

Junior 8 Summit 2009 - Rome Declaration

9 July 2009



We, the 54 participants of the Junior 8 Summit 2009 from Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, have come together in Rome, Italy, to propose immediate action from our leaders. We invite them to listen to the young people and take our proposals seriously. As young people, we are the leaders of the future, and therefore will be the most affected by your decisions made today. We believe that collaboration between adults and young people is the best way to grant a better future for the upcoming generation. The young people of today will follow up on the recommendations made and will be monitoring the actions of the countries represented. The J8 community urges the leaders to listen and act upon previous declarations as well as our own. The following are the conclusions of the fifth Junior 8 Summit.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS

Even in times of financial crisis, children's rights should not be neglected and urgent efforts are required to preserve them. We, the young people, call upon the G8 governments to keep their promises to children by increasing financial, technical and human support to countries ensuring the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially those that relate to health and education.

As the effects of the financial crisis can violate children's right to education, we strongly recommend that all governments provide scholarships and support to families of those in need to ensure that all children have access to free, complete and quality education.

Better global market regulations are needed immediately to reduce the effects of the current crisis on children as well as to prevent this from happening again.

We encourage leaders to promote investment from the private sector, especially to develop Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) into programmes with a special focus on children and families affected by the financial crisis. Governments should help child rights organisations so that the rights of children are respected.

CLIMATE CHANGE

MITIGATION

The reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is critical to the well-being of our planet. We insist that G8 leaders build upon the policies of the Kyoto Protocol and sign an improved version under the Copenhagen Agreement. The articles should state that:

- Government funding should be made available for green technologies in both developed and developing countries;
- Policies concerning land use, land-use change, forestry and reforestation to slow down deforestation must be promoted;
- We urge G8 leaders to commit to limiting global warming to ensure the increase in temperature does not reach two degrees Celsius;

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- Those countries that do not adhere to the requirements stated in the said documents within a certain period of time, should be given temporary observer rather than participant status in the next major climate change meeting, to enforce the rules stated;
- There must be a call in the Copenhagen Agreement to strengthen participation of children and young people in climate change action.

ADAPTATION

G8 countries must ensure universal access to safe drinking water to the 1.2 billion global citizens who do not have it. To ensure that water is shared, preserved and protected we propose the implementation of the BLUE initiative, which calls for: **B**ottled water reduction where access to safe drinking water exists; **L**egislate funds to build accessible water infrastructure in the developing world; **U**se water responsibly; and **E**ducate youth on water issues so that they understand the importance of saving water.

G8 leaders should address the issue of black carbon (black soot), which accounts for approximately 17 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, and is emitted through biomass cooking stoves mainly in developing nations.

TECHNOLOGY

To combat climate change, G8 leaders should promote international cooperation for green initiatives, such as the creation of a Green Olympics. The Green Olympics will allow for the introduction of newly developed products from both amateur and professional scientists worldwide. These products will be sold on a “Green Marketplace”.

FINANCING

We call on the G8 leaders to establish an international financing mechanism for energy conservation and the implementation of renewable energy resources.

POVERTY & DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

To achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we strongly suggest that the G8 live up to their promises to meet the target of 0.7% of GDP, deliver the 50 billion USD to development in Africa, and cancel the national debt of developing countries, as was pledged in previous summits and declarations. This would enable African countries to address basic health, water and sanitation, education, infrastructure and agriculture simultaneously.

We recommend that the G8 leaders support developing countries through the creation of “*End Poverty Bonds*”. The collected funds will be transferred to micro-financing centres in developing countries, so that local entrepreneurs can begin businesses and create new job opportunities. Funds dedicated to foreign aid must be monitored closely by a neutral external organization to ensure that they are used effectively, and to avoid losing funds to corruption.

We also propose that G8 governments invest in projects on the development of rural areas, such as the Millennium Village Project in Africa.

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We encourage G8 leaders to make every effort to include developing nations in free trade negotiations by continuing the proposals of the Doha process. This means that industrialised countries would abolish economic barriers, like taxes and agriculture subsidies, thus enabling developing countries to trade on equal terms, particularly in the sectors of agriculture and renewable energies. This allows for the emergence of stable economies, and encourages progress towards ending extreme poverty.

G8 governments should take the initiative to buy patents from pharmaceutical companies to facilitate the production of generic drugs for infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS. This in turn will ensure that everyone has access to free medication, including antiretroviral medicines and vaccines for tuberculosis, malaria and polio.

EDUCATION

Regardless of racial, cultural, and religious differences, every girl and boy has the right to receive free, quality and complete education. In addition, to provide post primary education to all children, we recommend that the leaders attending the G8 summit promote the implementation of programmes that focus on building school infrastructure in developing countries, especially safe public transportation for students.

To improve the quality of education, we insist that schools should supply food and water for all students in need. It is the duty of parents to send children to school, and is the responsibility of governments to both ensure that children have equal access to school and are able to maintain the functions necessary for a sustained attendance. It is also vital to make basic schooling compulsory, and to provide adequate school supplies, uniforms and unbiased information.

We also believe that free, regular retraining and periodic recertification of teachers is crucial to ensure high quality education. To protect the mental health of students, we ask G8 leaders to make funds available for psychosocial support at schools as part of raising the quality of education.

It is important that G8 leaders work actively in providing child-friendly education systems that involve children in the decisions that affect them. We request that constructive student opinions be given serious consideration, and that actions are taken in accordance with the voices of young people. We insist on the provision of facilities for extracurricular activities, and the establishment of systems to reward and encourage talent.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

We, the young people, are the emerging keepers of a threatened planet. If change is to occur, we must be its eyes, its heart, and its conscience. The ethical and moral tasks that are entrusted to the G8 leaders ultimately affect all human kind therefore, together, we must have enough respect for the present and the future in which the young people are living today and will live in tomorrow.

We urge you to listen and include our voices in your decisions. Act now!

To read more about J8 2009 globally, and read the previous declarations, please visit:
www.j8summit.com