



Gleneagles G8 Summit

delivering new hope for Africa?

Now that the 2005 Gleneagles G8 Summit is over, what has the G8 really delivered for the people of Africa? To keep up the momentum on the policy debate surrounding Gleneagles and its aftermath, the **Centre for Policy Studies (CPS)** and the **Labour Bulletin** are dedicating this special focus to assessing the implications of the summit for Africa and the South and how these issues affect South Africa's foreign relations and foreign policy identity.

The jihad bomb attacks in London ultimately failed to overshadow the G8 Summit at Gleneagles, Scotland which was devoted to Africa and climate change. But what real progress was made to 'Make Poverty History'? Did the failure to produce some firm indication of a near-term breakthrough on trade dilute the commitments made at Gleneagles? Will those commitments be sufficient to offset this failure? Are these commitments all they seem to be when 'the devil is in the detail'?

Critics of the recent G8 Summit would

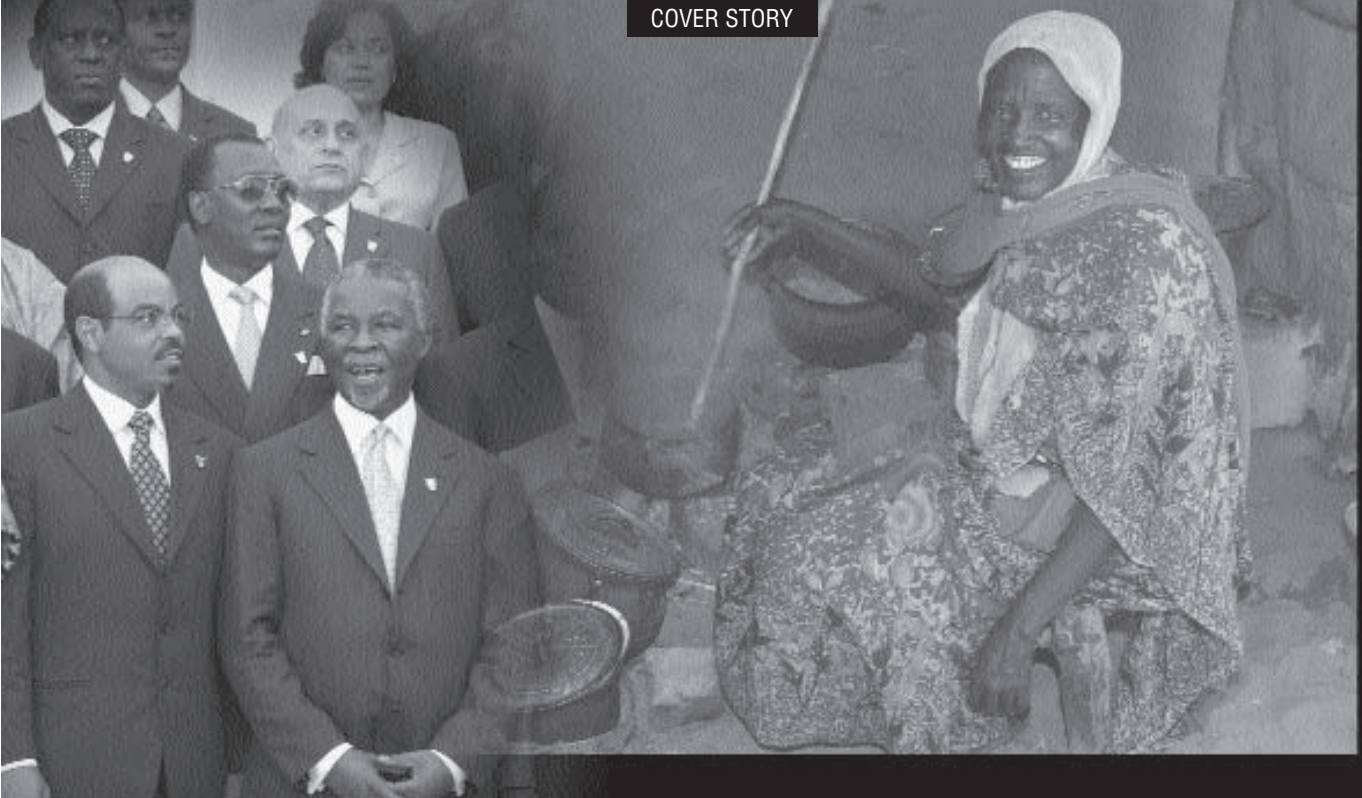
contend that none of these questions can be answered with a 'yes', while defenders counter that this was the first time that Africa and African issues attained such a top priority hearing at such a high level. Britain's High Commissioner to South Africa, Paul Boateng argues there was 'A degree of engagement at a high level of seniority around African issues that has never existed before.'

This engagement is not going to disappear, given the existence of the African Partnership Forum of G8-African leaders who are supposed to monitor and evaluate the agreement's implementation.

WHO AND WHAT IS THE G8?

The G8 are the world's leading industrial and post-industrial capitalist economies. They include the world's seven leading economies - the US, Canada, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan - plus Russia because of its residual post-Cold War status as a major nuclear weapons state. These states have a disproportionate influence and impact on world affairs.

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So what does the G8 do? As an exercise in global economic governance, the G8 is a forum that serves, more or less, as capitalism's international economic directorate devoted to coordinating the economic, trade and fiscal policies of their respective economies and for the world. This coordination also extends to a collective effort at harmonising their approaches to the global economy as a whole, including the workings of the Bretton Woods Institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

These deliberations over the past several years have increasingly extended to the G8's need to engage and accommodate the economic interests of the developing world and its leading emerging market economies. These include, in particular, China, India,

Brazil and South Africa. It is within this context that the G8 has increasingly found itself having to expand its forum to include an ongoing dialogue with Africa and the developing world on issues of aid, trade, debt and investment as these issues increasingly impact on the health of the global economy.

THE G8 AND AFRICA

It is within this context that leading members of the African Union (AU) began pressing the G8 on Africa's economic agenda beginning with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) summit in Algiers in 1999. This summit mandated South Africa, Nigeria and Algeria to begin a dialogue on debt relief and the information technology divide with the G8. This process eventually expanded into an intra-African dialogue resulting in formulating the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad). This process has interacted with the OAU's transformation into the AU, in the process, giving sharper resolution to relations between Africa and the G8.

The Gleneagles Summit, with its focus on Africa, grew out of the G8's initial commitment at the 2002 Kananaskis Summit in Canada to engage Nepad in the

implementation of an Africa Action Plan. As British Prime Minister Tony Blair prepared to assume chairmanship of the G8 in 2005, his government took on the commitment to give momentum to the G8 Africa Action Plan by convening the 'eminent persons' Commission for Africa (CfA) as a think tank to prepare for the Gleneagles Summit that would be devoted primarily to Africa.

The outcome of Gleneagles, therefore, should be seen as an attempt to further flesh out the G8's Africa commitment and to ensure implementing momentum in partnership with African governments, especially the AU and the Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) of Nepad.

GLENEAGLES - WHAT WAS AGREED?

The Gleneagles Summit produced the following results based on the recommendations of the CfA:

- re-affirmed debt cancellation for 14 African countries that reached the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) completion point, holding out the possibility that additional African countries would be added to this group;
- re-affirmed the EU's commitment to double grants to Africa while pledging



R325-billion in grants immediately, with the possibility of an additional R32,5-billion in aid coming from Japan, France and Britain;

- commitment to enhancing universal access to drugs to combat HIV/AIDS; and
- pledges of new assistance to African peacekeeping.

SETTING THE SCENE FOR GLENEAGLES

CPS director Chris Landsberg (see p7) sets the scene for the summit and begins to unpack what Africans wanted, what was on offer from the G8 and what Africa received. Landsberg explains how the Gleneagles focus on Africa grew out of an effort by Britain to renew the G8 momentum on Africa that many felt flagged after the Kananaskis G8 summit arrived at its Africa Action Plan in consultation with the Nepal HSGIC leaders such as Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo and South African President Thabo Mbeki who attended Kananaskis. The upshot of this process was Blair's CfA, the findings of which framed the world's expectations in the run-up to Gleneagles.

Before exploring the commitments made by the G8 leaders further, it is important to understand the broader recent historical and contemporary geopolitical context surrounding the summit, including the intrusion of the terrorism dimension introduced by the London bombing attacks. CPS senior researcher Francis Kornegay (see p10) and North Africa/Middle East specialist Naefa Khan (see p12) provide the geopolitical backdrop to the G8 focus on Africa, which was set against the rude intervention of the London terrorist bombings. This in turn, sheds light on the EU's differential relationship in its economic, aid and trade relations with north Africa as compared to sub-Saharan Africa.

The outcome of the Gleneagles Summit in which Africa received considerably less than expected and hoped for is viewed in terms of

the challenge that this presents to African governments and civil society alike. Amid these expectations came the tragic intrusion of the London bombings. As events unfolded, these terrorist attacks did not derail the Gleneagles Summit in the manner in which momentum in the politics of redress had been disrupted by the 9/11 attacks in 2001.

This is the point of departure for Kornegay's interpretation of how the Gleneagles Summit unfolded – a discussion that examines the interaction between the emergence of militant political Islam and the broader global South politics of redress, and how the events of 9/11 diverted renewed North-South engagement on world poverty toward the 'war on terror'. In the final analysis, the actual outcome of Gleneagles, in the face of the London attacks, is seen as anti-dimactic in the absence of any sign that the summit's outcome would generate momentum toward a trade agreement acceptable to Africa in terms of the current WTO negotiations.

Meanwhile, Khan reminds us that the G8 via the EU has a different agenda for North Africa compared to sub-Saharan Africa and that the entire Gleneagles process may only be reinforcing this differentiation which, in turn, reverberates in the North/sub-Saharan divide within the AU itself. Thus, the Gleneagles process and outcome needs to be seen in the wider context of the Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) initiative and the EU-Mediterranean Partnership.

WHAT DID GLENEAGLES DELIVER?

Sanusha Naidu of the HSRC (see p14) contends that while the G8 Summit sought to make 'poverty history', this yet to be fulfilled promise may resonate more as an abstraction than as a harbinger of reality. From this vantage point, she critically dissects what one Zambian official called the 'holy trinity' of 'aid effectiveness, debt relief and trade justice'. She points out that the debt write-off, modest as it is, is a 'once off package' while marginalising a number of African countries whose debt servicing constitutes a substantial percentage of their national budgets and who

must continue to shoulder such burdens in spite of sacrifices made to meet their obligations. What Naidu terms the 'cat and mouse game' between the EU and the US over agricultural subsidies means that Africa will continue to be strung out on 'trade justice' while remaining entrenched in what she terms 'debt row'. This theme is picked up by Action Aid's Wole Olaleye (see p16) who devotes a more focused critique on the G8's debt cancellation package. He concludes that Gleneagles fell short of developing countries' expectations when it essentially only re-affirmed the debt cancellation decisions of the G8 Summit in France in 2003.

The debt rut, when seen in the context of continued EU agricultural subsidies, further dims the glow of Gleneagles as University of Pretoria Professor Maxi Schoeman (see p18) poses the question of whether or not, in 'being cowed by cows (and their owners)', the G8 will 'deliver on agricultural subsidies in consummating the WTO Doha round?' Her critique of Gleneagles elaborates on the 'probably no' answer to the above questions – or to be more optimistic, a 'yes but...'. In the end, she points out that Africa may actually end up paying a high price for some concessions on agricultural subsidies while a consensus on phasing them out eluded the informal summit of 30 WTO in Dalian, China and the outlook for the December 2005 Hong Kong talks are being viewed pessimistically.

This entire 'holy trinity' menu affects human security of which the HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to loom in the foreground. The implications of the Gleneagles Summit outcome for combating HIV/AIDS informs the concluding contribution by Angela Ndinga-Muvumba (see p19) of the Cape Town-based Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR). Her 'letter to the G8' contends that 2010 is too late to 'make AIDS history' and makes a series of recommendations for African governments, the G8 countries and African civil society. She concludes with the challenge to civil society that they build on the Gleneagles commitment to enhance universal access to HIV/AIDS drugs by 'developing a common

