

# Recent G8, G20 Inclusive Multilevel Food Governance

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*Innovative, integrative, local and business-inclusive governance for food, agriculture, nutrition, health and wealth can be strengthened through informal global institutions led by the Group of Eight (G8) and the Group of Twenty (G20). Their regular summits include the most important countries' leaders and have a comprehensive, synergistic agenda, as well as the flexibility and authority to link issues, factors and actors in new ways. The G8 has increasingly addressed food, agriculture, nutrition, health and the link among them; it has involved business, civil society and low-income countries, and made decisions intended to affect the lives of the poor. The G20 has contributed to some degree in such ways too. Of particular promise are the G8's New Alliance on Food Security and Nutrition, launched in 2012, and the G20's AgResults program built on commitments made in 2010. Yet there remains much that both institutions can and should do to meet the combined, complex, food-health-wealth challenge now confronting the global community, before the next food crisis comes.*

**Key words:** governance, G8, G20, summits, food, agriculture, nutrition, business, local governance, health

## Introduction

The innovative integration of food, agriculture and nutrition with health in ways that mobilize the contribution of business and local actors challenges all levels of governance from the most global to the very local. At the top, the universal multilateral organizations created in the 1940s are deliberately separated, subject-specific bodies, notably the Rome-based Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Geneva-based World Health Organization (WHO). The more comprehensively oriented United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and secretariat in New York and the UN's subject-specific summits only seldom and slightly integrate the whole. Moreover, despite their array of field offices, such multilateral organizations are intergovernmental bodies with members, resources and reporting relationships that remain with national governments. Those governments determine how global directions and decisions are adopted and translated into effective action to and through local governments in ways that affect citizens, including the poorest, vulnerable, excluded ones. These multilateral organizations often deal cautiously, if at all, with business.

Innovative, integrative, local-level and business-inclusive governance for food, agriculture, nutrition, health and wealth can be strengthened through the newer informal global insti-

tutions, led by the Group of Eight (G8) major market democracies and the Group of Twenty (G20) systemically significant states. The summits of these economically oriented institutions include the leaders of the most important countries and have a comprehensive, synergistic agenda and impulse. They also have the flexibility and authority to link issues and involve local and business factors and actors in new ways. Since its start as the Group of Seven (G7) in 1975, the G8 has increasingly addressed food, agriculture, nutrition and health and the links among them. It has involved business, civil society and poor countries, and it has delivered decisions that have affected the lives of the poor throughout the world. Since their start in 2008, G20 summits also have contributed. Of particular promise is the G8's New Alliance on Food Security and Nutrition, launched at the U.S.-hosted Camp David Summit in 2012, and the G20's AgResults program built on commitments made at the G20 summits in Toronto in June 2010 and Cannes in November 2011. Yet there is much that both summits can and should do to meet the combined, complex, food-health-wealth challenge now confronting the global community, before the next food crisis comes.

In order to understand the contributions of the G8 and G20 it is essential to address the limitations of this specialized governance mechanism. The long-standing criticisms that the G8 lacks legitimacy, is ineffective in implementing its own declarations and does not have the power to solve problems have been reiterated by many in a variety of ways [Schneckener, 2009; Sidiropoulos, 2011; Hajnal, 2007]. When it acts in isolation, the G8 is perceived to lack the power to fully solve global or complex problems. However, through its outreach to non-member states and international organizations, this limitation is mitigated slightly by contributing "to a proliferation of 'clubs' that are becoming an increasingly important structural element of international politics alongside the established international organisations" [Schneckener, 2009, p. 2]. The concern and potential for further criticisms are then encompassed in identifying who has been invited to participate. While the criticisms loom large and are valuable to ensure transparency, they overlook the group's most important function as a global dialogue forum that can mobilize resources, and draw political and media support [Schneckener, 2009].

The G20 receives many of the same criticisms including that it lacks representational legitimacy and is ineffective [Vestergaard and Wade, 2012; Sidiropoulos, 2011]. These stem from the lack of formal criteria for membership and the group's self-appointed role as a steering committee for the global economy [Clapp and Murphy, 2013]. The question of membership legitimacy does not, however, affect the undeniable importance of the G20's role in global governance due to the sheer economic weight of its members [Harris Rimmer, 2014]. The short history of G20 leader-level summits leads some to believe that the forum is still too new to have much of a track record but there is a sense that more has been said than done [Callaghan, 2014]. Both the G8 and G20 face challenges of legitimacy due to selective membership and the nature of the issues they govern. Moreover, both struggle with the question of effectiveness and whether these summits actually produce positive tangible outcomes.

## G8 Governance of Food, Agriculture, Nutrition, Health and Wealth

For the purposes of this article, G8 governance of an issue area was measured quantitatively by extracting and counting the number of issue-specific references made in each of the collectively agreed, publicly available, concluding documents released during each summit. The G8 has addressed food, agriculture and nutrition since it began meeting as the G7 in 1975. It has done so continuously from 1978 to 1992 and again from 1999 to 2012, with peaks in 1982, 1988, 2003, 2005, 2008 and 2012. It first addressed health in 1979, then again, continuously, from 1983 to 1993 and from 1996 to 2012, with peaks in 1997, 2000–03 and from 2008 to 2010.

The G8 explicitly linked food, agriculture and nutrition with health first in 1979–80, then in 1985, 1991, 1996–97, 2000–01, 2003–06 and 2008–12. As the connection became more intense in the 21st century, the earlier links based on hunger and malnutrition and then official development assistance broadened to include biotechnology, research and development, and technology sharing in 2000–01, job-creating enterprise alongside improved health services, clean water and sanitation, and agricultural and food yields in 2003–04, and climate change in 2009. From 2010 to 2012, the G8 emphasized accountability, and endorsed its Food Security Initiative to improve maternal and child health.

In its multilevel governance of this link to health, the G8 has been much less active, but with a recent rise. It quickly broadened its deliberation to include many other international organizations. It explicitly included local actions in 1979, 1991 and 1996–97 and, increasingly, in 2003–04, 2008–10 and 2012. Its 19 local components largely related to food, agriculture and nutrition rather than health. None received sustained attention throughout.

The G8 added business to the link only in 1985, 1991 and 1996, and from 2003 to 2006, but not since. The business dimensions have been private organizations (1985); the private sector (1991); micro-enterprises and small-scale agriculture (1996); public-private partnerships (PPPs), local production and local markets (2003); agricultural markets, private investment, markets and entrepreneurial skills (2004); and job-creating enterprises (2006).

Very seldom have food, agriculture, nutrition, health, local and business dimensions been brought together or been related to the economy beyond business itself. The G8 first did so very weakly in 1991 and then again in 1996. In 2003 it combined local production and markets with food crises and famine (if not malnutrition directly). In 2004, it added poor farmers and private investment and linked food with malnutrition, child mortality and the power of markets to improve rural economic and social infrastructure. It further called for community-based programs that coupled courses on literacy with health, nutrition and entrepreneurship. Yet the well-developed mix made in 2004 was followed by a steep decline. A link to the selective economic components of private-public partnerships (PPPs) came in 2005 and to energy poverty in 2006.

While issue-specific statements and paragraphs in communiqués provide substantive context and insight into topic prioritization, a second measure – the identification of commitments – highlights discrete promises to be acted upon. Each communiqué includes precise, politically binding, collectively agreed, future-oriented decisions or commitments. The links among food, agriculture, nutrition, health, local governance and business have been much less intense. Since 2011, the G8 has linked food and health in its commitment on accountability reporting. In 2011, it linked agriculture, smallholder farmers and PPPs, but not health. And in 2012, it linked food and business, but not explicitly to health and local governance explicitly, in its commitment to “launch a *New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition* to accelerate the flow of private capital to African agriculture,” while recommitting to fulfill its financial pledges under the 2009 L’Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI) to disburse \$20 billion over three years [G8, 2012].

To enhance understanding of the G8’s value-added, a methodology to measure the implementation of discrete summit promises has been developed by the G8 Research Group at the University of Toronto. A compliance report based on a three-point scale (+1.00 for full compliance to -1.00 for non-compliance, with 0 awarded for work in progress) measures the implementation of a commitment by each member. The score allocated to each member is determined by commitment specific criteria. The individual commitment average contributes to an overall issue-specific compliance average based on a number of compliance reports. These averages are then converted into a percentage on the regular 0–100% scale.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> More detailed information is available at the G8 Information Centre website at <http://www.g8.utoronto.ca/compliance>. G8 compliance scores quoted in this article are drawn from the reports published there as well

G8 members' compliance since 2000 with nine commitments on food, agriculture and nutrition averaged 75% and with 24 health commitments averaged 71%. On food, agriculture and nutrition, Canada averaged 84% and the United States averaged 73%; on health, Canada averaged 94% and the United States 86%. Both countries complied above the G8 norm. The delivery of the G8's commitments on food, agriculture, nutrition and health, through members' strong compliance, suggests that effective results would be obtained if the full link were made.

While the G8 has proven to be effective at implementing the commitments it makes in the areas of food, agriculture, nutrition and health, it has not proven that the actions are satisfactory, or have a positive impact. In order to determine the effect on a specific population, interested groups with various missions must scrutinize the text of G8 commitments to determine whether the G8 has addressed the issue in a satisfactory way. The compliance data indicate little gap between promises and delivery in the area of food, agriculture, nutrition and health. What remains unanswered is whether the G8 summit promises are adequate and appropriate.

## G20 Governance of Food, Agriculture, Nutrition, Health and Wealth

The same methodology used for the G8 has been applied to the G20. At the much newer G20 summits, food, agriculture and nutrition have always been on the agenda, with attention peaking at the Pittsburgh Summit in 2009 and at the Los Cabos Summit in 2012. Health has also appeared continuously but less intensely and more generally, peaking – at half the level of food, agriculture and nutrition – at the Seoul Summit in 2010.

However, the link between food and agriculture on the one hand and nutrition and health on the other has been forged only twice. At Pittsburgh the global economic crisis was seen as joining a “global spike in food prices” to harm health spending in low-income countries [G20, 2009]. The G20 promised those who were hungry improved access to food. At the Cannes Summit in 2011, it declared that mitigating excessive price volatility for food and agricultural commodities was necessary for sufficient, safe, nutritious food for all.

At Pittsburgh the G20 linked food, agriculture, nutrition and health to the most vulnerable, but not to business. At Cannes, while there was no link to local governance, leaders agreed to cooperate with multilateral organizations and consult with producers, civil society and the private sector to mobilize G20 capacities in three main areas: to increase production, to facilitate an open and transparent trading system, and to find ways to mitigate price volatility. The “Action Plan on Food Price Volatility and Agriculture,” released by the G20 agriculture ministers in June before the November summit, outlined the multiple ways in which to address these areas.

From 2008 until 2013, the G20 made 42 discrete decisions or commitments on food, agriculture and nutrition, but none on health. It linked food, agriculture and nutrition to business in four decisions: one in 2010 at Toronto, which led to the 2012 AgResults, and three at Cannes, where it added the local dimension in the form of smallholders. The three Cannes commitments referring to the private sector were to increase agricultural production and promote food security, to mitigate food commodity price volatility, and to invest in agriculture, specifically smallholders through responsible investment.

Compliance by G20 members' with their commitments on food, agriculture and nutrition is modestly and increasingly positive. From 2008 to 2012, compliance with the four assessed commitments averaged 69%, below the overall average for all issue areas of 70%. In 2011,

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as from unpublished compliance studies produced by the G8 Research Group. Similarly, G20 compliance scores are drawn from those published on the G20 Information Centre website at <http://www.g20.utoronto.ca/compliance> as well as from unpublished reports produced by the G20 Research Group.

however, compliance with the commitment to remove food export restrictions was an almost complete 98%. In 2013, compliance with the commitment to “implement all existing initiatives including that stated in the Action Plan on Food Price Volatility and Agriculture which the G20 endorsed in 2011” received a compliance average of 90% [G20, 2013].

The G20 has involved business through the annual Business 20 (B20) Summit, which began meeting in Toronto in 2010. Its recommendations at Los Cabos included two from its Task Force on Food Security: to enhance public and private sector investment significantly to achieve a 50% increase in agricultural production and boost productivity by 20% to 30% and to strengthen national food security programs, supported by PPPs. Neither was well reflected in G20 commitments. In the closest, on scaling up nutrition, Canada’s compliance in the four and then nine months following Los Cabos was 100%. In the second closest, linking agricultural technologies to climate change control, Canada’s compliance after four months was 50%.

## The G8’s New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition

The G8’s most recent multidimensional initiative is the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, created at the 2012 Camp David Summit, when four committed African leaders, representatives from multinational corporations and representatives of the African private sector were invited to a special session. This was the first time that business leaders joined G8 leaders at the summit in a substantial way.

The New Alliance is a multistakeholder, results-oriented initiative to lift “50 million people out of poverty over the next decade” [G8, 2012]. It expands on the AFSI, designed to distribute \$20 billion over three years by aligning partner-country plans, the private sector and G8 support. By the 2013 Lough Erne Summit, all G8 members had fully met their financial requirement outlined in the AFSI.

The New Alliance focuses on partnerships facilitated by individual country cooperation frameworks, which align each partner’s Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) with predictable funding commitments, specific policy actions and statements of intent from the private sector. The G8 seeks to catalyze private investment by creating the conditions necessary for private capital investment based on national priorities.

The New Alliance is modelled on the Grow Africa Partnership, a 2003 initiative of the African Union (AU), based on a platform piloted by the World Economic Forum’s New Vision for Agriculture Initiative, to accelerate investments and transformative change based on national agricultural priorities and in support of the CAADP. It supports private-sector investment by helping develop investment blueprints, multistakeholder partnerships, and knowledge sharing of best practices from local and global stakeholders.

The alliance supports the preparation and financing of bankable agricultural infrastructure projects through existing and new initiatives, including the Fast Track Facility for Agriculture Infrastructure. The private sector is expected to deliver on its verbal promises, formal letters of intent, in-kind donations and monetary commitments. Indeed, 45 African and multinational companies committed to invest more than \$3 billion across agricultural value chains in Grow Africa countries. In addition, 60 companies agreed to sign the Private Sector Declaration of Support for African Agriculture Development to support responsible PPPs and African agriculture. In the months following the Camp David Summit, 21 more private sector companies signed letters of intent, increasing the monetary commitment by \$500 million. The first three partnership countries to develop country cooperation frameworks were Ghana, Ethiopia and Tanzania. Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire and Mozambique announced their frameworks during UNGA in 2012.

The New Alliance subsequently outlined tangible commitments to scale up innovative research and development in technology, risk assessment and insurance via research platforms. They consist of African and international research institutions willing to address the adoption of agricultural technology, the development and distribution of biofortified seeds, and the development of African-based risk management instruments. The goal is to determine 10-year targets in partnership countries for sustainable yield improvements, resilience and nutritional impacts.

Supportive multilateral partners include the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agriculture Development, FAO, the AU and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The New Alliance relies on them for information collection and exchange, implemented through agreements with partnership countries that have developed country cooperation frameworks.

In order to track implementation, the New Alliance established a leadership council that reports to the G8 and the AU. Its first meeting was in September 2012.

However, two of the three founding African leaders – Ghana's John Atta Mills and Ethiopia's Meles Zenawi have since died, creating uncertainties about their successors' commitment. While the G8 can continue to implement the New Alliance, it requires the political will of the partner country, and new leaders may have differing opinions to their predecessors. It remains unclear if this approach using a nationally owned, multistakeholder, results-oriented plan with targets and timetables can extend to all of Africa and beyond. G8 members have existing food security initiatives embedded in their overall development priorities, but these may focus less on the private sector than the New Alliance does.

## The G20's AgResults

The G20's major initiative is AgResults, announced at the 2012 Los Cabos Summit. It fulfilled the G20's Toronto commitment to "innovative, results-based mechanisms such as advance market commitments to harness the creativity and resources of the private sector in achieving breakthrough innovations in food security and agriculture development in poor countries" [G20, 2010]. Subsequently, the Development Working Group's [2011] report to the 2011 Cannes referred to agriculture pull mechanisms, pilot projects, a results-based approach and advance market commitments.

AgResults aims to enhance smallholder welfare and improve food security for the poor through the use of pull mechanisms in agriculture. Australia, Canada, Italy, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation pledged to finance up to \$100 million of results-based incentives to successful innovations and their adoption, with the potential to produce annual flows up to \$15 billion those who need it most [Australian Agency for International Development [AusAID] 2012; Gillard, 2012]. Partners that could demonstrate measurable results would receive funding.

Prior to the launch, four thematic areas and three initial pilot projects had been identified: inputs/increasing yields, outputs/post-harvest management, livestock and nutrition. Initial projects focused on maize production in sub-Saharan Africa, increased adoption of storage technology for smallholder farmers, innovative distribution of technology to reduce contamination by aflatoxin, and new markets for vitamin A-enhanced varieties of maize [World Bank, 2012].

The World Bank is the trustee of the initiative. A secretariat oversees implementation and reports to a steering committee of donor representatives. The success of projects will be verified by independent third-party experts [AusAID 2012].

Outstanding challenges concern the new costs of production to the smallholder farmers, the impact of AgResults on farmers' autonomy and whether the themes identified align with their needs.

## Operationalizing “G” Commitments: Enhancing Impact, Legitimacy and Accountability

To operationalize their commitments, leaders request follow-up meetings, data collection and expert reports from the relevant international organization to be submitted for analysis and incorporated into the agenda of subsequent summits. Individual countries implement commitments by integrating them into their domestic national policy addresses and statements of priorities, strategic objectives, budget allocations, and new programs, organizational units or procedures, and assigned personnel.

Implementing commitments on food, agriculture and nutrition often requires mobilizing new major money. In 2009 the G8 announced its AFSI would provide \$20 billion over three years toward sustainable agriculture and emergency food aid. At the 2010 Muskoka Summit, leaders stated that “as of April 30, 2010, we have disbursed/allocated USD \$6.5 billion and remain committed to disburse/allocate the full amount of our individual commitments by 2012” [G8, 2010]. At the 2011 Deauville Summit, they assessed their progress and stated that “since the L’Aquila Summit, 22% of the AFSI pledges have been disbursed, and an additional 26% are formally in the process of being disbursed for specific purposes. We will disburse or allocate our commitments in full by the end of our respective pledging periods” [G8, 2011]. At the 2012 Camp David Summit, the leaders again reiterated their commitment to disburse what was outstanding.

In its implementation, the AFSI prioritized emergency food aid. All G8 members consistently supported the WFP, emphasizing the needs of the people in the drought-affected areas of Africa. Food aid was also directed to other regions affected by climate events that limited food production. Aid was delivered in the form of food staples, money, school feeding programs and the development of early warning systems. Some funding was allocated to support the transition from emergency aid to sustainable agriculture.

The second mandate of the ASFI was sustainable agriculture. Implementing actions in this area can be disaggregated into sub-headings including research and development, private sector initiatives and support for national priorities.

Implementing action directed to research and development included financing for biofortification and development of genetically modified seeds. For the Durable Rust Resistance in Wheat project, which seeks a climate-resistant wheat crop, and elsewhere, members encouraged private sector investment in the agricultural value chain. Canada and the United States directly supported the private sector to enhance food security, through initiatives to support access to markets, to enhance the production capabilities and infrastructure for key crops, and to use financing mechanisms to boost the productivity of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the agricultural sector. The African Agricultural Capital Fund (AACF), established in 2011, works with private-sector partners to finance SMEs. G8 members also support the national priorities and agricultural plans of developing countries. Implementing actions often support the development of the primary crop for export or for consumption by its citizens, through building sustainable irrigation infrastructure, improving sanitation systems, distributing agricultural equipment to farmers and providing technical assistance in the nationally identified priority areas.

Implementation announcements vary in the size and specificity of the targeted beneficiary. A private sector initiative can predict an impact on the overall productivity of the country or specifically outline the number of households or individuals to be affected. Many initiatives to support national strategies, research and development or to facilitate technology transfer identify the goal as the transition from food aid to more sustainable food production.

G20 members collectively have developed multiple initiatives, working groups and reports to instigate progress on sustainable agriculture. Their most comprehensive document is the Seoul Multi-Year Action Plan, which included food security as one of its nine pillars. To implement the development commitments from the Seoul Summit, the G20's non-G8 members, unlike the G8 ones, typically engage in ongoing knowledge-sharing and technology-sharing initiatives in their areas of relative strength [Kirton, Bracht and Rasmussen, 2012; Alagh, Nathan, Sharma et al., 2012; Studer and Contreras, 2012].

## Conclusion

Internal and third-party implementation monitoring of G8 and G20 commitments, including initiatives such as the AFSI, the New Alliance and AgResults, is essential to understanding the impact of the decisions of these groups. However, the G8 and G20 could and should be more thorough in their accountability reporting and create commitments that are adequate in detail and scope. To ensure comprehensive and adequate commitments, the groups need to increase the breadth and transparency of their outreach. Within the G20 process, the business community and civil society have been included through the formal outreach mechanisms of the B20 and, more recently, the Civil 20. However, these mechanisms only include organizations from G20 members and not those perspectives and insights from citizens and businesses in non-member and yet affected countries. Individual host countries may engage in outreach, as Australia's 2014 G20 presidency did by appointing a special representative who actively solicited input into the summit preparations, but such efforts are discretionary [Australian Presidency of the G20, 2014]. G8 outreach has been less formal and often included ad hoc invitations to non-member country leaders.

In the areas of food, agriculture, nutrition and health, compliance data indicate a small gap between the G8 and G20 promises and their delivery. The gap lies in the lack of details, in undefined terms, and in the lack of transparency about which commitments were included and which were removed. To govern agriculture, food, nutrition and health effectively, the G8 and G20 need to strengthen their commitments and determine whether they adequately address the root causes.

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