



## GROUP OF 8 (G8) FACTSHEET

### *Who is the G8?*

- The Group of Eight, also known as the G8, consists of the seven strongest economies of the world, and Russia. Together their governments amount to 65% of the world's overall economy.
- The G8 consists of The United States, Britain, France, Germany, Japan, Canada, Italy, and Russia. This coalition was first created (originally as the G6, without Russia and Canada) in 1975, during the oil crisis of the 70's, to discuss how to face the economic decline, and other global social and political issues.
- The G8 meets annually with the presidency rotating between the members each year. These summits have been instrumental in shaping foreign policy, with an agenda focused on international social, political, and economic issues. This year's summit will be held in Saint Petersburg, Russia July 15-17, 2006.

### *So What Does the G8 Have to Do with Africa?*

- Each year the G8 makes several commitments to accelerate economic development in the developing world, and other global priority issues like tackling infectious diseases, conflict, or debt cancellation.
- In 2005 the G8 met at the Gleneagles Hotel in Scotland, and committed to tackling developmental issues in Africa, as well as global climate change. During this summit they met with African leaders that included representation from Ethiopia, Algeria, Tanzania, South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, and Senegal. Also members of the African Union, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and United Nations were present.
- In 2005 the G8 committed to the following in regards to Africa:
  - Provide extra resources for Africa's peacekeeping forces so that they can better deter, prevent and resolve conflicts in Africa
  - Give enhanced support for greater democracy, effective governance and transparency, and to help fight corruption and return stolen assets
  - Boost investment in health and education, and to take action to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, TB and other killer diseases
  - Stimulate growth, to improve the investment climate and to make trade work for Africa, including by helping to build Africa's capacity to trade and working to mobilize the extra investment in infrastructure which is needed for business
- In 2005, the G8 also canceled 100% multilateral debt for qualifying developing nations that would amount to \$40 billion of debt relief. 14 African countries qualified including: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.
- **G8 Summits have previously attracted the concern and protests of economic justice activists who raise the concern that major world decisions, especially in the case of economic policies, are formulated and determined by global economic powers such as the G8, who do not represent the interests of the people their decisions impact.**

- Africa Action sees the G8 as a part of the system of global apartheid. **Global apartheid** is a system of inequality that dictates access to wealth, power and basic human rights based on race and place. The elites in the rich and powerful countries control the major global decision-making bodies – such as the World Bank and the World Trade Organization (WTO) – and preserve this system, which works in their favor. They ensure that the privileged citizens of rich countries have more resources and access to human rights than people in poor countries.

## Now What?

- This year's agenda of the G8 summit is focused on:
  - Infectious Diseases
  - Global Energy Security
  - Education

### Africa Action calls the G8 this year to perform the following:

- Track the progress and implement commitments made previously in regards to promoting peace, justice, and a healthy political socioeconomic environment on the African continent.
- Prioritize Africa on the agenda, especially in regards to debt, HIV/AIDS, and Darfur.
- Advocate for a United Nations Peace Keeping Force in Darfur to protect the millions of internally displaced people. Darfur is in desperate need of a multi-national peacekeeping force to stop the genocide, and address the current humanitarian crisis.
- Cancel 100% of debt for all African countries without destabilizing economic strings attached. This will free resources to be invested in:
  - Preventing and treating the HIV/AIDS pandemic, Bird Flu, funding education, infrastructure, and other lacking social services.
  - Funding health workers on the continent, especially those who work in HIV/AIDS clinics, who are currently in dire need of financial support.
  - The nature of these debts is illicit and illegitimate in most cases. Therefore Africa should not be liable for debts incurred from the colonial period, which already has had destabilizing effects on societies all over the continent, or loans made to dictators that did not fund development. To learn more about Africa's debt situation read: [Africa Out of the Limelight: The Debt Crisis One Year After the Gleneagles G8](#)
- Advocate for safe environmental standards from western oil corporations. This will prevent Africa's oil rich regions from being endangered by polluted drinking water from oil spills, and gas flare-ups. Also there should be a guarantee that African oil profits will benefit African people.

For more information, please visit [www.africaaction.org](http://www.africaaction.org)