

ACTION AGAINST FAMINE, ESPECIALLY IN AFRICA

A G8 ACTION PLAN

We recognise that food security is a global concern. Millions of people world-wide are at risk of starvation, of which over 40 million are in Africa. This situation derives not only from climatic conditions and natural disasters but from more structural causes, such as chronic poverty, lack of an enabling environment and appropriate support for agriculture, HIV/AIDS prevalence, an increasing number of conflicts, poor governance and economic management and trade related issues. These factors are likely to cause recurrent food crises and increase long-term food insecurity, notably in Africa. While taking immediate action to avert the present peril of humanitarian crises, we recognise the strong need for longer term solutions to food insecurity, and are committed to working in partnership with developing countries to address these problems. To address these issues, we are working with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and relevant international bodies to prevent and mitigate famine. G8 action to address famine in Africa will take place within the framework of the G8 Africa Action Plan, in support of the New Partnership for Africa's Development .

Famine is a preventable tragedy that requires the right policy tools to respond to short-term emergency food aid needs flexibly and quickly, and mitigate the effects of foreseen crises. It can be prevented in the long-term by vulnerable countries adopting economic and governance policies and institutional reforms that help to prevent the conditions that lead to famine including a special focus on investment in agriculture. We are committed to contributing actively to solutions in each of these areas.

In order to improve significantly the capacity both of the countries affected and of the international community to anticipate and prevent famine, we will:

1. Meet emergency food assistance needs

1.1 We are determined to tackle urgent food shortages, through immediate measures. Remaining shortfalls in Africa are currently estimated by the World Food Programme in the range of 1.2 million metric tonnes. We will improve the efficiency, timeliness and responsiveness of our own contributions of food aid, cash and items other than food, and encourage and facilitate contributions by other traditional and non-traditional donors to meet emergency needs. We will work with governments, UN agencies, non-governmental organisations, civil society and other parts of the international community to provide the specific mix of assistance and types of programs best suited to actual needs.

1.2 Since Kananaskis, we have delivered US\$ 3.3 billion of emergency assistance to address these humanitarian needs world-wide, including US\$ 1.7 billion for Sub-Saharan Africa.

We will address new needs when they are confirmed with appropriate aid commitments.

2. Improve assessment capacities, warning systems and prevention mechanisms

2.1 We will support the strengthening of national, regional and international capacity for developing

accurate needs assessments as well as better shared analysis and understanding of vulnerability and its links to food insecurity. This should include appropriate use of common benchmarks and pre-famine indicators that combine production with food access and utilisation/nutrition indicators.

2.2 We will support the review and improvement of early warning and crop forecast systems as well as contingency planning at the national and regional level, in order to increase emergency preparedness and response. National decision makers will need to act on information provided in a timely manner and commit sufficient resources to fund and staff such systems.

3. Increase aid effectiveness

3.1 We commit ourselves to more flexible and efficient approaches to the use of aid in specific food crisis situations. Aid must be more responsive to the needs of recipients, avoid distortions to local production and not undermine local markets. We will utilise both food assistance and cash to avoid or mitigate the impact of famine, taking into account the availability of food locally, ability of vulnerable populations to pay for food, and other relevant local market conditions.

3.2 Contributions should include as necessary non-food items (such as seeds, tools, vaccines, medicines, school supplies, tents) and help ensure that emergency non-food needs (such as water and sanitation) are adequately addressed.

3.3 Alternative tools may be used when food is available, such as cash assistance to specially vulnerable populations and "cash for work" programmes.

3.4 We will actively participate in discussions in relevant fora and institutions that address food aid modalities, and promote flexible, sustainable, efficient and responsive aid approaches while avoiding distortions to local markets. This includes working to bring new donors and new approaches to bear on addressing famine.

4. Longer term initiatives to address food insecurity

4.1 We will support integrated approaches and programmes to identify and tackle the root causes of hunger and malnutrition.

4.2 Food security, rural and agricultural development must be adequately addressed in the context of national development and poverty planning as well as in multilateral and bilateral donor response strategies. To this end, we deem it necessary to increase productive investment in rural and agricultural development to achieve lasting food security. We undertake to work towards reversing the decline of official development assistance to agriculture and increasing trade opportunities for developing countries.

4.3 We are ready to support efforts by developing country governments to pursue these aims, including through support of sound agricultural policies at the national and regional levels, of development of farmers' organisations, of productive investment in agricultural infrastructure and inputs, promotion of food crops and of competitiveness of export crops. We will encourage improved scientific resources and adaptation of new and improved agricultural technologies including tried and tested biotechnology for use in developing countries.

4.4 Since Kananaskis, we have committed US\$ 3.2 billion to long term agricultural and food security assistance, including US\$ 1.4 billion for Sub-Saharan Africa.

4.5 We are particularly determined to intensify the fight against HIV/AIDS, given the immense impact of this disease particularly in African countries, especially on food production and other aspects of food security. Food and related emergency aid distribution should also prioritise the nutritional needs of those infected and the needs of vulnerable groups most affected by the pandemic. Preserving familial and social structures, or compensating for their disruption, is key to ensuring food security.

4.6 Good governance is vital for lasting progress on poverty reduction and food security as well as economic growth. We will support efforts by developing countries to establish sound political and economic governance frameworks.

Building on the work of the G8 Contact Group on famine, we will work actively to take this Action Plan forward in all relevant international fora.