against the common enemies that threaten all governments and their people.

Across the old north-south divide, in the poorest region of Africa, the Kananaskis G8 and the new African partners made history as well. They kept their agenda and the world's attention focused on Africa, a region that had dropped off the rich world's radar screen and has been excluded by the benefits of globalization. They produced the ambitious, innovative Africa Action Plan and pledged the money needed to make the whole plan worthwhile. Above all, Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo, on behalf of African leaders, said they were "satisfied," and Annan also pronounced that the package was indeed a "good" one.

In its design, the Africa Action Plan was carefully, creatively constructed to meet the need. It started with the call to stop the wars that, as proven over the past decade in the Balkans, kill any chance for democracy and development to emerge. It then backed "good governance" as the essential foundation. It went beyond the Africans' own and G8's past enthusiasm to put gender equality and the empowerment of women in a prominent place. Only after peace, order and good government came the trade and investment liberalization that the Africans require with the north and among themselves if they are mobilize the market to help meet their development needs.

In its delivery, the G8's Africa Action Plan built in some processes to ensure it takes hold. By promising that at least half of the US\$12 billion of the newly added official

development assistance would be sent to those African countries that lived up to their democratic principles, the G8 leaders gave their African partners at Kananaskis a powerful weapon with which to convince reluctant countries to get on board. The G8 added another US\$1 billion to relieve the debt of the **highly indebted poorest countries** (HIPC), mostly in Africa, so they could keep their money at home to spend on health, clean water and educating young girls.

Canadian prime minister Jean Chrétien came in with an all-Canadian contribution that opened Canada's market to the exports of these countries. Moreover, the G8 leaders instructed their personal representatives for Africa to work for another year, on the road to the 2003 Summit in France, and committed themselves to review how well they are doing when they meet next year. Most promisingly, at the conclusion of the Kananaskis Summit, French president Jacques Chirac declared that for his summit next year he would adopt the Canadian formula of focusing on a single central theme, and that the theme would again be African development.

The Summit did significant work on a surprisingly broad range of issues, from securing global transportation from terrorists to moving to ensure primary education for all the world's children by 2015. Even so, the leaders missed a few easy opportunities, such as prom-

ising to attend the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development in South Africa this fall, and also by failing to invite their new African partners back to the G8 Summit in France next year.

A final Kananaskis accomplishment, however, was finding the formula for future G8 summitry. Led by Chirac, Chrétien's colleagues gushed about how much they loved the very intimate, informal summit in the sun-drenched splendour of Kananaskis, amid the peaceful, polite Albertan political atmosphere. At the same time, the leaders generated a very large number of clear commitments for their governments to implement and ultimately for their citizens to judge them against in the coming year. It was thus hardly surprising that Chirac declared he would follow the Canadian model next year.

In their 30 hours alone together in Alberta, the G8 leaders and their new African partners thus did much to deal with these pressing international issues. They clearly deserve high marks for their Kananaskis successes. The test now is to move the momentum of Kananaskis in the months ahead on the road to France in 2003.

Note: This lecture was prepared in collaboration with John Kirton.

Recommended Reading

Bayne, Nicholas (2002), "Impressions of the Kananaskis Summit, 26–27 June 2002," June 28 <www.g8.utoronto.ca/g7/evaluations/2002kananaskis/assess_bayne.html> (June 2002).

Discussion Questions

1. How reliably can one assess the success of a G7/G8 Summit or any international summit at or immediately after the conclusion of the event?
2. Many of the critics of the Kananaskis achievements, following the tradition of earlier Summits, seemed to imply that it should instantly — by itself — solve the major problems in the world, or at least instantly provide during the meeting whatever amount of money the United Nations or nongovernmental organizations claimed was necessary to solve the problem. To what extent is this a useful evaluative referent for evaluating Summit performance?
3. In your view what was the greatest single achievement of the Kananaskis Summit?
4. What were the major shortcomings or disappointments of the Kananaskis Summit?
5. How do the major Kananaskis financial commitments of US\$20 billion for dismantling weapons of mass destruction, US\$6 billion for Africa and US\$1 billion for further debt relief of the poorest through the HIPC Trust Fund compare with the financial contributions made by previous Summits in regard to major global problems?

Quiz

1. The G7 Summit was held in Paris in:
 - a. 1975
 - b. 1989
 - c. 1995
 - d. 1996
2. At the start of the Paris Summit, the G7 leaders dined with:
 - a. Mikhail Gorbachev
 - b. developing country leaders
 - c. Kofi Annan
 - d. Boris Yeltsin
3. At Kananaskis, the G8 decided that Russia would host the Summit in:
 - a. 2003
 - b. 2005
 - c. 2006
 - d. 2010
4. The President of Nigeria is:
 - a. Thabo Mbeki
 - b. Olusegun Obasanjo
 - c. Kofi Annan
 - d. Robert Mugabe
5. The 2003 Summit will be hosted by:
 - a. Jacques Chirac
 - b. Vladimir Putin
 - c. Thabo Mbeki
 - d. Kofi Annan