

## ON FOREIGN AID

The G8 has stated that aid is “essential” and is committed to “strengthening the effectiveness of... development assistance.” In reality, the G7 are amongst the stingiest of donor nations. In terms of the standard Official Development Assistance to Gross National Product (ODA/GNP) measurement, no G7 country comes close to meeting the internationally recognized UN target of 0.7% ODA/GNP. In fact, the ratio for G7 countries is 0.19%, while for non-G7 countries it is 0.46%. From 1999-2000, G7 countries decreased their development assistance by 5 percent. In terms of world ranking for generosity out of 22 countries, France is 8th, Britain 9th, Japan 12th, Germany 13th, Canada 17th, Italy 21st, and the United States dead last.

## THE 2002 SUMMIT

The stated focus of the Kananaskis Summit is Africa and the New African Initiative. Tony Blair has called for a “Marshall Plan for Africa” and a concrete action plan is to emerge from the Summit. Following September 11, a focus on terrorism can also be expected. Prime Minister Chretien has called for the slimming down of country delegations but does not seem to be addressing the more critical issues of greater participation and wider representation.

*“Ultimately these summits must be judged by the benefits they deliver to the world's poor. The result this year has been an anti-poor trade plan, nothing on debt and a feeble fund. Thousands of peaceful protesters were in Genoa calling on leaders to tackle the plight of the poorest countries. Whatever the official spin, their voices have gone unheard, drowned out not just by the violence but also by the platitudes of the leaders.”*

*-Jessica Woodroffe,  
World Development Movement*

## MORE INFORMATION:

### U of T's G8 Information Centre:

[www.g7.utoronto.ca](http://www.g7.utoronto.ca)

### Government of Canada's G8 Page:

[www.g8.gc.ca](http://www.g8.gc.ca)

### Genoa Summit 2001 Pages:

[www.genoa-g8.it/eng/](http://www.genoa-g8.it/eng/)

[www.g8italia.it/\\_en/](http://www.g8italia.it/_en/)

### World Development Movement

[www.wdm.org.uk](http://www.wdm.org.uk)

### Environmental concerns of the G8 meeting in Kananaskis:

[www.kananaskisg8.net](http://www.kananaskisg8.net)

### The Halifax Initiative:

[www.halifaxinitiative.org](http://www.halifaxinitiative.org)

### Alberta Council for Global Cooperation:

[www.web.ca/acgc](http://www.web.ca/acgc)

### The Group of 20:

[www.g20.org](http://www.g20.org)

### The Group of 77:

[www.g77.org](http://www.g77.org)

## GET INVOLVED IN ORGANIZING IN ALBERTA:

For information on listservs, meetings, and events on the G8 in Alberta, visit:

[g8.activist.ca](http://g8.activist.ca)



2002 G8 SUMMIT  
KANANASKIS, ALBERTA  
JUNE 26-28, 2002

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## WHAT IS THE G8?

The G8, or Group of Eight, is an informal group of the seven most economically powerful countries: France, United States, Britain, Germany, Japan, Italy, and Canada, known collectively as the G7, plus Russia. The current President of the European Union also participates.

The group has met every year since the six largest economies first met in 1975 in Rambouillet, France to discuss the economic crisis created when the United States abandoned the gold standard, resulting in floating currencies. Canada joined in 1976, the European Union in 1977, and the participation of Russia was included over a period of time starting informally in 1994 and concluding with formal inclusion in 1997 at the Summit of the Eight in Denver.

While initially focused on macroeconomic and trade issues, political issues, such as security, development, nuclear safety, and terrorism have over the years become more important. The G7 continues to meet without Russia before each G8 Summit to discuss economic issues. The G8 has also created a series of ministerial forums which meet at the Summit and throughout the year on specific topics, including Trade Ministers, Foreign Ministers, Finance Ministers, Environment Ministers, and Labour Ministers.

## WHAT DOES THE G8 DO?

The G8 considers themselves a discussion forum only. However, nothing happens in formal international organizations (such as the WTO, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank) without the prior consent or active support of the G8. The overall direction of policy which comes out of the G8 also has a significant impact on these organizations.

The G7 countries control the most powerful international financial institutions. Voting power at the World Bank and IMF is determined by the level of a nation's financial contribution (one dollar, one vote) and the G7 holds a total of 45% which results in an effective veto on decisions.

*...strengthening the World Trade Organization (WTO) as the bedrock of the multilateral trading system is therefore an economic imperative...we pledge today to engage personally and jointly in the launch of a new ambitious Round of global trade negotiations...in Doha, Qatar.*

*-G7 Genoa Communiqué*

The true power at the World Trade Organization lies with the informal "Quad Countries" of the United States, Canada, Japan, and the European Union.

The G8 meets every summer in advance of the September meetings of the World Bank/IMF and the November Ministerial of the World Trade Organization, so that decisions made at the G8 impact the policies set at these meetings.

## THE G8 RECORD

The G8 as a multilateral forum is elitist, secretive, and exclusive, despite a facade of greater involvement from other voices. The record of the G8 is the advancement of the neo-liberal agenda and a tweaking of institutions, rather than fundamental reform and greater accountability. The G8 typically makes a series of promises at Summits, but do they deliver?

## ON DEBT

Of the \$100 billion of debt cancellation offered at the 1999 Summit in Cologne, only \$2.6 billion has been cancelled.

The G8 supports the World Bank's Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC), which it says will provide 23 countries with \$53 billion in debt relief, while the Jubilee Movement says the HIPC will only create \$34 billion in relief. The G8 refuses to recognize that debt relief should be based on a country's need for poverty reduction, which would mean 100% debt cancellation for the most impoverished countries.

## ON TRADE

The G8 believes that "open trade and investment drive global growth and poverty reduction," and are committed to expanding the WTO and to helping developing countries "improve the climate for private investment." Thirty African countries recently declared they were against negotiating

*...we must renew our unwavering commitment to structural change...including greater competition and more adaptable labour markets.*

*-G8 Okinawa Communiqué*

new agreements since the last round cost Sub-Saharan Africa an estimated \$569 million, and past agreements have not been fulfilled. For example, the US has removed only 13 of 750 quota restrictions on developing country products.

## ON AIDS AND HEALTH

The Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria was meant to be the big announcement of the Genoa Summit. However, the \$1.3 billion over a number of years which was committed falls far short of the estimated \$7-10 billion per year that the UN estimates is needed. Much of the funding also appears to be diverted from existing aid budgets. Debt relief would have provided far more resources for health budgets.