

# G8 to feed Oil Addiction, fuelling Climate Change

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## G8 TO FEED OIL ADDICTION, FUELLING CLIMATE CHANGE

BRUSSELS (BELGIUM) / LONDON (UK), 14 July 2006 — G8 plans to address global energy security are dirty, dangerous and will continue to fuel climate change, Friends of the Earth International warned today on the eve of the G8 summit taking place in St Petersburg, Russia [1].

An early draft of the G8 Plan of Action suggested that world leaders had forgotten last year's G8 efforts in Gleneagles to tackle climate change.

Despite G8 pledges to take action against climate change, the draft plan currently includes backwards proposals for major investment in finding new oil and gas reserves, for increased oil refining capacity and for greater reliance on nuclear power. [2]

Catherine Pearce, Friends of the Earth International climate campaigner said: "Last year heads of state at the G8 summit in Gleneagles recognised the urgent need for decisive action against climate change whilst 'eradicating energy poverty' around the world. But this action plan is a backward step which will mean a return to dinosaur-like dependence of fossil fuels. If the world's richest countries are serious about tackling climate change and energy security,, they must look to the solutions and heavily invest in energy efficiency and the clean, renewable energies, which is what most people want.[3]

Collectively the G8 nations, which represent just 13 per cent of the world's population, are responsible for 45 per cent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions.

The G8 summit is expected to reaffirm last year's commitments on renewable energies and energy efficiency as well as "eradicating energy poverty". But such laudable plans are little more than window-dressing in light of the focus given to triggering investments in fossil fuel extraction and the use of nuclear power, Friends of the Earth said.

Jan Kowalzig, Friends of the Earth Europe climate campaigner said: "It is unbelievable to see how our leaders are holding the world in the grip of dirty energy, feeding our addiction to oil instead of overcoming our dependence on fossil fuels. At a time of high oil and gas prices, political instability in producer countries, the threat of climate change and rising mountains of nuclear waste, common sense dictates cutting energy waste and investing in renewable energies like solar and wind — this will ensure a long-term sustainable energy supply."

Friends of the Earth is particularly concerned by recent attempts to revive the nuclear industry despite its economic failures over the past 50 years [4].

Although European Commission President José Manuel Barroso, who will attend the G8 summit, has highlighted the need to promote greenhouse gas reduction and large scale use of renewable energy, the EU's own energy policy is still strongly dominated by political and financial support for fossil fuels and nuclear power EU leaders calling for more nuclear power at the G8 summit act against the interests of their citizens, who do not consider nuclear power a solution to secure energy supply in the long-term [5]. Over 400,000 Europeans have so far signed a petition to phase out nuclear power. [6]

Friends of the Earth International wants to see commitments from the G8 leaders in the following areas:

1. Global average temperatures must not be allowed to rise two degree centigrade higher than pre-industrial levels . To minimise the risks of warming above two degrees centigrade global greenhouse gas emissions need to peak and decline within the next 10-15 years. An average of two degrees could mean up to five or six degrees centigrade increase in some parts of the world. Just 2-3 degrees centigrade of warming could mean up to 300 million more people will be at risk of malaria, three billion will face water shortages and 100 million people will be more at risk from coastal flooding. We are already 0.6C higher now than pre-industrial levels.

2. An agreement by G8 nations for specific, substantial and timetabled cuts in their domestic emissions of greenhouse gases. G8 leaders must commit themselves to strong future actions to combat climate change. These should include increased efforts to meet Kyoto targets, and a clear signal that their commitments will increase after 2012 (when the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol is due to end). Crucial talks on international action to tackle climate change are scheduled to take place in Nairobi, Kenya, later this year.

3. An agreement that offers innovative and substantial financing mechanisms to increase and diversify the energy mix. This must include more renewable energy and greater efforts towards energy efficiency. Broad economic instruments such as mandatory cap and trade need to run alongside specific support mechanisms for renewable energy and demand reduction. There are clear funding streams from international institutions and agencies which, with a strong steer from governments, can divert greater financial support to these proven technologies. G8 countries must stop promoting fossil fuel extraction in developing nations through international financial institutions such as the World Bank and export credit agencies and immediately phase-in public finance for sustainable clean energy.

4. Urgent assistance is needed for those developing countries already facing the devastating effects of climate change. These are countries which have done nothing to contribute to the current threat of climate change. Much is already understood on how these countries will be affected. Money and increased support must be given now.

## CONTACTS

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## NOTES

[1] Heads of State from France, Italy, Japan, Germany, Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States and Russia are meeting 15-17 July 2006 in St Petersburg, Russia. Energy security is a top item on the agenda of the summit. See <http://en.g8russia.ru>

[2] The draft was made available for the public by the US based NGO Oil Change International. See <http://www.priceofoil.org>.

[3] A July 13, 2006 BBC poll found widespread support for alternative energy strategies and extensive fear that the climate and environment are being harmed. See: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in\\_depth/5170152.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/5170152.stm)

[4] Not a single nuclear power plant has ever been built without direct or indirect subsidies through taxpayers' money. And, each Euro invested in nuclear energy would save ten times more greenhouse gases if it was invested in energy efficiency measures instead. See "Nuclear power: economics and climate protection potential": Rocky mountains Institute; January 2006; available at <http://www.rmi.org>

[5] A recent Eurobarometer poll shows the only 12% of Europeans believe that developing the use of nuclear energy would give a satisfactory answer to the current challenges of security of energy supply, growth of energy consumption and climate change. See [http://europa.eu.int/comm/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_247\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_247_en.pdf)

[6] See <http://www.million-against-nuclear.net>

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