

World Vision's calls to G8 Leaders for their 2012 Summit

When the G8 leaders meet at Camp David they must look beyond pressing economic issues and their own borders and address the most pressing needs of millions of children worldwide. 2012 provides both an historic opportunity and an urgent need for the leaders of eight of the world's largest economies to show bold leadership in a refocused and determined effort towards ending global hunger.

Food crises in both East and West Africa over the past twelve months have resulted in millions of people facing a daily struggle to survive the worst impacts of drought. Beyond the often fleeting headlines and attention that these crises attract there are close to 1 billion people worldwide who live in chronic hunger and over 170 million young children for whom the lack of an adequate diet is already causing irreversible damage to their ability to grow and learn. A third of all children under five in developing countries suffer from stunting, the lifelong effects of which include lower capacity for learning and productivity for individuals that negatively impact national economies.

The G8 and other world leaders have the power to stop hunger in its tracks. Renewed commitments to food security and to improve nutrition could go a long way toward preventing future catastrophes and to improving the lives and prospects of millions of children. The solutions needed are known and the roadmap to implement them exists. Commitments made by the G8 at previous summits have gone some way to reverse decades of underinvestment in agriculture and nutrition but it is now even more critical to fulfil existing pledges, build momentum and increase collective efforts towards the goal of a hunger free world.

With the deadline for meeting the Millennium Development Goals looming the forthcoming G8 Summit is an important milestone for securing successful outcomes on food security and nutrition, as well as displaying a continued commitment to improve maternal and child health. The G8 must send a strong signal to other world leaders in 2012, particularly those who will be attending the G20 Summit in Mexico and the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development in Brazil, that the richest countries will keep their promises and play their part in giving millions more children the best start to life.

World Vision calls on the G8 leaders to:

1. Fulfil existing pledges on food security and nutrition made as part of the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative by the end of 2012

At their 2009 Summit in Italy the G8, together with other world leaders, made historic pledges of \$22 billion in the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative. Now nearing the end of its time frame, it appears that less than half of the overall amount pledged has been delivered. A recent joint statement from the US and UK governments recommitted them to achieving the financial pledges made at the 2009 L'Aquila G8¹.

- With the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative set to expire at the end of 2012 it is critical that each G8 country provides detailed information on the planned disbursements to meet their L'Aquila commitments by the end of this year.

2. Set the bold, achievable target of reducing the number of children who are stunted by 15 million through enhancing food security and nutrition in high-priority countries by 2015

World Vision welcomes reports that the G8 is considering a new food security initiative to be announced at the Camp David Summit. However, with serious concerns about their current food security initiative, which is still off-track in terms of pledges being delivered, the G8 must outline plans to both fulfil and then improve on the L'Aquila initiative.

¹ See '2012 Joint Fact Sheet on US-UK Partnership for Global Development at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/03/14/joint-fact-sheet-us-uk-partnership-global-development>

The most critical element of this improvement is to increase both the focus on and funding for nutrition, particularly for pregnant women and young children. Research shows that investment in nutrition in the first 1,000 days of a child's life—from conception to age two—pays dividends for a lifetime. At their recent meeting G8 Foreign Ministers noted the 'particular leverage' provided by strategies and policies that specifically improve nutrition during this 1,000 days window and also commented that the Scaling Up Nutrition movement² which focuses on this time period merited wider participation.

A new G8 food security and nutrition initiative must:

- set bold, achievable goals to improve food security and nutrition, including to reduce the number of children who are stunted by 15 million;
- fund the identified financial shortfall in low-income countries that have agriculture and food security country investment plans and support the implementation of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) framework in these countries;
- pay special attention to assistance for small scale farmers, particularly women farmers;
- include a robust and transparent monitoring and evaluation mechanism;
- ensure civil society is included in national and regional food security and nutrition plans.

3. Strengthen accountability and transparency

In recent years the G8 has increasingly had a focus on accountability for their commitments, however this process has not been consistent and has relied heavily on the leadership of the country chairing the G8 in any given year. Accountability is the means by which governments, international organisations and institutions build and preserve credibility. It is critical for the G8 to implement more robust methods of accountability that are inclusive of a wider range of stakeholders, produce information that is comparable across more than one year and is available in a timely fashion.

To improve their accountability the G8 must:

- report annually on all current G8 commitments including those around maternal, newborn and child health, nutrition and food security;
- provide up-to-date, transparent funding information as well as qualitative and quantitative assessments of outputs and outcomes;
- open up the G8 accountability process to civil society input;
- publish the Accountability Report at least 30 days before each G8 summit.

² The Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) movement brings together over 100 organisations and groups committed to work together to fight hunger and under nutrition. The SUN Framework focuses on scaling up proven solutions for improving nutrition during the vital 1,000-day window from conception to a child's second birthday. See www.scalingupnutrition.org for more details