



Urgent Civil Society Statement on the Current State of Play at G8 Toyako Summit

2008 Japan G8 Summit NGO Forum

24th April, 2008, at the Civil G8 Dialogue

Despite the great expectations placed on the Japanese leadership with regards to global issues centering around the environment and development, we see little sign of progress towards a successful conclusion of the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit in just over 70 days. The lack of ambitious policy proposals from the Japanese Presidency is the cause of our great concern that the leaders gathering at Toyako may end up not producing any positive outcomes.

Taking the opportunity of the Civil G8 Dialogue where the G8 Sherpas directly engage in a dialogue with the global civil society, the 2008 G8 Summit NGO Forum issues this urgent call on the Government of Japan to boost its efforts to avoid failure.

Japan should set its mid-term GHG reduction goal within the range of 25-40% compared to 1990 level as recommended by IPCC

Currently, countries are negotiating a post-2012 framework to prevent dangerous climate change with the aim of reaching an agreement by COP15 in 2009. Solving climate change is significantly urgent. Developed countries should make clear their responsibilities and help those countries already getting impacts from climate change. However, the Japanese proposal of a sectoral approach implies developing nations to take the same sort of actions as Japan, without mentioning its own legally binding absolute reduction national target as a developed nation commitment.

This proposal was heavily criticized at Chiba Gleneagles Dialogue in March, as not based on “common but differentiated responsibilities” principle. Since then, Japan has continuously explained it to be a misunderstanding and that they respect the principle. But in fact, the contents of the submissions and the papers they distributed at Bangkok’s UN climate negotiation had not changed, so is still a threat to developing countries.

It is inevitable for Japan to announce a legally binding mid-term GHG reduction goal within the range of what the IPCC has recommended. Only then can Japan gain respect and extend leadership to lead the G8 process.

Face the lack of progress towards the MDGs and reverse the declining trend of ODA

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have promised to liberate people from poverty. The Government of Japan as the chair of the summit in the mid-point year, bears particular responsibilities to more than a billion people living in poverty towards achieving the Goals. Currently, not only has there been little progress, new threats caused by rich country economies such as climate change and escalating prices of food and energy are adding to the suffering of the poor people. Despite this, the G8 is off the track to keeping their promises as their Official Development Assistance decreases, including that of Japan that has seen a 24% drop in the last year.

Worse still, the preparatory discussion towards the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), tasked by the Government of Japan to inform the G8 discussion on Africa, seems to ignore the existing international agreements and commitments, and thus shows no roadmap towards achieving the MDGs in Africa. At this rate, we fear that TICAD might negatively influence the G8 discussion on Africa and development. We urge Japan to exercise leadership in the fight against poverty and lead the G8 to keep the promises as repeatedly demanded by the world.

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