

# The Guardian

## Broken promises leave three million children to die in Africa

As Blair and Bush close in on deal over debt, UN report reveals human cost

**Larry Elliott and Patrick Wintour in Washington**  
**Wednesday June 8, 2005**

Three million children will die in the poorest countries of sub-Saharan Africa as a result of the failure of the global community to meet its promise of slashing the death rates of the under-fives by 2015, the UN will reveal tomorrow.

The grim figure emerged as George Bush paved the way for a landmark deal on lifting the huge debt burden on Africa's poorest countries when he announced that the US will stump up extra cash that in the long term will cancel \$15bn (about £8.2bn) of accumulated debt.

Following talks with Tony Blair in Washington, he also said he would do more on aid, but did not set out a specific figure. The UK is looking for an initial \$25bn boost from across the G8 industrialised nations and the EU.

A study by the UN development programme, timed to put pressure on G8 leaders ahead of the summit at Gleneagles next month, showed that on current trends, the global community will miss by a wide margin the targets it set for poverty, infant mortality and education in the millennium development goals agreed by the UN in 2000.

"These numbers should serve as a wake-up call for G8 leaders," said Kevin Watkins, director of the UN's human development report office. "Africa cannot afford to see the world's richest countries sleepwalk their way to a heavily signposted human development disaster."

In 2000 the UN said that by 2015 it would cut infant mortality by two-thirds, halve the number of people living on less than a dollar a day, and put every child in school.

On current UNDP projections, there will be 5 million under-five deaths in Africa, compared with 2 million if the goals were achieved; 115 million children deprived of an education; and 219 million extra people living below the poverty line.

President Bush's officials said that following the talks they believed he would provide more aid, possibly targeted at specific projects such as girls' education, water sanitation, malaria and peacekeeping.

The outline deal on debt requires further consultation with the Germans and some other EU finance ministers and it was accepted by British officials that most of the progress had been made on the cancellation of multilateral debt to the World Bank, rather than the International Monetary Fund.

President Bush disappointed environmentalists at the press conference by implying he did not see the scientific case of manmade climate change as being unanswerable. Mr Blair wants to make climate change alongside Africa the big theme of his G8 summit.

President Bush said of climate change: "We need to know more about it. It is easier to solve a problem when you know a lot about it."

But the Washington trip will be remembered for the progress Mr Blair made on debt cancellation and the assertion by President Bush that lifting Africa from poverty "is a central goal of my administration".

On debt cancellation the Americans promised not merely 100% cancellation, but also additional funding to ensure that the World Bank does not lose out over cancelled interest payments.

America had been insisting the World Bank was recompensed through cuts in aid programmes to Africa. Now it will provide additional cash.

President Bush told a White House press conference: "We agree that highly indebted developing countries that are on the path to reform should not be burdened by mountains of debt. Our countries are developing a proposal for the G8 that will eliminate 100% of that debt and that by providing additional resources will preserve the financial integrity of the World Bank and the Africa Development Bank."

He omitted any mention of the debt owed to the IMF since America is opposing the British proposal of funding the cancellation by the revaluation of IMF gold reserves.

Mr Bush insisted he would not lift aid to a fixed formula but said he had already tripled aid.

He added: "We have got a fantastic opportunity presuming the countries in Africa make the right decisions. Nobody wants to give money to a country that's corrupt, where leaders take money and put it in their pocket. We expect there to be reciprocation."

Mr Blair also stressed the proposed \$25bn extra aid was not a figure taken out of the air. He said, in comments designed to attract the president, that over the coming weeks the cash could be allocated "on the basis of an analysis of what Africa needs".

He listed areas such as malaria, Aids, peace enforcement and education. It is possible the American extra aid cash will not go through multilateral institutions but through funds set up in Washington along the lines of their existing anti-Aids programme.

Mr Blair also stressed, like President Bush, that the aid was not unconditional. He said: "We require the African leadership to be prepared to make a commitment on governance against corruption in favour of democracy.

"What we're not going to do is waste our country's money."

President Bush bridled at suggestions that America would not provide any extra aid cash. He said: "We've got a lot of big talkers. What I'd like to say is my administration actually does what we say we're going to do."

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## **China Says Water Pollution So Severe that Cities Could Lack Safe Supplies**

*June 07, 2005 — By Joe McDonald, Associated Press*

BEIJING — China's booming economy is driving a rapid rise in water pollution so severe that densely crowded cities could be left without adequate supplies, a Cabinet minister said Tuesday.

"Limited water resources are threatened by pollution, and water safety in cities is facing severe challenges," said Qiu Baoxing, deputy minister of construction.

The unusually blunt warning came after a separate government report last week said Chinese cities are threatened by rising levels of acid rain from industrial pollution.

The reports emphasize the high environmental cost of China's surging economy in a dry, crowded country whose ecology already is strained by the demands of sustaining 1.3 billion inhabitants.

The government has tried in recent years to rein in environmental damage, imposing air- and water-quality standards and restricting logging. But such efforts have had only limited success.

More than 100 of China's 660 cities face "extreme water shortages," Qiu said at a news conference.

Intense demand by booming Chinese industries, farms and sprawling cities -- some of them with more than 10 million people -- has left many areas without adequate water supplies.

China supports 21 percent of the world's population with just 7 percent of its water supplies, Qiu said.

Conflicts over water supplies have led to violent clashes.

In April, scores of people were injured in the eastern province of Zhejiang when police clashed with villagers who occupied an industrial complex that they said ruined their crops by polluting water supplies.

The communist government has tried in recent years to rein in environmental damage, banning the clear-cutting of forests, imposing air-quality standards and forcing paper mills and other heavily polluting industries to close.

Premier Wen Jiabao promised in February to make guaranteeing adequate supplies of clean drinking water a priority in his annual report to China's legislature on government plans for the year.

"This is an urgent matter," Qiu said.

The minister called for local governments to step up enforcement of water quality standards, promote conservation and expand use of alternative sources such as rainwater and recycled sewage.

But he didn't say how Beijing would finance these steps, leaving it unclear how many would be carried out.

Water shortages have been a constant worry for China for centuries. Problems have only worsened in recent decades as the population swelled and largely unregulated factories dumped toxic pollutants into rivers and lakes.

Some 90 percent of China's cities and 75 percent of its lakes suffer from some degree of water pollution, Qiu said.

The government is building a US\$60 billion (euro50 billion) network of canals meant to move vast amounts of water from China's wetter south to Beijing and other parts of the arid north.

The government says building the South-North Water Diversion could take 60 years.

China will face growing shortages until 2030, when its population is projected to reach 1.6 billion people, Qiu said.

"According to the U.N. definition, at that time we will belong to countries that lack water," he said.

*Source: Associated Press*

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## THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

### World Bank to boost lending for African infrastructure projects

**Cape Town, June 6** The World Bank plans to increase its funding for infrastructure projects in Africa by 30% over the next few years in a bid to accelerate development and poverty alleviation on the world's poorest continent.

"In 2000 we were lending about \$600 million to the African continent for infrastructure and this year we are going to lend \$1.8 billion," said Michel Wormser, the World Bank's director for infrastructure in Africa. "We are foreseeing a further 30% increase, so by the end of the next couple of years, we will probably be at \$2.4 billion to \$2.6 billion a year," he said.

Increasing access to electricity and water and building new roads and bridges are key components of the United Nation's millennium development target of halving global poverty by 2015.

"Infrastructure is absolutely critical for growth and there has to be about \$20 billion which would have to be spent in Africa to reach the millennium development goals," Mr Wormser told reporters on Monday on the sidelines of a conference in Cape Town, South Africa. "Today we are at \$10 billion, so much more than \$3 billion a year" that donors are now providing "has to be put into Africa if we want results," he added. Private funding for African infrastructure projects also needs to increase, he said.

"Ten years ago, we thought the private sector would take a major share in financing infrastructure in Africa," he said. "When we look at the past 10 years, at most the private sector has put about \$2 billion a year," he said.

Plans to reduce poverty in Africa will feature high on the agenda at a meeting of the Group of Eight industrial nations in Gleneagles, Scotland, on July 6-8.

"We expect at the time of the G-8 summit, not only will there be a call for much more funding for Africa, but also that the share of funding going to infrastructure and to the growth agenda will increase," Mr Wormser said.

Britain's "department for international development has taken a leading role over the past few months in getting a coalition of the donors to think how they could scale up their contribution to infrastructure in the continent," Mr Wormser said.

—*Bloomberg*

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## Urban Dwellers Mainly Cause Global Warming, but See Little of It

June 06, 2005 — By Uta Harnischfeger, Associated Press

GENEVA — Urban dwellers are mainly responsible for global warming, but see little of the effects because they have their biggest impact in isolated and sparsely populated regions, the U.N. environment agency said.

"Cities use vast amounts of resources like water, food and timber while also producing a large amount of waste," said Klaus Toepfer, head of the United Nations Environment Program, or UNEP.

"People living in San Francisco or London may look at these images of deforestation or melting Arctic ice, and wonder what it has to do with them," Toepfer said on Friday. "Their impacts stretch beyond their physical borders affecting countries, regions and the planet as a whole."

Toepfer made his remarks to commemorate the launch of a new atlas called "One Planet Many People," which compares and contrasts satellite images of past decades with present ones. The atlas is aimed at educating citizens, notably of industrialized countries, on how their lifestyle can destroy the environment.

"An image says more than a thousand words ... The atlas provides evidence of the changes we bring to our environment," said Pascal Peduzzi, an environmental scientist at UNEP.

Using satellite images from the United States Geological Survey and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the pictures highlight dramatic changes around cities such as Beijing, Dhaka, Delhi and Santiago, the destruction of farmland, the clogging of river beds, the draining of water supplies and many others.

The atlas shows satellite images of Las Vegas, the fastest-growing metropolitan area in the U.S., which had 24,000 inhabitants in the 1950s and where today's population of 1 million is expected to double by 2015. As a result, the water level of nearby Lake Meade has dropped by 18 meters (60 feet) from 2000 to 2003 as housing and irrigated golf courses replaced natural desert.

"The images are as awe-inspiring as those of the tsunamis, although they don't occur from one day to the next," Peduzzi said, referring to the tsunami that devastated coastal areas of Asia in December.

Other images show the effects from the huge growth of greenhouses in southern Spain, rain forest deforestation or the rise of shrimp farming in Asia and Latin America.

But they also highlight effects from wars and diseases. For example, wars and Saddam Hussein's draining of marshlands in Iraq have contributed to the virtual destruction of the world's biggest date palm forest along the Shatt al'Arab in Iraq and Iran. Satellite images show that more than 14 million trees, or 80 percent of the trees that stood in 1970, are gone along with the livelihoods of millions of people.

The atlas was being launched simultaneously in San Francisco; Nairobi, Kenya; and London.

Source: Associated Press

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From the June 03, 2005 edition



[Click here](#) for image.

SOURCES: UNITED NATIONS FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION, WORLD FOOD PROGRAM, UNICEF; TOM BROWN - STAFF

## UN and firms team up to tackle hunger

**A new map released this week highlights global crisis points and success stories.**

By [Abraham McLaughlin](#) | Staff writer of *The Christian Science Monitor*

**JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA** — The figures are almost too big to comprehend: 800 million of the world's 6.4 billion people go through their days hungry. About 300 million of them are children.

But a new map released this week by the United Nations and partner organizations puts a finer point on those numbers. It's a country-by-country survey of hunger around the world. And it arrives at a time of fresh focus on hunger and poverty in places like Zimbabwe and Congo - and on how corporations are stepping up to help fight food shortages. It also highlights some surprising findings:

- Eritrea has the highest rate of undernourishment in Africa - 73 percent. That's far higher than the 46 percent rate in neighboring Ethiopia, which is notorious for its hunger problems.
- Marxist North Korea has an undernourishment rate of 36 percent, significantly lower than the 47 percent rate in Haiti, in America's backyard. (Tajikistan and Yemen round out the only four countries outside Africa that have undernourished rates higher than 35 percent.)
- South African transportation giant TNT provided trucks, airplanes, and staff in 2003 to help bring 33 tons of supplies to refugees in Chad who had fled fighting in Sudan's Darfur province.

The map's release comes as Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe agreed this week to again receive food from international donors. Last year, he ejected most aid groups.

But with an estimated 4.8 million people now verging on starvation, Mr. Mugabe told UN special envoy James Morris on Wednesday that he would accept food aid. (Thursday Zimbabwe's social welfare minister said that the country was not requesting food aid, but welcomed any that comes.) Zimbabwe's undernourishment rate is 44 percent.

Congo's is worse, at 71 percent. According to the UN World Food Program, 37 million of Congo's 60 million people desperately need food. Malnutrition accounts for about half of all deaths.

The interactive version of the map (go to <http://maps.maplecroft.com/map.html> and under the "social" pull-down menu, select "hunger") also highlights things like how countries now facing the same amounts of undernourishment can be on divergent paths: In Southern Africa, for instance, Zambia has an undernourishment rate of 49 percent; neighboring Mozambique has a similar rate of

47 percent. But hunger in Zambia is growing worse, while Mozambique is showing progress.

The map was released in Cape Town, South Africa, at the Africa Economic Summit, which is focusing on the continent's business prospects. It also highlights how corporations are joining the global fight against hunger.

In Nicaragua, for instance, children weren't getting enough key nutrients. So Proctor & Gamble teamed with relief groups to distribute a low-cost, high-nutrient drink called NutriStar nationwide.

But the role of multinational corporations in poor countries is also under fresh scrutiny this week, including in the Congo. A new report by Human Rights Watch called "The Curse of Gold" details how multinationals have exploited the fighting in eastern Congo to mine one of Africa's richest goldfields. It specifically targets South Africa's AngloGold, a cosponsor of the Cape Town conference on business in Africa, for operating "on the thin edge of ethical and responsible business."

The report has already had one effect. It accuses Swiss-based Metalor of buying "tainted gold" from Uganda that had been smuggled out of Congo. Metalor has announced it is suspending gold purchases from Uganda.



## **Kissinger warns of energy conflict**

>By Caroline Daniel in Washington

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Henry Kissinger, former US secretary of state, on Wednesday warned that the global battle for control of energy resources could become the modern equivalent of the 19th century "great game" the conflict between the UK and Tsarist Russia for supremacy in central Asia.

"The great game is developing again," he told a meeting of the US-India Business Council. "The amount of energy is finite, up to now in relation to demand, and competition for access to energy can become the life and death for many societies. It would be ironic if the direction of pipelines and locations become the modern equivalent of the colonial disputes of the 19th century."

His comments come amid tensions over the building of a \$4.5bn (£2.5bn) gas pipeline from Iran to India through Pakistan, which has become a critical part of the two-year India-Pakistan peace process. In March, Condoleezza Rice, US secretary of state, expressed objections, reflecting concern about Tehran's development of nuclear weapons.

The two nuclear superpowers, the US and Soviet Union, navigated the cold war because they made "the same calculations", Mr Kissinger said. "When nuclear weapons spread to 30 or 40 countries and each conducts a calculation, with less experience and different value systems, we will have a world of permanent imminent catastrophe."

Mr Kissinger called on India to join a dialogue on energy and proliferation and suggested “a global conference among the nuclear powers on how to do it. It has to be one of the top priorities of a US administration.”

In a clear rejection of George W. Bush's advocacy of democracy, he argued: “I do not believe India will join a crusade to spread democracy. For the US to crusade in every part of the world simultaneously to spread democracy may be beyond our capacity.”

While he noted that US-India relations had improved considerably over the last 30 years, he disagreed with suggestions that India should be built up as a counterweight to the growing strength of China in the region.

“India will be concerned with its own security and independence and should not be part of an American desire to counterbalance China,” he said. “It is not a situation where good relations with one country have to be aimed at another.”

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## The Yomiuri Shimbun

### Energy security must be improved

May 30, 2005

Japan's energy self-sufficiency rate --the ratio of energy the nation secures solely at home-- currently stands at only 4 percent, with hydroelectric power generation as the main source of energy. This exceedingly low figure stands in stark contrast to the ratio of self-sufficiency in food, which amounts to 40 percent.

The Economy, Trade and Industry Ministry's energy white paper for this year focuses on the nation's energy security. Since last year, crude oil prices have risen sharply, mainly as a result of increased demand in Asia, including China and India. It appears the current tight relationship between oil supply and demand will remain unchanged for some time. This likely will further increase the need for Japan to secure energy.

This country's energy-sufficiency rate still remains at a modest 19 percent if its water-power and other domestically produced energy is combined with its nuclear power generation. Japan's nuclear power is considered semi-domestically produced energy.

Although it exceeds the ratio of 15 percent in Italy, the figure falls far below the ratios of 73 percent in the United States, 51 percent in France and 39 percent in Germany. Given these figures, the nation's energy situation is its Achilles heel.

Japan can afford to remain indifferent to its own disadvantage in energy security if it can buy abundant energy at stable prices. However, such a favorable energy situation is a thing of the past.

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#### Mounting prices

This can be seen in the import prices of major types of energy. With the January 2002 figures as an index of 100, uranium stood at 219 on a U.S. dollar basis in January 2005, crude oil at 199, power station coal at 148, and liquefied natural gas at 130. This means that the prices of not only crude oil but all other major energy sources have sharply risen.

According to the white paper, the skyrocketing prices can be attributed to a less-than-satisfactory level of investment in energy development due to a decrease in the prices of energy sources during the 1980s, combined with the tight supply-demand relationship resulting from the surge in energy consumption in Asia. The white paper goes on to say that the situation has been exacerbated by negative factors such as political instability in the Middle East, an accident at a uranium mine in Canada and an influx of speculative funds.

If all energy consumption in Asia is converted into oil consumption, the figure stood at 740 million tons in 1971, the eve of the first energy crisis. The figure shot up to 2.77 billion tons, accounting for 29 percent of the world's total energy consumption, up from 14 percent. According to an estimate, the figure is expected to increase to 5.97 billion tons in 2030, mainly because of increases in China.

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#### Regional energy security

Japan should urge other Asian countries to boost their oil stocks as soon as possible. This is important to ensure Asian nations secure a stable supply for the future. Doing so would enable Asian countries to curb a surge in petroleum prices if the energy situation worsens, instead of flocking to oil-producing nations to continue purchases.

It is also important for Japan to impart its advanced energy-saving technology to other Asian economies.

In recent years, Japan and China have been bitterly at odds over natural resources in the East China Sea. The government should not compromise its basic stand on the issue. However, Japan would be wise to cooperate with China in areas of mutual interest, including the development of energy-saving technology. It would benefit Japan to help China correct its tendency to waste national resources.

This must be complemented by efforts to promote nuclear power generation at home in a safe and steady manner. The government should also seek to increase the utilization ratio of domestic nuclear power plants.

The surge in uranium prices could be effectively countered by reusing spent nuclear fuel. Further delay should not be permitted in developing a fast-breeder reactor that could most efficiently burn uranium.



## Arab and South American nations to share science

Wagdy Sawahel  
23 May 2005  
Source: SciDev.Net

[CAIRO] South American and Arab countries have pledged to increase cooperation in science and technology. The plans were outlined in a declaration made at the first South American-Arab Summit, held on 10-11 May in Brasilia, Brazil.

The main aim of the summit was to emphasise the importance of — and opportunities for — economic, social, technical, scientific and cultural cooperation between the two groups of nations.

The Arab and South American nations said they would create a Scientific and Technological Development Program. This would initially focus scientific cooperation on desertification, management of water resources, irrigated agriculture, biotechnology and genetic engineering, climate forecasting, and cattle herding.

"The scientific issues in the declaration are very good ones and deal with specific areas of common interest, but more planned work is needed," says Hassan Abdel Aal Moawad, professor of microbial biotechnology and former president of Mubarak City for Scientific Research and Technology Applications, Alexandria, Egypt.

Moawad told SciDev.Net that a network of research centres and a database of scientists in both regions should be created to enhance collaborative research and improve the overall scientific performance in the two regions.



Bridging the world: Egyptian geneticist Nagib Nassar has worked in Brazil since 1974

He pointed out that there are about 12 million people of Arab origin living in South America who could act as a bridge between the two regions in all fields, including science and technology.

Among the scientists from Arab countries now living in South America is Egyptian-born Nagib Nassar, a professor of genetics at the University of Brasilia, who moved to Brazil in 1974.

Nassar told SciDev.Net that there is a lot of potential for scientific cooperation between Arab and South American countries. Brazil, for instance, could contribute to alleviating food shortages in Egypt by offering expertise in agricultural sciences, he said.

Some Arab countries such as Libya began sending undergraduate students to Brazil in the 1980s, creating a large base of technicians with experience of Brazilian science, Nassar added.

The declaration emphasises the "urgent need" to coordinate cooperation programmes in the two region's leading universities and research centres and to promote exchange visits of scientists.

It also states that Arab and South American countries are committed to protecting intellectual property rights, while "recognising that intellectual property protection should not prevent developing countries from access to basic science and technology, and from taking measures to promote national development, particularly concerning public health policies".

It calls for "active and generous" support from the international community for efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other epidemics, in particular those affecting Africa.

The Brasilia summit was convened by Brazil's president Luiz Inacio da Silva and attended by representatives of 22 Arab and 12 South American nations, including 15 heads of state. It was co-chaired by da Silva and by the Algerian president, Abdelaziz Buteflika.

### **Related links:**

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**Photo Credit:** Nagib Nassar ([www.geneconserve.pro.br/](http://www.geneconserve.pro.br/))