



## COMMENT

### Don't abandon Africa

The dollar, the war against terror and the rebuilding of Iraq threaten to deprive Africa of its much-needed recovery plan, says former Canadian 'sherpa' GORDON '

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drought cycles, the facts of the African crisis are appalling. In an increasingly knowledge-based global economy, fewer than half of Africa's children complete primary school and only one in every 100 Africans has access to a personal computer (not to mention that less than 1 per cent of the continent's 750 million inhabitants have actually gone on-line).

But these dismal numbers mask some encouraging news. Increased multiparty elections in many countries, rising incomes in countries outside of sub-Saharan Africa and strides taken by Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia in their growth rates are notable development achievements. It is these examples of progress that offer pockets of hope; we can build on them. This determination combined with African leadership and developed countries' commitment through the New Partnership for Africa's Development can begin to transform the future.

Following Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's example at Kananaskis last year, your summit at Evian should maintain the G8 focus on Africa and move to implement the New Partnership. NEPAD is designed to radically alter the assumptions underlying international African development-assistance programs. As a move away from a patronizing and ineffective donor-recipient relationship with the developed world, this new partnership is based on mutual respect as well as shared responsibility and accountability.

Critics of NEPAD would do well to move beyond the anachronistic rhetoric of the 1960s and recognize that effective strategies designed by Africans and supported by the international community will provide new momentum and serve as the basis for concrete projects to address poverty and insecurity.

There is evidence that genuine partnership and African-led development projects are possible under the NEPAD agenda. We can decisively move from talk toward implementation and action. Working with the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, the OECD Development Centre and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the Centre for Global Studies at the University of Victoria initiated a project last year funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. The work resulted in five development initiatives for specific priority sectors of NEPAD designed by Africans to promote socio-economic change.

Strong business cases were provided. Peace and security were addressed through the proposed creation of a central database of illegal natural-resource exploitation that could be used for early

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