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## PRESS RELEASE

### **ACP-EU Assembly debate centres on Economic Partnership Agreement with the Pacific region and food crisis**

*Directorate-General for Communication*  
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

## FORMAL OPENING

### **ACP-EU Assembly debate centres on Economic Partnership Agreement with the Pacific region and food crisis**

**Negotiations on the EU's economic partnership agreement with the Pacific region and the impact of the food and financial crisis on developing countries are taking centre stage at the 16th session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, from 24 to 28 November 2008. Delegates are concerned that the financial crisis may be used to justify cuts in public development aid.**

The ACP-EU Assembly will debate economic partnership agreements (EPAs) with the Pacific, where, provisional agreements have been signed by only two of the region's 14 countries: Fiji (on sugar) and Papua (on tuna), prompted by the erosion of trade preferences.

Pacific region negotiators want EPAs to focus on trade in goods, fisheries, development and dispute settlement, but are against including services or intellectual property at this time, noted Ms Kinnock (PES, UK) at the opening session in Port Moresby on 25 November.

Ms Kinnock called on the Commission to "stop pushing so hard" in the negotiations, stressing that a full EPA needs to include "varying degrees of commitment" on trade in services and that EPA-related development support is need to help ACP countries to withstand external shocks.

#### **Port Moresby Call to Action on the world food and financial crisis**

The ACP-EU JPA is expected this Friday to issue a call to ACP and EU governments jointly to ensure that at least 10% of aid and public spending is channelled towards achieving food security.

"If the strongest economies in the world need economic stability - and they do - the weaker ones need economic dependability", commented Glenys Kinnock (PES, UK) at the opening session.

The financial crisis "must not be used to justify aid cutbacks", says the draft declaration (to be adopted Friday, 28 November), which calls on EU Member States to honour their official development assistance commitments - i.e. 0.56% of gross national income by 2010 and 0.7% by 2015.

This crisis "calls for urgent global action - change is needed that would allow the developing world to have a voice in global institutions and regulatory frameworks", said acting Co-President Tony Aimo, standing in for Co-President Wilkie Rasmussen (Cook Islands) at the opening ceremony.

#### **Climate change**

"What has been achieved in the fight against poverty could be unravelled by climate change", stressed ACP-EU Co-President Glenys Kinnock (PES, UK), pointing out that several thousand people have already left Tuvalu for New Zealand because of rising sea levels, and that in the South Pacific there is a growing threat from malaria and dengue fever.

#### **Other business**

The Assembly will also debate developments in North Kivu (Democratic Republic of Congo) and adopt urgent resolutions on political situation in Mauritania and Zimbabwe.

Parliamentarians will ask that public development aid be redefined, to prevent non-aid items such as military spending from being included in public development aid accounts.

### **Reports to be put to a vote**

The Assembly will debate and vote on three reports:

- Protection of civilians during peace-keeping operations by the UN and regional organisations - Johan Van Hecke (ALDE, BE) and Komi Selom Klassou (Togo);

- Aid Effectiveness and the definition of official development aid - Anne Van Lancker (PES, BE) and Waven William (Seychelles);

Social consequences of child labour and strategies to combat child labour - Liam Aylward (UEN, IE) and Ana Rita Sithole (Mozambique).

Resolutions and reports will be put to the vote on 28 November 2008.

Twice a year the ACP-EU JPA brings together 78 Members of the European Parliament and 78 parliamentarians from the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states.

Venue: **Sir John Guise Indoor [Sports Complex](#) PO Box 1991, Boroko, NCD.**

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/acp/60\\_15/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/acp/60_15/default_en.htm)

Link to website of the ACP/EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly

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