

The Role of the G8 and the Gleneagles Summit

Olivier Giscard d'Estaing

Chairman of the European League for Economic Co-operation
and chairman of the INSEAD Foundation (Fontainebleau)

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(summary)

Global perspectives on the G8's role in development and sustainability

G8 summits and system in general

Initially, in Rambouillet (1975), such meeting was informal, without prepared agendas, and without spectacular decisions. The Chiefs of State had a new and outstanding opportunity to meet and to discuss about the main world economic and political issues.

The second step that has developed since is now that the host Chief of State proposes an agenda, well ahead of time, allowing detailed preparations by each government. As far as I can see it, it is not followed by collective decisions nor clear plans of action.

However the recent decision made by the Ministers of Finance of the 8 countries relieving by \$40 billions the debt of the poorest countries give the hope that decisions can be made at that level.

To make the G8 summit meetings more effective, I wish to present two recommendations :

- one concerns the agenda; before being decided by the host government, suggestions and proposals might be requested on a broad scale, involving other countries than the G8 and other groups than governments. For instance, I would suggest that our pre G8 meetings could take place in the fall or early winter, or that a consultation could be worked out among its members to have the possibility to suggest topics and propose resolutions on time to be taken into consideration by the governments.
- my second proposal is to favour a strong cooperation at the level of the G 20, representing 4 billions inhabitants, that is 2/3 of the world population. This group, in addition to the members of the G8, would include South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, South Korea, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Turkey and a representative of United Europe. This group of nations, taking also into consideration the needs of smaller countries, should have a chance to work on the same model that the G8, in a much more effective way than the General Assembly of the United Nations to which they might report.

G8 and sustainable development

I would suggest three lines of action:

- try to adopt joint positions in the negotiations of the WTO for decisions involving sustainable developments. This would apply to agricultural policies, the impact of world trade to employment levels and critical sectorial problems; one example would be what to do for african producers of cotton when the market price falls in such a way that it affects drastically the local populations?
- try to adopt joint positions concerning the financial efforts to be accomplished. Besides the objective of increasing public contributions, it should be analysed how to apply a small part of the very high price of oil to sustainable development, by negotiations with oil producing countries. Billions of dollars are involved and no one seems to raise the issue of those movements of funds, corresponding to the inequal geographical repartition of this world

ressource. A voluntary contribution of \$2 per baril would allow to meet the objectives of the UN millennium, when the market price varies from \$35 to \$55 above production costs.

- make sure that the reform of the United Nations will ensure that world decisions needed for sustainable development would be made possible, democratically decided and controlled. The G8 might support the creation of an adequate institution to deal with this matter.

My conclusion is a wish: at a time of world turbulances and uncertainties, when there is a growing feeling of human insecurity, but also of interdependance and solidarity, the governments are facing a historical responsibility to act, to reassure the populations and to show the ways to overcome the challenges of our time.