

Rt Hon Tony Blair MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
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2nd March 2007

Dear Prime Minister

G8 2007

We are writing to urge you and your government to use the 2007 G8 process to make decisive progress towards poverty eradication and to forge a strong international response to climate change.

The UK has a critical role to play both in ensuring that Africa and climate change figure prominently in the summit discussions in June, and in agreeing concrete commitments. The welcome focus you gave to Africa and climate change at Gleneagles in 2005 led to some significant pledges. Unfortunately, many of these now risk being unfulfilled.

We would urge that the UK government focuses on the following areas in the upcoming sherpa meetings, in other international fora, and at the summit itself: implementation and development of Gleneagles pledges on aid, debt, and on HIV and AIDS; action to ensure delivery on essential services such as education, health, and water and sanitation; progress on cutting carbon emissions and supporting adaptation for developing countries; and progress in international trade talks and on investment which will truly deliver pro-development outcomes for Africa and other developing countries.

On **aid**, the UK government must show clear leadership. At a minimum, the Comprehensive Spending Review in July must guarantee the resources needed for the 0.7% UN target to be met by 2013. However, we believe that the government should go further, by bringing forward its commitment to 2010. Clear steps should also be taken to improve the quality of that aid, including an end to the practice of counting debt relief as ODA and the use of aid to push economic policy conditions. At the same time, we are particularly concerned that those countries furthest from meeting their commitments - Germany included - are currently doing little to meet them, and that the promised \$50 billion aid increase risks being jeopardised as a result. The summit communiqué must recognise the need for a more concerted effort to meet and exceed the 2005 pledges, reflected in binding and detailed annual plans for increasing aid.

On **debt**, implementation of the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative is a positive example of the G8 doing what it said it would in 2005. However, as the UK government has stated, debt relief is needed for a much larger group of countries that continue to face a heavy debt burden, at great cost to some of the world's poorest people. The UK must push for a commitment by the G8 to full debt relief for all 'IDA-only' countries, and an audit of other outstanding debt claims, based on recognition of creditor co-responsibility for the current situation. The summit communiqué must also recognise the need for a just, transparent and comprehensive process to address current and future debt crises.

On **HIV and AIDS**, the commitment to achieve universal access to prevention, treatment and care for all people with HIV and AIDS by 2010 was among the most ambitious and important outcomes of the Gleneagles summit. Yet two years on, progress is unacceptably slow. Although a growing number of countries, including Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Lesotho, have produced detailed national plans for achieving the 2010 target, the donor funding response is inadequate. The G8 must commit to a comprehensive funding plan to achieve the 2010 target, and support measures (including greater trade flexibilities) to promote the production and distribution of generic medicines. These objectives should be pursued in the context of a wider effort to support the development of better health services (see below).

A key test of the 2005 commitments, will be whether they catalyse progress towards universal access to **essential services** in health, education, water and sanitation, as well as improved social protection:

On **health**, there must be robust action to reduce user costs, which are a major barrier to life-saving medical treatment for millions of poor households. The G8 should match its commitment to free, universal basic education, with a commitment to financially support national efforts to make essential health services free at the point of delivery and support the recruitment and retention of an extra 4.25 million health workers in developing countries. This should include a firm commitment not to actively recruit essential health workers to meet G8 countries' own requirements. The G8 should provide their share of the additional \$21 billion required annually to pay for this. Action on costs must be matched with a firm commitment to ensure co-ordination and funding for the development of strong health services, through a mechanism which brings together existing donor initiatives and ensures that they support national plans.

With regard to **education**, substantial progress has been made in the past decade. Experiences such as Tanzania's demonstrate that even the poorest countries can dramatically improve access. The G8 must commit to meeting its fair share of the estimated annual education funding gap of \$15-16 billion. Education in fragile states should be a particular priority, given that they account for half of the world's out-of-school children, and the Fast Track Initiative should be extended beyond its current focus on 'strong performers', to cover conflict-affected and fragile states.

Three years on from the Evian summit, the G8 must review its progress on **water and sanitation**, and commit its share of the \$10 billion funding gap to help support developing country efforts to provide safe water and sanitation, thereby preventing two million avoidable child deaths each year. The G8 must also use this year's summit to lay the groundwork for a Global Action Plan, to be followed up in 2008.

The UK must work with G8 countries to secure agreement on long-term predictable funding for **social protection** in Africa, in line with the Commission for Africa recommendation for \$2 billion a year, rising to \$5/6 billion by 2015.

On **climate change**, we agree with you that the G8 summit represents a crucial opportunity to make progress towards a post-2012 framework as part of the Kyoto process. As the major current and historical source of carbon emissions, the G8 bears particular responsibility to make this happen, at a point when the dangers are growing at a faster rate than the political response. We support your efforts to reach agreement on a stabilisation goal. We believe that binding agreements must be made to keep global warming at less than 2 degrees, which requires stabilisation at 450 ppm CO2 equivalent or below, in line with EU policy and scientific projections.

In order to remain below 2 degrees, the G8 must commit to a post-2012 agreement that adopts more ambitious targets for developed countries, gains wider participation and gives greater attention to the needs of the most vulnerable. The UK should work with other G8+5 countries to call for the launch of a negotiating mandate on a post-2012 agreement at the UNFCCC talks in Bali this December. It should call for a new agreement to be concluded by the end of 2008, allowing time for this to come into force in 2012.

Poor people and poor countries will in many cases be the first and worst affected by climate change, while having done least to bring it about. This should be reflected in the G8 reaching a collective commitment to reduce their own carbon emissions by 80% from their 1990 levels by 2050. G8 countries must also commit to ensuring that sufficient resources are made available to assist developing countries in building sustainable, low carbon economies, and in supporting efforts to adapt to the immediate and future impact of climate change. These commitments should be made in addition to 0.7% promise. Efforts to support low-carbon development in poor countries must be matched by similar steps to 'de-carbonise' the global economy. The G8 should put renewable energy at the forefront of these efforts, and commit to 20% of energy from renewable sources by 2020.

With regard to current **trade** negotiations, we urge that you prioritise getting the Doha Development Round and EU-ACP negotiations onto a pro-development track. The UK must not push for a rushed trade deal in the WTO, which fails to live up to the promise of the Doha Development Round to make trade rules fair. EU-ACP negotiations must also be turned around to deliver pro-development outcomes.

In all regional and bilateral negotiations, development issues must not be used as concessions, but rather as critical components of a development friendly agreement. They must also acknowledge that

developing countries need substantial support and special flexibilities over how and when they open up their markets and liberalise investment. Any demands for reciprocity should therefore be rejected, with poor countries free to use trade and investment policies to promote food security, rural livelihoods, and future industrial development.

On **investment**, it is essential that efforts to increase the quantity of investment going to Africa through initiatives such as the Investment Climate Facility are matched by equivalent efforts to increase the quality of that investment. The ICF must focus on encouraging appropriate domestic policies to ensure that foreign investment is complementary to local private sector development. We also urge you to encourage other G8 leaders to build on the precedent set by the Companies Act in the UK. The G8 should commit to holding the directors of companies headquartered in their countries legally accountable for the impacts of their businesses on workers, suppliers, communities and the environment. This must be accompanied by improved transparency for shareholders and other stakeholders through mandatory social and environmental reporting.

With the UK having committed so much time and energy in 2005 to the issues of Africa and climate change, it is imperative that the agreements reached then are now followed through with delivery, through both the G8, and other fora including the European Union and WTO.

We urge you to continue to work closely with Chancellor Merkel and other leaders to ensure that the legacy of the 2007 G8 summit is a positive one for the world's poorest and most vulnerable people.

We look forward to working with you and the UK government over the coming months to take these proposals forward.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Miller, Director, ActionAid International UK
Bala Sanusi, Chair, African Diaspora Voices
Richard Bennett, General Secretary, BOND
Chris Bain, Director, CAFOD
Daleep Mukharji, Director, Christian Aid
Tony Juniper, Executive Director, Friends of the Earth
Trisha Rogers, Director, Jubilee Debt Campaign
Barbara Stocking, Director, Oxfam GB
Marie Staunton, CEO, Plan UK
Christine Allen, Director, Progressio
Jasmine Whitbread, Chief Executive, Save the Children UK
Cliff Allum, CEO, Skillshare International
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