

25. Kananaskis's Contribution to the Global Community

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Hello. I'm John Kirton, Director of the G8 Research Group at the University of Toronto and your lead instructor for G8 Online 2002.

In this session, "Kananaskis's Contribution to the Global Community," we explore how well the G8 at Kananaskis reached out to the broader global community, and what the G8 could do — and should do — in this regard in the years ahead.

At the conclusion of the Kananaskis Summit, there was much disagreement about the G8's historic moves to make Russia a full member with a place in the G8 hosting sequence and to involve four African leaders and United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan as full partners in the Summit's final day. There was also much disagreement about where these moves might lead in the years ahead. One school of thought — the "assured optimists" — welcomed both the Russian and African outreach initiatives. They forecast that these steps would lead to economic and political stability in important global regions and bring the full integration of both Russia and Africa as equal partners in the democratic, market-oriented west (Christian Science Monitor 2002, Financial Times 2002). A second school — "assured pessimists" — dismissed these decisions, arguing that the Africans and even the Russians had submerged their own real interests, to parrot their preference for the open markets and investment they knew would appeal to a G8 locked into a neo-liberal ideology but that would not work for these newcomers' poor peoples in the long term (McQuaig 2002, Bellaby 2002). A third school — "disappointed optimists" — saw the Russian and African leaders authentically and eloquently arguing for their own real interests, but receiving only very limited and unpromising steps toward true partnership, or even an outright "slap in the face," from the G8 in return (Irish

Times 2002). Finally, a fourth school — "contingent optimists" — saw the G8's Kananaskis outreach to both Russia and Africa as genuinely historic, but only if it was followed up by expanding processes of engagement and equal partnership.

In this lecture I argue the case of the contingent optimists — that the G8's initiatives at Kananaskis to treat the Russians and Africans as equal partners are historic, but only if they are followed by an expanding engagement at all levels in the coming years. Never before had a single Summit done so much as Kananaskis did in reaching out simultaneously across the old east-west and north-south divides, to involve the once rival Russians and long-forgotten Africans as full partners. Moreover, the Kananaskis G8 put in place several processes that promise that this new partnership will endure and expand in the years ahead. But in order to render these new partnerships permanent, there remain some important steps for the G8 to take, starting with France as G8 host for next year.

A. The Kananaskis Partnership with Russia and Africa Assessed

At Kananaskis, the G7/G8 Summit, for the first time ever, made two bold moves toward outreach and inclusion. First, across the old east-west divide, it completed the process, begun in 1991, of including Russia as a full member, by agreeing that Russia could chair and host the annual Summit in 2006. This date reflected Germany's willingness to delay its own place in the hosting sequence by one year, so that Russia could be inserted. By placing Russia in the middle of the hosting sequence rather than at the end, the decision presumed that Russia was destined to be not the latest, weakest link but a full-strength, normal

member of the G8 club. As British prime minister Tony Blair suggested, it also meant that by 2006, the G7 Summit would have disappeared, having held its last meeting when Britain hosts in 2005. It was expected that the G7 finance ministers would continue to function "at seven" after 2006. But with Russia assumed by then to be accepted into the **World Trade Organization (WTO)**, Russia could well be the fully developed economic and financial power that the G7 finance ministers, as well as the trade ministers quadrilateral, would want in their ministerial-level clubs.

The second major move toward outreach at Kananaskis took place across the old north-south divide. It occurred when the G8 met with the four democratic leaders of Africa's major powers plus Annan, as equal partners rather than added-on visitors, for most of the Summit's second day. During the meeting, the Africans outlined their **New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)** and the G8 responded supportively with its own Africa Action Plan. The new equality was evident at the Summit's concluding news conferences, where the African views were as publicly prominent and valued as the G8 leaders' own.

B. Processes for the Future

Were these unprecedented dual moves toward outreach the start of something new? Or were they merely the completion or continuation of a process begun in 1989 when both the east and the south signalled at the Paris Summit that they wanted into this western G8 club?

One sign that it might be the last step, rather than the start of an ever-proliferating partnership, was the G8's decision, in announcing the Russian insertion in the hosting order, to identify who would host the annual Summit in each year until 2010. In doing so, the G8 indicated that the European Union, until now a partial participant, would not be graduated into the hosting order and thus full membership, nor would anyone currently outside the G8 club. Russia was expected to be the last new

full member for a very long time. At the same time, the G8 declared for the first time that it intended to stay in business as a centre of global governance, with its current membership, for the next eight years. This implied that U.S. president George Bush's presumably unilateralist and isolationist America was content with the plurilateral G8 forum. It also implied that the G8 expected Canada, named as 2010 host, to continue to be a major power, with a treasured array of distinctive national values (see Lecture 10) for a very long time.

Yet there were other signs that the instinct toward greater inclusiveness might continue. One was France's President Jacques Chirac's decision to hold the 2003 Summit in France on June 1, immediately after a summit in St. Petersburg between the EU and Russia, which the "outside" G8 members — the United States, Canada and Japan — were invited to attend. Although this St. Petersburg Summit seemed to be a symbolic rather than substantive occasion, if the three Pacific powers accepted, they would thus join all EU leaders at a de facto EU-G8 Summit, to which even the EU's candidate members could conceivably come.

A second promising sign was the decision of the G8 leaders to keep their personal representatives for Africa working for another year. This decision would allow them to continue to meet with their African colleagues on NEPAD's steering and implementation committees, and prepare a report for the "final" review the G8 leaders requested on the Africa Action Plan at their G8 Summit next year. The nascent north-south partnership would thus be nourished for another year. However, the word "final" implied that the Africans would be on their own after that.

A third promising sign of continued connection was the decision in the G8's Africa Action Plan to invite NEPAD's new peer reviewers to participate in the OECD's own Development Assistance Committee. There they would learn at first hand how analytically based but

politically consequential peer review was professionally done among the "advanced" developed states. But their presence could allow them also to see how the G8's own promises of enhanced aid volumes and effectiveness were being assessed and kept.

C. Prospects and Possibilities for the Years' Ahead

Yet even with such promising signs at the working level on the African front, some important questions remained. One was when, whether and how Jacques Chirac, who had declared he would focus his Summit once again on African development, would invite the African leaders at Kananaskis and Annan to return to his Summit in France. Another was whether the G8 leaders, beyond Britain's Tony Blair, would go to the South African-hosted World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in late August, in order to complete the UN-based, southern-driven "triple-header" that began with the WTO's Doha development round of multilateral trade negotiations in November 2001 and continued through the UN Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey in March 2002. And a final question was how the G8, as it embarked upon its fifth cycle of Summitry, intended to bring others, either directly from other regions, or indirectly through leaders such as Annan, into its forums.

References

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Further Readings

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Discussion Questions

1. To what extent were the African leaders at Kananaskis pleased with the process of their participation, as opposed to the product or "present" they received in the form of the G8's Africa Action Plan?
2. Recalling the G7's ever-increasing association with the former Soviet Union and Russia from 1989 to the present, to what extent, in regard to Africa, can the G8's offer or participation and partnership substitute for greater financial assistance and vice versa?
3. If the African countries whose leaders came to Kananaskis become deeper and more durable democracies, what form of greater participation with and in the G8 will they and should they get?
4. With Russia now destined to be a full member, who else from western, central and eastern Europe warrants greater participation in the G8? What forum should such participation take?
5. Did France's Chirac, America's Bush or Britain's Blair "make history" by giving Russia "their" early place in the G8 hosting order? Why?

Quiz

1. Kofi Annan is Secretary-General of:
 - a. NEPAD
 - b. the African Union
 - c. the G8
 - d. the United Nations
2. Russia will host its first full G8 Summit in:
 - a. 2003
 - b. 2005
 - c. 2006
 - d. 2010
3. Canada will next host the Summit in:
 - a. 2009
 - b. 2010
 - c. 2011
 - d. never
4. On May 31, 2003, the EU-Russia Summit, with the United States, Canada and Japan invited, will take place in:
 - a. Paris
 - b. St. Petersburg
 - c. Moscow
 - d. New York City at "Ground Zero"
5. At Kananaskis, the G8 leaders extended the mandate of their personal representatives for Africa for:
 - a. six months
 - b. one year
 - c. until 2002
 - d. until the African Union is created