

ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

ACP-EU 100.205/08/fin.

RESOLUTION¹

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 Article 17(1) of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the conclusions of the 1996 World Food Summit and the 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 subsequently in Cotonou concerning development and trade,
- having regard to the UN report of 25 October 2007 drafted by the UN Special Rapporteur on Food,
- having regard to its Kigali Declaration of 22 November 2007 for development-friendly Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs),
- 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 to the economies 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 in 1996 the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation 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

¹ Adopted by the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly on 20 March in Ljubljana (Slovenia).

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 give priority to this key sector, in addition to which small farmers are becoming increasingly marginalised,

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- E. whereas the objective of promoting the integration of the ACP countries into the global economy, as provided for in the Lomé and Cotonou Agreements, has yet to be attained and whereas, despite the privileged access to the European market that products from ACP countries enjoy, their share of imports to the EU has continued to decrease,
- F. whereas a hasty opening up to European exports of ACP countries' markets would expose the economies of those countries to major upheaval and would 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 export of its agricultural products, the European Union is practising dumping on the markets of the ACP countries, with serious consequences for the local producers, who are unable to compete with European products which sometimes sell for a third of the price of their own 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 greatest risks are linked to water, agriculture, human health, biodiversity and the rise in sea levels,
- J. whereas increasing food production is of key importance to reducing food insecurity in so far as it helps to bring down food prices and to increasing producers' incomes,
- K. whereas irrigation can, to a significant extent, increase, and ensure, the sustainability of agricultural production,
- L. having regard to drinking water's importance to food security and the difficulty of accessing it in ACP countries, with the health problems which this 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. noting the environmental benefit of agrifuels, while highlighting the challenges their production represents in terms of availability of arable land, food prices and hunger eradication in the context of the Millennium Development Goals,

- O. having regard to the frequency of disasters affecting the agriculture sector, coupled with the decrease in the resources allocated to food aid before and after such disasters in ACP countries,
- P. whereas the ACP countries are dependent on exports of commodities, which account for over 50% of their foreign currency revenue,
- Q. whereas the role of women in ACP countries is of crucial importance to development, particularly as regards food security and health, and whereas inequality between the sexes reduces women's ability to play that role,
- R. whereas a direct link exists between women's access to, and control over, household resources and an improvement in their households' food security,
- S. whereas, according to FAO estimates, seven 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,
- T. whereas HIV/AIDS mainly affects the productive labour force, reducing not only the amount of work done but also the quality of that work,

Responses to the challenges associated with food security in ACP countries

- U. whereas increased access to modern information technologies is essential to enhancing capacities and better informing farmers on practices, prices and access to 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 research - extension services - farmer linkages in pursuing food-security objectives; stresses the need for ACP countries to adopt affordable technologies that have proved to be effective and innovative for achieving food security;
 3. Points out that, in order to strengthen food security in the ACP countries, the most effective method for sustainable exploitation of agricultural land must first be identified and policies which foster the use of that method 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 on the EU Commission and Council to give priority, in close consultation with the ACP countries, to the issue of the impact on ACP countries of Europe subsidising the export of its agricultural products, and to pledge to provide concrete solutions for the prevention of dumping, in line with the commitments made in connection with the Millennium Development Goals;
9. Urges the EU Member States and the international community to assist the WFP in facing up to new challenges in the fight against hunger, with soaring global food and oil prices, increasingly severe weather shocks due in part to climate change, and declining global food stocks;
10. Calls for efficient planning of water supply for irrigation in ACP countries, so as to permit 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;
11. 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;
12. 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 they 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; stresses, in this connection, the importance of investing in educational programmes for all people living in rural areas;
13. 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, particularly in connection with regard to access to and acquisition of land, in order to allow sustainable growth in this sector;
14. 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' food security; calls upon the EU Commission and Council and the ACP countries to make micro-credit programmes accessible to women in rural areas;
15. Urges the ACP countries and the European Union to release the additional resources to

which they committed with a view to meeting the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the third goal ('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;

16. 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 size of the workforce, and also in the quality of the 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;
17. 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) caused by HIV/AIDS, with a focus on women and children;
18. Recommends that agricultural and rural development be promoted and that investments be made which, as a priority, lead to opportunities for the very poor to improve their livelihoods;
19. Urges increased investment in information and communication technologies (ICTs) in order to improve capacities and better inform farmers about production factors, and to facilitate market access; believes that a special effort is needed to ensure that the poorest people in ACP countries can access ICTs, which means putting in place policies to address computer illiteracy and the high cost and lack of access to computer equipment;
20. 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 that the poor have immediate access to food; calls upon the EU Council and 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;
21. 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;
22. Emphasises the need for the EU and the ACP countries to have effective, well-thought-out plans for dealing with emergency situations arising from disasters in the agricultural sector;
23. 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 (one example being the regeneration and conservation of soil);
24. Calls upon the ACP countries to bolster their government procedures for budget implementation and management, particularly with a view to facilitating the financing of all specific actions and measures designed to combat food insecurity;
25. Calls on the EU Member States and Commission to increase ODA, in particular for the least developed ACP states and the net-food-importing ACP states, so as to enable them to mitigate the adverse effects they are experiencing following the significant rises in

food prices which are increasingly exacerbating their balance of payments problems;

26. 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;
27. Calls for 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;
28. Instructs its Co-Presidents to forward this resolution to the ACP-EU Council and the European Commission.