



**ACP-EU**  
**ACP-UE**



Friday, 28 November 2008

## PRESS RELEASE

### Overview of 16th ACP-EU JPA

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The next ACP-EU JPA takes place in  
Prague (Czech Republic)  
from 4 to 9 April 2009

*Directorate-General for Communication*  
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

# OVERVIEW OF THE 16TH ACP-EU JPA

## 1. ACP-EU Assembly debate centres on food and financial crises and partnership with the Pacific

**The world financial crisis should not be used to justify cuts in development aid, says a Port Moresby Declaration adopted at the 16th ACP-EU JPA in Papua New Guinea on 24-28 November. The JPA debated the EU's economic partnership agreement with the Pacific region, passed resolutions on the political crises in Mauretania and Zimbabwe, and adopted reports on protecting civilians, aid effectiveness and child labour.**

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.

### **Port Moresby Declaration on the global food and financial crises**

The current financial crisis must not be used to justify aid cutbacks, says the Port Moresby Declaration, 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.

ACP and EU governments should also jointly ensure that "sufficient aid and public spending is channelled towards achieving food security", says the declaration.

The declaration also calls on the international community to reform and regulate the global financial system to guarantee transparency and ensure developing nations have a greater say.

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

### **Economic partnership agreements with the Pacific**

The Assembly debated the EU's economic partnership agreements (EPAs) with third countries, and specifically those with the Pacific region (15 countries, including East Timor). The erosion of trade preferences, particularly for sugar (Fiji) and tuna (Papua) prompted these countries to sign a provisional agreement in November 2007.

The key issues debated were the rate at which "interim" versions of these agreements are being signed, whether or not services and intellectual property protection should be built into them, and whether the European Parliament should give its assent, in spring 1999, to their taking effect.

Outlining what he would like to see in the final agreement for Papua New Guinea and Fiji, EP rapporteur for the EPA with the Pacific Glynn Ford (PES, UK) listed: progress on allowing export taxes for development purposes, adequate protection for infant industries, intellectual property protection, not just for western artefacts but also for traditional knowledge, opening up public procurement to an extent consistent with Pacific states' needs, and for services, recognising the need for work visas for the EU.

If the Commission cannot accept this basis for further negotiation, said Mr Ford, then he would recommend voting "no" to the interim agreement.

### **Restoring democracy in Mauritania**

The Assembly condemns the overthrow of President Sidi Mohamed Ould Cheikh Abdullahi and the government by the armed forces in Mauritania in August 2008, and calls for his immediate release, in an urgent resolution adopted on 28 November. It also urges the ruling military authorities to commit themselves forthwith to a timetable for restoring constitutional order, democratic institutions and the ineligibility of the military to stand in elections.

Any sanctions should target the military putschists, not affect the population.

### **Assembly backs unity government in Zimbabwe**

The Assembly confirms that a government of national unity is a solution for ending the political, economic and social crisis that followed Zimbabwe's widely-criticised elections of June 2008, in an urgent resolution adopted on 28 November. It also calls on the parties to a power-sharing deal of September 2008 to work together for a lasting democratic and peaceful solution, and advocates setting up a peace and reconciliation commission.

### **Assembly debates North Kivu conflict escalation fears**

Fears that the North Kivu conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo could escalate throughout the Great Lakes region, calls for a European peacekeeping force, and control of Congolese mineral resources were debated by the ACP-EU Assembly on 27 November with EU Development Commissioner Louis Michel.

### **Reports adopted**

#### **Stepping up civilian protection in peacekeeping operations**

Civilian protection needs to be made an integral part of peacekeeping operations, in a "routine process" enabling parties to settle their disputes, says a report adopted by the Assembly on 28 November. The report calls for permanent civilian peace services to be set up at national level and in regional organisations such as the African and European unions.

Rapporteurs: Dr Komi Selom Klassou (Togo) and Johan Van Hecke (ALDE, BE)

#### **Combating child labour**

Measures to harness the power of consumers and industry to discourage the exploitation of child labour - including a "without child labour" kite mark and a requirement that large firms eliminate child labour from their supply chains within three years, are set out in a report approved by the Assembly on 28 November.

Rapporteurs: Mrs Ana Rita Sithole (Mozambique) and Mr Liam Aylward (UEN, IE)

#### **Redefining development aid**

Official Development Assistance (ODA) needs to be more tightly defined, so that it cannot be made to include non-aid items such as military spending, says the Assembly in a report adopted on 28 November. Spending on debt relief should also be separated from other ODA accounting, and aid generally needs to be scaled up and better aligned with national systems, it says.

## 2. Economic Partnership Agreements: timing and assent

Debate: 26.11.2008

**On 26 November the Assembly debated the EU's economic partnership agreements with third countries and specifically those with the Pacific region. The key issues were the rate at which "interim" versions of these agreements are being signed, and whether the European Parliament should give its assent (in spring 2009) to their taking effect.**

Of the Pacific region's 15 countries (including East Timor), only two have signed provisional agreements, prompted by the erosion of trade preferences: Fiji (on sugar) and Papua (on tuna).

### **PNG and Fiji**

Outlining what he would like to see in the final agreement for Papua New Guinea and Fiji, European Parliament rapporteur for the EPA with the Pacific Glyn Ford (PES, UK) listed: progress on allowing export taxes for development purposes, adequate protection for infant industries, intellectual property protection not just for western technical artefacts but also for traditional knowledge, opening up public procurement to an extent consistent with Pacific states' needs, and for services, recognising the need for work visas for the EU.

If the Commission cannot accept this basis for further negotiation, said Mr Ford, then he would recommend voting "no" to the interim agreement.

"It is in the interest of ACP countries to conclude these agreements as speedily as possible, so as to put themselves on an equal footing with the trading world" said Jürgen Schröder (EPP-ED, DE). "We should not impose unrealistic time frames, but neither must assume we have endless time", he added, pointing out that if European countries had not been so prompt to join the Euro, the global economic crisis would have been worse.

### **CARIFORUM**

"The European Parliament must give its formal agreement (assent) to the CARIFORUM EPA for it to have legal effect" pointed out Cariforum EPA rapporteur David Martin (PES, UK), adding that "we shall only give our assent if we believe the EPA serves development goals".

"We will therefore require, before we vote next March, assurances that:

- the foreseen review clause is genuine and properly financed. If we find that EPAs are failing to tackle poverty, it must allow for the comprehensive renegotiation of the agreement,
- most favored Nation principle will be eliminated,
- adequate "aid for trade" is provided, and
- additional funds are made available under the 10th EDF to assist with adjustment policies.

### **3. Restoring democracy in Mauritania**

Debate: 26.11.2008

#### *Urgent motion for resolution on the situation in Mauritania*

**The Assembly condemns the overthrow of President Sidi Mohamend Ould Cheikh Abdullahi and the government by the armed forces in Mauritania in August 2008, and calls for his immediate release, in a resolution adopted on 28 November. It also urges the ruling military authorities to commit themselves forthwith to a timetable for restoring constitutional order, democratic institutions and the ineligibility of the military to stand in elections.**

President Abdallahi was ousted on 6 August 2008, by a military junta, led by General Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, and is being kept under house arrest in his home village.

#### **Democratic transition**

The President had been elected in April 2007, as part of a democratic transition process that was hailed as exemplary by the international community and validated by the European Union election observation mission and the European Parliament delegation.

The EU has backed the democratic transition process and is providing a €156,000,000 "support programme" for 2008 - 2013 under the 10th European Development Fund.

#### **Sanctions**

The Assembly calls on the African and European Union to look at all targeted sanctions that might be taken against the military putschists (travel ban, freezing of assets, etc.), should no commitment be made in the near future to a relevant and credible plan for ending the crisis and restoring constitutional order.

It also warns against taking any steps that might jeopardise Mauritania's development and the improvement in the living conditions of its people.

The Assembly welcomes the start of consultations between the EU and the Mauritanian ruling authorities under Article 96 of the ACP-EU partnership agreement, which provides, in the event of failure to respect human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law, for the possibility of taking certain measures. Suspending the agreement is the ultimate step.

#### **Plenary debate**

"Mauritania once represented hope for democracy, but is a disappointment today. Its coups d'état are not an error of youth, but a return to an old tradition", said Jean-Pierre Audy (EPP-ED, FR).

"Democracy has succumbed to partisan interests", said Benjamin Bounkoulou (DRC), adding that "the results were reversed without sound reason. We need a rapid return to constitutional order, early elections and a government of national unity to manage the transition process".

## **4. Assembly backs unity government in Zimbabwe**

Debate: 26.11.2008

### *Urgent motion for resolution on the situation in Zimbabwe*

**The Assembly confirms that a government of national unity is a solution for ending the political, economic and social crisis that followed Zimbabwe's widely-criticised elections of June 2008. In a resolution adopted on 28 November, it calls on the parties to a power-sharing deal of September 2008 to work together for a lasting democratic and peaceful solution, and advocates a peace and reconciliation commission.**

The official results of the second round of the presidential elections on 27 June 2008 brought back the incumbent President, Robert Mugabe, following the withdrawal of opposition candidate Mordan Tsvangirai.

The Assembly firmly condemns campaigns of violence and intimidation against the population with the aim of influencing voting in the June 2008 elections and violations of the rights of the opposition.

It also welcomes the African mediation efforts led by President Thabo Mbeki, and urgently calls for the increased engagement of African countries and regional institutions such as the South African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU), as well as eminent African personalities in negotiating and monitoring a solution.

### **Peace and reconciliation commission**

The Assembly calls on the future government of national unity to set up a neutral and independent peace and reconciliation commission with a view to promoting a national healing process that will review the crimes against humanity, torture, rape and other crimes committed in the internal conflict.

### **Refugees and aid**

The Assembly also expresses deep concern about the situation of Zimbabwean refugees in the region and deplores acts of violence against Zimbabwean refugees in neighbouring countries. It calls on the European Commission to support these countries with financial and material programmes for the refugees.

It strongly appeals to all stakeholders and the international community to be prepared to ensure the rapid provision of aid for the post-conflict reconstruction of Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe is facing a cholera outbreak with a virtually collapsed health system and broken water supply. Life expectancy has dropped from 60 years for both sexes to 37 years for men and 34 for women in the past decade and 1.7 million people there are now living with HIV.

### **Plenary session**

"It is unacceptable that Zimbabwe's leaders are still failing to respect the will of its people", said Michael Gahler (EPP-ED, DE).

Zimbabwe is a worry for the SADC countries, because the situation is not evolving so fast as we would wish. Angola is ready to share its experience to help it to achieve a peaceful

settlement", said Batawar Bonito de Sousa (Angola), adding that "all the parties must respect the voters' choice and work to improve Zimbabweans' living conditions".

"Robert Mugabe may be mistaken about the level of tolerance of oppression and violation of people's rights, said Ana Gomes (PES, PT), adding that "this is not a democratically negotiated agreement - African leaders must speak out more clearly", and "the image of the African Union is at stake".

A representative of Mugabe's Zanu-PF party said that efforts to "resolve the political situation are well-advanced, and some provisions are already being implemented, e.g. on the allocation of ministerial posts". One constitutional change - an amendment 19 for a more inclusive government, is before the facilitator and should soon be submitted to Parliament and the Senate, he added.

"We shall sign nothing until amendment 19 reflects the September 2008" agreement replied an opposition MDC representative, who pointed out that "food does not reach those suspected of belonging to the opposition".

## **5. Assembly debates North Kivu conflict escalation fears**

Debate: 27.11.2008

**Fears that the North Kivu conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo could escalate throughout the Great Lakes region, calls for a European peacekeeping force, and control of Congolese mineral resources were debated by the ACP-EU Assembly on 27 November with EU Development Commissioner Louis Michel.**

The direct or indirect involvement of several countries in the Great Lakes region had prompted fears that the Congolese conflict could escalate into a "regional war", said EU Development Commissioner Louis Michel.

"Angola respects the DRC's sovereignty and territorial integrity, but wants to ensure stability in the region. If necessary, it would act to prevent conflict spiralling out of control and prevent a humanitarian disaster", said Mr De Sousa (Angola).

### **Keep calm, Angola**

"The best thing that Angola can do is to remain calm", replied the Commissioner, who saw "no justification for Angolan intervention in the DRC".

Rwanda echoed the Commissioner's rejoinder, and observed that the DRC has a twofold problem: the Interahamwe (a Hutu group involved in the Rwanda genocide of 1994), "which rapes and pillages, and bad governance, which fosters corruption and the illegal exploitation of mines".

"It is high time to put in place a genuinely neutral international force to eradicate the FDLR" (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda) said Christophe Lutundula (DRC), adding that the Mission of the United Nations to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) could provide the core of this force.

Johan Van Hecke (ALDE, BE) felt that Laurent Nkunda should be prosecuted in the International Criminal Court, but admitted that "unless DRC's structural problems are solved, he would simply be replaced by another Nkunda".

## Minerals

"We need a political solution that leads to lasting peace" said Alain Hutchinson (PES, BE), adding that "it would be too easy for the international community to dismiss this as an 'ethnic conflict', when in fact it "has responsibilities" in DRC.

The Congolese forces' control of mines producing valuable minerals such as gold, diamonds and coltan (used to make high-tech equipment including mobile phones and portable computers) "justifies the presence of MONUC" (Mission of the United Nations to the Democratic Republic of the Congo), he continued, noting that "but for these minerals, there would be no war".

### A European buffer force?

Replying to a question from Jürgen Schröder (EPP-ED, DE) about whether a European force could be deployed to disarm the FDLR, Commissioner Michel said there was no political will among EU states to send an EU force.

The MONUC should be increased by 3,000 men, including a substantial Indian unit, to 20,000, he said.

## 6. Redefining development aid

Debate: 25.11.2008

*Report on aid effectiveness and the definition of official development aid*

**Rapporteurs: Waven William (Seychelles) and Anne Van Lancker (PES, BE)**

**Official Development Assistance (ODA) needs to be more tightly defined, so that it cannot be made to include non-aid items such as military spending, said the ACP-Joint Parliamentary Assembly on 28 November. Spending on debt relief should also be separated from other ODA accounting, and aid generally needs to be scaled up and better aligned with national systems, it said.**

OECD figures show that overall EU aid decreased significantly in 2007 and aid figures are often inflated by including debt relief and accounting funds that do not reach the populations of partner countries.

One-third of the EU's €47.5 billion ODA total for 2006 was actually non-aid, including, for example, the amount spent on housing refugees, educating students in Europe and debt cancellation.

### Scale up aid, tailor to national needs

The report urges the EU to ensure more development policy consistency among European policies (e.g. on agriculture, fisheries, trade, energy, environment, climate change, security and migration), so as to avoid undermining the impact of poverty eradication measures and help achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

MEPs want EU Member States to achieve aid targets of 0.56% of GDP in 2010 and 0.7% in 2015, targets which Member States themselves confirmed in June 2008. In 2007, for the first time since 2000, public development aid fell from 0.42% of GDP to 0.39%.

In addition to multi-annual development aid tables, members hope that the 2008 donor atlas will hope to inform more ambitious donor coordination, so as to solve the problem of the so-called "darling" and "orphan" countries and remedy neglect of crucial sectors such as health, education, social cohesion, gender equality and agriculture.

### **Budgetary aid and ownership**

The major defect of the definition of aid ownership is that it does not recognise the importance of democratic ownership, says the report, which calls on donors and partner governments to recognise the role parliamentarians have to play in ensuring the effectiveness of aid, by providing checks and balances, notably by scrutinising budgets.

### **Aligning aid with national priorities**

The committee urges donor countries to speed up the alignment of their aid to country systems to the maximum extent possible, to strengthen government systems and increase the amount of their aid channelled as general and sector-specific budget support. It notes that budget support is not always adequate in cases of crisis or widespread corruption.

### **Fair trade**

The resolution also stresses that fair trade can be an effective driver of sustainable economic development, provided it is accompanied by measures to address adjustment-related costs, funding for a social safety net, and redistributive social policies to ensure that its benefits are shared out equitably.

### **Plenary debate**

Presenting the report, Mr Waven William stressed that it was intended as an input for the Doha meeting on development funding (29 November to 2 December 2008). The key aims, he said, were to ensure that aid pledges are honoured, to facilitate investment mechanisms, and to ensure that the financial crisis does not affect aid commitments or effectiveness. "We want to see the report's conclusions applied", he said.

Mrs Van Lancker welcomed the Accra Agenda on aid effectiveness as "a step forward in political commitment", but stressed that the need now was for "a concrete delivery timetable", adding that improving aid quality should not become an excuse for reducing its volume. She reiterated that aid is effective "only if there is real democratic ownership" of its planning and implementation, and "never effective when undermined by other policies".

## **7. Stepping up civilian protection in peacekeeping operations**

Debate: 27.11.2008

*Report on the protection of civilians during peacekeeping operations by the UN and regional organisations*

**Rapporteurs: Dr Komi Selom Klassou (Togo) and Johan Van Hecke (ALDE, BE)**

**Civilian protection needs to be made an integral part of peacekeeping operations, in a "routine process" enabling parties to settle their disputes, says a report adopted by the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly on 28 November. The report calls for permanent civilian peace services to be set up at national level and in regional organisations such as the African and European unions.**

## **Rapidly-deployable civilian peacekeepers**

Military strategies alone cannot succeed in the absence of humanitarian measures and political objectives for peace, says the report, which stresses the need for peacekeeping operations to develop an "improved capacity to act". This should include a "standing civilian peacekeeping capacity", with a coordinating office at operational HQ and rosters of rapidly-deployable civilian personnel.

## **Troops need training too**

The report reminds EU Member States of their responsibility under international law for ensuring the appropriate training of all civilian and military personnel, in line with international humanitarian standards. European training for African military personnel under the "Euro Recamp" programme should include systematic training in human rights and protecting civilians it adds.

UN member states should set up a joint training academy for peace missions to provide at least for command personnel with standard multinational basic training on humanitarian tasks and technical assistance for protecting civilians.

It also stresses the need for pre-mission and in-service civil protection training (e.g. in human rights law and preventing sexual violence) for multinational troop deployments.

## **No immunity for abuses of power**

The report strongly condemns peacekeepers who abuse their power by sexually exploiting civilians or engaging in corrupt practices. Such criminals should rigorously prosecuted by national authorities or by the International Criminal Court, says the report, which opposes granting immunity, in any form, to UN staff or UN-mandated soldiers.

The report advocates creating national "watchdog" mechanisms to ensure that complaints of abuse are investigated and dealt with fairly.

## **Civil protection instruments**

Military strategies for peacekeeping operations with specific protection mandates should include instruments such as civilian unarmed protection, night patrols and radio communication, village defence committees to alert peacekeepers, air cover, rapid reaction forces to respond to disturbances, and "stability police" to support missions and provide exit strategies, says the report.

## **Plenary debate**

"The thousands of civilians forced onto the roads of North Kivu by General NKunda's offensive highlight the need to build civilian protection capacity in a world where ethnic cleansing, large-scale massacres and recourse to sexual violence as a weapon of war are rife", said Dr Selom Klassou, introducing the report.

"We need the goodwill of armed groups and dissuasive instruments such as the International criminal court to remove impunity", he added, pointing out that civilians tend to suffer more in today's conflicts than their perpetrators.

"The non-intervention principle should not apply to cases of genocide or ethnic cleansing" said Mr Van Hecke, adding that "soft-law measures are not what military people are best at - we need well-trained civilian personnel".

## **8. Combating child labour**

Debate: 25.11.2008

*Report on social consequences of child labour and strategies to combat child labour*

**Rapporteurs: Mrs Ana Rita Sithole (Mozambique) and Mr Liam Aylward (UEN, IE)**

**Measures to harness the power of consumers and industry to discourage the exploitation of child labour - including a "without child labour" kite mark and a requirement that large firms eliminate child labour from their supply chains within three years, are set out in a report unanimously approved by the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly on 28 November.**

According to the ILO some 165 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 are involved in child labour, the worst forms of which include child slavery, the sale and trafficking of children and child prostitution, says the report.

### **Consumer power**

The report calls for the international community (including the WTO) to pioneer a "child kite mark" for products "grown/manufactured without child labour". After a phased enforcement programme, imports of products without the kite mark into the EU would be prohibited.

It also calls on the European Commission to set up a "child labour hotline" for callers with information on child labour used by large EU firms or their suppliers.

### **Supply chain compliance**

The committee also calls on the Commission to oblige "the corporate sector" operating in the EU to document, report and take responsibility for labour practices at all levels of the supply chain. Supply-chain compliance should be inspected at all levels and independently audited, it says, and firms with child labour in their supply chains should be required to publish a time-bound programme for eliminating it within three years, and face sanctions if they fail to do so.

The report calls on the EU Member States and Commission to tie support given to companies through trade missions, export subsidies, grants and loans to demonstrating compliance with international conventions on child labour. It also says public procurement contracts should require firms to demonstrate compliance with international child labour standards, and not be awarded in the absence of proof.

### **Development policy levers**

Finally, the report calls on the international community, and particularly the EU, to include child labour concerns in their development programmes, and to target education funding on those most at risk of exploitation: girls, children in conflict areas, and those in marginalised or vulnerable groups.

### **Intolerable types of labour**

The report stresses the need for urgent action to eliminate "the most intolerable aspects" of child labour, such as employment of children in slave-like and bonded conditions and in dangerous and hazardous work in the production and trafficking of drugs and the smuggling and trafficking of small arms, the exploitation of very young children, and the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

At greatest risk are children belonging to ethnic or other minorities, child migrants, displaced children or refugees, children affected by armed conflicts, child soldiers, orphans, children affected by HIV/AIDS, and those with disabilities. Girls face additional risks of exploitation, it adds.

### **Plenary debate**

"Child labour is a global problem that calls for global action" said Ms Sithole, stressing the need for both ACP and EU states to "move from resolutions to measures".

Improving child welfare is vital to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, which means society, including the private sector, has a role to play, she said, observing however that "many companies do not look upon child labour abuses - or even sexual abuses - as a societal problem".

So "business must be made more accountable", although poverty, and the fact that children are kept out of school in many ACP countries, make this a tough challenge, she admitted.

"The facts show that we do tolerate and do accept that huge numbers of children around the globe are denied access to education and that their mental and physical development is impaired by being sent out to work from a very young age", said Mr Aylward.

The report advocates a "push and pull" approach, in which the "pull" factor is corporate social responsibility and the "push" one is education, he explained. "As policymakers we must together with the corporate sector work towards removing the demand for child labour, which involves ensuring that companies in the EU are child labour free", he said. On education, "we must step up our efforts to ensure that there is quality education available for all children, and that this education is easily accessible and well-supported", he said.

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/acp/60\\_16/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/acp/60_16/default_en.htm)

Link to website of the ACP/EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly

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