

# Transatlantic Taskforce on Development

## Japan and China

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### *Background*

The Transatlantic Taskforce on Development, co-chaired by former Congressman Jim Kolbe and the Swedish Minister for International Development, Gunilla Carlsson gathered a diverse group of 24 experts from the United States, Canada and Europe – from all sides of the political spectrum, as well as from different stakeholder groups. It set out to identify priority challenges to development and produce policy recommendations. The four key challenges addressed by the Taskforce were: 1) the Development/Democracy/Security Nexus, 2) Climate Change, 3) Food Security, and 4) Effective Support for Development. The Taskforce report and list of Taskforce members may be found at: <http://www.gmfus.org/taskforce/>.

Since the launching of the Taskforce report in February 2009, the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) has been disseminating and elevating Taskforce recommendations in high-level policy discussions, often in partnership with other organizations. These activities have engaged legislators, policymakers, NGOs and other influencers from the United States, Europe and Africa. China and Japan are playing vital and increasing roles in development-related dialogues, for instance within the G20. Both have a critical stake in how the international community responds to the challenges surrounding food security. Accordingly, a select group of Taskforce members plan to travel to Beijing and Tokyo in May 2010 to discuss food security issues and learn more about Chinese and Japanese policy orientations in this realm.

### *Mission and Policy Environment*

The purpose of this trip is to engage in a meaningful dialogue with Chinese and Japanese government officials, academics, policymakers and other development stakeholders on the topics of **food security and development**. The Taskforce provides impetus behind transatlantic and global solutions to increase aid effectiveness, reduce poverty, and promote global stability. This exchange will add to the momentum started by the Taskforce's recommendations on food security and seeks to build understanding through dialogue between U.S., European and Asian stakeholders. The global scope of a challenge such as food security requires global and collective action.

Since the launching of the Taskforce report in February 2009, the world has changed dramatically. Over a billion people go hungry each day – nearly one-sixth of the world's population – a historical number reached in the wake of the food and financial crises. Demographic and income trends point to a world where demand for food will outpace production well into the future. Food riots among a number of fragile states have further increased attention on food security. Food insecurity threatens millions around the world. Asian and African countries will feel increasing pressure on food supply in light of rising populations and climate change.

After years of underinvestment in agriculture, global leaders – across the U.S., Europe, Asia and the developing world – are rethinking development policies. Enhanced farm productivity and the necessary business climate improvements to strengthen food markets locally and globally are seen as the way forward. Greater access to land, water, rural finance, seeds, tools and fertilizer are required. Better transport links, supply chains, and trade will help. Additional investments in local research and development and technology will allow markets not only grow but adjust to

the evolving and sometimes volatile marketplace. Many of these and other Taskforce recommendations on food security are gaining traction on national and international policy agendas.

At the 2009 meeting of the G-8 in L'Aquila, world leaders committed \$20 billion over three years for sustainable agriculture development and safety nets for vulnerable populations. There is increased focus not only on food security, but also on how to create more effective policies to achieve it. The U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has launched a U.S. Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative and among its pillars are a comprehensive approach, investing in country-led plans, and strengthening strategic coordination globally, regionally, and locally.

On the European side, Spain has joined the United States and Canada in creating a multilateral trust fund at the World Bank, food security is on the agenda of the forthcoming U.S.-EU summit, and a €1 billion food security facility has been established at the EU level with unspent funds from the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). European Union's Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) points to global food security as one area where improvements are needed in reducing overlap, cutting transactions costs, and ensuring more efficient aid. The EU's Code of Conduct calls for a better division of labor among donors to reduce the fragmentation in aid programs.

But, will these efforts lead to greater or less fragmentation within the international aid architecture? There is a risk that well-intended investments by U.S., European and Asian donors could result in more incoherence and complexity in the system. How might the U.S., Europe, and Asian partners forge greater understanding and build networks and frameworks for enhancing global development cooperation? Food security – like climate change, organized crime and fragile states – is a transnational problem requiring collective action by many countries.

The Transatlantic Taskforce on Development was launched just over a year ago and provided innovative recommendations for addressing the food security challenge. Many key points made by the Taskforce are now part of these high-level policy discussions and food security has risen as a priority issue on the transatlantic agenda. But are policymakers pursuing the changes needed to development policy and practice to implement them?

China is an important emerging donor and Japan is a leader among traditional donors. Food security is a critical issue impacting policymaking in these countries and their respective relations with the United States and Europe. Accordingly, Taskforce co-chair Jim Kolbe is planning to take a small group of Taskforce members to Beijing and Tokyo. They will present the findings of the Taskforce report and latest policy perspectives from the United States and Europe and participate in a series of constructive dialogues with Chinese and Japanese stakeholders.

The G8 L'Aquila Initiative for Food Security was endorsed by Japan and China along with other leading nations. Its mission includes enhancing cooperation to achieve global food security, promoting better coordination at the country level and ensuring that local and regional interests are duly voiced and considered. Donors must act with urgency to achieve sustainable food security through effective coordination, mutual accountability and a sound policy environment. They must also pursue a comprehensive approach focusing on agriculture and rural economic growth.

It is with this impetus and urgency that the Taskforce members wish further the dialogue between Asia, Europe and the United States to address the pressing challenge of food security and accelerate economic growth and poverty alleviation in a collective manner.