



G8 Leaders' Statement on Global Food Security
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1. It is very promising that global food security is now on the G8 agenda, and will stay there, as G8 leaders want to review progress at the next summit.
2. It is encouraging that actions regarding global markets and increasing production are being proposed; however, insufficient attention is being paid to actions on social protection and nutrition for the poorest. The food security and nutrition of the poor, which was already compromised before the world food crisis hit, is now severely jeopardized. High food prices lead the poor and hungry to limit their food consumption and switch to less-balanced diets, with potentially irreversible consequences for their nutritional status and health. Well-designed safety net programs can address these problems with high payoffs, in terms of economic productivity, poverty reduction, and improved nutrition.
3. It is noteworthy that there was attention to accelerating development of second-generation biofuels. But given that biofuels are estimated to have accounted for about 30 percent of the increase in grain prices between 2000 and 2007, the G8 did not address short-term measures such as freezing biofuel production at current levels, reducing it, or introducing a moratorium that would temporarily suspend the use of grains and oilseeds for biofuels production until prices come down to reasonable levels, thus providing relief for poor people.
4. It is reassuring that the G8 has taken note of the large amount of resources needed to overcome the food crisis, including the need to "reverse the overall decline of aid and investment in the agriculture sector, and to achieve significant increases in support of developing country initiatives." It is important that steps are taken to assure that committed funds, including the US\$10 billion that has already been committed since January 2008, are actually released in a timely manner. However it is disappointing that no clear commitments were made to specific amounts; mention was only made of the "appropriate scale."
5. It is notable that the G8 has paid attention to the global governance architecture of agriculture and food security, but it is not enough to simply add an unclear set of actors and yet more meetings ("global partnership," "global network of high-level experts," "G8 expert group; G8 Ministers of Agriculture meeting") without a clear understanding and delineation of the mechanisms for coordination.
6. Progress in hunger reduction since the mid-1990s has been disappointing, and poverty remains severe and persistent in many parts of the developing world. The current food crisis will push even more people into poverty and hunger. The G8 has taken an important step in committing to assist vulnerable people and countries. It is important that these good intentions are translated into timely action on the global, regional, and national levels. The strategy for the way forward should include a well-structured package of actions to address the emergency now unfolding, along with a package of actions that would bring resiliency into the food system and help prevent another crisis. With climate change threatening future food security, the G8 needs to better connect the food security agenda to the climate change agenda.