

## G8 2007: Progress...? Failure...

### What was agreed at Gleneagles in 2005?

The G8 summit at Gleneagles focused on Africa and climate change. It was the focus for huge public attention. More than 8 million people wore a white band and several hundred thousand marched in London and in Edinburgh, joining many other people across the world as part of the campaign to Make Poverty History.

As a result of this campaign, and a concerted effort by the UK Government, business, African Governments, NGOs and faith groups, there were landmark commitments made in 2005, including:

- \$50 billion extra aid per year by 2010, of which half would go to Africa
- 100% debt cancellation
- Universal access to AIDS treatment
- Free basic health and education
- Stronger governance in Africa
- Training of African Union (AU) forces

### Progress since Gleneagles

I am pleased to say that the UK has kept its promises. We are on track to increase the amount we spend on aid to 0.7 per cent of national income by 2013, we have cancelled every single penny owed to us by the world's poorest, most indebted countries; the debt deal agreed at Gleneagles has cancelled all the debts owed to the IMF, World Bank and African Development Bank of 22 of the world's poorest countries; and we have worked hard to end conflict around the world, especially in Darfur. We are also pushing hard to make sure other countries keep their promises too.

There's still a lot to do. But we can see that our work is helping people in practical ways. In fact, UK aid now helps about 5,000 people get out of poverty every single day.

We should all be proud that we, together with others, are helping 17 million children a year go to primary school in Bangladesh; more than 1 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa get treatment for HIV, so saving more than 250,000 lives a year, and helping African peacekeeping troops to get training, 7,000 of whom are now in Darfur. And proud that a new vaccination fund we started should save 10 million lives.

### G8 Summit - 2007

As the leaders of the G8 nations met together at the German Baltic Sea resort of Heiligendamm, the biggest challenge was getting agreement from all eight nations to live up to the promises they made in 2005.

At the end of the day the G8 did not go far enough to meet the aspirations they set themselves.

On the issue of climate change, the outcome was mixed – a climate change agreement was made, but it does not go far enough to reach the target set in a recent Tearfund report, which clearly demonstrates the catastrophic impact of allowing temperatures to rise more than 2 °C. The agreement has potential and at least sets out a framework for further action, but it did not make any of the real commitments necessary.

On the issues of poverty and HIV/AIDS, the outcome was sorely disappointing. Despite the fact the UK government has honoured all its pledges; many of the promises made at Gleneagles are not yet being fulfilled.

Oxfam's Senior Policy Advisor, Max Lawson said: "The headlines sound impressive but ultimately mean precious little. Instead of delivering what they promised the G8 has tried to get the biggest possible headline number out of the smallest possible aid increase. The \$60bn for HIV/AIDS, health, TB and malaria represents, at most, an extra \$3bn of aid in 2010. This is welcome but falls \$27bn short of what the G8 pledged in 2005."

The G8 have at the disposal the financial and technical ability to eradicate absolute poverty within a generation. This G8 was a failure. The headline figures mask a paucity of aspiration and willpower.

Bono summed it up for me; he said "They have taken language hostage. We wanted numbers but this is bureaubabble... It is not real in any language. We are looking for accountable language and numbers. I might be a rock star but I can count."

We *must* do better if we are to change the lives of the world's poorest, if we are to fulfil the aspirations of all who marched in 2005 calling for an end to poverty in our lifetime.