

## Executive Summary

This paper offers a survey study of the compliance of the G7 member states with their Summit commitments, focusing specifically on those issues central to Canada's foreign policy objectives, including the environment, development (debt relief and aid), human rights (child labour), nuclear safety, and weapons proliferation (landmines). Following an empirical assessment of the existing studies on G7 Summit compliance, this paper presents explanations for variations in compliance by country, issue area and over time.

The G7 has continued to produce a large number of specific and ambitious commitments since the Summit's inception in 1975. There have been positive and rising levels of compliance with these commitments. Positive compliance is the result, primarily, of the direct involvement in, and dominance of, the G7 by democratically-elected heads of state and government as well as the effects of important national and international institutional variables. Domestic political factors matter as well, for commitments are complied with when the leaders who made them enjoy credibility as well as popular and party support, have demonstrated a strong tendency towards multilateralism and have shown a strong personal commitment to the G7 as an institution and to the issues themselves. Changes in these factors account for the significant variations in compliance by country, across issue area and over time.

Based on this analysis, this study advances seven general and fourteen practical proposals for reforming the Summit process to improve compliance and thereby enhance Canada's foreign policy priorities. Together, these recommendations point to an enhanced role for foreign ministers and their deputies in acting, on behalf of leaders, to enhance monitoring, surveillance, implementative dialogue, and thus compliance.