Situation in Mali

In 2012, Mali underwent one of the most serious crises in its history. Today, the country is attempting to rebuild itself. The Government presented its Sustainable Recovery Plan at the Donor Conference in May 2013, and obtained major financial support from the international community. This plan includes the holding of presidential and legislative elections in the months ahead. The Assembly has emphasized the importance of the reconstruction of the country for all the actors of the area and beyond, as well as its support to the transitional Government.

Food and Nutrition Security and Agricultural policies

There will be exchanges of views with Irish Development Minister Joe Costello and Agriculture Commissioner Dacian Cioloş on food security and agricultural policies.

Improving food security is important not only to the EU, but also to ACP countries and their citizens. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is a corner-stone in ensuring food security in the EU and worldwide. The challenge of balancing future food demand...
and supply, as the world’s population is set to reach nine billion by 2050, cannot be ended by agricultural production alone. Sustainable solutions for challenges in food security and climate change need to be found.

Human resources for health in ACP countries

Healthcare is an essential instrument in improving the lives of those living in poverty. Several of the Millennium Development Goals are health-orientated, yet the sector in many ACP countries is woefully under-resourced. The Assembly will discuss a report on how to improve human resources in this field. The major issues include the brain-drain of healthcare workers to richer countries, access to healthcare facilities, and financing and training. A resolution will be adopted recommending how improvements can be made.

Economic Partnership Agreements - next steps

EU and ACP countries were committed to conclude WTO-compatible trading arrangements. Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) by 2007 aiming at supporting regional integration processes of six ACP regions. Negotiations building on the mutually reinforcing effects of trade and development cooperation started in 2002. In 2007 a comprehensive EU-CARIFORUM regional EPA was concluded and also interim EPAs with some ACP countries/sub-regions. After 10 years of costly negotiations, "next steps" must include political-level decisions on whether to continue to seek a successful conclusion or bring the negotiations to an end.

Military Coups

Military coups are the ultimate negation of democracy. Recent examples of Guinea Bissau, Mali, the Central African Republic show a resurgence of this phenomenon. The draft resolution proposes a series of concrete recommendations to all internal actors such as the military, the government and opposition, civil society, and external actors like the EU and other international organisations. Actions should reinforce democratic structures and decision-making, contribute to economic resilience of the population and to a fair distribution of wealth in the country.

Other topics

The Assembly will also adopt urgent resolutions on the situation in the Central African Republic and the Republic of Guinea, two ACP countries whose people are enduring great suffering as a result of armed conflict. The European Investment Bank will also contribute to an exchange of views celebrating 50 years of the Institution’s relations with ACP countries.

I look forward to comments and feedback from all of you on this first newsletter and hope to see you at the 25th Session of the Assembly.

The EU has a special partnership with the ACP countries due to historic ties between them and many EU member states. This partnership is laid down in the Cotonou agreement. It is vital that this partnership should have a parliamentary dimension, allowing for the scrutiny of the governmental and executive dimension.

Therefore parliamentary representatives of the 78 ACP countries and 78 MEPs meet twice a year in Joint Parliamentary Assembly, once in the EU country holding the EU Council presidency and once in a country determined by the ACP. Apart from the full plenary sessions there are regular committee and Bureau (presidium) meetings.

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