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G8 Africa Action Plan: towards the 2003 summit

Why Africa?

Africa is the poorest region of the world – in human terms this means that half of Africans live on less than US\$1 a day and the average life expectancy is only 47 (30 years shorter than in the UK). One in five people's lives are affected by violent conflict and one in ten newborn babies die before their first birthday. The scourge of HIV/AIDS has further reduced the life expectancy throughout Africa – seven out of every ten people living with HIV in the world are African.

On present trends Africa will not meet the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals and halve poverty by 2015, but the picture is not entirely bleak. In 2001, 20 countries achieved growth rates of 4% and above, and the governments in Uganda, Malawi, Rwanda and Tanzania are making great strides in getting more children into school. Africans are leading the efforts to resolve long running conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola and Sudan. The conflict in Sierra Leone is over and elections there have been held successfully.

Another hopeful sign for Africa's development is that African leaders have launched the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) to tackle nationally and regionally the challenges that their countries face. NEPAD has a long-term

agenda for Africa's development that will address all the key development challenges for Africa. The NEPAD Implementation Plan is currently being developed. One of its most innovative features is the plan to create a peer review mechanism as a means to monitor progress and raise standards of political and economic governance.

What is the G8 Africa Action Plan?

It is the actions of African governments that will have the most impact on Africa's development, but in order to make real progress towards the 2015 targets, Africa's actions must be supported by the international community.

At their Genoa summit in 2001, the leaders of the G8 countries (the United States, France, Germany, Italy, UK, Canada, Japan and Russia) determined that they would respond to NEPAD by developing closer partnerships with reforming African governments, and by taking actions to promote peace, boost expertise, encourage trade and investment and provide more – and more effective – aid.

An Africa Action Plan was agreed at the G8 summit in Canada in 2002. This sets out specific G8 actions in the areas of peace and security, strengthening institutions and governance, fostering trade and investment, debt relief, education, health

Some one in five of the world's population live in extreme poverty. Governments worldwide have agreed to work together to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015, and to other targets including universal primary education and improved healthcare. The British Government is strongly committed to these targets.

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and HIV/AIDS, agriculture and water. Progress in implementing the plan will be monitored at the G8 summit in Evian, France in 2003.

What is the UK doing to implement the G8 Action Plan?

The UK is taking forward actions in all the areas covered by the action plan as part of our ongoing international development efforts.

Our priorities for immediate action are peace and security, trade, health, education, aid effectiveness and corporate transparency. The rest of this document summarises key UK actions in these areas until June 2003.

Full details of the actions the UK Government will be pursuing are available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and DFID websites.

Peace and security

Without peace and security Africa cannot realise any of its economic and social development goals. Conflict management, conflict prevention and peace-building are therefore at the heart of the Government's Africa Policy, carried forward within the Africa Conflict Prevention Pool, in which DFID, the FCO and the Ministry of Defence (MOD) work together to make our approaches to conflict in Africa more strategic, co-ordinated and effective.

Up to, and beyond June 2003 the UK Government will:

- Support the resolution of conflicts and consolidation of peace in the Great Lakes region (including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda) Sierra Leone and neighbouring countries, Sudan and Angola.
- Support the development of a long-term plan to build conflict management capacity in Africa, and specifically, support for an effective African peacekeeping force by 2010.

- Work towards a G8 commitment at Evian to implement common standards in arms export controls.

Trade

Africa has 12% of the world's population but only 2% of the trade. Africa's full integration into the international trade system would have a hugely beneficial impact on Africa's development. It is also one of the most difficult areas in which to make progress with G8 and European Union (EU) partners, and will therefore require continued and sustained effort.

Up to June 2003 the UK Government will:

- Work to complete the Common Agricultural Policy mid-term review to enable the EU to commit to meaningful reductions in agricultural support by the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial meeting in Cancun, Mexico in September 2003. We hope this will also stimulate reduction commitments from other G8 members.
- Work within the EU and WTO to ensure that African countries benefit from moves to greater regional integration
- Work with G8 and African countries to ensure that product standards do not act as trade barriers to African exports – including by increasing African participation in international standard setting bodies

Health

On average, almost a fifth of an African's life will be spent in poor health – this is not just a personal tragedy on a massive scale, but has devastating effects on the prospects for social and economic growth in Africa. Ill health can drive households deeper into poverty. To this burden has been added the devastating personal and societal costs resulting from AIDS.

The UK continues its work on HIV/AIDS and supporting developing country health systems. Up to June 2003 the UK Government will:

- Work to gain international support from governments, the pharmaceutical industry and others for a system of differential pricing of essential medicines in the poorest countries in order to give Africa's poor access to affordable medicines. This will build on the successful outcome of the UK's own Working Group on Access to Medicines, to be launched by the Prime Minister on 28 November 2002.
- Work towards the global eradication of polio by encouraging other donors to make commitments to fill the remaining \$218 million funding gap within the Polio Eradication Initiative. DFID has allocated an additional £37.9 million (including the \$25 million pledge made in the run-up to Kananaskis) by the end of 2005.

Education

Investment in education is critical to economic and social development in Africa, and also holds the key to important goals such as achieving full gender equality for women and girls. Many African governments have a clear commitment to achieving the goal of education for all, and we will continue to support the policies which they are putting in place to do this. That includes the provision of additional support through their budgets as needed.

Up to June 2003, and beyond, we will:

- Work to ensure progress in countries such as Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo, which both have large numbers of children out of school and need support to reform their education systems.
- Encourage better co-ordination of monitoring progress on girls' education through partnerships led by the UN.
- Continue support to the expansion of information and communications technology (ICT) in Africa, through initiatives such as Imfundo – our partnership for ICT in education.

Aid effectiveness

Much of Africa will continue to require significant amounts of foreign aid in order to finance its development. Aid levels – which fell steadily throughout the 80s and 90s – will need to increase but simply increasing the amount of aid money spent in Africa is not enough. We must ensure that aid is targeted and delivered in such a way that it can deliver the greatest good to the greatest number of poor people.

The Prime Minister committed the UK to a £1 billion bilateral programme in Africa by 2006. Up to June 2003 the UK will:

- Encourage other EU member states to follow the UK in increasing aid levels to meet the agreed target of average EU expenditure of 0.39% of national income on aid by 2006.
- Increase resources with greater certainty over a sustained period to reforming African governments that demonstrate commitment to reducing poverty.
- Work with other donors to streamline the way in which aid is delivered to minimise the burden on developing country systems.
- Encourage other donors to untie further their development assistance – the UK untied all development assistance in 2001.
- Continue to work with the European Commission to increase the percentage of EC aid spent in low-income countries – which includes most of sub-Saharan Africa – from 38% to 70%.

Corporate transparency

Parts of Africa have significant natural resources in the form of gas, oil and minerals, the revenues from which could have a significant impact on poverty reduction. However, it is currently very difficult for citizens of resource rich African countries to hold their governments accountable for the expenditure of these revenues, as neither host-country

governments nor the governments where the companies are registered require oil, gas and mining companies to disclose the payments that they make.

At the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in September 2002, the Prime Minister announced an initiative to promote transparency in the payment and management of government revenues generated by both national and multinational companies engaged in natural resource extraction. Up to June 2003 the UK will:

- Work to persuade other key governments and oil and mining companies to join this initiative.
- Host an international meeting of all partners – governments, industry representatives, multilateral agencies and civil society actors – in the run-up to the Evian summit.

Who is leading this work within the Government?

Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development, and DFID are responsible for co-ordinating UK implementation of the G8 Africa Action Plan, in close co-operation with other government departments. Baroness Amos, FCO Minister for Africa, will continue to pursue the UK agenda within the G8 in her role as the Prime Minister's Africa Personal Representative.

Full details of the UK implementation plan can be found at www.dfid.gov.uk and www.fco.gov.uk. Details of the Millennium Development Goals can also be found at www.dfid.gov.uk.