

Africa to seek more aid at G20 Summit

ADDIS ABABA: Africa will request more financial assistance and a strengthened role in the international financial institutions at next month's summit of the Group of 20 (G20) leading developed and emerging nations.

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown had invited a number of African leaders, including Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, to London this week to hear their concerns about the world economic downturn in the build-up to the summit.

At the consultative meeting, Meles urged developed nations to attach due attention to the cause of Africa, whose only representative in the G20 is South Africa.

Meles and other African Heads of State and government thoroughly conferred with Brown as to how to promote Africa's cause at the G20 Summit, which is expected to focus on the current global financial and economic downturn.

At a press conference held after the meeting, Meles, Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete, and Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga reiterated that African leaders and Brown had agreed on the basic issue of Africa to be presented at the summit.

Hence, the participants of the consultative meeting reached an agreement that Africa shall request for more financial assistance and for enhanced role in the global financial institutions during the course of the 2 April, G20 Summit.

The press conference underscored the need to synchronise efforts at a global level toward reversing the existing global financial and economic downturn since the problem is an international crisis.

Both the United States and Europe shall be concerned about Africa, Meles said, adding that developed countries shall provide financial assistance to Africa as they designed stimulus plans to their respective banks.

"Some countries could go under and that would mean total chaos and violence. In the end, the cost of violence is going to be much higher than the cost of supporting Africa," Meles said.

Brown expressed London's firm commitment to voice the cause of African countries in the summit and said Britain would strive to lift the preconditions imposed on African countries for obtaining loans and to establish a special fund for Africa aimed at withstanding the crisis.

Britain itself would donate \$100 million for the purpose and would do everything possible to boost trade exchange among African nations, which was slowing because of the financial crisis, Brown added.

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