



Policy Brief

Research and Innovation for Development at the G8

June 11, 2010

G8 Research Group

Research and innovation for development, particularly in relation to food, nutrition and agriculture, will be high on the agenda when the G8 leaders meet at the Muskoka Summit on June 25-26, 2010. At the meeting of G8 development ministers in Halifax in April, research was highlighted as a way to improve the development of struggling countries.

G8 action on research and innovation for development has focused mainly on innovative finance and research for agricultural aid and health. At the summits in 1979, 1980, 1985 and 1996, leaders identified the need to improve research to increase the production, efficiency and quality of agricultural products. At the 2003 Evian Summit, leaders called for “research on diseases mostly affecting developing countries.” At the 2005 Gleneagles Summit, the G8 committed to build on “the valuable G8 Global HIV/AIDS vaccine enterprise, increasing direct investment and taking forward work on market incentives, as a complement to basic research, through such mechanisms as Public Private Partnerships and Advance Purchase Commitments to encourage the development of vaccines.” When the G8 leaders met with the leaders of Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa (the Group of Five) at the 2007 G8 Heiligendamm Summit, they discussed the need for topic-driven political dialogue on research and innovation to realize the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

In July 2009, Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper identified development as a priority for the G8 summit he would host the following year. In May 2010, Canadian finance minister Jim Flaherty announced the launch of Grand Challenges Canada, an innovative initiative with federal support that brings together scientists from the developed and developing world to solve some of the health challenges facing developing countries.

At the Muskoka Summit leaders will consider their commitments for financing for development, now that their Gleneagles pledge to double official development assistance (ODA) to Africa has come to an end. New funds will be allocated for research and innovation to tackle the social dimensions of development, particularly in the fields of health, nutrition, agriculture, water and sanitation. The G8 will work with its partners in Africa, civil society and the private sector to realize these initiatives. At the same time, leaders will emphasize funding into the “relatively simple health solutions, all well within the reach of the international community,” as Harper noted in January 2010.

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