

G8

G8 Development Ministers' Meeting Chair's Summary

Halifax, Nova Scotia, April 28, 2010

1. G8 Ministers and senior officials responsible for development cooperation met in Halifax on April 27 and 28, 2010 to lay the foundations on development issues for the G8 Muskoka Leaders' Summit in June 2010. The Minister of Health of Mali, as well as senior representatives from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations and its agencies and the World Bank also participated in the meeting – all of whose contributions enriched the discussions.

2. Ministers met at a time when the impacts of the economic and food crises continue to affect developing countries. Ministers focused on three key themes: strengthening accountability and effectiveness of development assistance; improving the health of mothers, newborns, and children under five in developing countries; and accelerating food security efforts, including nutrition. The following reflects a summary of the discussions, as understood by the Chair.

Accountability and Effectiveness in International Assistance

3. G8 Ministers agreed that more determined political action is needed to deliver on existing aid effectiveness commitments, including greater predictability and transparency of aid, reducing transaction costs and fragmentation. They emphasized the importance of accountability to their own citizens for the effective use of international assistance.

4. Ministers emphasized that it is more important than ever to pay what they pledge on time and to shift the focus from inputs to sustainable outcomes. They renewed their commitment to enhancing the timeliness of their international assistance so that partner countries can better plan and budget. They acknowledged that predictable, more transparent and more cost-effective development assistance is within their reach.

5. Further efforts should also be made to improve the coordination of development assistance. Haiti's reconstruction is an important test in this regard. Ministers reiterated the importance of using country systems to deliver international assistance in order to reinforce the ownership and accountability of partner countries to their citizens. G8 countries will continue to support the efforts of partner countries to strengthen transparency and accountability for their development results, including better legislative oversight, stronger civil society voices, effective institutions and public financial management – all of which are key to effective and accountable development.

6. In terms of next steps to increase the effectiveness of international assistance, Ministers asked the OECD to report on progress and challenges related to

predictability in advance of the December 2010 Development Assistance Committee High-Level Meeting. Ministers also asked that the evidence base for aid effectiveness be strengthened. Noting the inherent difficulties in measuring development outcomes, Ministers asked that the OECD prioritize its work on development outcomes and report on the issue at the next meeting of G8 Development Ministers. Ministers agreed that such work would benefit from a sectoral focus.

7. Ministers noted the importance of the work being done by the G8 Accountability Working Group.

Maternal and Under-Five Child Health

8. Ministers agreed that healthy mothers, healthy children and their reduced mortality and morbidity is a top priority for the G8. They expressed deep concern for the fact that the lives of far too many mothers and children are still lost every year.

9. Laying the groundwork for a new G8 Summit initiative on maternal, newborn and under-five child health and building on past G8 commitments, Ministers agreed to a set of core principles for long lasting results, namely:

ensuring sustainability of results;

building upon proven, cost-effective, evidence-based interventions;

focusing on the countries with the greatest needs while continuing to support those making progress;

supporting country-led national health policies and plans that are locally supported;

increasing coherence of development efforts through better coordination and harmonization;

improving accountability; and

strengthening monitoring, reporting, and evaluation.

10. Ministers agreed that progress in the health sector does not require new mechanisms, funds and structures. Rather, existing mechanisms and structures need to be aligned around a common set of goals and aid effectiveness principles, particularly in support of country plans and systems.

11. In terms of scope, Ministers agreed that improving maternal and under-five child health requires comprehensive, high impact and integrated interventions at the community level, in country, across the continuum of care (from pre-pregnancy, through delivery to the age of five), including elements such as:

antenatal care;

post-partum care;

family planning, which includes contraception;

reproductive health;

treatment and prevention of diseases;

prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV;

immunizations; and

nutrition.

12. Ministers stressed that action is required on other factors that can contribute to improving the health of women and children, such as access to safe drinking water and sanitation and gender equality.

13. In order to deliver these interventions effectively, Ministers agreed that health systems needed to be strengthened to provide integrated and comprehensive services at the local level. This would include access to primary care; equipped and resourced facilities; trained frontline health workers; and robust health information systems.

14. Joined by the Health Minister of Mali, Ministers acknowledged existing efforts and commended those partner countries that are investing directly in building effective health systems in order to make integrated primary health services available at the community level. As part of the initiative, Ministers committed to support partner countries' efforts to improve access at the local level through

properly equipped and resourced health systems, including a skilled health workforce.

15. Recognizing that a vast number of interventions already exist to save lives and in line with their desire for improved accountability and better measurement of results and impacts, Ministers actioned the following:

requested the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Bank to develop a common set of concrete goals and associated indicators, and to develop a common methodology to determine the most effective and affordable basket of integrated interventions based on and adaptable to country-specific needs and to build in-country capacity for these assessments;

urged the WHO to finalize guidelines on training and the effective use and supply of health workers;

asked the WHO and other UN agencies to work with developing countries to strengthen their health information and management systems, including through the use of 21st century technology to improve the collection of data on pregnancies, births and deaths;

asked the WHO and other UN agencies to assist in selecting a concise set of outcome indicators to measure progress across regions and countries; and

called on the OECD to work with donors to improve the tracking of investments related to maternal and under-five child health.

Food Security

16. Recalling that at the G8 Summit in 2009, development partners committed to mobilizing \$20 billion over three years in support of sustainable agricultural development, Ministers agreed to accelerate efforts to implement the commitment made at L'Aquila, including reiterating their support for comprehensive country-led initiatives.

17. Ministers also received a progress report on the status of L'Aquila commitments. They underscored the need for greater focus on country-led implementation and development partner harmonization and the development of an agreed framework for assessing results. Ministers welcomed Canada's offer to convene a meeting of engaged stakeholders later in 2010 focused on implementation of the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative at the country level. Ministers also welcomed the progress on specifying principles and good practices to promote responsible land use and sustainable agricultural investment.

18. Given the importance of nutrition to maternal, newborn and child health and other broader development programming, Ministers stressed that nutrition needs to be better integrated in development efforts. Ministers recognized that investments in nutrition could have a catalytic impact on making progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). To support this effort, Ministers asked the United Nations High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, chaired by the United Nations Secretary General, to identify a set of common

nutrition indicators to monitor progress in the area and operational guidelines to improve nutrition.

19. Ministers acknowledged the important progress being made by, and reiterated their continued support for, developing country partners' efforts in developing and implementing inclusive, technically sound food security, agriculture and nutrition plans. Ministers supported the imperative to act now to implement national food security, agriculture and nutrition plans. The importance of research was highlighted and the recent reforms of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) were welcomed.

20. Ministers believe in a Food Aid Convention (FAC) for the 21st century that focuses on providing appropriate and effective food assistance to vulnerable populations. Ministers agreed to do further work.

Millennium Development Goals

21. Ministers recognized that while considerable improvements have been made, progress on some MDGs varies across the global, regional and country levels. Particular attention is needed on those Goals and regions where progress is slowest. The role of all actors – governments, civil society organizations, private foundations, the private sector, as well as international organizations – will be critical to accelerating this global effort. In this regard, Ministers noted the importance of mobilizing domestic resources and of dialogue with new development actors.

22. Ministers agreed that the September 2010 United Nations High-Level Plenary on the MDGs presents an opportunity for the international community to take stock of progress, identify gaps and galvanize efforts towards the achievement of these Goals and, most importantly, to ensure results can be sustained for the long term. The importance of grounding work in clear assessments, especially at the country level, will be key to accelerating progress. To that end, Ministers expressed strong support for the United Nations Development Programme-led international assessment currently under way.

Source: Muskoka 2010 G8 [Official website]