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REPORT

on Water Pollution

Committee on Social Affairs and the Environment

Co-rapporteurs: Mr Bobbo Hamatoukour (Cameroon) and
Ms Christa Klass

PART A: MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

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PROCEDURAL PAGE

At its meeting of 28 March 2010, the Bureau of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly authorised its Committee on Social Affairs and the Environment to draw up a report, pursuant to Rule 2(8) of its Rules of Procedure, on Water Pollution:

At its meeting of 29 September, the Committee on Social Affairs and the Environment appointed Mr Bobbo Hamatoukour (Cameroon) and Ms Christa Klass as co-rapporteurs.

The Committee on Social Affairs and the Environment considered the draft report at its meetings of 16 March and 14 May 2011.

At the latter meeting, it adopted the accompanying draft motion for a resolution.

The following were present for the vote: Aylward (for De Sarnez), Thompson (Barbados), Bauer, Bearder, Gaborone (Botswana), Sanou (Burkina Faso), Hamatoukour (Cameroon), Christensen, Engel (for Ronzulli), Baldeh (Gambia), Noel (Grenada), Hall, Haug, Kombo (Kenya), Klass, Neuser, Rivasi, Sithole (Mozambique), Tozaka (Salomon Islands), Nhleko (Swaziland), Ndugai (Tanzania), Khan (Trinidad and Tobago).

The resolution was tabled for adoption on 14 May 2011.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on Water Pollution

The ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly,

- meeting in Budapest (Hungary) from 16 to 18 May 2011,
- having regard to Article 17(1) of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 64/292 entitled ‘The human right to water and sanitation’,
- having regard to United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution 15/9 entitled ‘Human rights and access to safe drinking water and sanitation’,
- having regard to the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 8 September 2000, which sets out the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as criteria established jointly by the international community for the elimination of poverty, and particularly Goal 7,
- having regard to the July 2009 report by the UN Secretary-General on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration,
- having regard to the UNDP report entitled ‘Beyond the Midpoint: Achieving the Millennium Development Goals’ published in January 2010,
- having regard to the UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP report entitled ‘Stocktaking on the Millennium Development Goals’ published in January 2010,
- having regard to the UNDP Human Development Report 2006, entitled ‘Beyond scarcity: Power, poverty and the global water crisis’,
- having regard to the annual report (2010) entitled ‘UN-Water Global Annual Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS)’,
- having regard to the UNICEF report entitled ‘Progress for children – Achieving the MDGs with equity’ published in September 2010,
- having regard to the twelve-point EU action plan in support of the Millennium Development Goals that was issued by the European Commission on 21 April 2010,
- having regard to the UN High-Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on Millennium Development Goals hosted in New York on 20-22 September 2010,

- having regard to the G8 Water Action Plan, adopted in Evian in 2003, and its subsequent reports,
 - having regard to the Assessment Reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published in 1990, 1995, 2001 and 2007,
 - having regard to the Resolution on water in developing countries adopted by the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly on 23 November 2006 in Bridgetown (Barbados),
 - having regard to the report by the Committee on Social Affairs and the Environment (ACP-EU/100.915/11/A/fin.),
- A. whereas the UN General Assembly and Human Rights Council have recognised that access to safe drinking water and sanitation are a fundamental right,
 - B. whereas water is an essential resource for life and health and a public good, and not solely a commodity and that although the access to water is a fundamental right, societies and individuals bear the responsibility of managing it in a sustainable way,
 - C. whereas MDG 7 includes the specific target to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation; whereas despite all the progress that has been made, the countries of sub-Saharan Africa will not, as matters currently stand, achieve this Millennium Development Goal; whereas drinking water supplies and sanitation continue to be problems, particularly outside towns and cities,
 - D. whereas according to the latest UN figures, almost 900 million people in the world today do not have access to safe drinking water, that 2.6 billion people do not have access to basic sanitation and that contaminated water is the second biggest cause of infant mortality in the world,
 - E. whereas achieving MDG 7 would create an extra 322 million additional working days and would allow the health sector to save USD 7 billion per year; in addition, for every dollar invested in sanitation and safe drinking water, the return in terms of economic development is between USD 3 and USD 34,
 - F. whereas women and girls, responsible for collecting water and tending to the sick, are the first to suffer from the lack of safe drinking water and whereas access to safe water is essential for maternal health; in addition, the distances that need to be covered in order to have access to clean water and the lack of sanitation in schools has an adverse effect on access to education for girls in particular,

- G. whereas EU Member States are among the principal donors in the water sector and can draw on a wealth of experience in international development cooperation and water management,
- H. whereas the EU Water Initiative launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, September 2002), has been designed as an integrated approach to water resource management in order to meet the MDGs and sustainable development targets for drinking water and sanitation,
- I. whereas 70% of untreated industrial waste in developing countries is disposed into water and thus pollutes the water supply,
- J. whereas, because of long river courses and associated water systems, the problem of water pollution is a cross-border issue that requires common action,
- K. whereas in 2002 the EU adopted the Water Framework Directive (WFD) in order to rationalise its approach to water-related issues and to introduce a general obligation to protect the environment as well as a minimum standard for all surface waters,
- L. whereas climate change has an influence on access to safe water and sanitation, and the 2007 IPCC report concluded that climate change would reach dramatic proportions by 2050,
 - 1. Considers that, given the importance of water as a vital resource, access to safe drinking water is a fundamental human right and must be guaranteed, particularly for food preparation and hygiene, and as a fundamental resource for production; it must continue to be used as a human development indicator;
 - 2. Takes note that water pollution prevention is economically more reasonable than any water treatment and purification after domestic and economic use;
 - 3. Stresses that the problem of water and of water pollution is a cross-cutting issue and should be tackled with a multidisciplinary and multilateral approach combining economic viability, social solidarity, employment protection, ecological responsibility, the precautionary principle and rational use so as not to compromise the needs of future generations;
 - 4. Considers any investment in water infrastructure and services as catalysts for development as improved water services will provide jobs to local communities, will free up time for other productive activities and will foster the social dimension on local level;
 - 5. Stresses the importance of dialogue between institutions and the local population throughout the decision-making process concerning water resources in order to facilitate the participation of all interested parties and further to fulfil the real needs of users in choosing solutions which take account of the climate, the

environment and the skills available to install and maintain drinking water supply systems; insists in this regard on a proper communication strategy, education and advocacy measures on the importance of clean water;

6. Stresses the importance of financing micro- and small projects in order to bring about a sustainable improvement in local conditions, and stresses the need to improve information on possible sources of support;
7. Stresses the need to have an adequate legal framework guaranteeing access to water, including drinking water, its quality and its responsible use; recommends the introduction of the "polluter pays" principle; in this regard recalls that the adoption of such legislation on the protection of drinking water must be a priority for governments;

Waste water pollution

8. Stresses that safe access to clean water and proper disposal of waste water as well as water sanitation are important prerequisites for public health, with the particular goal of reducing mortality rates, especially among children, due to water-borne disease; therefore, the United Nations has recognised the right of access to sanitation as a human right, in the same way as the right to safe drinking water;
9. Stresses, however, that the provision of widespread safe access to drinking water through networks supplying drinking water and disposing of waste water is expensive and will be a burden on the limited financial capacities of many ACP countries; nevertheless recalls that this should be one of the priorities of the authorities and recommends the greater use of boreholes in villages and shanty towns with very rapidly increasing populations, and the use of innovative solutions such as chlorine tablets to combat epidemics such as cholera, which are caused by increasingly frequent flooding;
10. Insists on the need to combat waste wherever there is the risk of water shortage, and to balance water usage, in particular through re-use, bearing in mind its manifold values and fostering a sense of responsibility among users;
11. Believes that innovative solutions for balancing the water cycle must be encouraged, such as by alternative technologies adapted to the local situation, the use of organic matter as fertiliser and others measures;
12. Stresses that healthy and sufficient water can be secured only through long-term sustainable strategies and that to do this, the least expensive and most innovative, efficient and sustainable treatment technologies must be encouraged, if necessary through technology transfer, without neglecting the environmental dimension and taking into account the local situation, in consultation with the local population;

13. Stresses the importance of the Second ACP-EU Water Facility and therefore supports its future projects, which have been allocated EUR 200 million from the 10th European Development Fund, to ensure water supply and basic sanitation for the most disadvantaged populations and to contribute to improving water governance and management of water resources and to the sustainable development and maintenance of water infrastructure; recalls, however, that any decision in this respect must be taken as closely as possible to the people concerned;
14. Takes note of increasing agricultural production, mining, industrial production, power generation, forestry and other economic activities in ACP countries leading to alteration of chemical, biological and physical characteristics of water in ways that can threaten human health, ecosystems and biodiversity;

Industrial and agricultural pollution

15. Calls on the ACP countries and EU Member States to tackle the pollution of rivers by toxic chemicals and heavy metals, which are a major source of water pollution in EU countries as well as in some ACP countries; asks that all possible measures be taken to prevent industry, deforestation, mining, chemical production and extensive use of pesticides in agriculture and horticulture from affecting water quality and purity, in accordance with the precautionary principle; in that regard calls for standards to be introduced and for check analyses to be carried out in at-risk areas with penalties for polluters, in order to combat the pollution of surface waters (rivers, lakes, run-offs) and the water table by fertilisers, pesticides, toxic chemicals and heavy metals;

Climate and demographic change

16. Underlines the need to study further the links between the rising global population and climate change, and in particular the potential impact on access to essential natural resources, such as safe drinking water, and on coastal waters;
17. Takes note of increasing urbanisation in ACP countries which triggers a need for large investment in infrastructure in order to deliver water and to process wastewater; encourages in this regard the investment in recovery and reuse of water in order to save water and in consequence energy;
18. Urges the international community to recognise the importance of tropical forest protection and to start tackling this as a priority issue, recognising the need to obtain from the main CO₂-producing countries adequate funding and the technology transfers needed for preserving the planet's water resources and for dealing with climate change and the restrictions that it could impose on drinking water resources; asks the European Commission to transfer the best legal and technological water protection practices to the ACP countries;

19. Calls on the European Commission to create an online platform for compiling examples of best practice in water protection;
20. Instructs its Co-Presidents to forward this resolution to the ACP-EU Council of Ministers, the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Presidency of the Council of the EU and the African Union.