

As G8 chair, Canada is leading the development of the G8 Africa Action Plan [see page 7], the roots of which go back to last year's meeting in Genoa, Italy. At Prime Minister Chrétien's initiative, G8 leaders meeting in Genoa agreed to develop a "concrete Action Plan" in support of the New African Initiative, now called the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The G8 Action Plan will be designed to work with African governments that are committed to implementing NEPAD's principles. This means governments that are committed to working on behalf of their citizens to build durable peace and security, strengthen democratic governance, address the crises in health and education, and open trade and investment.

"It is a vision founded on freedom and democracy, and the principle that the key to progress in Africa lies, first and foremost, with Africans," Mr. Chrétien said in describing the Action Plan to delegates at the Forum.

Africa may be front and centre at the G8, but it will not be the only subject of discussion.

As Canada, Europe and the United States emerge carefully from one of their mildest post-war recessions, and as Japan still struggles with its most severe downturn ever, leaders will also focus on strengthening economic growth both within their own countries and more broadly. The G8 countries are the engine of global growth, accounting

for nearly half (48 percent) of the world's economic output. However, an important area of leaders' discussions will be how to ensure that the other half is sustainable, and that no part of the world is excluded.

Finance ministers and central bank governors, meeting in Halifax, Nova Scotia, on June 14 and 15, will have much to contribute to this effort. Like their counterparts responsible for justice and interior, energy, labour, environment and foreign affairs, finance ministers meet in advance of G8 summits in a far-reaching, policy-building process to support the work of their leaders. In addition to these important meetings, consultations take place through such bodies as the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations.

Not surprisingly, terrorism will also be on the agenda at Kananaskis. Since the late 1970s, G7 and G8 meetings have made significant progress in the fight against terrorism, serving as catalysts for the negotiation of no fewer than 12 United Nations counterterrorism conventions. After the attacks of September 11, G8 leaders asked their ministers to draw up a list of specific measures, including mechanisms to stop the flow of funds to terrorists, improve aviation security, bring about stricter control of arms exports and enhance security cooperation. Many of these measures will be discussed at Kananaskis. ♣

Photo: Canadian Press CP



The G8 leaders at the 2001 G8 Summit in Genoa, Italy, where African leaders first proposed the New African Initiative (now the New Partnership for Africa's Development). As G8 chair of this year's summit, Canada is leading the development of the G8 Africa Action Plan. (left to right): Junichiro Koizumi (Japan), Tony Blair (U. K.), George W. Bush (U. S. A.), Jacques Chirac (France), Silvio Berlusconi (Italy), Vladimir Putin (Russia), Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, Gerhard Schröder (Germany), Guy Verhofstadt (Belgium), Romano Prodi (European Commission)