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**PRESS RELEASE
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**More opportunities needed for
young people from ACP countries**

Committee on Social Affairs and the Environment

Directorate-General for Communication
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

YOUTH

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More opportunities needed for young people from ACP countries

Rapporteurs: Mr Manuel Jiménez (Dominican Republic) and Mr Olle Schmidt (Sweden)

Governments should give more attention to young people aged 15-24, who represent 31% of the population of the developing countries. Members of the European Parliament and their counterparts from the ACP countries call for a better access to education, employment and technologies to young people, in a resolution adopted on Saturday by the Social Affairs and Environment Committee.

Young people between 15 and 24 constitute 18% of the world's population or 1.2 billion people, almost 85% of which live in developing countries. They represent 25% of the global working-age population, but accounted for 43.7% of the unemployed in 2007.

To ensure a better integration and participation of young people in society, EU Member States and ACP countries should guarantee them full enjoyment of their rights and freedoms and eliminate all forms of discrimination, including towards young people living with HIV/AIDS.

The minimum age for voting should not be above 18 years of age to ensure full participation of youth in society, says the Assembly. Active participation of young people in society is essential both for their personal development and for sound and democratic national and global development, states the resolution.

The Assembly calls on the EU to enhance the protection measures for all young third country nationals working legally in Europe by working towards a definition of the status of semi-skilled and non-skilled labour. The EU and ACP governments should also create programmes to curtail brain drain of young people from developing countries.

Migration has become one of the coping mechanisms used by young people to expand their options for education and opportunities to work, states the resolution. The Assembly calls on EU Member States to ensure respect of young migrants' rights and the same access to education, social services and economic opportunities as those enjoyed by the citizens of the given country.

The Assembly calls on ACP and EU governments to establish programmes that reduce school drop-out rates, youth illiteracy and improve the quality of basic education.

Members also call for universal ICT access for young people and urge governments to provide grants and concessional loans to students from developing countries who would like to enrol in tertiary education.

The need to create more favourable conditions for young entrepreneurs, facilitating access to micro-credit for young people, is also highlighted in the resolution.

In the cultural field, the Assembly calls on the international community and EU and ACP governments to focus on preserving traditional handicrafts by allocating more funds to vocational training, manufacturing possibilities and to support sales and marketing of these products and to improve market access opportunities for cultural goods and services,

especially those produced by young people, and to improve the mobility of cultural goods and services.

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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