

small replica of the inflexible international institutions, at least when profoundly complex and contentious issues — poverty, development, the environment, for example — are high on the agenda? Could an implicit agreement on basic norms and principles really govern dialogue between the G7 and China — or China and India for that matter? These and other questions should be carefully thought through before the G8 is turned into the G-N. Perhaps it would also be useful to consider the possibility of a core group with a core agenda and variable geography for other issues.¹² But that gets us to the really tough problem — the agenda.

The centrepiece of the Kananaskis summit, as announced by Prime Minister Chrétien in a speech to the World Economic Forum, will be to reduce the marginalization of Africa by working with NEPAD. An African Action Plan is being prepared, by personal representatives of G8 leaders and African officials, for adoption at Kananaskis. It will address a wide range of issues including peace and security; health, education, trade and investment, all essential to development and the reduction of poverty. The Prime Minister stressed the importance of Canadian values of caring and compassion and belief in an “equitable sharing of global prosperity and opportunity”. There was no mention of the costs involved in implementing the African Action Plan.

Dealing with African marginalization is both praiseworthy and essential to the achievement of comprehensive global security. The subject reflects the shift over the past several years to global issues with a strong moral resonance, in part a response to a media that favors the emotive over the intellectual and the NGOs who seem to have captured the moral high ground on subjects such as aids and debt relief. Be that as it may, the need for a comprehensive and coherent strategy for Africa devised in partnership with the African countries is clearly an appropriate subject for the G7.

But there's a problem. There's no agreement at present among the G7 on financing. *Au contraire*. While Prime Minister Blair has been campaigning for a new Marshall Plan for Africa, the U.S. has clearly indicated that its aid budget will be only marginally increased (mainly to deal with Afghanistan) and at the G8 meeting with NEPAD in mid-February it was announced that the G8 countries were unable “to meet African expectations for — financial support”.¹³ One can debate whether or not aid has been effective or not — the