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The South African perspective of the results of the Heiligendamm

What was the outcome of the Summit?

Representatives of the eight leading industrial nations, the G8, met from 6 to 8 June 2007 in Heiligendamm for their annual summit. Subjects on top of the agenda were: the stability of the world economy, Africa and climate change. The Summit created great expectations. In line with its outreach policy, the G8 invited state and government representatives from Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa – the O5, as well as representatives from Nigeria, Egypt, Algeria, Ghana and Senegal to attend the last day of the Summit. The aim was to engage in extensive dialogue and discussions with Africa about development and further co-operation. However, few results emerged.

“The presence of our eminent representatives at Heiligendamm must communicate the message, once again, that Africa’s leaders are determined to use their bold and imaginative thinking to take the historic actions that will shape the future of our Continent in favour of the millions of African men and women who are proud to say - I am an African!”

Thabo Mbeki, ANC Today

Great expectations

Already half the time set for achieving the *Millennium Development Goals* (MDG) in 2015 has elapsed. Africa in particular is behind and no nation has reduced its poverty level even by half, millions of people have no access to clean drinking water, schools and health facilities. But one cannot blame African governments alone because the industrialised countries of the G8 are also partially responsible. Their *Gross National Product* is 70 per cent, the spending power of their population is the largest worldwide and their governments have the right to determine the development of economic globalization. In addition, they committed themselves to the *United Nations Millennium Declaration* to reduce poverty.

At this year's G-8 Summit in Heiligendamm the host, Angela Merkel, prioritised Africa. She mentioned specifically the promises of support to Africa made at the Scottish Gleneagles Summit in 2005. She invited an African delegation headed by John Kufour, President of Ghana and the Chairman of the *African Union* (AU) to attend the last day of the Summit. The delegation included the President of the *AU Commission*, Alpha Oumar Konaré and Meles Zenawi, the Ethiopian Prime Minister and representative of the *New Partnership for Africa's Development* (NEPAD). Thabo Mbeki (South Africa), Abdelaziz Bouteflika (Algeria), Abdoulaye Wade (Senegal), Umara Yar'Adua (Nigeria) and Mohamed Hosni Mubarak from Egypt completed the delegation. The G8 President also invited delegates from the developing countries of Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa to take part in a dialogue with the G8 countries in what has been called the *Heiligendamm Process*. The dialogue will deal with the biggest challenges the global economy is facing today. The "*Heiligendamm Process*" will last for the next two years and a final report will be presented at the G8 Summit in 2009.

The South African President attended the Summit with great expectations. In his editorial in *ANC Today*, the weekly newsletter of the African National Congress, he outlined the promises made regarding increased co-operation, fairer globalization as well as a more efficient approach to dealing with poverty; the headline of his report was: "Heiligendamm and Africa – an outstanding promise." He emphasised the efforts of the continent to improve democracy, to increase economic growth to five per cent and to establish trustworthy institutions like NEPAD. Africa, he said, had finally reached a common vision on ending its marginalisation and promoting stable development. The South African President claimed that, "the presence of our eminent representatives at Heiligendamm must communicate [...], that Africa's leaders are determined to use their bold and imaginative thinking to take the historic actions that will shape the future of our Continent in favour of the millions of African men and women." He said that Africa takes the *Millennium Development Goals* very seriously and he challenged the large industrialised countries to participate in creating a prosperous future for Africa.

The 8 Millennium development targets

1. to reduce extreme poverty and hunger worldwide by 50 per cent
2. to provide elementary schooling for all children
3. to promote gender equality and to strengthen women's rights
4. to reduce infant mortality
5. to improve the health of mothers
6. to fight HIV/Aids, Malaria and other infectious diseases
7. to protect the environment
8. to establish a worldwide development partnership

Above all, Mbeki wants to consolidate the development agenda. Before Thabo Mbeki left the Summit his spokesperson, Ronnie Mamoepa said, "The president believes the summit must assess... the implementation of the set of agreements reached between the G8 and the African continent," South Africa intends to improve rela-



tions with the G8 and to encourage South–South co-operation. The South African President was accompanied by the Foreign Minister, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, and the Minister of Trade and Industry, Mandisi Mpahlwa.

Progress at the Summit

Numerous proposals for development aid have been submitted in the past. Apart from the eight millennium goals, the G8 action plan finalised during the *World Economic Summit* of 2002 in Kananaskis, Canada, is considered fundamental. This plan supports the African reform initiative, NEPAD, and lists the following objectives: strengthening government leadership, support for commerce, debt relief as well as improving education and health services.

At the Gleneagles Summit the G8 promised to double development aid to Africa by 2010 and cancelled the debt of the 18 poorest countries in the world. The G8 promised treatment and care for Aids sufferers by 2010. It aims to decrease the number of new Malaria and Tuberculosis infections by 2015 thus achieving the *Millennium Development Goals* through the *Global Fund to fight Aids, Malaria and Tuberculosis* (GFAMT).

Apart from the agenda, numerous bilateral meetings took place among heads of state and governments where other subjects were discussed. The South African President, Thabo Mbeki, met with the President of China, Hu Jintao, the General Secretary of the UN, Ban Ki-moon and the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi. Subsequently Mbeki had meetings with the Prime Minister of Italy, Romano Prodi, the Canadian Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and with the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel. Trade and NEPAD were the main topics of discussion between the G8 nations and the African delegates. Peace, security and the various tasks of the *United Nations* were also discussed. The African delegates as well as delegates from Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa – the emerging countries – discussed ways to improve South–South co-operation with regard to investment, research, climate change and energy. All agreed, however, that the Summit should not replace multilateral negotiations. South Africa played a dual role as both an African and emerging country representative.

Outcome

At the end of the Summit the German chancellor announced the *G8 Declaration* and the *Joint Declaration by the G8 presidency and Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa* as well as the *Declaration on Growth and Responsibility in Africa*. Owing to the revival of the world conjuncture the G8 did not regard it necessary to discuss the agenda item: growth and responsibility in the world economy. Agreement was reached on the importance of a liberal and open economy, liberal investments and the protection of intellectual property rights. Product piracy must be combated. No agreement was reached on tighter control of hedge funds as this was opposed by the USA and Great Britain. The G8 also agreed to reduce CO₂ emissions by half before 2050. The UN will be the platform for all actions regarding climate change and the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (IPCC) will report to the UN.

The G8 agreed that emerging countries should be included in decisions around climate change, the stability of the world economy, protection of intellectual property rights and transparency in the trade with raw materials. The G8 and the emerging countries agreed to co-operate on five main points: supporting investments over borders for common benefit; increasing research and development; combating climate change; exchanging knowledge on energy efficiency and putting a special emphasis on Africa. But it was clear that the G8 will not result in a G13.

The *Africa Declaration* outlined progress achieved. The G8 promised €60 billion for the *Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria*, a big step. The financial support of the fund is saving 3.000 lives on a daily basis. According to the Minister of Development, Heidemarie Wiecezorek-Zeul, Germany will increase its support to combat HIV/Aids to €4 million in total during the next eight years. The Federal Government confirmed that it will increase development aid up to 0,7 per cent of gross national product by 2015 – including an interim initiative of 0,51 per cent by 2010. The final paper praised the initiative of the AU and NEPAD. It was commonly agreed by the G8 and the African representatives that NEPAD and the representatives of the G8 will have concrete proposals for the next meeting. The desperate position of the population in Sudan was again addressed.



Criticism

The South African media and the emerging countries played down the achievements of the Summit. President Mbeki pointed out that “not

development aid shrunk from 0,33 to 0,30 per cent of the gross national product.” The Archbishop, therefore, demands a review of the handling of affairs regarding Economy Politics and Development Co-operation by the G8. He suggested that the, “G8 leaders need to start subjecting themselves to peer-review, where they account for why they are lagging behind in meeting the commitments they have made. The G8 have made promises which were already not met last year. Clear plans and time frames are still missing.”

The decision by the G8 to increase development aid and to supply additional support to combat infectious diseases in Africa was criticized because no time frame was set or any firm promises of financial aid given by the individual countries. The headline of the report on the Heiligendamm Summit in the South African *Sunday Independent* read “R60 billion ‘a smokescreen’ for G8’s backtracking.” This report refers to comments made by Oxfam that the seemingly impressive amounts blur the fact that this was already promised at Gleneagles. According to Oxfam’s calculations the \$60 billion to combat HIV/Aids, Malaria and TB “are in fact only an increase of \$3 billion in development aid until 2010” and most of the financial support has already been settled via the release of debts.

Many NGOs in South Africa criticized the G8 for simply repeating their stand at the *Doha World Trade* talks which have stalled for the time being. Many demanded a kind of Marshall Plan for Africa and a limit on European and US export subsidies for agricultural products. They warned of the consequences on Africa of introducing increased patent protection on medicines and stressed the impact of climate change on Africa. China justified its Africa politics and its support of the Khartoum regime in the Sudan saying, “There are different perceptions of what good governance means.” Canada admitted that it was directing its development aid increasingly towards South America. Angela Merkel intends to visit South Africa in October 2007. The *European Union* and the *African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States* (ACP Group) will meet for discussions in December. This drew considerable attention both before and after the Heiligendamm Summit. Time is of the essence. At the current pace the *Millennium Development Goals* for Africa will only be met in about 100 years time. ■

The African delegation in Heiligendamm

enough progress is being made with regard to honoring the undertakings that were made (in Africa)” and he claimed that “progress (...) was not sufficiently honoured.” The Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, was disappointed. He criticized the fact that the invitation to the emerging countries was simply an “item on the G8 agenda”. The South African newspaper *The Weekender* wrote that the results of the Summit were “not substantial” and that the state and government representatives did not discuss critical subjects sufficiently. During the *World Economic Forum for Africa* (WEF) in Cape Town which took place after the Summit, these failures were highlighted again. The 700 Representatives of Politics and Economy – among them the former General Secretary of the UN – Kofi Annan – compared the G8’s promises regarding development aid to Africa with actual amounts pouring in from China and India. The South African Archbishop, Njongonkulu Ndungane, said that the results of the Heiligendamm Summit were only “hot air”. His non-governmental organisation *African Monitor* oversees promises for development aid and their actual implementation. This Cape Town-based organisation lobbies for the inclusion of more African voices on the development agenda. Ndungane commended Angela Merkel’s commitment to put Africa on the agenda but he sharply criticized the results of the Summit: “The G8 have again failed to come to a common conclusion regarding concrete steps for development, fair economy and open markets. Solutions regarding the failed *Doha World Trade Talks* were left hanging and specific measures to reduce commercial barriers were swept under the carpet. He claimed that, “It does not help to make promises each and every time. Trade is a significant factor for long-lasting development in Africa. As long as the G8 will not deal with this problem in earnest, we will have doubts on the seriousness of the G8.”

Ndungane no longer believes in the increase of public development aid by 50 per cent. He said that, “Last year

Editorial

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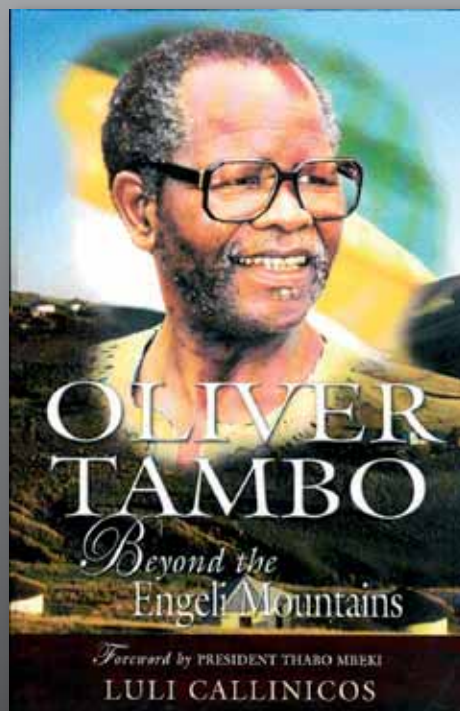
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