DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Development

for the Committee on Foreign Affairs

on the proposal for a recommendation to the Council on EU priorities for the 64th UN General Assembly
(2008/XXXX(INI))

Rapporteur: Glenys Kinnock
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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Development calls on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Notes with grave concern the growing evidence that the world is falling far short of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) promise, that there has been a failure to significantly reduce maternal death rates, and that if current trends are not revised, the target for cutting child mortality will be missed by the equivalent of 2 million additional deaths in 2015, and there will still be over 29 million children out of school; calls on the EU to exercise global leadership in galvanising international action to deliver on the MDG pledges;

2. Welcomes the initiative to convene the September 2008 UN High-Level Event on the MDGs;

3. Welcomes the reaffirmation, at that meeting, of the EU's collective funding commitments for 2010 and 2015, but notes with particular concern that some EU Member States are failing to honour these pledges, and that the share of GNI that Member States devote to Official Development Assistance has, on average, fallen since 2005;

4. Recognises that deep-rooted inequalities of opportunity based on gender, wealth, ethnicity and region are holding back progress towards achieving the MDGs; calls on developed and developing country partners to strengthen their focus on social justice and improved equity, by establishing ‘equity targets’ and reporting on progress in reducing unfair gaps in life chances;

5. Underlines that, in the face of global economic slowdown, the global food crisis and global warming, it is more important than ever to focus on achieving the MDGs, and to honour funding pledges;

6. Stresses that, as the financial crisis develops into a deepening recession, developing countries could be set back by decades as a result of falling commodity prices, lower investment flows, financial instability, and a decline in remittances; further notes that the value of existing EU aid commitments will fall by nearly USD 12 billion a year, because they are expressed as a percentage of Member State GDP;

7. Fully supports the commitment to hold a high-level UN conference on the world financial and economic crisis and its impact on development, which was agreed at the 2008 Doha Financing for Development conference, and recommends that the EU calls for the urgent organisation of such a conference;

8. Welcomes the Business Call to Action initiative and the commitments to funding and supporting MDG efforts, but, in parallel, urges an increase in accountability from the corporate sector;

9. Considers that the occasion of the 64th General Assembly offers a good opportunity for the Commission and Council to report on the progress made towards meeting the
benchmarks set out in the EU Agenda for Action on MDGs;

10. Further invites the Commission to report on the progress made in implementing MDG Contracts and to encourage other donors to deliver more of their aid on a long-term, predictable basis in the form of budget support;

11. Urges Members States to communicate in the strongest terms to the European public the consequences of failure to achieve the MDGs not just for those most immediately affected, but for future international prosperity, stability and security.