

## **Address to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade**

**by Ambassador Robert Fowler, Personal Representative of the Canadian Prime Minister for the G8 Summit, and Personal Representative of the Prime Minister for Africa**

April 23, 2002 Ottawa

Madame Chair, members of the Committee:

It's a pleasure to be here again to provide the Committee with information on preparations for the G8 Summit to be held in Kananaskis, Alberta on June 26-27, 2002.

As you know, I have been asked by the Prime Minister to prepare Kananaskis as an informal retreat that addresses in a substantive and serious way some of the most pressing global challenges we face. I propose today to do three things:

first, I'll provide an update on the policy preparatory process as it stands now, including on the Prime Minister's recent trip to Africa;

second, I'll address some of the issues that the witnesses, whose testimony we have been following, have raised; and

third, I will provide you with my impressions on what I've heard as I've spoken to Canadians about the Summit, and tell you more about the non-governmental activities that we are supporting as part of the Summit preparations.

Since I last briefed you, I have participated in several preparatory meetings, two of the so-called G8 Sherpas and three of the G8 Africa Personal Representatives. I have had a number of meetings with interested Canadians as well as citizens of G8 and African countries to engage them in discussion of the Summit priorities.

And, perhaps most significantly, the Prime Minister made an unprecedented trip to Africa to engage committed African Leaders in a discussion of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. As you have heard the Prime Minister say repeatedly, the centerpiece of the Kananaskis Summit will be the adoption of a G8 Africa Action Plan.

The first of a series of sectoral G8 Ministerial meetings in the lead-up to the Summit, a meeting of Environment Ministers, was held in Banff 10 days ago. Ministers' discussions focused on health and environment, environment and development, and governance, in the lead up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) taking place in Johannesburg later this year, to identify a series of priorities to help narrow the focus of WSSD. Ministers also expressed a strong desire to work with African countries on the environmental components of the New Partnership for Africa's development (NEPAD). Ministers also had an informal exchange on the status of actions and debate on climate

change within each G8 country. Other Ministerials will be held in the coming days and weeks.

As the preparatory process continues, your report will play a valuable role in preparing the Prime Minister for the Summit. I look forward to reading and reflecting on your conclusions and recommendations.

As I outlined to you when I last briefed you on January 29, 2002, the three agenda items which will be discussed at Kananaskis are:

- Strengthening global economic growth
- Building a new partnership for Africa's development, and
- Fighting terrorism.

Let me deal with those issues in the order that I expect them to be treated at the Summit. I'll begin with terrorism.

### **Fighting Terrorism**

Mr. Graham will be speaking to you on the preparations for the G8 Foreign Ministers' meeting in two days time. Counter-terrorism will be a major focus of that meeting, as will a range of regional issues, principally current hot spots.

You will recall that shortly after September 11 G8 Leaders asked their Foreign, Finance and Justice and Interior Ministers to strengthen counter-terrorism cooperation in a wide range of specific areas.

At Kananaskis, G8 Leaders will review progress in the global campaign against terrorism and will discuss how to sustain it over the long haul — including the vital challenge of preventing chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) terrorism. G8 Leaders may also address how to ensure that improved security measures facilitate, as we have done bilaterally with the United States through the Smart Border initiative, rather than inhibit, trade.

Some of your witnesses have drawn linkages between terrorism and poverty but also between counter-terrorism and good governance.

I fully support the notion that countries with good governance, where human rights are respected and where there is justice in the form of an accountable political and judicial system, have a better chance of not only dealing with security threats but also of channeling dissent into legitimate political expression.

I must however express caution about the notion that poverty inexorably breeds terrorism. As I have often said, in the case of Africa, we can all agree that it is not wise to allow an entire continent sink into ever greater hopelessness and marginalisation. But we need to be careful, I would argue, about drawing causal connections between being poor or being marginalized and becoming a terrorist.

Look at the middle class background of many of the Al-Qaeda terrorists involved in the

September 11 attacks, or indeed that of Osama bin Laden himself, who comes from a wealthy Saudi family. Consider the fact that many rich countries have homegrown terrorist groups. Connections between security and economics and politics are complex and don't lend themselves to easy conclusions. We need to understand them better, but we should not jump to conclusions.

Providing assistance and building a new partnership with Africa will help to lift significant numbers of marginalised and desperate people out of poverty and give them a sense of hope; I don't think we need a counter-terrorism argument to justify these actions.

### **Strengthening Global Economic Growth**

The outlook for the global economy is improving. According to the IMF's latest forecast, global growth was 2.5% in 2001 and is expected to strengthen to 2.8% in 2002; among the G7 countries, Canada is forecast by the IMF to have the strongest growth, at 2.5%, with overall growth in the G7 economies at 1.5%. Leaders will want to discuss what needs to be done to strengthen growth prospects and consolidate this recovery in our own economies as well as in the wider world.

This is a large subject. Leaders will want to talk about a wide range recently at the 4th WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar and the UN Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico, as well as through the preparatory process for the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Clearly, poverty reduction remains at the centre of these discussions. G8 Leaders are faced with the challenge of both creating the right environment for economic growth—at home and around the world—and ensuring that its benefits are widely shared. This means encouraging national governments to put in place the policies and institutions, in the context of an integrated global economy, needed to promote sustained economic growth and poverty reduction.

For G8 countries, this also means achieving greater coherence between our aid, trade and economic policies. Some of your witnesses have highlighted the importance of action by developed countries on market access and trade-distorting agricultural subsidies. Your Sub-Committee on Trade's related consultations on access to Canadian markets for goods from least developed countries is very significant in this regard and I wish you well on that important work.

G8 Leaders may choose to move from this broad discussion on poverty reduction and the global economy to discuss the recommendations of the G8 Education Task Force as well as the results of G8 work on bridging the digital divide. Len Good will elaborate on the Education Task Force, and I know you have already spoken to Peter Harder on his work with the DOT Force — which of course now extends well beyond the G8 — on ways to bridge the digital divide.

## **Building a New Partnership for Africa's Development**

This brings me to the G8 Africa Action Plan. As you know, I have recently returned from the Prime Minister's highly successful trip to Africa.

Mr. Chretien's principal message in Africa was that African issues had fallen off the international political and economic agenda and that this needed to be changed. Canada and the G8 are committed to being effective partners for Africa in the areas of investment, trade and development assistance, provided that African partners make appropriate efforts to "get their houses in order".

Expectations, on both sides, must be realistic for this partnership to work, but we are ready to respond pragmatically to NEPAD to bring Africa into the mainstream of the global economy. The Prime Minister made this trip to hear from his African counterparts, to listen to their concerns and engage them on their future plans, and to develop his thinking on the best way to respond to their offer of a new partnership.

But he also made this trip to send a strong message about how much building this new partnership was a personal priority for him and a national priority for Canada. Our Posts as well as both African and Canadian media have reported that the Prime Minister did succeed in getting Canada's message across to our African partners. African media, diplomats and civil society spoke of the Prime Minister's frankness and encouragement, as well as of the promise and hope he elicited.

His discussions with Heads of Government in each of the countries he visited saw the PM in a vigorous and committed mood. He engaged his colleagues in discussions about the importance of good governance, democracy and human rights, and the need to get the African peer review process right in support of a strong "enhanced partnership" with the G8 countries. Each of the fourteen Heads of Government and two Vice-Presidents he met with urged Mr. Chrétien to help build capacity in Africa to allow Africans enter the mainstream of our globalized world. Several commented that that his visit made clear the strength of Canada's commitment to Africa and emphasized Canada's effective leadership in responding to NEPAD.

However, during his African trip, the Prime Minister reiterated to his African counterparts that despite Canada's \$500 million commitment to support the G8 Africa Action Plan, the Action Plan would not be only, and indeed not primarily, about new resources, but about changing the paradigm for our relationship based on ownership and mutual responsibility; on rewarding success rather than rewarding failure; that is, on providing Africans and Canadian taxpayers alike some examples of successful development with those countries who "walk the talk" in terms of their commitment to the NEPAD undertakings.

The G8 Africa Action Plan will be discussed on the second day of the Kananaskis Summit. Several African Leaders will be included in these discussions, along with the Secretary General of the United Nations.

Again, witnesses and members of the committee have raised important issues here in their discussions.

The G8 commitment to Africa is not a response, as some have suggested, to criticism about

the record of the G8. Yes, the G8 is an economic Summit, but for the past several years, G8 Summits have had at their core a poverty reduction agenda. This is exemplified by the Cologne Debt Initiative from 1999, the announcement of the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria in Genoa last summer, and the commitment made in Genoa to developing a concrete G8 Africa Action Plan.

I'd also like to respond to some questions relating to what lies behind the G8's emphasis on governance. Governance issues will be important in the G8 response to Africa, not just governance as a means to attract investment and to allow for effective development, but also in terms of its more normative foundations like democracy and human rights.

At the same time, let's recall that this is not just G8-imposed conditionality. The NEPAD, written by African Leaders, commits to good governance as a way to ensure stronger economic growth and to better alleviate poverty. It's their plan, their commitment and their priority.

## **Outreach**

Finally, I would like to take a moment to tell you a bit about my own discussions with Canadians, and indeed people in a number of G8 countries as well, about the Kananaskis Summit. Engaging this dialogue with Canadians has been rewarding. It has challenged my thinking on a number of issues relevant to the Kananaskis agenda, like the sustainability of development, and role of democratic participation in the development process in Africa, and it has helped me perform my task as Sherpa more effectively.

I have spent a great deal of time on these discussions, more than has ever been done, I believe, by any G8 Sherpa in the past. I have heard a wide range of opinions and I have been gratified by the interest demonstrated by many Canadians to meet with me and discuss these issues. During our sessions, but also in our general approach, we have been transparent about our priorities and the challenges we face in preparing the Summit.

Canadians conveyed a strong interest in doing better in dealing with the marginalisation of Africa. They have a strong belief that we should be doing more in dealing with issues like HIV/AIDS, proliferation of small arms, education for young girls, and conflict resolution. I also heard of the needs and priorities of the Stony Nakoda Nation near Calgary. All of this has helped me a great deal as I prepare the Summit.

Clearly, NEPAD needs to be better known and better connected to the people of Africa. While we must recognise that this is primarily the responsibility of Africa's leaders, we can still try to help, and we are.

In addition to CIDA's funding of local outreach initiatives by African civil society, the G8 Summit office is working with the NEPAD secretariat to develop their capacity for outreach and consultation, a priority which they fully recognise and want to address effectively. It is my hope that this will help strengthen the long-term debate at a national and local level in Africa about how this remarkable plan, endorsed by all the OAU Leaders, should be made a reality in each country and region of Africa.

We are also providing significant funding to non-governmental activities in Canada, now as part of the preparatory process and in the days preceding the Summit, and will look at how they can strengthen follow-up to the Summit as well.

We are looking at innovative ways to help the University of Calgary, the host of a number of parallel events, in addition to direct funding: for example, providing a shuttle from the media centre to the university, and plugging them in to our web and host broadcast facilities for key events. Also in Calgary and the Kananaskis region, the Summit office is making a great effort to reach out and talk to community groups, schools, business associations, etc...in order to be open about not only the policy process but also hear and respond to questions and concerns about the impact of the Summit and related activities on local communities and the Kananaskis environment.

Many Canadians have raised issues with me that have implications far beyond the agenda of the Kananaskis Summit. I have a sense that a desire for participation in the preparations for international summits reflects a desire to be more actively engaged in public decision-making more generally. Through your work and through my own discussions I hope that we have helped to address this interest.

Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to your questions. Of course, I would be happy to appear again in front of this committee if you deem it useful, again, because I believe your report will be the critical document that outlines the views of Canadians on the Summit in a way that only those who represent them can do.