

THE GROUP OF SEVEN

DEADLY DWARVES
and the pharmaceutical industry, too!



The AIDS Crisis and the Evian Summit: the Group of Seven Deadly Dwarves Strike Again

(3 June 2003: Evian) Heads of State of the wealthiest countries in the world used the Evian Summit to obstruct access to affordable generic medicines, renege on promises to poor countries on health and patent rights, while congratulating themselves for donating paltry sums to the Global AIDS Fund, according to AIDS activists. “The Heads of State are more focused on getting into the good graces of the G1, President George Bush, than on endorsing and implementing policies that would save the lives of millions by increasing access to cheap medicines,” said Asia Russell of Health GAP. “The U.S. delegation rewrote the final G8 Action Plan on Health, gutting stronger language from the French on access to affordable generic medicines, and on full funding for the Global Fund. “People dying without access to medicines will be the casualty of Chirac’s interest in warmer, longer handshakes with President Bush.”

France: To curry favor with President Bush, President Chirac allowed the U.S. to dictate the final version of the G8 Health Action Plan, weakening earlier language on promoting access to affordable generic versions of medicines. France has also followed Bush,s bad example by undermining the multilateral Global Fund with a paltry contribution of 150 million euros from France for 2004. Rather than basing his contribution on the Global Fund’s actual financial need for 2003-2004, France just stepped into line with the disastrously slow pace of the U.S. contributions. Chirac has ignored the fact that the maximum U.S. contribution for 2004 will not leverage enough from other donors to fully fund the Global Fund.

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USA: At the bidding of the pharmaceutical industry, President Bush has sabotaged efforts to reach a consensus at the WTO on the issue of access to affordable generic medicines for countries that lack efficient domestic manufacturing capacity. At Evian, Bush hijacked the G8's Health and Trade Action Plans to reflect his and the pharmaceutical industry's dangerous agenda. This deadlock on patents and access to medicines will be a defining issue of the Cancun Ministerial in September 2003.

Germany: In absolute dollars, Germany, with 6% of GDP, has given only as much as Nigeria (US\$10 million) to the Global Fund in 2003.

UK: While the Global Fund is facing a fiscal crisis now, the UK only agreed to extend its initial, stingy contribution of \$40 million for 5 years out 2 more years.

Italy: Still has not paid its \$60 million pledge for 2003, despite an urgent funding shortfall this year.

Japan: Japan has fought a pro-public health resolution to the deadlock on access to generics at the WTO, including elimination of vaccines from the list of health products that would not be covered under the resolution. Europe is explicitly relying on them to come to the table with new contributions, but Japan has explicitly said it will not increase its anemic contribution to the Global Fund. While Japan has found millions together to fight SARS, it claims it can't find any new money to commit to the Global Fund. As a share of global wealth, Japan comes in last in contributions to the Global Fund. Canada: Chretien has expressed strong support for the Global Fund, but has not translated those words into action--Canada has committed only as much as the Gates Foundation. For more about Canadian activists, demands for Chretien, go to: www.icad-cisd.com/content/home.cfm?lang=e

...and the European Commission: On the issue of sustainable access to low cost generic medicines, the EC insists on playing good cop at the WTO to the U.S.'s bad cop. But the EC's proposals are no better than those of the U.S., at heart--they would rather the U.S. draw fire meant for them, as well. This "Snow White" is also sleeping on 10 billion unspent euros could in the European Development Fund. This money should be released immediately to rescue the Global Fund from bankruptcy and to push donors closer to meeting its critical UN goal of funding the fight against global AIDS with \$10 billion by 2005. Will President Prodi use the June European Summit to press for the release of these desperately needed funds?

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