Finance leaders vow to work to end recession

By Jeannine Aversa
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WASHINGTON — Finance officials from the world's top economic powers pledged Friday to move swiftly on efforts to lift nations out of the worst recession since the 1930s. The major goal: Get banks in every country to start lending again.

Meeting three weeks after an economic summit of world leaders in London, the finance ministers did not put forward any sweeping new proposals but stressed the need for individual countries to carry through on commitments.

Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner and his counterparts from the world's top seven industrialized democracies promised in a joint statement to provide the necessary fiscal tonic — tax cuts or increased government spending — to turn around their own troubled economies. Fixing financial institutions in the U.S. and worldwide and jump-starting lending must be done before the global economy can rebound.

"We are committed to act together to restore jobs and growth and to prevent a crisis of this magnitude from occurring again," the finance officials said. "We will take whatever actions are necessary" to bring that about, they said.

The task at hand is for individual countries to fulfill their pledges and for financial officials to keep up the pressure on each other so that momentum is not lost.

"Implementation is the priority," said French Finance Minister Christine Lagarde.

Besides the United States, other Group of Seven participants were Japan, Germany, France, Britain, Italy and Canada.

Officials, however, didn't win new financial commitments to raise $500 billion for an emergency lending facility at the International Monetary Fund, the world's financial firefighter. That goal was set by G-20 leaders on April 2.

Takehiko Nakao, a senior official with the Japanese finance ministry, said countries would meet again soon, with the hope of coming up with the needed money before the end of June.