

The Right Honorable Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A2
Canada

8 June 2010

Re. Faith communities urge G8/G20 to jointly address food security and HIV

Dear Prime Minister Harper,

We are writing to you as people of faith and faith-based organizations committed to working together for a more just, peaceful and sustainable world. As you prepare to meet with other world leaders at the G8/G20 Summits in Canada in June, we join with the Interfaith Partnershipⁱ to urge you to take 'courageous and concrete action' to ensure 'follow-through on past promises'.

In particular, we ask that you deliver on your 2009 pledge, known as the L'Aquila Food Security initiativeⁱⁱ, to invest more in smallholder farmers and in sustainable production to reduce poverty and hunger. This is action that is vitally needed in a world that produces enough food to feed itself but where 1 in 6 people still go hungry, 129 million children are underweight and 195 million children are stunted by hunger and malnutrition.

We believe that concrete action to support smallholder farmers is vital not only because it will improve food security for the world's poorest people, but because it will also contribute to efforts to achieve universal access to HIV prevention, treatment and care by 2010ⁱⁱⁱ – a goal set by the G8 in 2005 and adopted by all governments in the 2006 UN Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS – but for which implementation is underfunded and off-target.

The L'Aquila Food Security initiative, which included a commitment to investing USD 20 billion over three years in sustainable agricultural production, with a focus on smallholder farmers, was a commendable step towards increasing cohesion in policies and funding and mobilizing new political will and resources to fight hunger. It also represented a decisive break from 20 years of underinvestment in agriculture while only channeling increased financing into emergency food aid.

One year on and conscious that the momentum built by this initiative should not be lost, we urge you to account for the timely delivery of this initiative. Crucially, we ask for a reconfirmation of the USD 20 billion pledge and a clarification of how much of this money represents new and additional aid.

On its own, however, a reconfirmation of the 2009 pledge is not enough: A clear plan of action for implementing the L'Aquila Food Security initiative must also be drawn up. In particular, we urge that the plan:

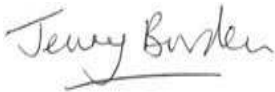
- includes a clear timetable for the remaining 3-year period of the L'Aquila pledge
- shows what mechanisms will be used to channel the money and deliver the initiative

- outlines specific strategies for investing in smallholders farmers, for example, by supporting indigenous knowledge-based agriculture, promoting biodiversity and investing in seed research initiatives
- specifies how investments will reach and ensure the participation of the poorest smallholder farmers, including women, people living with HIV and the most food-insecure
- integrates support for smallholders with other efforts to respond to HIV and climate change
- sets out how additional funding will be levied and coordinated with other regional and international initiatives^v to ensure long-term, predictable and sustainable funding for robust, country-led food security plans, in line with the Accra^y agenda on aid effectiveness
- establishes follow-up mechanisms to show what has already been achieved and what remains to be done

If the above recommendations are met, we are convinced that world leaders will have moved closer to both safeguarding the right to food for all and enhancing efforts to boost access to HIV prevention, treatment and care. In many parts of the world, a lack of food security and poor nutrition are worsening the effects of the HIV epidemic: without access to food either from their own food production or from income earned, people living with HIV are likely to develop AIDS and become sicker quicker, while those on treatment will struggle to absorb the medication and may be unable to continue treatment.

Please be assured of our prayers and support as you discuss these issues, act to uphold past commitments and resolve to move forward in addressing food security and HIV for the benefit of the majority of the world's population.

Yours in faith,



Jenny Borden
Interim Executive Director
Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, Switzerland

This letter is supported by the following organizations and churches:

Africa-Europe Faith and Justice Network, Belgium
AFRIKA-EUROPA Network, The Netherlands
American Jewish World Service, USA
Association des Religieuses pour les Droits des Femmes, Canada
Bread for All, Switzerland
Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR), Canada
Christian Aid, UK
Christian AIDS Bureau for Southern Africa (CABSA), South Africa
Christian Care, Zimbabwe
Christian World Service, New Zealand
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Community Technology Development Trust (CTDT), Zimbabwe
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Islamic Relief Worldwide, South Africa
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Map International, USA
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Partners for the Land and Agricultural Needs of Traditional Peoples (PLANT), USA
Pax Christi International, Belgium
Positive Women's Network, South Africa
Presentation Justice Network, Ireland
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Trócaire, Ireland
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United Church of Christ HIV & AIDS Network (UCAN), USA
Washington Biotechnology Action Council, USA
World Alliance of YMCAs, Switzerland
World Association for Christian Communication, Canada and UK
World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), Kenya
World Vision, Canada, Italy and Japan

Cc: Canadian Embassy, Kirchenfeldstrasse 88 CH-3005 Berne, Switzerland

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- ⁱ See www.faithchallengeg8.com
- ⁱⁱ [www.g8italia2009.it/static/G8_Allegato/LAquila_Joint_Statement_on_Global_Food_Security\[1\],0.pdf](http://www.g8italia2009.it/static/G8_Allegato/LAquila_Joint_Statement_on_Global_Food_Security[1],0.pdf)
- ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2005gleneagles/communique.pdf>
- ^{iv} such as the new and revitalized UN Food and Agriculture Organization's Committee for Food Security
- ^v www.undp.org/mdtf/docs/Accra-Agenda-for-Action.pdf