

The Edinburgh Declaration, 7 June 2005

We — parliamentarians from G8, European and African countries — met in Edinburgh, Scotland on 6 -7 June 2005 for the G8 International Parliamentarians' Conference on Development in Africa 2005. Our aim was to agree on concrete, realistic and measurable recommendations addressing the development needs of Africa, with a particular focus on HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health and rights, in the context of aid, trade, debt relief and conflict resolution.

Africa needs urgent attention. The number of people living in extreme poverty on the continent has almost doubled, from 164 million in 1981 to 314 million today. In Africa, half the population lives on less than \$1 a day, while 40 million children are not able to go to school. In 2005, three million people will become infected with HIV while a further two million people will die of AIDS-related illnesses. HIV/AIDS has reversed development progress, reducing life expectancy to less than 40 years in nine African countries. Based on current estimates, Sub-Saharan Africa will not meet any of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Women need to be at the heart of development policies. This means providing access to education, economic opportunities, resources, decision-making authority, comprehensive health services, including for reproductive health; fighting the cultural obstacles to women's advancement, and ensuring the equal participation of women in political, economic and social spheres.

For all its complex challenges, the African continent has enormous potential. Last year, African economies recorded their fastest growth in 30 years. Eritrea, Senegal and Uganda have shown that HIV/AIDS can be fought if given more support.

African countries and their international partners must build on this progress. The time for political action is now. 2005 is a make or break year for development. The Commission for Africa has, and July's G8 Summit at Gleneagles, and September's UN conference on Millennium Development Goals must all attest to a renewed commitment to defeat poverty and advance services for basic health, with heightened priority to sexual and reproductive health. We must seize this opportunity to improve the lives of Africa's 906 million people.

G8 ACTION POINTS

We call on the leaders of the world's wealthiest countries meeting at the G8 Summit in Gleneagles to take action in six areas:

- **Improve the quality and quantity of aid to Africa.**
 - That G8 countries immediately commit to a timetable for the doubling of aid to Africa by 2010;
 - That G8 countries commit to national timetables towards the allocation of 0.7 percent of their gross national income in official development assistance (ODA) - as set out in the Monterrey commitments - before 2015;
 - That the increase in aid is accounted for independently of debt relief and emergency assistance;
 - That G8 countries improve the quality of aid (i.e. making it more predictable, untied, aligned with developing country priorities, harmonized, transparent and accountable);
 - That G8 countries act to implement the February 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, which defines 12 indicators for monitoring aid delivery and management;
 - That G8 countries devote 10 percent of their ODA to population, and reproductive health and rights programs¹;

¹ As agreed to at the October 2004 Strasbourg Statement of Commitment of the International Parliamentarians' Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD Program of Action.

- That aid prioritise the empowerment of women and promotion of gender equality. There must be better indicators to monitor improved gender equality and aid negotiations must involve women;
- **Strengthen African capacity to benefit from the international trading system.**
 - That G8 countries eliminate agricultural export subsidies and commit to substantially reducing tariff rates for agricultural products;
 - That G8 countries assist African countries to build their own capacity to trade and strengthen their domestic agricultural markets including improving transport and communications;
 - That G8 countries ensure that the World Trade Organization's Hong Kong ministerial meeting in December must see real progress for the Doha Development Round;
 - That G8 countries support efforts to ensure the full and equitable participation of women in economic development, through the provision, for example, of micro-credit programs and access to business education training;
 - That G8 countries support NEPAD's agriculture-led Poverty Reduction Strategy and use the comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) as a common framework for assistance to the agricultural sector.
- **Agree on ways to expand debt relief.**
 - That G8 countries commit to eliminating the unsustainable bilateral and multilateral debt of the poorest countries;
 - That G8 countries consider new and innovative mechanisms to finance debt relief that neither create future liabilities nor detract from existing ODA;
 - That resources generated by debt cancellation are equitably distributed and meet the needs of the most marginalized, particularly women;
- **Placing women's rights at the heart of development policy**
 - That G8 countries support African Governments to ensure the equal participation of women in all aspects of social, political and economic life. In particular, measures should be put in place to close the gender gap in earnings and to provide better legal and social protection for women in the workplace;
 - That G8 countries support African led efforts to create an enabling legislative environment for women's rights. Measures to protect and promote sexual and reproductive health and rights and to mitigate gender based violence must be included in national and regional policies and implemented effectively by legislation;
 - That G8 countries support African states to immediately meet MDG 3, the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education. Special emphasis should be placed on the retention of girls in education and the elimination of socio-economic barriers which often force girls to drop out of school;
- **Address the specific health burdens of African countries**
 - That G8 countries support, including through increased funding, the implementation of the "Three Ones" to improve the coordination and harmonization of efforts to address

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HIV/AIDS through the complete continuum of prevention, (including exploring new technologies²), treatment and care;

- That G8 countries advance the linkage of sexual and reproductive health and rights programs in health sector development, including within the response to HIV/AIDS and maternal, newborn and child health;
 - That G8 countries support national programs to reduce stigma regarding HIV/AIDS in particular, and sexual and reproductive health matters in general;
 - That G8 countries take collaborative steps with African States and with donor partners to strengthen health systems to ensure universal access to basic health services and supplies, including services to promote maternal and child health, support reproductive health and combat the killer diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis and malaria; and particularly take steps addressing human resource issues such as policies and actions supporting the recruitment, training and retention of skilled medical personnel;
 - That G8 countries support the addition of the target of universal access to reproductive health by 2015, under the Improve Maternal Health MDG, with appropriate indicators through the relevant technical process, to capture women's health issues beyond mortality prevention – also recognizing its importance to promoting gender equality, combating HIV/AIDS, reducing child mortality and eradicating poverty;
 - The G8 countries support intensified efforts for the provision of effective interventions to address malaria, tuberculosis and other neglected diseases;
- **Strengthen partnership with African-led initiatives.**
 - Africans must lead efforts to tackle the development challenges of Africa by investing in their people, empowering African women, supporting sustainable development and agriculture, building effective nations and good governance, promoting peace and security, and developing the private sector. G8 and other donors must follow the African lead;
 - African countries must work to strengthen the participation of civil society in public life, policy dialogue, and improving governance and accountability;
 - G8 leaders must reaffirm their support for African-led initiatives such as the Africa Union, the New Economic Partnership for Africa (NEPAD), and the Pan-African Parliament, as well as the newly-created Pan-African Parliamentary Committee on Population and Development;
 - G8 leaders must call on the Executive Boards of the World Bank and the IMF to refuse to consider any Poverty Reduction Strategy that has not yet been debated by parliament.

PARLIAMENTARY ACTION POINTS.

As representatives of the people, as legislators and as government overseers, we must do our utmost to support this action agenda.

Depending on our parliamentary systems, those of us from G8 and European countries should:

- Hold government leaders to account on their commitments through annual parliamentary special sessions on Africa and sexual and reproductive health and rights, beginning with a “G8 Implementation Watch Session” in early autumn 2005. This will include calling on governments to outline concrete steps to be taken to deliver on financial commitments made at Gleneagles

² Such as vaccines, post-exposure prophylaxis and microbicides

and past international gatherings such as the 2002 Monterrey Conferences on Financing for Development.

- Write to heads-of-state and ministers detailing the outcomes of this Parliamentary Conference and call for actions outlined by the declaration to be implemented.
- Request to be included in government consultations surrounding September's Speakers' of Parliaments World Conference, the UN Millennium Development Goals Summit in September 2005, and the UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS in 2006, and to be included on relevant delegations.
- Introduce parliamentary resolutions reaffirming support for, and solidarity with, Africa's people.
- Advocate and program for sexual and reproductive health and rights both domestically and in our development policies using this declaration as a discussion point.
- Engage partner organizations to join in mobilizing constituents, the media and civil society representatives on Africa's development challenges, using this declaration as a discussion point.
- Report back on any parliamentary actions taken to support this declaration to the October 2005 Sixth Annual Conference of the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank in Helsinki, and to the Annual Council meeting of the Inter-European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development and the International Parliamentarian's Conference on Implementation of the ICPD Program of Action, both in 2006.

Depending on our parliamentary systems, those of us from African countries should:

- Call on governments to strengthen the African Union and NEPAD, with special attention given to implementation of NEPAD's Peer Review Mechanisms.
- Demand a stronger voice in the design and implementation of Poverty Reduction Strategies.
- Promote greater accountability and transparency within government systems.

Finally, we thank the Scottish Parliament for hosting the conference, and the Inter-European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development, Interact Worldwide, the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank, and the World Bank for organizing the meeting.
