

# A NEW PLAN TO SAVE AFRICA

## Introduction

### Focus

This *News in Review* report provides an overview of NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development), an African plan that calls on Western nations to increase aid, investment, debt relief, and trade opportunities to African nations that commit themselves to democracy, good governance, and peace. The report also explores the problems facing Africa that necessitate this deal, and an examination of the Group of 8 countries that have been asked to provide new hope to Africa.

On June 27 and 28, 2002, the leaders of the world's wealthiest and most industrialized nations met in Kananaskis, Alberta. Known as the Group of 8 (G8), the leaders of these powerful nations meet to discuss and take action on global economic and political issues that concern them. This year's meeting was unusual, in that the leaders of a number of African nations were invited to attend the summit to discuss an action plan for African development. African leaders had never before attended a G8 summit.

Many people would argue that the problems of the African continent have disappeared from the eyes of the world community since the terrorist attacks on the United States in September 2001. But Africa's problems have not gone away. Tragically, close to 20 000 children die each day from preventable diseases. Twelve million people are threatened with starvation this year in the southern part of the continent. Two hundred million people have no access to fresh water. Twenty million people have already died of AIDS in Africa, and approximately 75 per cent of people with AIDS in the world live in this continent. Unemployment is between 50 and 60 per cent. Not surprisingly, poverty has caused many of these problems and continues to exacerbate them. Recent estimates state that 260 million of the 659 million people in sub-Saharan Africa live on less than one dollar a day.

African leaders drafted the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in an attempt to change the course of Africa's future. The goals of NEPAD are both admirable and chal-

lenging: cut poverty in half by 2015, reduce infant mortality rates by two-thirds, reduce maternal mortality rates to three-quarters of their present rate, achieve an annual growth rate of seven per cent for 15 years, and have every eligible child enter school. The leaders believe this can be achieved if the G8 leaders increase aid, investment, debt relief, and trade opportunities for African nations.

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien worked hard lobbying the other leaders to support NEPAD before the meeting at Kananaskis. While he was able to convince many leaders to support the ideals of NEPAD, he was unable to deliver them all. The most notable dissenting voice came from the United States. President George Bush came to the G8 meeting to get support for his continued, and expanded, war on terrorism. Russia came to the meeting wanting financial help to rid its country of its many nuclear weapons. In the end, the G8 leaders agreed to commit a further \$6-billion to Africa by the year 2006.

Unfortunately, this is not enough money to help Africa deal with its pressing problems. Since the African nations are currently \$54-billion in debt, the \$6-billion offered by the G8 will barely cover interest on the debt for one year. But why was so little money offered? Is there no money available? Have Western nations become desensitized to the human suffering in Africa? Have we given up on those who have so much less than ourselves? And just what is our moral obligation to help others? As you read this *News in Review* report you will be asked to answer these questions for yourselves.



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## *Video Review*

For a detailed understanding of this story, watch the video and record answers to the questions on this and the next page.

1. The partnership between the G8 and African nations is being compared to the Marshall Plan. What was the Marshall Plan?

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2. Why was the meeting between African leaders and the G8 historically important?

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3. List three reasons given for the poverty currently being experienced by African nations.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Neville Gabriel, of the South African non-governmental organization Justice and Peace, is critical of the deal. Explain his reasons.

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5. How much new money has actually been promised by the G8 nations? Be specific.

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6. Explain the link between foreign debt and African poverty.

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**Follow-up  
Analysis**

Visit the official  
NEPAD Web site at  
[www.nepad.org](http://www.nepad.org)  
and write a brief  
profile of the site.

7. In order to qualify for financial assistance under the terms of the new deal, what conditions do African nations need to meet?

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8. In your view, which condition is most important? Why?

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9. How did Thabo Mbeki, President of South Africa, respond to the question of Western nations' concern about corruption within African governments?

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10. According to this report, is NEPAD "the last hope" for African development? Explain.

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11. What might the legacy of this year's summit be?

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12. In your view, what should Canada's response be to NEPAD? Explain fully.

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# A NEW PLAN TO SAVE AFRICA

## *G8 Backgrounder*

### **Did you know . . .**

Canada has hosted three G7-G8 Summits in the past?

- 1995 – Halifax
- 1988 – Toronto
- 1981 – Ottawa-Montebello

### **What is it?**

The Group of 8 (G8) is a forum for the eight member nations to discuss and take action on global economic and political issues. The members also attempt to resolve internal disputes, identify common threats and objectives and establish new policies. The G8, however, is not a formal international organization like the United Nations. It has no permanent staff, headquarters, or budget. The nation that hosts the G8 summit in any given year provides the meeting facilities. G8 members comply voluntarily with the group's policies, and there are no penalties for non-compliance. It is also important to remember that the G8 is not representative of the world's population: it represents only countries that have industrialized, market-driven economies.

### **How did the G8 come to be?**

In the 1970s a series of economic crises hit Western countries. One of these was the collapse of the Bretton Woods system; this system had regulated the value of nations' currencies by fixing them to the U.S. dollar. Another was the first oil crisis, when oil prices quadrupled in a matter of months. And the third was a broad recession that resulted in a rise in unemployment in most Western nations.

In response, the United States formed an informal, private group to discuss these challenges and co-ordinate efforts to respond to them. Named the Library Group because the meetings were held in the White House library, the group consisted of the top government finance officials from the United States, West Germany, France, Japan, and the United Kingdom. In 1975, the heads-of-state of these countries, plus Italy, became known as the G6 and began holding annual meetings, or summits, to deal with economic and monetary concerns.

Over the next two decades the group grew in size, and the nature of the issues the group addressed changed. In 1976, Canada joined the group, and the G7 was born. In 1977, the group became known as the G7 +1 when the European Community (now the European Union) was granted limited status at the summit in London. And in 1978, the G7 began dealing with political issues for the first time. In 1998, the G8 was established when Russia became a partner in the organization. Today, with the launching of the euro (Europe's common currency) and the establishment of the European central bank, the European Union plays a more active role in economic and financial meetings. The EU does not participate in political meetings, however.

### **Discussion**

1. Why do you think the decisions of the G8 are followed so closely? In what ways do their decisions affect the world?

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2. In what ways are the G8 nations not representative of the majority of the world's population?
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## Taking a Closer Look at the Members

The United States is the dominant member of the G8. While there is no formal recognition of this dominance within the G8, the United States is able to use its financial, economic, and military power to pressure other countries to follow its lead. The other countries are not powerless in the face of the

U.S. but they often have to band together to pressure the United States on a certain issue. In addition, the United States has to make compromises with other members to get them to commit to its initiatives. The G8 member countries are examined below in alphabetical order.

Country	Population <sup>1</sup>	Area <sup>2</sup>	GDP <sup>3*</sup>	GDP growth	GDP per capita <sup>3</sup>	Inflation	Unemployment
Canada	31.1 (2001)	9 970 610	\$700.4 billion	4.4%*	\$22 763*	2.7%*	7.3% <sup>§</sup>
France	159 (2000)	550 000	\$1.448 trillion	3.2%*	\$22 900*	1.6%*	6.9% <sup>§</sup>
Germany	82.8 (2000 est.)	357 000	\$4.61 trillion	3.01%*	\$22 878*	2.1%*	7.8%*
Italy	57.6 (1999)	301 255	\$1.08 trillion	2.9% <sup>+</sup>	\$19 107 <sup>+</sup>	2.6%*	10.6%*
Japan	126.9 (2000 est.)	377 864	\$4.61 trillion	1.7%*	\$37 748*	-0.6%*	4.7%*
Russia	144.8 (2001)	17 075 200	\$246.7 billion	8.3%*	\$ 1672*	20.2%*	9.6% <sup>§</sup>
UK	59.9 (2001 est.)	241 752	\$1.42 trillion	3.0%*	\$24 228*	2.1%*	5.6%*
U.S.	283.8 (2001 est.)	9 629 091	\$9.96 trillion	5%*	\$33 888*	3.4%*	4.0%*

1 in millions • 2 in km<sup>2</sup> • 3 in U.S. dollars • + Year 1999 • \* Year 2000 • § Year 2001

## Follow-up

1. The GDP (gross domestic product) of a nation is the value of all goods and services produced in a country. GDP per capita is the GDP divided by population. Which do you think is the better measure of a country's wealth? Why?
2. Review the information in the table and identify the three wealthiest countries in the G8. Are you surprised by this information? Explain.

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## *A Continent in Crisis*

The statistics are grim:

- A child dies every three seconds in Africa from preventable diseases (about 19,000 children a day).
- One African in five is affected by an armed conflict or civil war.
- 260 million of the 659 million people in sub-Saharan Africa live on less than one dollar a day.
- 20 million people have already died of AIDS in Africa and approximately 75 per cent of people with AIDS in the world live in Africa.
- Unemployment lies somewhere between 50 and 60 per cent.
- Life expectancy is 47 years of age (compared with 79 in Canada).
- 200 million people have no access to fresh water.
- 12 million people are threatened with starvation in 2002 in six southern African countries.

There is little doubt that only long-term development will help the African continent to overcome its many challenges. The most pressing need, however, is food. In southern Africa, three years of alternating floods and drought have wiped out agricultural production. Aid agencies warn that unless food is adequately delivered in the next three months, at least 12 million Africans face starvation. Workers in these same agencies are already witnessing horrifying scenes. In rural Malawi, peasants are reported to be chewing on sawdust, mutilating each other, and fighting to death over scattered corn cobs in dried-up fields. In Mozambique, men are catching crocodiles with their bare hands for food. And in May of 2002, Médecins sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders) reported finding an entire town of 18 000 people dying of hunger in the remote southwest of Angola.

The shortage of food is also partly the result of corrupt governments and poor decision-making at the highest levels. In Zimbabwe, for example, the government

of Robert Mugabe introduced a “land-reform” policy two years ago in which black “war veterans” were encouraged to seize some of the most productive land from white farmers. Since the land grab began, there has been a 60 per cent drop in agricultural production, and the government now needs to import over 1.5 million tonnes of corn and wheat to feed its people. As well, earlier this year Zimbabwe held a suspect presidential election. As a result of this, the country has found itself out of favour with the international community and is now literally begging for food.

In Malawi, the United Nations estimates that up to four million people—about 40 per cent of the population—need food. But the situation in the country has been compounded by the fact that the International Monetary Fund, Britain, and the European Union have frozen \$75-million (US) in monetary funds because of the disappearance and alleged private sale of over 150 000 tonnes of emergency grain shipments.

It is ironic that although millions of Africans will die of starvation this year the world actually has a surplus of food. And that is the cruel reality of poverty. Many African nations are too poor to buy what others are selling. Many Africans are too poor to even grow their own crops. Agricultural subsidies provided by rich countries in Europe and North America artificially increase the price of African exports and result in those products being left without a market. This is a significant problem. The United States and other industrialized countries spend *\$350-billion a year* on agricultural subsidies. That is 100 times what they spend on food aid.

Africa is a huge continent, with over 50 states. Some of those states have developing economies and adequate infrastructure, including clean water supply and capable sewage treatment.

But there are also a number that require political and economic reconstruction from the ground up. Civil war is ongoing in a few countries, and although many are democratic, others are ruled by dictators or an absolute monarch. All this is to say that a continent as large and complex as Africa cannot be “fixed” overnight. But does that mean there is no hope? Not at all.

An editorial in *The Toronto Star*, on June 20, 2002, stated that if the world is able to free 400 million people from hunger, those same people would boost global output by \$120-billion or more. This is because well-fed people work harder and are less likely to fall ill. The cost of such an endeavour? Twenty-four billion dollars in foreign aid and local investments. That is a net gain of \$5 for every \$1 spent—a good investment.

## Follow-up

1. After reviewing the information in this feature write an open letter to one of the leaders of the G8 from the perspective of an African. In your letter include some information about the struggles you see around you and what you believe needs to be done to improve the situation.
2. Using the LRC or Internet, locate some personal stories, written by Africans, describing their daily life. Share these stories with your classmates.

# A NEW PLAN TO SAVE AFRICA

## *The Africa Fund*

One of the areas the G8 leaders focused on at the 2002 Summit in Kananaskis, Alberta, was a plan to help African nations deal with the poverty plaguing their peoples. The plan, called the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was put together over the last four years by South African President Thabo Mbeki, Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, and President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria. The plan calls on Western nations to increase aid, investment, debt relief, and trade opportunities to African nations that commit themselves to democracy, good governance, and peace.

African nations that want to join NEPAD will have to sign up for a Democracy and Political Governance Initiative. This includes agreeing to operate as a parliamentary democracy, instituting fixed terms of office for national leaders, and respecting the independence of the judiciary within the country. Members will also have to agree to an independent peer review every three years on how they are living up to their NEPAD obligations. These are tough criteria—especially since about one-third of Africa's 53 states do not meet the plan's criteria for membership.

### **What were the hopes of African leaders?**

The goals of NEPAD are impressive:

- to achieve an annual growth rate of seven per cent for 17 years
- to cut poverty in half by the year 2015
- to reduce infant mortality rates by two-thirds
- to reduce maternal mortality rates to three-quarters of their present rate
- to have every child enter school who is

eligible, thereby reinforcing the principle of gender equality

### **What did the G8 leaders promise?**

The G8 leaders released their Africa Action Plan as their initial response to NEPAD. Although they talked about their support for the African initiative, they were vague about the exact amount of money that they would give to Africa. They promised to increase overall foreign aid to a total of \$12-billion (US) per year by 2006, but it looks like only half of this money will specifically be targeted at Africa. Approximately \$6-billion dollars more a year will be directed to Africa in aid by 2006.

### **Will this be enough?**

Although \$6-billion sounds like a great deal of money, it really is not. Let us look at some other figures to help to put the amount in perspective. At the same G8 Summit where the Africa Fund was established, Russia was given \$20-billion to prevent its nuclear materials from falling into terrorist hands. In August 2002, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) gave \$30-billion to help bail out Brazil's bankrupt economy. And of the \$112-billion spent internationally on development aid worldwide, just \$17-billion goes to agriculture. In fact, Africa receives 40 per cent *less* in aid for water, crop seeds, and other agricultural needs than it did 10 years ago.

As well, it is important to remember that Africa is currently \$54-billion in debt. As a result, most African countries spend more on debt interest than they do

on health care. The additional \$6-billion promised by the G8 is likely not enough to cover interest on the debt for one year.

Another problem with the Africa Action Plan is that the United States does not seem as eager to support the plan as other countries do (Canada and France in particular). In fact, it is believed that President Bush blocked more funds going to Africa so that cash could be concentrated on America's fight against terrorism. Despite repeated efforts, Prime Minister Chrétien was unable to convince Bush to direct 50 per cent of American foreign aid to Africa. As it stands now, the U.S. is increasing foreign aid to \$15-billion this year, but the government has not stated how much of this is for Africa. Matters are further complicated by the fact that Washington has just passed a new farm subsidies bill that will make it harder for African nations and others to sell goods in the U.S. market.

This policy frustrates Prime Minister Chrétien, who has steered Canada toward eliminating many agricultural subsidies. By introducing the new Farm Bill the United States government is not

only hurting Africa it is also hurting Canadian farmers. Chrétien is also concerned because the annual level of all assistance to Africa from developed nations amounts to \$50-billion, but agricultural subsidies by these same countries exceeds \$350-billion a year. Chrétien believes that food prices should rise, rather than being kept artificially low by subsidies.

Despite the relatively small amount of additional money pledged to Africa, supporters of NEPAD, like Prime Minister Chrétien, argue that the plan has a much greater chance of success than former bail-out schemes because it was devised by Africans themselves. As such, this should give the plan greater acceptance within Africa and should result in greater adherence to the principles of the plan. Other supporters argue that the G8 Summit and NEPAD have at least put Africa on the agenda again. The concerns of the continent had slipped from the limelight since the events of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States. Now the international community is being forced to deal with African issues.

## Follow-up

- 1 . What is your personal reaction to the NEPAD program?

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2. Record at least three reasons why you believe the G8 did not offer more in response to NEPAD.

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- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_

## A NEW PLAN TO SAVE AFRICA

### *AIDS: The Destruction of a Continent*

Although there are many crises facing the African continent, it is likely fair to say that the most critical of them all is AIDS. Twenty million people have already died of AIDS in Africa and approximately 75 per cent of people with AIDS in the world live in Africa. As many as one quarter of adults in many African nations are infected with the HIV virus. Since the disease affects people of working age, it is breaking down the extended family structure that has helped many people survive previous droughts. Because people with AIDS in Africa also have to deal with poverty, their chances of dying from the disease are much higher than in the Western world.

Stephen Lewis, former Canadian ambassador to the United Nations, and currently the United Nations Special Envoy on HIV/AIDS in Africa, has spent a great deal of time traveling throughout Africa studying the impact of the disease. In a speech to the critics of the G8 in Calgary, Alberta, on June 21, 2002, Lewis emphasized that NEPAD will fail to “save” Africa because any real gains in human development will remain an impossible hope unless HIV/AIDS is brought under control. He noted the following.

I cannot put the case too strongly. There will be no continuous . . . growth in the 25 countries where the prevalence rate of HIV is above five per cent—considered to be the dangerous take-off point for the pandemic—unless the pandemic is defeated. In fact, it is virtually certain that several of those countries will experience a negative rate of growth year over year under present circum-

stances. . . . When family income is gutted as wage earners die, as plots of land are left untended, as every penny goes to the care of the sick and the dying, it is preposterous to pretend that poverty will be halved. . . .

“There will be no reduction in infant mortality by two-thirds, unless the pandemic is defeated. How can there be? Two thousand infants a day are currently infected . . . a certain death warrant . . . maintaining or elevating the already impossibly high infant mortality rates . . . .

And there is certainly no chance of putting every eligible child in school, especially the girls, unless the pandemic is defeated. Four out of every 10 primary-school-age children are now not in school in sub-Saharan Africa. Young girls are regularly pulled out of classrooms to look after ailing parents. There are 13 million orphans in Africa, huge cohorts of them living on the streets, or attempting to survive in child-headed households after all the extended family is gone and the grandmothers are dead. These kids have nothing; they certainly have no money to afford school fees, or books, or uniforms. . . .

And it’s not just the children, it’s the teachers. . . . [In 2001,] a million African children lost their teachers to AIDS. The government of Mozambique just issued a statement that 17 per cent of its teachers will die of AIDS by the end of this decade. As I travel, when I speak to Ministers of Education, they haven’t the faintest idea how they’re going to replace the teachers that are gone or how they will ever find trained or adequate substitute teachers to fill in for the regular classroom teachers who are off sick for extended periods of time.

We're talking about an unprecedented calamity. There's nothing more noble than the objective of putting every child in school, but if the objective is not to be more than some kind of ephemeral mockery, then AIDS must be defeated. . . .

Let me be clear: while the situation feels apocalyptic, it can be addressed. AIDS has done and is doing terrible things to Africa, but we know how to defeat it. . . . We know all about voluntary counselling and testing; we simply have to train more counsellors and get rapid testing kits into the hands of those who administer the tests. We know all about the prevention of mother-to-child transmission. We know about anti-retroviral treatment, the so-called drug cocktails that keep people alive. . . . But no matter how dramatic, the drugs are still beyond the capacity of Africans to afford when people live on less than a dollar a day. But it could be afforded through external financing, and it is one of the gruesome iniquities of the present situation that people are dying, everywhere, in huge numbers, unnecessarily . . . .

In his speech in Calgary, Lewis refers to a statement made by Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Annan said, "In the war against HIV/AIDS, there is no us and them, no

developed and developing countries, no rich and poor—only a common enemy that knows no frontiers and threatens all peoples. But we must all remember that while HIV/AIDS affects both rich and poor, the poor are much more vulnerable to infection, and much less able to cope with the disease once infected. We need leadership and commitment to show the millions of suffering that the world is finally summoning the will—and committing the resources . . . to win this war for humanity."

Lewis concludes by noting that Annan uses the metaphor of war to refer to the AIDS pandemic. "In times of war," he says, "every apparatus of the state is conscripted into battle. In times of war, resources are somehow found that are thought not to exist—just think of the so-called war on terrorism, with scores of billions of dollars hurled into the fray overnight to avenge the horrendous deaths of 3000 people. So explain to me why we have to grovel to extract a few billion dollars to prevent the deaths of over two million people every year, year after year after year? Why is the war against terrorism sacrosanct, and the war against AIDS equivocal? In the answer to that question lies the challenge for NEPAD and the true test for the G8."

## Analysis and Action

1. Do you agree that the impact of HIV/AIDS in Africa is similar to a war? Explain your answer.
2. Do you think that if a primarily white country or continent was faced with an AIDS crisis on the scale of that facing Africa that greater action would be taken to help those suffering? Explain.
3. One way to take action on an issue is to spread information. Decide how you would like to let others know about the situation in Africa and then do it. You may choose to create a poster or collage for display, write a letter to the editor, or invite a guest speaker into your school or classroom.

# A NEW PLAN TO SAVE AFRICA

## *Implementing NEPAD*

### **Task**

In this activity you will be asked to review the case of Zimbota, a fictional African country that has applied for development funds through NEPAD. You will have to decide if Zimbota meets the criteria established by NEPAD **and** you will also have to decide how much money (if any) to grant the country. Prepare a written brief that explains your decision.

### **NEPAD's Rules**

NEPAD's Democracy and Political Governance Initiative demands specific obligations and required actions toward good governance. Specifically, before a country can apply for funds it must:

- implement a system of parliamentary democracy
- impose fixed terms of office for national leaders
- protect the independence of the judiciary
- agree to an independent peer review every three years to ensure it is living up to NEPAD obligations.

### **Case Study: Zimbota**

For the past three years the government of Zimbota has been working hard to improve the standard of living for its citizens. Greater numbers of children are now attending school because the government passed strict child labour laws that forbid families from using children under 10 to earn money for the household. The government has been able to attract greater numbers of teachers to the field of education by improving salaries slightly and providing subsidized housing near the rural schools that need teachers. As well, the

government is making a great effort to reduce the new number of HIV/AIDS cases by providing mandatory testing of all pregnant women, counselling in clinics, and free condoms.

The government of Zimbota has applied for development funds from NEPAD to help establish sewage treatment facilities in the country. Currently, sewage is untreated and either buried in unlined pits or dumped directly into waterways. This has a direct impact on water quality in the country and is believed to be a major source of many infectious diseases contracted by citizens. Sewage treatment will improve water quality and decrease health-care costs, as well as improve the country's environment.

In their brief to NEPAD, the government explains that it has made arrangements to hire experts from Canada and Britain to develop the infrastructure necessary for such a large-scale project. Once construction on the project is begun, it is expected that close to 3500 new jobs will be created by the industry.

Zimbota has met all of the terms of NEPAD, except that it refuses to limit the terms of office for national leaders. Zimbota has asked NEPAD for \$245-million dollars.