

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0664/09

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to the Commission

Subject: Irregularities in development projects and EU procurement of excessively expensive mosquito nets

A report from the World Bank (Detailed Implementation Review, India Health Sector - World Bank from December 2007¹) shows considerable irregularities in the World Bank's health programme running in India from 1997 until it was terminated in 2002 due to allegations of fraud and corruption.

One of the problems emphasised in the report concerns the supply, buying, sale and distribution of long-lasting, insecticide-treated bed nets, the so-called LLINs which prevent malaria.

According to the report, the procurement procedure and decisions on bed nets have been such that tenders on bed nets have been subject to fraud and corruption, which resulted in high prices and different, and poorer, quality than promised.

The irregularities in the management of the programme resulted in a waste of taxpayers' money and a less effective health programme than expected, at the expense of the beneficiaries of the health programmes. As most World Bank programmes are sponsored by members of the EU, it is of great importance that the EU facilitates full transparency on these issues.

1. Does the European Commission have any documentation on these irregularities, or if not, does the European Commission intend to procure documentation of the claims in the World Bank report, thus clearing, or summoning before a court, the European companies accused in the case?

If similar problems have arisen elsewhere in the world the EU could be contributing to keeping prices of bed nets artificially high due to corruption and other irregularities.

2. Will the European Commission take the initiative to investigate whether EU funds have been used legally in buying nets from the accused companies, in other parts of the world?

¹ The report can be found here:
(<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/ORGANIZATION/ORGUNITS/EXTDOI/0,,contentMDK:21810144~menuPK:5372841~pagePK:64168445~piPK:64168309~theSitePK:588921,00.html>)