

PM announces Canadian participation in G-8 food security initiative

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Canada will play a key role in the international effort to address the global food security crisis, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced today.

“Both before and during the current global recession, we saw a deeply troubling pattern of scarcity and price instability causing significant hardship to vulnerable people – particularly those in the developing world,” said the Prime Minister. “Whether we are talking about famines, price-spikes or lack of sustainable agricultural development, there are many clear and compelling humanitarian, economic and security reasons to address this mounting global challenge today.”

As part of the joint G-8 pledge on food security, Canada will more than double its investment in food security and provide \$600 million in increased funding over three years, reaching \$1.18 billion in overall funding. In total, G-8 members pledged to mobilize at least USD \$15 billion (CAD \$17.4 billion) over three years. The new funding will go to bilateral programming and multilateral initiatives.

Canada is a global leader in increasing food security, with our overall investment including food aid reaching over \$580 million in fiscal year 2008-2009, a nearly 40% year-over-year increase. Our long-standing commitment was recently re-affirmed by the identification of food security as one of Canada’s five international assistance priorities. With over a billion people now suffering from hunger, food security is a critical global challenge whose effects are felt most dramatically by the world's poorest and most vulnerable.

The Prime Minister underlined the importance of maximizing the effectiveness of Canada’s assistance program by fully untying its food aid budget. This benefits people in developing countries by maximizing the assistance that can be procured for each dollar contributed. The Prime Minister also reinforced the point that open markets and increased trade are essential to ensuring that food and other key commodities remain available and affordable.