

UNDP Administrator Malloch Brown Lauds G8 Promise to Double Africa Aid, Calls for Continuing Pressure on World Leaders to Deliver

Press release

Gleneagles, Scotland, 8 July 2005—UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown applauded today's commitment by the Group of Eight leaders to double aid to Africa and eliminate outstanding debts from the poorest countries to the World Bank, IMF and other multilateral lenders.

"Today was a good day for Africa and a good day for the fight against poverty, even if it was not so good on trade or climate change," Malloch Brown said.

Malloch Brown praised British Prime Minister Tony Blair and the other G8 leaders for adhering to their agenda on aid to Africa and global warming despite the lethal bombings in London Thursday as the summit talks began.

"The terror attacks in London gave the summit a sense of urgency and lent leaders a certain steeliness," said Malloch Brown, who accompanied UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to the G8 meeting.

The G8 leaders said in their official communiqué today that wealthy nations will together increase aid to all developing nations "by around \$50 billion per year" by 2010, of which "at least \$25 billion extra per year" will go to Africa. The G8 leaders also promised increased support for African peacekeeping forces "so that they can better deter, prevent and resolve conflicts in Africa" and pledged additional investment in education and the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis "and other killer diseases."

The G8 leaders said they had agreed in principle to phase out agricultural subsidies that have been shown to penalize farmers in poor countries while distorting world trade and raising real food costs for their own citizens. However, they did not set a firm timetable for the elimination of these subsidies, deferring action to the World Trade Organization talks in December in Hong Kong.

Secretary-General Annan had personally urged the G8 leaders in Gleneagles to set "a clear, unambiguous date for ending export subsidies," and expressed regret at their failure to do so today. The Secretary-General said he still hoped that the industrialized nations will make such a commitment in Hong Kong.

"The outcome on trade was a disappointment, frankly, in contrast to the commitment for increased aid resources," Malloch Brown said. "Citizens groups in industrialized nations and the leaders of the developing countries themselves must intensify pressure for the elimination of these unfair and costly subsidies, and the thorough reform of other trade practices that penalize the world's poor."

The African leaders at the G8 summit fully agreed that the additional aid can be utilized effectively only in the context of good governance, democratic accountability, and policies aimed directly at the poorest segments of society, Malloch Brown noted. The G8 leaders must now ensure that the promises made today are translated into action, he said. The UNDP administrator stressed the need to deliver the promised aid rapidly if poor nations are to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, and called on activists and ordinary citizens to continue the campaigning that helped make the 2005 G8 meeting a milestone in the fight against world poverty.

"We've still got ten years to go to the Millennium Development Goals," Malloch Brown noted. "We'd like to see this pressure take us to the next stage, which is the UN World Summit in New York in September, and to then continue. I want this pressure to remain on politicians for a decade. The political passion that got us here today is vital to get us to 2015."

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