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REPORT

on food security issues in ACP countries and the role of ACP-EU cooperation

Committee on Economic Development, Finance and Trade

Co-rapporteurs: Mohammed Ali (Ethiopia) and Alain Hutchinson

PART A: MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

APP/100.205/A/fin.

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PROCEDURAL PAGE

At its meeting of 24 June 2007, the Bureau of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly authorised its Committee on Economic Development, Finance and Trade to draw up a report, pursuant to Rule 2(8) of its Rules of Procedure, on food security issues in ACP countries and the role of ACP-EU cooperation.

At its meeting of 23 June 2007, the Committee on Economic Development, Finance and Trade appointed Mohammed Ali (Ethiopia) as the ACP co-rapporteur, and Alain Hutchinson as the EU co-rapporteur.

The Committee on Economic Development, Finance and Trade considered the draft report at its meetings of 23 January 2008 and 15 March 2008.

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

The following were present for the vote: Kgathi (Botswana) (co-chair); Schlyter (co-chair), Kutekela (Democratic Republic of Congo) (vice-chair), Dombrovskis (vice-chair), Waziri (Nigeria) (vice-chair), Ribero E Castro (vice-chair), Ali (Ethiopia) (co-rapporteur), Hutchinson (co-rapporteur), Berend, Manirakiza (Burundi), Gahler (replacing Wijkman), Dalrymple-Philibert (Jamaica), Kinnock, Tiheli (Lesotho), Assarid (Mali), Guelaye (Mauritania), Mayer, Mushelenga (Namibia), Polisi (Rwanda), Schnellhardt (replacing Lulling), Seck (Senegal), William (Seychelles), Lahai (Sierra Leone), Dekuek (Sudan), Mugambe (Uganda), Van Lancker and Njobvu (Zambia).

The resolution was tabled for adoption on 15 March 2008.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on food security issues in ACP countries and the role of ACP-EU cooperation

The ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly,

- meeting in Ljubljana (Slovenia) from 17 to 20 March 2008,
- having regard to Rule 17(1) of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the conclusions of the World Food Summit of 1996 and their objective of reducing by half the number of people on Earth suffering from hunger by 2015,
- having regard to the United Nations statement on the Millennium Development Goals and its commitment to halving the proportion of people suffering from hunger and living on less than one US dollar a day,
- having regard to the objectives of the ACP-EU partnership agreements signed in Lomé and in Cotonou concerning development and trade.
- having regard to the UN report of 25 October 2007 drafted by the US Special Rapporteur on food,
- having regard to its ‘Kigali Declaration on Trade’ of 22 November 2007,
- having regard to the conclusions of the EU-Africa summit of December 2007 and the First Action Plan,
- having regard to the conclusions of the 2007 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Report,
- having regard to the report by the Committee on Economic Development, Finance and Trade (ACP-EU/100.205/08/fin.),

Importance of the agriculture sector in the economy of ACP countries

- A. whereas the international community has undertaken to halve extreme poverty and hunger in the world by 2015 (pursuant to the first Millennium Development Goal), and whereas food insecurity affects almost one-third of the inhabitants of ACP countries,
- B. whereas since 1996 the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation has defined food security as ‘access for all people at all times to sufficient, safe and nutritious food for a healthy, active life’,
- C. whereas the repercussions of hunger are more pronounced in rural areas (which are home to up to 60% of the population which is directly dependent upon agriculture or agriculture-related rural activities), and whereas agriculture is the ACP countries' main economic sector (20% of GDP and two-thirds of employment),

- D. whereas despite the proven importance of the agriculture sector to ACP countries, neither national governments nor EU development cooperation policies award priority to this key sector, in addition to which small farmers are becoming increasingly marginalised,

ACP-EU cooperation and food security

- E. whereas the objective of promoting the integration of the ACP countries into the global economy, provided for in the Lomé and Cotonou Agreements, has yet to be attained and, despite the privileged access to the European market that products from ACP countries enjoy, their share of the imports to the EU has continued to decrease,
- F. whereas a hasty opening to European exports of the markets of ACP countries would expose the economies of those countries to major upheaval and weaken them,
- G. whereas only four of the 78 ACP countries made agriculture a priority sector under the 9th EDF, while 15 chose rural development, and whereas only 7% of the 9th EDF's budget has been allocated to rural development and 1.1% to activities specifically linked to agriculture,
- H. whereas by subsidising the exportation of its agricultural products, the European Union is practising dumping on the markets of the ACP countries, with serious consequences for the small local producers unable to compete with European products, which sometimes sell for a third of the price of their products,

Challenges associated with food security in ACP countries

- I. whereas 60% of the world's ecosystems, including freshwater and fisheries resources, have been degraded or misused, and the first people to suffer from this will be the very poor; whereas the sectors most exposed to risk are water, agriculture, human health, biodiversity and the rise in sea levels,
- J. whereas an increase in food production is an important key to reducing food insecurity, in so far as it helps to bring down food prices and to increase producers' income,
- K. whereas irrigation can to a significant extent increase and ensure agricultural production,
- L. in view of the importance of drinking water to food security and the difficulty of accessing it in ACP countries, with the health problems which that entails,
- M. whereas the ACP countries must enjoy effective public services with particular regard to access to water, which is a key aspect of food security,
- N. in view of the frequency of disasters affecting the agriculture sector, coupled with the decrease in the resources allocated for food aid before and after such disasters in ACP countries,

- O. whereas the ACP countries are dependent on exports of commodities that constitute over 50% of their foreign currency revenue,
- P. whereas the role of women in ACP countries is of crucial importance for development, particularly as regards food security and production and health, and whereas inequality between the sexes reduces women's ability to play that role,
- Q. whereas a direct link exists between women's access to, and control over, household resources and an improvement in the level of their households' food security,
- R. whereas, according to FAO estimates, 7 million agricultural workers have died of HIV/AIDS since 1985, and the pandemic is set to claim 16 million more victims over the next two decades in the 25 African countries worst affected,
- S. whereas HIV/AIDS mainly affects the productive labour force, reducing not only the amount of work done but also its quality,

Responses to the challenges associated with food security in ACP countries

- T. whereas increased access to modern information technologies is essential to enhancing capacities and better informing farmers on practices, prices and access to the factors of production,
1. Stresses the essential nature of the right to food; reminds the EU and the ACP countries that they have undertaken to help halve the proportion of the population who suffer from hunger by 2015, and calls upon the Commission, the EU Council and the ACP countries to adopt - and properly finance - whatever measures are needed in order to enable that commitment to be honoured;
 2. Calls for adequate recognition of the importance of Extension Services, Research and Farmer Linkages in pursuing food-security objectives; Stresses the need for ACP countries to adopt affordable technologies that have proved to be effective in an innovative manner for achieving food security;
 3. Points out that in order to strengthen food security in the ACP countries, the most effective method for possible sustainable exploitation of agricultural land must first be identified and policies which further such development must then be devised;
 4. Considers it essential to give fresh impetus to the EU-ACP partnership by negotiating fair and balanced EPAs which are genuinely geared towards development and not purely confined to trade considerations;
 5. Takes the view that imposing the liberalisation of services on ACP countries has a negative influence on the development of promising new sectors and deprives the public authorities in those countries of the power to manage key public services which are more in accordance with the realities of the societies concerned;

6. Stresses that it is essential for the discussions on the implementation of the 10th EDF to take far greater account of the needs of populations in terms of agricultural food production than has previously been the case;
7. Calls on the EU to include in its 10th EDF a specific priority programme of agricultural development for each of the ACP countries, and for that programme to include clear and ambitious targets as well as concrete measures to be established and applied within precise time limits, in close consultation with farmers' organisations and civil society;
8. Calls for efficient planning of water supply in the area of irrigation in ACP countries, so as to enable significant growth in agricultural production; stresses that water and water-related services (which are essential to food security) cannot be regarded as a commodity or as commercial services and calls for the EU and the ACP countries to have the right to water formally recognised as a universal, indivisible, inalienable and imprescriptible human right stemming from the right to life for all;
9. Calls upon the EU and the ACP countries to back a comprehensive movement in support of public-private water-access partnership programmes launched by and involving north-south, south-south and north-north local communities;
10. Calls on the EU to factor into its development policy the short-term needs and constraints to which men and women living in rural areas are subject, be these social, economic, judicial or technological, in order to guarantee the success of agricultural and rural development projects and programmes in general and, in particular, programmes relating to food security and to rural and agricultural development; stresses in this connection the importance of investing in educational programmes for all people living in rural areas;
11. Urges the ACP countries and the European Union to lay emphasis on gender equality in general, and to recognise and promote the multi-dimensional role of women in seeking to achieve food security, with particular regard to the access and / or acquisition of land in order to allow for sustainable growth in this sector;
12. Calls upon the EU and the ACP countries to recognise the vital economic role played by women in the agricultural sector and the importance of increasing women's productivity and their contribution to food systems; calls upon them to incorporate, as a major concern in their food-security policies and programmes, the direct link between women's access to, and control over household resources and an improvement in their households' level of food security; calls upon the Commission, the Council and the ACP countries to make micro-credit programmes accessible to women in rural areas;
13. Urges the ACP countries and the European Union to release additional resources to which they were committed towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the third one ('Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education enrolments preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015'), since proper nutrition for entire families depends to a large extent on women;
14. Expresses concern at the fact that HIV/AIDS constitutes a risk for the economic and social development of ACP countries, owing to the decrease in the workforce, and also in the quality of work done, and calls for the issue of HIV/AIDS also to be considered

from the viewpoint of food security and its impact on nutrition;

15. Urges EU and ACP governments to address the problem of land-tenure arrangements for HIV/AIDS-affected households and individuals in areas where there is land pressure/land scarcity and calls on them to address the impact of changes on land-tenure systems (including patterns of ownership, inheritance, access and rights) as a consequence of HIV/AIDS with a focus on women and children;
16. Recommends that agricultural and rural development be promoted and that investments be made which, as a priority, lead to opportunities being created for the very poor to improve their livelihoods;
17. Urges increased investment in New Information Technologies (ICTs) in order to improve capacities and better inform farmers regarding production factors and in order to facilitate market access; believes that a special effort is needed to ensure that the poorest people in ACP countries can access information technologies, which means putting in place policies to address computer illiteracy and the high cost and lack of access to computer equipment;
18. Recommends that support be provided for training and for the exchange, development and adoption of sound agricultural practices in the ACP countries, in order to ensure the poor have immediate access to food; calls upon the Council, the Commission and each of the Member States to support research into bio-fuels produced from agricultural waste and those produced from inedible plants grown on arid or semi-arid land;
19. Calls upon ACP Countries and the EU to promote the adoption by the UN General Assembly of a moratorium on plant production intended for conversion into fuel;
20. Emphasises the need for the EU and the ACP countries to have effective, well-thought-out emergency plans for dealing with emergency situations arising from disasters in the agricultural sector;
21. Recommends that studies be carried out into environmental problems such as soil deterioration, damage to the biodiversity of agricultural areas and the effects of climate change on agriculture, and that relevant action be taken in order to enable environmental resources to be properly managed (an example being the regeneration and conservation of soil);
22. Calls upon the ACP countries to bolster their government procedures for budget implementation and management with a particular view to facilitating the financing of all specific actions and measures designed to combat food insecurity;
23. Believes it essential to increase ODA, in particular for the least developed countries, in order to help provide basic facilities in rural areas;
24. Deplores the inadequate coordination, particularly at national level but also within the international development community, of the efforts made in the context of programmes which are a burden on human and financial resources;

25. Calls for a pinpointing of the areas in which the integration of policies is particularly poor, and for development of the means to enable that integration at every level;
26. Instructs its Co-Presidents to forward this resolution to the ACP-EU Council and the European Commission.