



Weekly Special Report



Produced by the Public Affairs Section

INSIDE

Obama Calls on Africans to Claim Their Future

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr. Staff Writer

Washington — Saying he too has the blood of Africa within him, President Obama does not see the African people as living a world apart, but as a fundamental part of an interconnected world.



President Obama addresses the Ghanaian Parliament in Accra July

"I've come here to Ghana for a simple reason: the 21st century will be shaped by what happens not just in Rome or Moscow or Washington, but by what happens in Accra as well," Obama said

in a July 11 speech before the Ghanaian Parliament in his first visit to

sub-Saharan Africa as president. "I have the blood of Africa within me, and my family's own story encompasses both the tragedies and triumphs of the larger African story."

The 21-hour visit to Ghana, the speech by Obama and his reception by Africans were all the more poignant because he is America's first African-American president, (Continued on page 2)

Obama: Ghana Shows Democracy Can Thrive in Africa

By Charles Corey Staff Writer

Washington — Capping his historic visit to Ghana, President Obama told the Ghanaian people his visit to their country had been "particularly meaningful" and that Ghana sends a message to the world: "Democracy can thrive in Africa."



President Obama travels to Ghana, July 10-11.

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whose father came from Kenya, where the president still has family. Obama's grandfather was a cook for the British in Kenya, and his father grew up in a tiny village where he herded goats.

The July 11 speech in Accra capped off a journey that began in Moscow July 6, followed by the Group of Eight Summit in L'Aquila, Italy, July 8–10, a visit with Pope Benedict XVI at the Vatican on July 10, and then his visit to Ghana before returning to Washington.

Obama began the day with a breakfast meeting with Ghanaian President John Atta Mills at the Christiansborg Castle in Accra. The president and first lady Michelle Obama also attended a brief event on maternal health at La General Hospital before the speech to the parliament.

Ghana was chosen by the White House for Obama's first address to the African people in part because of its progress in democratic governance, the president said in a recent interview with AllAfrica.com, which provides comprehensive African news to the continent.

Ghana was the first sub-Saharan nation to gain independence. It has experienced colonial rule under the British, a period of military rule and finally democratic rule. Previously Presidents Clinton and Bush had visited the nation of 23 million.

REALIZING THE POTENTIAL

Obama said that despite the progress across Africa that has been made in the latter half of the 20th century and the early 21st, much of Africa's promise has not been fulfilled.

"Disease and conflict have ravaged parts of the African continent. In many places, the hope of my father's generation gave way to cynicism, even despair," the president said before a special session of the Ghanaian Parliament at the Accra International Conference Center.

Good governance is the key to development, Obama said. "That's the change that can unlock Africa's potential. And that is a responsibility that can only be met by Africans."

For the United States and the West, Obama said, the commitment to Africa must be greater than annual allocations of foreign aid; it involves partnerships to build the capacity for transformational change. The president outlined four areas critical to the future of Africa: democratic governance, economic opportunity, strengthening public health, and the peaceful resolution of conflict.

The president said foreign aid from the West is not an end in itself. "The purpose of foreign assistance must be creating the conditions where it's no longer needed."

Governments that respect the will of their people tend to be more prosperous, more stable and more successful, Obama said. But no country is going to create wealth for its people if its leaders exploit the economy for personal gain.

"In the 21st century, capable, reliable and transparent institutions are the key to success — strong parliaments, honest police forces, independent judges, independent press, a vibrant private sector, a civil society. Those are the things that give life to democracy, because that is what matters in people's everyday lives," Obama said.

Africa is rich in natural resources, and the African people have shown the capacity and commitment to create their own opportunities, the president said. But he cautioned that old habits are the most difficult to break.

"Dependence on commodities, or a single export, has a tendency to concentrate wealth in the hands of the few, and leaves people too vulnerable to [economic] downturns," he said.

Obama said Africa has boundless natural gifts to generate its own power while exporting profitable, clean energy abroad.

Strengthening public health is critical, Obama said. Africans have struggled with AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, but also other diseases such as polio and often-neglected tropical diseases. The president said public health programs must also promote wellness and improve the care of mothers and children.

Finally, Obama said that conflict has become too much a part of life in Africa, and peaceful solutions have to be embraced.

"It is still far too easy for those without conscience to manipulate whole communities into fighting among faiths and tribes. These conflicts are a millstone around Africa's neck," he said.

Obama said that it is never justifiable to target innocents in the name of an ideology. "It is the death sentence of a society to force children to kill in wars," he said.

Africans are standing up to this inhumanity, he said.

"Freedom is your inheritance. Now it is your responsibility to build upon freedom's foundation," the president said ♦

Obama: Ghana Shows Democracy Can Thrive in Africa . . .

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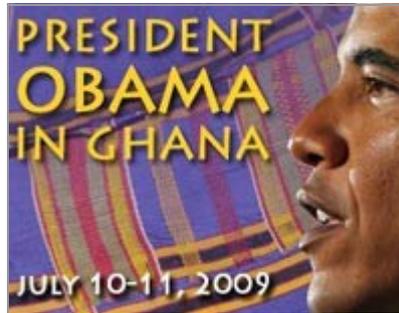
national Airport in Accra before leaving, Obama said he had a chance to discuss not only the future of Ghana but the future of Africa with Ghanaian President John Atta Mills, who also spoke and was there to bid farewell to the U.S. president.

"I have spoken to the parliament here in Ghana about America's commitment to supporting democracy and development," Obama told those gathered to see him off. Obama then fondly recalled his visit to La General Hospital for a visit with women and children who are getting the health care they need.

Additionally, he mentioned his tour of Cape Coast Castle with his family. It was "a place for centuries where men, women and children of this nation and surrounding areas were sold into slavery."

"I will never forget the image of my two young daughters, the descendants of Africans and African-Americans, walking through those doors of no return but then walking back (through) those doors. . . . It was a remarkable reminder that while the future is unknowable, the winds always blow in the direction of human progress."

Obama told the Ghanaian people that "at each point of our visit here, I was reminded of the enduring bond between our nations. The men and women taken from this nation helped to build my own. Today, many of our leading citizens trace their roots to these shores. Your first president attended a university in the United States, as did your



President Obama travels to Ghana, July 10-11

current one."

Obama also praised the Peace Corps volunteers who were present. Ghana was the first nation that hosted such volunteers.

Great civil rights leaders in the United States like Martin Luther King, he said, "looked to the independence movement here in Ghana and asked themselves, 'If Africans can live freely in Africa, why can't African-Americans live freely in America?'"

Today, Obama told the Ghanaian people, "both our nations are diverse and vibrant democracies. Here in Ghana many different ethnic groups speak many languages but have found a way to live and work together in peace. People here can speak freely and worship freely. You have a robust civil society, fair elections and free press, a growing market economy and a sense of energy and optimism."

For those reasons, Obama said, "we in America are proud of our partnership with Ghana. Together we work to advance education and fight poverty. We have made real and measurable strides in fighting diseases from malaria to tuberculo-

sis to polio and neglected tropical

diseases. This is a partnership we intend to continue," and the partnership is based on shared interests and shared ideals forged in "struggles for independence."

In closing, he said, it is "up to each of us," not just the people of Ghana but those in the rest of Africa as well, to uphold the principles of democracy. "America wants to partner with the people and nations of Africa, but we all know that the future of Africa is in the hands of

Africa."

Speaking to the young people of Africa, he said, "The world is what you make it. You have the power to hold your leaders accountable and to build institutions to serve the people."

He pledged: "If you seize this opportunity, if you take responsibility for your future, America will be with you every step of the way as a partner and as a friend."

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

Regional Trade Hubs Help Foster U.S.-Africa Trade

By Charles W. Corey
Staff Writer

Washington — The United States operates four regional trade and competitiveness hubs in sub-Saharan Africa. They aim to assist, enhance and broaden the flow of trade between the United States and the region, both inside and outside the terms of the historic African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

The four trade hubs — located in Ghana, Senegal, Botswana and Kenya — provide information and technical expertise to enhance and expand bilateral trade between the United States and Africa.

Nathan Van Dusen, an economist with Carana Corporation, which is working under contract with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to help manage the West and Southern Africa trade hubs, spoke in an interview with America.gov. He described the key role trade hubs play in helping firms and government agencies take advantage of trade opportunities with the United States. He acknowledged that some 80 percent of U.S.-Africa trade under AGOA is in petroleum-based products and said the hubs are not concerned with petroleum trade but rather in expanding the nontraditional export sectors for U.S.-Africa trade.

The trade hubs, he said, are helping to expand textile and apparel trade — particularly trade in surgical scrub suits for hospitals. Additionally, the U.S. apparel retailer GAP Inc. has been obtaining much of its product line from southern Africa, the CVS drug store chain has been

getting work wear for its employees, and Wal-Mart has been purchasing T-shirts and other low-end apparel items from West and Southern Africa.

“So there are a lot of U.S. companies that are doing business in the region, and we are seeing increasing interest, particularly with political risk in parts of East Africa becoming a problem for some manufacturers and also due to some uncertainty on where the labor market is going to go with China,” with the possibility of rising labor costs in China, Van Dusen said.

Van Dusen said his trade hubs sent African business representatives to a large specialty food and trade show in New York in June. “Specialty foods last year in the United States were an \$80 billion industry, and prior to the trade hubs working in this sector, there really was no presence of genuine African themes and manufactured products in the U.S. specialty foods market. We are now seeing a growing presence.”

The hubs are now working with a specialty business operation that places “sets” of theme foods (French, Spanish, German, etc.) in U.S. supermarkets. This business group launched an African “set,” which first was picked up by the Food Emporium, a grocery chain in New York City, and now that same set is in more than 7,000 grocery stores nationwide. The set, he said, includes “a variety of products from West Africa, Southern Africa and East Africa. It is a lot of sauces, jams, spice mixes and some milled flours. This importer has really taken a new risk in trying to create a new product area for the U.S.

marketplace for specialty foods and it seems to be taking off.”

Additionally, Van Dusen said the trade hubs have also been active in expanding the handmade gifts and décor trade and product sector, which includes beaded jewelry, Rwandan gift baskets and traditional Malian Bogolan or mud cloth bags, which have been put in Hallmark Gift Stores nationwide in the United States. That came about, he said, after the Hallmark Company came to the trade hubs and asked for products that could be easily stocked.

While tariff preference programs like AGOA have some impact in getting American companies to invest in Africa, he cautioned that they are not sufficient in themselves to stimulate trade between the United States and Africa.

“When we talk to aspiring or current exporters in the region, and when we talk to buyers and investors in the U.S. about sourcing from Africa or putting manufacturing operations in Africa, they do ask about tariff preferences, but they also ask about investment incentives, education levels and transportation costs. So the trade hubs, in addition to helping companies take advantage of the tariff preferences, are working in these other areas,” he said.

Other factors, such as transport costs, time to market, labor productivity and rule of law are also important, he said. “There are a lot of factors that go into making that decision for a company. Tariff preferences [like AGOA] matter, but

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U.S.-Africa Trade Increased 28 Percent in 2008

By Charles W. Corey
Staff Writer

Washington — U.S. trade with sub-Saharan Africa, exports plus imports, increased 28 percent in 2008 and U.S. imports under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) are becoming increasingly diversified, according to a just-released profile of U.S.-Africa trade trends.

The report, compiled by the International Trade Administration at the U.S. Department of Commerce, was released as a preview of major U.S.-Africa trade trends that will be discussed at the eighth annual United States-Sub-Saharan Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum to be held August 4–6 in Nairobi, Kenya.

U.S. exports, the report explains, increased by 29.3 percent to \$18.6 billion, driven by growth in several sectors including machinery, vehicles and parts, wheat, non-crude oil, aircraft and electrical machinery (including telecommunications equipment).

U.S. imports in 2008 increased by 27.8 percent to \$86.1 billion, the report states. This growth is due to a significant increase of 31.9 percent in crude oil imports (accounting for 79.5 percent of total imports from sub-Saharan Africa).

Of the top five African destinations for U.S. products, exports to South Africa rose by 17.6 percent, to Nigeria by 47.7 percent, to Angola by 65.4 percent, to Benin by 192.4 percent (due to a large increase in the export of non-crude oil and vehicles and parts), and to Ghana by 46.2 percent.



President Obama visited a USAID-supported sewing factory in Johannesburg, South Africa, while still a U.S. senator.

U.S. imports from the oil-producing countries grew in every case, the report says, with imports from Nigeria growing by 16.2 percent, from Angola by 51.2 percent, from the Republic of Congo by 65.2 percent, from Equatorial Guinea by 89.5 percent, from Chad by 55.4 percent, and from Gabon by 4.4 percent.

U.S. imports from South Africa grew by 10.2 percent. Declines in the import of platinum and diamonds from South Africa were more than balanced by strong growth in the import of ferroalloys and extremely high growth of more than 350 percent in the import of passenger vehicles (caused by a surge in imports from South Africa as new car lines produced in South Africa came on the market at the end of 2007).

In 2008, U.S. imports under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) were \$66.3 billion, 29.8 percent more than in 2007. This figure includes duty-free imports from AGOA-eligible countries under both the U.S. Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) and the expanded AGOA GSP, plus textile and apparel items imported duty-free and quota-free under AGOA

provisions.

Petroleum products continued to account for the largest portion of AGOA imports, with a 92.3 percent share of overall AGOA imports. With these fuel products excluded, AGOA imports were \$5.1 billion, increasing by 51.2 percent. Much of this product increase was due to a 224.8 percent increase in imports of transportation equipment, virtually all from South Africa as mentioned above.

AGOA minerals and metals also increased by 58.8 percent and AGOA chemical and related products by 38.7 percent. AGOA textiles and apparel imports declined by 10.4 percent and AGOA agricultural products by 7.9 percent.

U.S. imports under AGOA are becoming increasingly diversified. Some of the more significant products include: jewelry and jewelry parts; fruit and nut products; fruit juices; leather products; plastic products; and cocoa paste.

The top five AGOA beneficiary countries in 2008 were Nigeria, Angola, South Africa, Chad and the Republic of Congo. Other leading AGOA beneficiaries included Gabon, Cameroon, Lesotho, Madagascar, Kenya, Swaziland and Mauritius.

The U.S. merchandise trade deficit with sub-Saharan Africa continued to widen in 2008 to \$67.5 billion, from \$53.0 billion in 2007. Nigeria, Angola, the Republic of Congo, South Africa, Chad, and Equatorial Guinea accounted for 97.2 percent of the U.S. trade deficit with sub-Saharan Africa in 2008.

The full report can be found at

Obama Calls for Global Nuclear Summit in March 2010

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama, at the G8 Summit in Italy, added another element to his goal of a nuclear-free world by calling for a global nuclear summit in March 2010, White House aides said.

The purpose of the summit would be to achieve the highest levels of nuclear security, which the president believes is essential for enhanced international security and for the peaceful development and the global expansion of nuclear energy, presidential aide Mark Lippert said July 8 following a dinner by the Group of Eight (G8) leaders in L'Aquila, Italy.

Lippert said Obama sees this as another piece of the nonproliferation agenda he first put forward in his Prague speech in April, where he called for a nuclear-free world. The Obama agenda includes substantial reductions in the U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals, which the president and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev agreed to July 6 at the Moscow Summit; U.S. ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT); and strengthening of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

In the Prague speech April 5, Obama proposed a sweeping strategy to thwart the international nuclear threat: reducing and eventually eliminating existing nuclear arsenals; strengthening the NPT and stopping the spread of nuclear weapons to additional nations; and preventing terrorists and political extremists from obtaining nuclear weapons or materials.

In a series of related statements,

G8 leaders endorsed that strategy on the first day of the summit July 8, the White House said in a statement.

"Perhaps the key reason for the



President Obama at the G8 Summit

summit is, as [Obama] said on numerous occasions, he believes nuclear terrorism is the most immediate and extreme threat to global security, and he feels the need to help lead an international effort to secure vulnerable nuclear materials within four years, break up black markets, detect and intercept materials in transit, and use financial tools to disrupt the illicit trade in these materials," Lippert said in a White House conference call from L'Aquila.

The Group of Eight (G8) countries — Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States — are meeting in the mountain town of L'Aquila, Italy, July 8–10. The leaders are holding a series of conferences alone and with leaders from other nations representing advanced emerging economies and less developed nations.

Lippert, who is chief of staff of the U.S. National Security Council that advises the president on an array of security and economic issues, said Obama is trying to set higher standards on nuclear nonproliferation

and expand the peaceful use of nuclear energy worldwide. This announcement comes as the United States and its allies are trying to convince the regimes in North Korea and Iran to abandon efforts to develop nuclear weapons.

"The president is very committed to a proactive approach on these issues and doesn't want to wait for an act of nuclear terrorism before working together to collectively improve our nuclear security culture," Lippert said.

The G8 leaders issued a statement July 8 that emphasized a unanimous commitment to a comprehensive, peaceful and diplomatic solution to the standoff with Iran over its nuclear development program. "We urge Iran to use the present window of opportunity for engagement with the international community in a spirit of mutual respect and to respond positively to the offers advanced," the statement said.

The G8 statement condemned the nuclear weapon test by North Korea on May 25, saying it undermines peace and stability in the region and beyond.

Denis McDonough, the president's deputy national security adviser, said Obama has no illusions that this will be easy. "But I do think that we are continuing to see the impact of the investment of time and resources not only this week in Moscow, but certainly over the course of these last several months with the trips and the visits in Washington to discuss these issues, particular Iran and nuclear security," he said.

The full texts of a G8 statement on nonproliferation (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans->

G8 Nations Propose \$20 Billion in Food Assistance

By Merle David Kellerhals
Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — The world's most advanced industrial economies agreed to provide \$20 billion over the next three years to help farmers in the poorest nations improve food production and help the poor feed themselves.

"We have committed to investing \$20 billion in food security — agricultural development programs to help fight world hunger," President Obama said July 10 at a post-G8 Summit press conference in L'Aquila, Italy. "We do not view this assistance as an end in itself. We believe that the purpose of aid must be to create the conditions where it's no longer needed — to help people become self-sufficient, provide for their families and lift their standards of living."

The Group of Eight (G8) — Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States — met for three days in the mountain town of L'Aquila about 130 kilometers east of Rome for its annual talks on the global economy, development efforts, climate change and a host of other economic and security issues. One of the eight member states hosts the annual meeting, which includes meetings with officials from emerging economies and others.

Obama said the group had gone into its food security meeting after agreeing to \$15 billion for food security assistance, but agreed to



G8 leaders gather in L'Aquila, Italy, for the 2009 summit.

boost it by \$5 billion in "hard commitments." The approach taken to enhance food security is different from previous efforts, the president said.

"I proposed a new approach to this issue, one endorsed by all the leaders here," he told reporters.

It brings the resources of the most advanced economies to the poorest nations to provide coordinated support for food programs created by the countries themselves, Obama said. The plan also draws on support and guidance from multilateral institutions like the World Bank and the African Development Bank.

In talking with other G8 leaders, Obama used the example of his own father's homeland, Kenya, to make the point about a different course in responding to food security.

"We've got 100 million people who dropped into further dire poverty as

a consequence of this recession; we estimate that a billion people are hungry around the globe. And so wealthier nations have a moral obligation as well as a national security interest in providing assistance," Obama said.

"The flip side is, is that countries in sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere in the world that are suffering from extreme poverty have an obligation to use the assistance that's available in a way that is transparent, accountable, and that builds on rule of law and other institutional reforms that will allow long-term improvement," the president said.

"There is no reason why Africa cannot be self-sufficient when it comes to food," Obama said. "It has sufficient arable land."

What Africa lacks is the right seeds and the right irrigation methods, but also the institutions to ensure that farmers will be able to grow crops

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G8 Nations Propose \$20 Billion in Food Assistance. . .

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and market them at fair prices, he said.

"My father traveled to the United States a mere 50 years ago and yet now I have family members who live in villages — they themselves are not going hungry — but live in villages where hunger is real," Obama said. "This is something I understand in very personal terms."

The G8 leaders said in a communiqué that food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture remain priority issues on their political agenda. "Food security is closely connected with economic growth and social progress as well as with political stability and peace," the statement said.

"The food security agenda should focus on agriculture and rural development by promoting sustainable production, productivity and rural economic growth," the statement said.

According to the World Bank, in 2008, when food demand far exceeded the supply in many less-developed nations, food riots and civil strife threatened to topple governments in more than 50 nations.

In a separate statement, the G8 leaders pledged to help African nations develop national water and sanitation plans; improve coordination within donor programs to promote more effective aid programs; align assistance to reflect national priorities; improve bilateral and multilateral contributions; and help the African Union, the African Ministers' Council on Water and other

regional economic development organizations.

The G8 leaders' statement said the growing scarcity of water resources



The Guardia di Finanza Non-Commissioned Officers School just outside L'Aquila host of the meetings of the Group of Eight.

and the dramatic lack of sustainable access to water and sanitation create major impediments to sustainable development, wealth creation and the eradication of poverty.

After the G8 Summit closed, Obama was scheduled to meet in Rome with Pope Benedict XVI before heading to Accra, Ghana, where he is to deliver a speech before the Ghanaian Parliament on July 11.

For more information on the summit, see Group of Eight Summit: Taking Stock, Looking Ahead (http://www.america.gov/g8_2009.html).

What foreign affairs decisions

should President Obama consider? Comment on America.gov's blog (<http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/2009/01/21/day-2-what-should-obama%e2%80%99s-top-priorities-be/>).

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

G8 Leaders Focused on Global Economic Recovery

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — Leaders of the Group of Eight major industrialized nations believe the outcome of the economic crisis is still uncertain and that significant risks remain to global economic and financial stability.

"We agreed on the need to prepare appropriate strategies for unwinding extraordinary policy measures to respond to the crisis once the recovery is assured," the world leaders said in a statement released July 8. "These exit strategies will vary from country to country depending on domestic economic conditions and public finances, and must ensure a sustainable recovery over the long term."

Repairing the battered financial sector, which includes stabilizing financial markets and normalizing banking activity, is an urgent priority, the leaders' statement said, to ensure a permanent economic recovery.

The Group of Eight (G8) – Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States – are meeting in the mountain town of L'Aquila, Italy, for annual talks on the global economy, development efforts in Africa, climate change and a host of other issues from North Korea and Iran to Middle East peace efforts, terrorism and maritime piracy off the coast of Somalia.

"Stable and sustained long-term growth will require a smooth unwinding of the existing imbalances



President Obama, holding discussion with Italy's Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi at the G8 Summit in L'Aquila, Italy, July 8.

in current accounts," the statement said.

The G8 leaders said that while there are signs of economic stabilization, which includes recovery in stock markets, a decline in interest rates, and improved business and consumer confidence, significant risks remain. The leaders said they are committed to withdrawing stimulus spending, but only when recovery is more certain.

"We reconfirm our commitment to keep markets open and free and to reject protectionism of any kind," the statement said. "In difficult times we must avoid past mistakes of protectionist policies, especially given the strong decline in world trade following the economic crisis."

The summit leaders will meet July 9 with leaders from the Group of Five emerging economies — Brazil,

China, India, Mexico and South Africa, plus Egypt, which was invited to attend by summit host Italy. As host, Italy also sets the agenda and chairs the summit.

The 14 nations are expected to issue a communiqué July 9 supporting efforts to conclude the Doha round of trade-liberalization talks next year. The trade initiative was launched in 2001 to help poorer nations enhance their economies through more liberal trade practices, but the talks have been stymied by opposition to proposed tariff and subsidy cuts.

President Obama will chair a meeting on July 9 of the 17-nation Major Economies Forum on managing climate change. The annual summit concludes July 10 with a working session on development in Africa and a session on world food security.

For more on the summit, see Group of Eight Summit: Taking Stock, Looking Ahead (http://www.america.gov/g8_2009.html).

What foreign affairs decisions should President Obama consider? Comment on America.gov's blog (<http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/2009/01/21/day-2-what-should-obama%e2%80%99s-top-priorities-be/>).

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G8 Leaders Urge Economic Action to Prevent Deeper Social Crisis

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — At a time of global economic turmoil, the leaders of the Group of Eight major industrialized nations say they will help developing nations to cope with the crisis.

“Growth and employment in developing countries are seriously threatened, jeopardizing progress achieved toward internationally agreed development goals,” the G8 leaders said in a joint statement July 8.

“The global economic slowdown has significantly reduced export revenues, private capital flows and remittances to developing countries.”

Compounding the crisis is that falling government revenue and a drop in available financing has forced many governments to cut vital investments and spending on social-safety-net programs, the leaders’ statement said.

“We must act now to prevent the economic crisis from turning into a deeper social crisis,” the statement said.

The Group of Eight (G8) economies — Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States — are meeting in the mountain town of L’Aquila, Italy, July 8–10 for annual talks on the global economy, development efforts in Africa, climate change and a host of other issues from North Korea and Iran to Middle East peace



G8 leaders gather in L’Aquila, Italy, for the 2009 summit.

efforts, terrorism and maritime piracy off the coast of Somalia.

The leaders confirmed commitments already made to increase overseas development assistance, debt relief and low-interest financing as part of a greater approach to economic development. Working with other donors, the G8 will increase aid by \$25 billion a year by 2010, the statement said.

The G8 leaders said agriculture and food security should be at the core of the international agenda. “As a consequence of spikes in food prices, the number of people suffering from hunger increased by 100 million up to 1 billion and could significantly worsen as the global economic crisis unfolds,” the statement said. While global commodity and food prices fell in many regions, they continue to remain high compared with historical levels.

“The climate change impact on agriculture and decreasing availability

of water could aggravate the already critical situation of food security, requiring broader adaptation and mitigation efforts,” the statement said.

The G8 leaders pledged to launch a strengthened Africa-G8 water and sanitation partnership.

For more information on the summit, see Group of Eight Summit: Taking Stock, Looking Ahead (http://www.america.gov/g8_2009.html).

What foreign affairs decisions should President Obama consider? Comment on America.gov's blog (<http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/2009/01/21/day-2-what-should-obama%e2%80%99s-top-priorities-be/>).

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Pop Superstar Michael Jackson Created Universal Music

By Michael Gallant
Special Correspondent

San Francisco — Michael Jackson, the larger-than-life American singer widely referred to as the “King of Pop,” died unexpectedly June 25. He was in the final stages of rehearsing for a run of 50 sold-out arena concerts in London set to begin in July, with additional international touring to follow.

As news of Jackson’s death spread worldwide, a deluge of tributes emerged — not just from the singer’s home country, but from diverse international sources as well. Former South Korean President Kim Dae-jung, for example, described Jackson as “a hero of the world,” reported the New York Times, while the Nelson Mandela Foundation, created by the human rights activist and former president of South Africa, stated, “His loss will be felt by fans worldwide.”

Nowhere was the global impact of the singer’s death more evident than on the Internet, which exploded with Jackson-related news following the event. YouTube quickly displayed tens of thousands of homemade tribute videos; one particularly unusual segment, showing more than 1,500 inmates in a Philippines prison performing the signature dance from Jackson’s groundbreaking Thriller music video, spread virally, receiving more than 28 million views at the time this article was written. There were news reports that Google News, a leading search engine, initially received so many “Michael Jackson” requests that its computers mistakenly believed it was under automated cyberattack.



“King of Pop” Michael Jackson, pictured here in Singapore in 1993, died at age 50 on June 25.

The power of Jackson’s music to unite fans from around the globe — seemingly regardless of their political, religious, ethnic, or socioeconomic differences — remains unparalleled. “My parents don’t know much American music,” said Rajneil Singh, a 23-year-old whose family immigrated to the United States from the Fiji Islands in the 1970s. “But they know all of Michael Jackson. He transcends not just cultures, but generations — the old people are just as sad as the young people. There aren’t many artists who can have that sort of impact.”

THE MAN AND THE MUSIC

Jackson crafted a trademark musical style that earned him massive success. “You could say that it was pop or that it was rhythm and blues, but it really was a unique-sounding hybrid,” said Geoff Grace, a California composer who worked for Jackson as an arranger and orchestrator in conjunction with Jackson’s longtime music director, Brad Buxer. “Michael would never imitate someone else’s style. He was always an original.” While maintain-

ing his distinctive voice, Jackson exhibited a wide stylistic range. “There are a lot of acts known for hard-hitting dance music, or for tender ballads, but Michael was known for both,” added Grace. “People might have been interested in him for something sweet like ‘The Girl Is Mine,’ or a harder, driving song like ‘Jam.’ He had a breadth, as well as uniqueness, of style that captured a lot of people’s attention.”

Key to Jackson’s style was the sonic bedrock that Buxer, Grace and others helped create for his recordings and live performances. “A lot of the instrumental sounds used on Michael’s recordings are larger than life, just like everything else about him,” said Grace. Whether recording pianos, drums, synthesizers or strings, Jackson and his production team took great care to produce tones and textures that were edgy and powerful. “The goal was more than just creating a wide, lush, stereo soundscape,” Grace continued. “It was, ‘What can we use to make an impact?’”

Perhaps more important than the music itself was Jackson’s total fearlessness on stage. The singer’s breakout television performance of the song “Billie Jean” for the Motown 25: Yesterday, Today, and Forever special in 1983, for example, showcased Jackson’s fiery energy, explosively virtuosic dancing and total commitment to his performance. “Starting in the 1990s, there would be moments when he would just stop and scream during his concerts and videos,” said Grace. “He didn’t hold anything back.”

Jackson grew up in the spotlight as

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U.S. Summit Readies Communities for Autumn H1N1 Flu Surge

By Cheryl Pellerin
Science Writer

Washington — As the number of cases of pandemic H1N1 continues to rise around the globe and uncertainties remain about the novel influenza's continued spread, severity and genetic stability, the Obama administration held a high-level summit July 9 to help state and local governments and communities prepare for the coming flu season.

As of July 7, 137 countries and territories had reported more than 98,000 cases of pandemic H1N1 infection and 440 deaths to the World Health Organization (WHO).

In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on July 10 reported 37,246 confirmed and probable cases and 211 deaths in 54 states and territories for the week ending July 4, including the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

"I think it's clear that, although we were fortunate not to see a more serious situation in the spring when we first got news of this outbreak, the potential for a significant outbreak in the fall is looming," President Obama told attendees by telephone from another summit — the Group of Eight (G8) — in L'Aquila, Italy.

At the meeting, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security John Brennan, Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano and Education Secretary Arne Duncan joined with delegations from 54 states, tribes

and territories to promote aggressive nationwide flu-preparedness efforts.

FLU.GOV



Schoolchildren wear face masks June 30 in Rangoon, Burma, which reported its first case of novel H1N1 flu June 27.

Administration officials announced new programs and resources to help state and local governments, the medical community and citizens prepare for H1N1 and the fall flu season:

HHS is making \$350 million in preparedness grants to state and local public health offices and health care systems for stepping up preparedness efforts.

The federal government is centralizing communications about H1N1 and seasonal flu at the new www.flu.gov (<http://www.flu.gov>) Web site. The one-stop site offers flu-related information from HHS and other agencies.

HHS is launching a new public service announcement contest to encourage Americans to get involved in flu preparedness efforts by making 15- and 30-second announcements.

The contest seeks to "tap into the nation's creativity" to educate citi-

zens about planning and preventing the spread of the novel H1N1 flu. The winning announcement will appear on national television, and its creator will receive \$2,500.

SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

In the Southern Hemisphere, which is nearly halfway through its winter season, H1N1 pandemic activity is heaviest in Argentina (2,485), Australia (5,298), Chile (7,376) and New Zealand (1,059).

As in the Northern Hemisphere, flu activity varies from country to country, Dr. Keiji Fukuda, WHO acting assistant director-general for health security and environment, said at a July 7 briefing in Geneva.

"For example, a few weeks ago Australia was reporting pandemic activity occurring quite heavily in some parts of Australia, in the Victoria area, whereas it was at lower levels in other parts of Australia for a while, then began picking up," Fukuda said.

"In South America," he added, "there are viruses which have been isolated from most of the countries there; however, much of the heaviest activity has occurred in Chile first and then more recently in Argentina."

Twelve countries in Africa had reported H1N1 cases as of July 7, Fukuda said, with nearly 100 cases and no deaths.

"In Africa, if we go back a few weeks ago," he said, "we would have said that there had been no viruses isolated from that continent. But as of today, 12 countries in the

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U.S. Summit Readies Communities for Autumn H1N1 Flu Surge . . .

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intervening period have reported detecting the virus. So it is clearly spreading pretty quickly through the Southern Hemisphere."

WHO and other organizations have helped countries on the African continent prepare to fight influenza, Fukuda added. "As of today, we have two new National Influenza Centres in Africa, one in Cameroon and one in Côte d'Ivoire. Although surveillance is definitely not optimal everywhere in the world, I would say that surveillance is definitely much better than it was three or four years ago."

ANTIVIRAL DRUG RESISTANCE

Until June 29, all of the novel H1N1 viruses tested were sensitive to the antiviral drugs oseltamivir (Tamiflu, produced by Roche U.S. Pharmaceuticals) and zanamivir (Relenza, licensed by United Kingdom-based GlaxoSmithKline).

These drugs are called neuraminidase inhibitors and they work by blocking the function of neuraminidase (the N in H1N1), a protein on the surface of flu viruses that allows copies of the virus to be released into the body from the infected host cell.

H1N1 is resistant to two other antiviral drugs that are available to treat or prevent flu, amantadine and rimantadine, which work by blocking a pathway into the healthy cell that the virus creates using a protein called M2.

On July 8, WHO announced that health authorities in Denmark, Ja



pan and Hong Kong had reported the appearance of H1N1 viruses that were resistant to oseltamivir. The viruses were found in three patients who had mild disease and have recovered. The viruses are still sensitive to zanamivir.

Laboratories in the WHO Global Influenza Surveillance Network have evaluated nearly 1,000 pandemic H1N1 viruses for antiviral drug resistance and found all other viruses are sensitive to oseltamivir and zanamivir. WHO and its partners continue to monitor flu viruses for

antiviral drug resistance.

The instances of drug resistance seem to be sporadic, according to WHO, and there is no evidence to indicate the development of widespread antiviral resistance among pandemic H1N1 viruses.

More information about the pandemic is available at the H1N1 Web sites of WHO (<http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html>), CDC ([\[www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/update.htm\]\(http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/update.htm\) \) and the U.S. government's new Web site, \[flu.gov\]\(http://www.flu.gov/\) \(<http://www.flu.gov/> \).](http://</p></div><div data-bbox=)

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

G8 Nations Agree to Cut Carbon Emissions 80 Percent by 2050

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — The effects of climate change are putting every country at risk and no one nation can address it alone, President Obama says, adding that the United States and other developed countries have a responsibility to take the lead in reducing carbon pollution that is causing global temperatures to rise.

Speaking July 9 at the Group of Eight (G8) meeting in L'Aquila, Italy, Obama said climate change is one of the "defining challenges of our time," and the scientific research pointing to its existence is conclusive and can no longer be ignored.

"Ice sheets are melting. Sea levels are rising. Our oceans are becoming more acidic. And we've already seen its effects on weather patterns, our food and water sources, our health and our habitats," Obama said.

On July 8, the G8 countries — Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States — reached a "historic consensus" on goals for reducing carbon pollution, the president said. By 2050, developed nations will reduce carbon emissions 80 percent below a base year that was not specified. They also agreed to work with other nations to cut overall global emissions in half.

"This ambitious effort is consistent with limiting global warming to no more than two degrees Celsius, which, as our declaration explicitly acknowledged for the first time, is



President Obama says the United States will meet its responsibilities to take the lead on combating climate change.

what the mainstream of the scientific community has called for," Obama said.

The president acknowledged that developed and developing nations have different priorities because of their differing levels of economic development. Developing nations do not want to "sacrifice their aspirations for development and higher living standards," but they must be active participants in a solution because they will be the source of most of the growth in projected emissions, Obama said.

On the other hand, developed nations have "the much larger carbon footprint per capita," he said, which carries a "historic responsibility to take the lead," and he pledged U.S. leadership on the issue.

"I know that in the past, the United States has sometimes fallen short of meeting our responsibilities. So let me be clear: Those days are over," Obama said.

Discussions on climate change expanded July 9 to include Australia, Brazil, China, Denmark, the European Union, India, Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa and South Korea, who are participating in the Major Economies Forum (MEF) along with

the G8 nations.

For the first time, developing nations at the MEF "acknowledged the significance of the two degrees Celsius metric and agreed to take action to meaningfully lower their emissions relative to business as usual" over the next 10 years, Obama said. They also agreed to negotiate concrete goals to reduce their carbon emissions by 2050 before an international summit on climate change scheduled to be held in Copenhagen, Denmark, in December 2009.

The MEF agreed to establish a "peak year" for global carbon emissions, after which overall levels would start to fall, and the president said the reductions would be "measurable, reportable and verifiable." Developing nations will also have access to more financial resources to help them deploy clean-energy technologies and create low-carbon growth plans.

There will also be a global partnership established with the goal of doubling research and development of transformational clean-energy technology and bringing it to the global marketplace.

Despite the difficulty of getting MEF leaders to agree on climate change within the context of a global economic recession, Obama said the forum has "made a good start."

The president outlined steps the United States has taken in 2009, such as investing billions of dollars in developing clean technologies, raising auto fuel efficiency standards, and drafting pending legislation that would cut U.S. carbon pol-

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See also

<http://www.america.gov/>

Telling America's story

Regional Trade Hubs Help Foster U.S.-Africa Trade . . .

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that may be 10 to 20 percent of what goes into that decision, depending on the company and what their requirements are," Van Dusen said.

The trade hubs provide assistance in helping companies manage "onerous paper requirements" that go along with tariff preferences, he explained. "In order to get a product into the United States under AGOA, you

have to go through certain steps," which include the certification of a product's country of origin and the accompaniment of the proper U.S. customs forms filled out with all of the right codes.

What foreign affairs decisions should President Obama consider? Comment on America.gov's blog. (<http://blogs.america.gov/campaign/2009/01/21/day-2-what-should-obama%e2%80%99s-top->

G8 Nations Agree to Cut Carbon Emissions 80 Percent by 2050 . . .

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lution by more than 80 percent by 2050.

"I've come to see that it is going to be absolutely critical that all of us go beyond what's expected if we're going to achieve our goals," he said.

Urging global cooperation, Obama said the world is facing the choice of either shaping its own future or letting "events shape it for us."

"We know that the problems we face are made by human beings. That means it's within our capacity to solve them," he said.

Web site: <http://www.america.gov/> ♦

Pop Superstar Michael Jackson Created Universal Music . . .

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the youngest member of the Jackson 5 singing group, performing with his four older brothers and achieving stardom as a child. And though this early experience can explain much of the appeal Jackson would later develop as a solo artist, other factors contributed as well. "Michael Jackson transcended boundaries," said Jason Burwen, a world-music radio disc jockey and graduate student in international public policy. "Pop music is about being popular, and he appealed to people with different backgrounds. He was not just music — he was, in and of himself, a fantasy, and people were into that." Grace echoed the senti-

ment. "There was nobody who was even remotely like Michael," he said. "He didn't fit into anybody's stereotypes of anything. And people wanted to know what made him tick."

Indeed, Jackson's life on and off the stage was one of spectacle and controversy, inspiring both adoration and revulsion from the global public. Jackson's lavish California "Neverland Ranch," for example, housed a zoo and amusement park, while his dramatic, plastic surgery-induced appearance changes attracted morbid fascination from fans and media alike. "He was larger than life, and nobody thought he was really human," said Burwen. "So when he

passed away, it was a huge shock. Nobody thought he could actually die."

Michael Gallant, a musician, composer, producer and author living in San Francisco, serves as senior editor at Keyboard magazine.

The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of State.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov/> ♦