



Monday, 30 November 2009

PRESS RELEASE

**Opening of the 18th Joint Parliamentary
Assembly**

Luanda from 30 November to 3 December

**"Financial crisis must not lead to
development aid cuts"**

Directorate-General for Communication
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

FORMAL OPENING

ACP-EU Assembly: financial crisis must not lead to development aid cuts

Official development aid must continue to grow and not suffer from the current economic and financial crisis, warned ACP-EU Co-President Louis Michel at the inaugural session of the 18th ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly on Monday in Luanda (Angola).

"Additional" funds should be released to help developing countries combat the food crisis and climate change, argued the Assembly's Co-President, Louis Michel.

"This money ought not to be deducted from current development aid", said Mr Michel, noting that some states are cutting their development aid budgets in response to the crisis, and adding that "nothing justifies such a reduction in official development aid - quite the contrary".

Mr Michel advocated seeking new sources of development policy funding, like the tax on air fares, and backed the idea, tabled by certain Member States, of a "tax on financial transactions".

He condemned the coup d'Etat in Niger, observing that "the situation in Niger does not allow us to recognise constitutional bodies deriving from non-constitutional elections", a law that makes homosexuality a crime in Uganda, and difficulties in overcoming the crisis in Madagascar, despite African Union mediation efforts.

The ACP-EU Assembly should have a say in ACP-EU economic partnership agreements (EPAs), reiterated Mr Michel, adding that within the new European Commission, development policy needs to retain enough autonomy from the rest of development policy to ensure that it can meet specific needs.

ACP Co-President Wilkie Rasmussen (Cook Islands), again called for EPAs to be accompanied by specific measures and funding to help ACP countries cope with the opening of their markets to European imports. "Otherwise, EPAs may not deliver on their development aid promises", warned Mr Rasmussen.

The formal session was opened by President of the Republic of Angola José Eduardo Dos Santos.

The ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, which twice a year brings together 78 members of the European Parliament and 78 parliamentarians from the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states, will adopt two urgent resolutions, one on climate change and the other on the political and institutional crisis in Madagascar.

The Assembly will debate and put to the vote on Thursday 3 December three reports on:

- Global governance and the reform of international institutions - Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez (S&D, ES) and Donald Ramotar (Guyana),
- Impact of the financial crisis on ACP countries - Hans Peter Mayer (EPP, DE) and Joseph Mugambe (Uganda), and
- Social and cultural integration and the participation of young people - Olle Schmidt (ALDE, SV) and Manuel Jiménez (Dominican Republic)

Venue: National Assembly of Angola Assembleia nacional, Caixa postal 1204, Luanda

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/acp/60_18/default_en.htm
Link to website of the ACP/EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly

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