

## 23. The Kananaskis Summit: The Development Agenda

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The Kananaskis Summit has been innovative in its format, in a number of ways:

- The G8 heads of government were all housed under one roof at a small and secluded mountain resort. This kept down the size of official delegations and allowed much closer personal interaction between the leaders.
- The G8 did not issue a communiqué. Instead, the Canadians put out a two-page “Chair’s Summary” of what was actually discussed by the leaders. This statement is supported by weightier documents on specific issues, such as the Africa Action Plan.
- The G8 took decisions about future summits that enabled the Russians to take the final step to full membership. Russia will host the Summit in 2006; by then, the heads will cease to meet as G7.
- Four African leaders — Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal and Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria — together with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, joined the G8 for the discussion of Africa.

This lecture assesses the results of the Kananaskis Summit on development issues. These issues have increasingly dominated the Summits of the last cycle, from Lyon in 1996 to Kananaskis in 2002. This trend reflects growing concern that the poorest countries, especially in Africa, are not benefiting from globalization, but rather are falling behind.

Africa was the central issue for the Kananaskis Summit. This lecture will therefore look mainly at what was agreed on Africa, fitting in other development issues, such as debt

relief, education, health and trade, into the African context.

### **NEPAD and the Africa Action Plan**

The major achievement of the Kananaskis Summit was to launch the G8’s Africa Action Plan in response to the **New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD)** and to link the two together.

NEPAD is the first example of a development plan for Africa created by African governments themselves. It has not been imposed from outside. The Africans take ownership of it and make themselves responsible for putting it into effect. NEPAD contains a range of economic programs, but its central feature is a political commitment to better standards of governance, through improved democracy and respect for the rule of law. The Africans undertake to make each other accountable for respecting these standards and are setting up a peer review system for this purpose. The aim is to make Africa more attractive to foreign private investment and more deserving of help from the G8 governments and other outside sources.

The Africa Action Plan announced at Kananaskis is the G8’s response to the Africans’ appeal for help to support NEPAD. In the Action Plan, the G8 members:

- strongly commend NEPAD, while being careful to leave ownership of it with the Africans;
- undertake to conclude “enhanced partnerships” with African countries that meet NEPAD standards, so that they get first claim on outside help;
- support the African peer review process, which will influence the choice of enhanced partners, although the G8 members will apply their own standards too.

The G8 members have made a broad financial commitment in support of their action plan. Earlier in 2002, at Monterrey, they promised to increase their total aid spending by US\$12 billion per year over five years. They agreed at Kananaskis that at least half of this increase could go to deserving African countries. Within this total, however, it is not clear how the G8 countries will proceed to develop enhanced partnerships. So far, each G8 member has made its own commitment to increased action, without visible co-ordination. For example, the United States and the United Kingdom announced new measures just before the Summit and Canada did so just afterward, but there was no sense of a collective program.

### Specific Development Issues

The Africa Action Plan sets out a program of measures in support of Africa in two political areas — in peace and security and in better governance — and six economic ones — trade, debt relief, education and information technology, health, agriculture and water. The peace and security section stands out in its aim of giving Africa, by 2010, the capacity to resolve all its civil conflicts, starting with the trouble spots in Congo, Angola and Sudan. The other sections, taken together, aim to help African countries meet NEPAD's political standards and economic goals.

These sections overlap with the Summit's actions on a range of specific development issues, as follows:

- *Debt Relief.* The G8 agreed to contribute up to US\$1 billion to replenish the **World Bank** trust fund, so as to permit the full financing of debt relief under the **heavily indebted poor countries** (HIPC) initiative.
- *Education.* The G8 Task Force on Primary Education, created at Genoa last year, recommended that aid should go to countries whose policies enabled them to absorb it. The Summit endorsed this, but did not commit aid to the 18 countries (11 in Africa) identified as deserving by the World Bank.

- *Health.* The G8 promised the resources needed to eliminate polio. But it failed to replenish the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis, launched last year, even though it has committed almost all its initial endowment of US\$2 billion.
- *Trade.* The G8 made a general commitment to complete the Doha round of **World Trade Organization** multilateral trade talks on time and reaffirmed the negotiating mandate on agriculture. But this approach is not reassuring in the light of the new U.S. farm bill and the resistance in the European Union to reforming the Common Agriculture Policy.
- *Sustainable Development.* The preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), which will take place in late August in Johannesburg, South Africa, are in trouble and the process needs a political boost. But despite the presence of Mbeki and Annan, the G8 leaders failed to provide one and did not make a joint commitment to go to Johannesburg themselves.

Except on debt relief, the harvest from Kananaskis was fairly meagre on these items, which were discussed under the "economic growth" item on the agenda.

### Prospects for Africa

Obasanjo, speaking just after the Summit, called the Africa Action Plan a good beginning and hoped it would lead on to a good ending. This comment reflects well the strengths and weaknesses of the Action Plan and the NEPAD in combination. The concept of Africa reviving by its own efforts, with the west helping but respecting African ownership, generates strong positive symbolism. It has parallels with the relationship between the Americans and Europeans in the **Marshall Plan** after World War Two, which had such far-reaching and durable results.

Against that, however, there are still many uncertainties. The NEPAD process is still very unfamiliar for African governments. For example, African governments hesitated at first to

condemn the elections in Zimbabwe, although Mbeki and Obasanjo then came out against them. The NEPAD process is still at the elevated level of heads of government. It has a long way to go before it can bring benefits at the grass roots and it has attracted criticism because it was developed without consultation. So the G8 may not believe the Africans will change their ways and may not exert themselves enough to help.

On the other side, the resources and the trade access offered by the G8 may not be adequate for what Africa needs. The commitments on education, health and trade are imprecise, at best. So the Africans may not have the incentive to bring in painful changes, if these will not be sufficiently rewarded.

But it was always clear that the revival of Africa would be a long-term enterprise. The G8 Africa Group, which prepared the Action Plan, remains in being. French president Jacques

Chirac, who will host next year's Summit in France, has said that Africa will once again be the leading issue on the agenda. The combination of the G8 Africa Action Plan with NEPAD has the potential to provide a fresh start for Africa, so that African countries can really benefit from globalization and begin to catch up with other regions, instead of falling behind. This would have great economic advantages, not only for the people of Africa, but for the whole world economy. It would have great political advantages, in bringing peace and security to a troubled continent and preventing failed states in Africa from becoming havens or breeding grounds for terrorists.

### **Recommended Reading**

Kirton, John (2002), "Democratic Development for Africa," *Calgary Herald*, June 30, "Delivering Democratic Development for Africa," *Calgary Herald*, June 30 <[www.g8.utoronto.ca/g7/evaluations/2002kananaskis/assess\\_africa.html](http://www.g8.utoronto.ca/g7/evaluations/2002kananaskis/assess_africa.html)> (June 2002).

## Discussion Questions

1. In evaluating the achievements of the Kananaskis Summit, is it fair to say that the African agenda was overtaken, if not hijacked, by the decision on weapons of mass destruction? Why or why not?
2. Can the Kananaskis G8 Summit be considered a success in regard to Africa, given its modest accomplishments in regard to HIV/AIDS? Why or why not?
3. Assess the importance of the following issues as the key to development in Africa: combating infectious disease, stopping violent conflict, good governance, education, and building regional physical infrastructure.
4. How well did NEPAD and the G8's Africa Action Plan correspond to what is really needed to reduce poverty in Africa?
5. Did the G8 leaders' and African leaders' approach to Africa at Kananaskis primarily reflect a neo-liberal conception of development? Why or why not?

## Quiz

1. The Kananaskis Summit codified its major achievements in a:
  - a. negotiated communiqué
  - b. legal convention
  - c. chair's statement
  - d. a rock video presentation with a mountain backdrop
2. The G8 leaders were joined on the final day of the Kananaskis Summit by how many other leaders:
  - a. none
  - b. two
  - c. four
  - d. five
3. Earlier in 2002, G8 leaders had pledged to increase their overall development assistance spending by:
  - a. US\$1 billion
  - b. US\$ 6 billion
  - c. US\$12 billion
  - d. US\$ 20 billion
4. The G8 Task Force on Primary Education was created at the G7/G8 Summit in:
  - a. 2002
  - b. 2001
  - c. 2000
  - d. 1975
5. At Kananaskis the G8 extended its campaign against infectious disease by promising to eradicate:
  - a. HIV/AIDS
  - b. malaria
  - c. tuberculosis
  - d. polio