



Policy Brief

Food Security and Nutrition at the G8

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G8 Research Group

Food security and nutrition will be given a strong push at the G8 Muskoka Summit on June 25-26, with the assistance of the G20 in Toronto on June 26-27, primarily to get the overdue US\$20 billion commitment from the 2009 L'Aquila Summit delivered.

At L'Aquila, Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper said that "whether we are talking about famines, price spikes or lack of sustainable agricultural development, there are many clear and compelling humanitarian, economic and security reasons to address this mounting global challenge today." At Muskoka, the G8 will try to deliver on their ambitious pledges to improve food security and nutrition in developing countries.

Leaders will emphasize more innovation in agriculture and nutrition, and improved accountability and effectiveness for past food and agriculture promises and programs. New funds for nutrition will be a key component of the G8's maternal, newborn and child health strategy.

G8 performance on food security and nutrition has increased substantially since the leaders first took up the subject in 1979. At the 2004 Sea Island Summit, they declared that "we are united in our belief that famine is preventable in the 21st century." At Hokkaido-Toyako in 2008, the leaders committed to providing new funds, reforming the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and investing in innovative agricultural technologies. At the 2009 L'Aquila Summit, G8 leaders pledged US\$20 billion for food programs and sustainable agricultural development over three years. U.S. president Barack Obama stated that "the purpose of aid must be to create the conditions where it's no longer needed, to help people become self-sufficient, provide for their families and lift their standards of living."

At the September 2009 Pittsburgh Summit, the G20 called on the World Bank to develop a "trust fund to support the new Food Security Initiative for low-income countries" announced at L'Aquila.

At their meeting in Halifax in April 2010, G8 development ministers made food security one of three key themes. They asked the United Nations High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis to identify common nutrition indicators to monitor progress in the area and to provide operational guidelines to improve nutrition. They stressed the importance of immediate action to implement national plans for food security, agriculture and nutrition. They recognized the important progress of developing countries in producing and implementing inclusive, technically sound food security initiatives.

The G8 leaders will build on these initiatives at Muskoka. They will accelerate efforts to implement their L'Aquila commitments, while supporting comprehensive country-led initiatives. In Toronto, G20 members may commit more funds to the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program. At the G8, commitments to untie food aid and supply the micronutrients required for good health will come. Leaders will also emphasize the development of an appropriate framework for assessing the impact of their food security and nutrition initiatives.

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