

G8/G20 Deficit Reduction and the Neglect of the Global South

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Former South Africa president Thabo Mbeki's statement that at the recent G 8 and G 20 summits the rich of the world had once again "conveyed the point that Africa had drifted to the periphery of the global development agenda" has underscored the fault lines of the G 8 and G 20.

It is not only the people of Africa being relegated to the sidelines but also millions throughout the world.

For example, the G 8 countries together pledged less than one-fifth of what the United Nations says is necessary to stop the preventable deaths of women and children under the age of five throughout the world.

The agreement to cut deficits by 50 per cent of 2013, if implemented, will fall squarely on the poorest of the world. Public investments in education, health, municipal infrastructure and community development will be sharply reduced. Unemployment will increase even further.

In promoting this agenda of privatization and social spending cutbacks, Harper is following the wishes of the so-called B 20 -- those select handful of powerful business leaders who were in fact invited into the G 20. Harper himself admitted we have no more sovereignty and Canadians should face that fact. This is an abdication of governance and of responsibility for building national and international policy to create a fair and inclusive economy for all. These were some of the real reasons for the thousands upon thousands of citizens peacefully demonstrating at the G 20 in Toronto. Don Kossick