

## Africa's New Partnership

### *A plan by Africans for Africans*

When elephants fight it is the grass that suffers, say the Kikuyu people of Kenya. The East African proverb could have been written with the Cold War in mind, or the many localized conflicts that have prevented Africa's development and impoverished millions of people from Côte d'Ivoire to the island of Zanzibar.

Today, Africa is the only continent where poverty is on the rise. Almost half of the 673 million people south of the Sahara live on less than one dollar a day. And of the more than 40 million people in the world infected with HIV/AIDS, over two-thirds are in Africa. Clearly, many donor governments are frustrated that there is not more to show for decades of development assistance to Africa and are convinced that some sort of new approach is required.

At last year's G8 Summit in Genoa, African leaders presented the New African Initiative, now called the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Designed by progressive African leaders, it was endorsed by 53 members of the African Union (the successor, as of July 2002, to the Organization of African Unity).

NEPAD is the first comprehensive plan for African development to have originated in—and been supported throughout—Africa. It addresses education, health, good governance, action against corruption, market access and much more. It also focuses on those countries that are prepared to take political and economic decisions to produce stable markets in which to attract new private capital, the cornerstone of development efforts in the 21st century.

G8 leaders in Genoa enthusiastically supported the New African Initiative. They agreed to develop a concrete action plan to support its goals and asked Canada, as G8 chair in 2002, to lead the plan's development. Since the beginning of the new year, the Prime Minister's personal representative for Africa and for the Kananaskis summit, Ambassador Robert Fowler, has been meeting with other G8 representatives and working closely with African representatives to determine how the G8 can best respond to this initiative and where it can add real value. G8 leaders will endorse this plan when they meet in Kananaskis.



Photo: Associated Press/AP

Children at a refugee camp in central Sierra Leone. This West African nation was ravaged by over 10 years of civil war, resulting in thousands of displaced people. With 17 million Africans either refugees or internally displaced, Africa has the largest concentration of displaced persons in the world.

"The underlying objective of the G8 Africa Action Plan is not to provide a massive infusion of funding nor to underwrite the actions of others," says Ambassador Fowler. "The goal is to put in place a new partnership that will unlock greater public and private capital over the long term."

At the same time, Canada recognizes that financial and technical resources will be needed in the context of this new partnership. It has created the Canada Fund for Africa, a \$500 million fund in support of the Action Plan, to be disbursed only after the plan is formally adopted by G8 leaders.

The fund is just one part of Canada's long history of engagement with Africa. Through its own efforts in promoting human security and conflict prevention, plus those of multilateral organizations to which Canada belongs, such as the United Nations, La Francophonie and the Commonwealth, Canada has long linked Africa's development to just systems of law and governance. These are the essential guarantors of peace and security and, in turn, economic development. In addition to the Canada Fund for Africa, the Government of Canada recently cancelled some \$1 billion of African debt and announced it would increase international assistance by 8 percent per year for the foreseeable future. 🍁

To learn more about the agenda and preparations for the Kananaskis G8 Summit, visit [www.g8.gc.ca](http://www.g8.gc.ca)

For questions or comments about the G8 Summit, you can call the toll-free line: 1-888-316-2002 (within Canada and the United States only).