

ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Members will find attached the follow-up given by the Commission to the resolutions adopted by the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly during its 11th session 19-22 June 2006 in Vienna (Austria).



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Brussels (Belgium)

13 September 2006

Members of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly will find attached progress reports on the follow-up action the Commission has taken or planned in response to the main points and certain specific requests contained in the resolutions adopted by the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly during its session held in Vienna (Austria) on 22 June 2006.

The Commission is at the disposal of the parliamentarians for any further information they may require.

**FOLLOW UP OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION
TO THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY
ASSEMBLY
ADOPTED IN VIENNA (Austria) on 22 June 2006**

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RESOLUTION

on the role of regional integration in the promotion of peace and security

The European Commission welcomes the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly Resolution on the role of regional integration in the promotion of peace and security.

The Commission welcomes the resolution's strong emphasis on the root causes of violent conflict and insecurity and the close linkage made with the promotion of sustainable development and the achievement of sustainable security. Moreover, the Commission also welcomes the emphasis on the potential for conflict prevention through inclusive political dialogue in accordance with the revised Cotonou Agreement. With this revision, political dialogue becomes more structured, more permanent and potentially more effective. The use of the revised article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement will allow the European Commission and ACP partners to use this mechanism continuously and under almost all circumstances. Article 96, the use of sanctions, should therefore only be used as a last resort. As such, political dialogue will be used to prevent the violation of the 'essential elements' of the Cotonou Agreement instead of being a reaction mechanism only when a problem occurs.

The Commission agrees with the statement in paragraph T that "the European Union and other European organisations must consider ACP regional organisations as their equal partners". Indeed, it is our firm conviction that in this field our cooperation must be characterised by a spirit of true partnership with all partners shouldering their responsibilities. Our efforts will be more effective when we assume joint responsibility and ownership of the tasks at hand.

Many of these principles and proposals echo those presented in the European Commission's regional strategies for Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, presented in the form of three Commission Communications in 2005 and 2006. These strategies will, in the coming years, provide a comprehensive framework and roadmap for the European Commission's relations with its national and regional partners in the ACP countries.

The causes and dynamics of conflicts and insecurity are often regional in nature and the Commission therefore fully agrees with the Joint Parliamentary Assembly that regional organisations – in the ACP-countries as well as in the rest of the world – have a key role to play in the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security. This is why the European Commission for a long time has supported the efforts of regional organisations to strengthen their capabilities to act as agents for peace and stability, including the support to the African Union (AU) as well as to ECOWAS, IGAD and SADC.

In the case of Africa, the European Commission and the EU Council Secretariat in July 2006 presented a joint paper outlining an "EU concept for strengthening African capabilities for the

prevention, management and resolution of conflicts" which is due to be discussed with the EU Member States in relevant Council Working Groups during the fall of 2006. This concept highlights the important progress made in recent years by African organisations in developing their own capabilities in conflict prevention, management and resolution. While this development has been owned and led by the Africans themselves, the EU – the Member States as well as the Commission – has played an important supporting role. The EU concept has been developed in order to give substance to the respective commitments and policy decisions made in the EU Strategy for Africa and the European Development Consensus regarding African capabilities. To this effect, the concept aims at defining the overall approach enabling an efficient and concerted EU response to African requests for assistance in developing self-sustainable African capabilities and seeks to provide a framework for transparent and concerted action which would combine EU policies and instruments with those of Member States.

Some of this support will be channelled through the African Peace Facility, an innovative development instrument established in 2003 at the request of the African Union Maputo Summit. In the framework of the EU-Africa dialogue, the EU Member States and the Commission expressed their support to the peace and security agenda of the AU on several occasions, including the Africa-Europe ministerial meeting at Ouagadougou in November 2002 and the Rome ministerial meeting in November 2003. The Communiqué of the latter meeting explicitly expressed its appreciation for the establishment of the Peace Facility. This resulted in the creation of the APF based upon a request by the AU approved by the ACP Committee of Ambassadors in accordance of Article 13.2(c) of Annex IV of the Cotonou Agreement.

The Commission welcomes the reference to the AU-led operation in the Darfur region of Sudan which it has supported throughout. It is foreseen that the European Commission in September will sign a sixth Contribution Agreement in support of the AMIS operation, taking the total of the Commission's contribution to AMIS to €242 million. The European Commission would also like to highlight two other important regional peace support operations: the AU-led short-term mission in the Comoros during the election period in the spring of 2006 and the ongoing CEMAC-led peace support operation in the Central African Republic. Both these operations have also received funding from the Peace Support Operations envelope of the APF. Finally, we also welcome the resolution's suggestion for an all-ACP Peace Facility.

We will continue to work closely with the African Union in furthering the objectives of the African Peace and Security Architecture, and what UN Secretary Kofi Annan calls (cited from paragraph I of the resolution) "a common vision of a global architecture of peace and security with interlocking capacities based on the comparative advantages of global and regional institutions". In this context we have funded a number of the workshops that have taken place under the coordination of the AU and with the support of the Regional Economic Communities to establish an African Standby Force conceptual framework. We are also funding a needs-assessment of the AU's and RECs' long term needs in the context of peace and security.

Capacity in the area of conflict prevention, management and resolution is closely link to overall institutional and operational capacity. In the case of the African Union, the European Commission is currently finalising proposals for a large programme (€55 million) to strengthen the operational and institutional capacity of the African Union and its programmes and institutions. This Support Programme aims at supporting the African Union to effectively play its

role as a "motor" for the African integration process and at helping it develop Africa-wide programmes in areas such as governance, infrastructure and migration. It is foreseen that the Contribution Agreement for this programme will be signed in October 2006.

In this context, the European Commission will also continue to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development – the socioeconomic programme of the AU – whose four main priorities include both peace and security and regional integration and cooperation. The Commission would welcome if the very promising African Peer Review Mechanism in the future also could focus more on peace and security issues, an area in which it could have an important added value.

Finally, the European Commission has also developed a strong partnership with the United Nations (UN), who has the chief global responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. This co-operation has taken the form both of EC financial support for UN programmes and projects and of policy dialogue and participation by the Commission in various UN fora. As such the EC is the main donor to the UN peace operations in Africa reflecting the EU's strong belief in resolving conflict through multilateral efforts.

RESOLUTION

on the situation in Sudan

The European Commission essentially agrees with the analysis, shares the concerns and endorses the recommendations of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly and has taken account of them in its diplomatic and political demarches concerning Sudan in general and Darfur in particular.

It considers that the Abuja Agreement has established a framework within which peace may be achieved and calls on those movements which have not signed the Agreement to do so, in order to sustain the political process now underway. In this connection it condemns all exploitation of the Darfur crisis and calls on the JEM and the SLM groups which rejected the peace to strive to achieve a consensus and an inclusive approach based on the Abuja Agreement.

The Commission believes that any obstruction of the peace process and any violation of the ceasefire is to be condemned, whatever its provenance, and reminds all those concerned that there is no room for a military solution in Darfur. Any move in this direction would merely trigger a major humanitarian crisis. In this connection the Commission wishes to express its grave concern about the deteriorating humanitarian conditions caused by the resurgence of human rights abuses including sexual violence, attacks on humanitarian workers and attacks on AMIS. It also reaffirms its support for the work of the International Criminal Court in Darfur.

In this context, the Commission and the Council Secretariat organised an International Conference on Darfur, held in Brussels on 18 July, attended by Mr Kofi Annan, President Konaré and most of the AMIS partner countries. At this meeting, the Commission reiterated its support for the African Union and for the latter's desire to transfer its military responsibilities in Darfur to the United Nations. The Commission, which remains AMIS' principal donor, also announced an additional contribution of EUR 30 million for the this African Union operation. In the Commission's opinion, it is crucial that UN forces be redeployed in Darfur in order to establish the security conditions essential to implementation of the peace agreements. It calls on those in Khartoum who oppose the redeployment to back sustainable peace without restrictions.

The Commission is also willing to play an important role in the reconstruction of Darfur. It supports the efforts of the international community to rapidly identify priority interventions to allow displaced persons to return home in the near future, and endorses the Netherlands initiative calling for a donor meeting as soon as local conditions permit.

However, the Commission did not wait for the Abuja agreements to start providing support for the people of Darfur. Since 2004 it has allocated more than half a billion euro (EUR 534.9 million) to Darfur. More than half of this was for humanitarian aid, including food aid (EUR 322.9 million). The balance of EUR 212 million is the amount of support provided to AMIS so far.

The Commission is also concerned about the tensions between Chad and Sudan which have arisen recently and supports the current attempts at reconciliation (Tripoli agreements), while stressing that the stabilisation of Darfur and the actual application of the peace agreements are essential to faster progress in re-establishing normal relations between the two countries and avoiding regional destabilisation.

The Commission reiterates its support for the Comprehensive Peace process and urges that it be continued according to the timetable set out in the agreement of 9 January 2005. It also calls on those concerned to continue the peace talks in eastern Sudan.

RESOLUTION

on the problematic of energy in the ACP countries

The Commission welcomes the attention that the Joint Parliamentary Assembly gives to the important issue of energy in ACP countries.

The Commission has already taken a number of actions with the ultimate objective of increasing the access to modern energy services in ACP countries. The inclusion of energy as a priority sector in the new EU Development Policy reaffirms the key role access to modern energy services plays in development.

The new EU strategies for Africa, the Pacific and the Caribbean also emphasise the importance that energy has for economic development and the difficulties caused by the sustained price increase of fossil fuels on the world market.

Energy Facility

The €220 million ACP-EC Energy Facility has been launched. The submission deadline for the call for proposal has been postponed to 6 October 2006.

The Energy Facility will co-finance projects aimed at increasing access to modern energy services, drafting of policies and strategies in the energy sector, and the facilitating of interconnections.

The Facility is open to the co-financing of decentralised off-grid generation and distribution projects, thereby recognising the importance of the impact of such services in remote and sparsely populated areas. These solutions have to be accompanied by a proper management structure, such as rural energy services companies, which can also be supported by the Energy Facility.

The Facility can also support the drafting of master plans in the energy sector, the formulation of energy policies, the improved utilization of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency measures. These interventions should be viewed as appropriate responses in this period of sustained high fossil fuel prices.

Consideration is being given to a possible replenishment of the Energy Facility. Continuation will depend on a wide range of issues such as the outcome of the present call for proposal, the availability of funding under the 10th EDF, the interaction with the new instruments, for example, the EU-Africa Partnership for Infrastructure, etc.

The EU-Africa Partnership for Infrastructure

Increased national and cross-border energy cooperation and trade is essential to improve reliability, affordability and access. It is acknowledged that the traditional approach of limiting energy planning and service provision to nation states has a negative effect on development of the energy sector in Africa. Nation-based planning is sub-optimal in several respects: (a) the geography of energy supply options does not necessarily correspond to political boundaries, since the cleanest and cheapest energy source may lie across national borders; (b) national energy markets are often too small to justify the investments needed to harness certain energy supply options; (c) the difficulties involved in the delivery of energy services in remote areas due to weak planning frameworks and regulations; (d) local and cross-border energy supply often allows diversification of energy sources – a key component in energy security.

This is why the energy sector is central to the new EU-Africa Partnership for Infrastructure, with a focus on interconnectivity. The ongoing dialogue with AU and NEPAD aims to fully develop access to sustainable and affordable energy services for economic and social sectors; to improve policy frameworks and institutional capacity; and to facilitate investments essential for generation, cross-border interconnections, grid extension and rural distribution.

The Partnership will operate at national, regional and continental level. It will draw upon the financial resources of the EDF National and Regional Indicative Programmes and similar funding instruments in the Mediterranean region (EC's Neighbourhood Policy and associated agreements) and introduces an innovative instrument of a trust fund with the EIB open to all Member States. The Trust Fund facilitates co-financing with the EIB and European development banks of projects identified by AU-NEPAD as priority generation and interconnections, including by applying interest rate subsidies.

Partnership start up actions are already underway in the energy sector, with the formulation of support for the West, Central, East and Southern Africa Power Pools, and to the continental regulatory body.

Programming of the 10th EDF

The highlighting of energy in the new EU Development Policy, and the recently developed strategies for Africa, the Pacific and the Caribbean, allows for the inclusion of support to the energy sector in the 10th EDF National and Regional Indicative Programmes.

Already ACP countries and regions are leading an ongoing dialogue for identifying energy strategies and possible actions. This dialogue builds on a similar process that led to a multi-country renewable energy programme in the Pacific, being implemented under the 9th EDF.

Finally, the new EU development policy recognises the role that transparency and good governance have in the management of the energy sector. The EC endorses the Extractive

Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI), and it looks forward to the political dialogue with resource rich ACP countries in the framework of the 10th EDF programming.

Other Instruments

The Commission, under the framework of the European Union Energy Initiative (EUEI) for poverty eradication and sustainable development launched at the WSSD in Johannesburg, is also implementing other programmes. One such example is COOPENER that co-finances projects in the energy sector, mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa. COOPENER's budget is €18 million, and the third, and last, call for proposals has been recently finalised.

The energy sector will also be a sector of concentration in the new thematic programme on Environment and sustainable management of natural resources, including Energy that the Commission is preparing for launching in 2007.

The EUEI is also active with its Partnership Dialogue Facility (PDF), which is financing dialogue activities with developing countries, mainly in Africa.

The EUEI is also a forum of dialogue with the European and ACP private sector. This dialogue should strengthen and update the existing instruments, for enhancing the global competitiveness of the ACP private sector in the energy field.

A business forum between European and African private sector will be held in November 2006 under the framework of the new EU-Africa Partnership for Infrastructure.

The Commission is preparing further collaboration on renewable energy sources under the 7th Research Framework Programme (FP7) that involves ACP and EU research institutes. It will take into account this resolution, according to the provisions and opportunities offered by FP7 and its evaluation criteria.

Finally, as the Commission has been financing many programmes which tackle the efficiency of energy systems, the EC will sponsor, by January 2007, an international conference of energy efficiency at which ACP countries will participate.

RESOLUTION

on avian influenza

11. The call for proposals for research projects on human and avian influenza launched by DG Research in December 2005 for €20 million (€10 million for human health and €10 million for animal health) was closed in June. The tenders have been opened and the selected research centres may launch their respective programmes.

12. In line with the global strategy adopted at the international conference in Beijing in January 2006, the fight against avian flu and preparations for a possible human pandemic entail a strengthening of health services so that any outbreaks of the disease can be detected early on and rapid action can be taken. This is the framework within which the European Union will grant its support.

13. Support from the international community comes in response to integrated action plans, which comprise short-term (emergencies), medium-term and long-term measures to be taken nationally but in a coordinated fashion at regional level, and which include human health, animal health and communication components. The plans are drawn up under the responsibility of a national multi-disciplinary team and with the help of international experts, taking into consideration the concerns of all the sectors of the national economy.

14. By favouring existing mechanisms and partnerships, the European Commission is trying to channel its funding on the basis of past support and experience. The existing networks are valuable bases for our future action.

16. In order to mobilise the intra-ACP funds (€30 million, which the Secretariat of the ACP countries wishes to allocate to the African countries), the technical services (AIDCO and the World Bank) are working on the financing convention (the EDF Committee approved this funding at its meeting on 14 June 2006).

17. The European Community has been supporting the African Union's proposal to host the forthcoming ministerial meeting on the follow-up of the Beijing commitments in Africa. Mali has offered to host this conference, which will include a specific session to cover the new needs in Africa (there were no outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian flu there in January, at the time of the Beijing conference, and financial commitments concerned mainly Asia and Europe). There are plans for Commissioner Louis Michel to attend in the conference, where he could announce further EC funding for Africa.

RESOLUTION

on fisheries and their social and environmental aspects in developing countries

Principles and challenges

The Commission welcomes the initiative of the JPA to focus on the social and environmental aspects of fisheries in developing countries. The topic is well chosen as fisheries play an important role in the economy of coastal and island ACP and some land-locked countries in Sub-Saharan Africa: the fishing sector is a major contributor to rural income and employment and a critical source of food security. At the same time, fisheries are facing big challenges due to fleet overcapacity, overexploitation of stocks and illegal fishing, which can endanger the livelihoods of many poor people. These problems are often exacerbated by inadequate governance of the fisheries.

The EC development cooperation in fisheries

The EC fisheries development cooperation is marked by the tension between the sector's potential to contribute to poverty reduction and reducing hunger and the risk of depletion of valuable resources. The EC therefore puts a lot of emphasis on environmental and social considerations in its fisheries cooperation. It is currently financing about 15 fisheries initiatives in ACP countries, mostly under the 8th and 9th EDF (programming periods 1997-2002 and 2002-2007 resp.), with a total financial envelope of roughly €140 million. Key themes are: the sustainable management of aquatic resources (including monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing activities (MCS) and research (stock assessment)); sanitary control of fishery products, and support to small-scale fisheries development.

The governance issue

The recent international debate concurs on the strong link between weak governance and unsustainable fishing (see for example the World Bank Report on Sustainable and Equitable Governance of the Global Fishing Sector, May 2004). The governance issue is therefore more and more seen in a broader context of fisheries management. A recent study carried out in the UK uncovered for example a striking relationship between the level of governance of a country and its exposure to illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing (IUU). Conversely, assistance is unlikely to have a lasting effect on combating IUU unless it is targeted at improving both MCS capacities and governance. The importance which the Commission attaches to the governance issue under the 10 EDF programming is therefore also expected to promote sustainable fisheries

management. One can add to this that the Commission is currently preparing an intra-ACP programme called "Strengthening Fisheries Management in ACP Countries" (or ACP Fish II). It will aim at improving institutional capacities for sustainable fisheries management in target ACP countries, supporting the elaboration of policies at regional and national level and facilitating regional collaboration by strengthening networks and transfer of skills and knowledge. A global amount of €30 million from the 9th EDF has been allocated for this programme. A feasibility study is under way. The implementation phase is expected to start in the second half of next year.

Monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing activities (MCS)

As already mentioned above, an important component of the EC assistance for sound fisheries management is the strengthening of monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) to combat IUU fishing. Although IUU fishing has become a global phenomenon, it is widely agreed that developing countries are particularly affected by this scourge which has detrimental economic, social and environmental consequences. In view of this, the Commission is implementing since year 2000 a comprehensive MCS project in the SADC region (total financial envelope 15 M€), and since 2004 also in the Indian Ocean on a pilot basis (9th EDF, 3.5 M€). Another regional MCS project is in preparation for Western Africa in favour of the member states of the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (CSRP).

SPS measures and improvement of export facilities

The Commission agrees on the need to assist developing countries in their attempt to meet international SPS requirements for fishery products and, thus, to improve export market potential and increase added value. The Commission is therefore running a programme called "Strengthening Fishery Products Health Conditions in ACP/OCT Countries" (EU funding 44.8 million €, mostly from 8th EDF), the beneficiaries of which are all ACP/OCT countries that have sustainable export potential in fish. This programme, in financial terms the most important fisheries development programme currently implemented under the EDF, is running over a period of 5 years and aims at improving the access of ACP/OCT fisheries products to the world market, by strengthening control capacities of Competent Authorities and improving production conditions, including handling practices and infrastructures for small-scale fisheries

Regional cooperation

The Commission also agrees with the importance the report attaches to regional cooperation and integration since the challenges of a sound management of fishery resources can often only be reasonably taken up at regional level (e.g. in the case of straddling stocks or highly migratory species like tuna). In recognition of this, the EC development cooperation in fisheries focuses very much on regional cooperation and will most probably also do so in future.

Fisheries and food aid

The Commission is no longer providing its food aid in kind but in cash. The EC strongly supports the untying of food aid and promotes the purchase of food in the country or the regions where local markets exist and have the capacity to supply the products needed. These local and regional purchases stimulate the local production, sustain local markets and enhance livelihoods. This should apply to the fisheries sector as well.