

Resolution on the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

2011/2599(RSP) - 07/04/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

The resolution was tabled by the S&D, ALDE, Greens/ALE, EPP, and ECR groups.

It notes that 48 countries are currently classified as LDCs, 33 in Africa, 14 in Asia and one in Latin America, and that 75% of the 800 million inhabitants of the LDCs live on less than USD 2 per day. Only 3 countries have graduated from LDC status.

Parliament notes that LDC-IV will assess the results of the Brussels Programme of Action as it comes to an end and propose new actions (2011-2020) designed to encourage the sharing of best practices and lessons learnt and identify policy decisions and challenges that the LDCs will face in the next decade. **Parliament considers that LDC-IV should be result-oriented, on the basis of clear indicators and the objective of reducing the number of LDCs by half by 2020**, combined with efficient and transparent monitoring and follow-up mechanisms. It notes that the LDC-IV recommendation can only be achieved if crucial issues affecting LDCs, such as policy coherence between trade and development, agriculture, fisheries, investment and climate change, are properly addressed and important topics, such as governance and the fight against corruption, in particular the concept of the 'governance contract' (incorporating in particular a social threshold) between partner and donor countries, and human capacity-building, are put on the agenda. LDC-IV should therefore focus on Policy Coherence for Development as an important factor for policy shift, at national and international level. Policy-making in all areas – such as trade, fisheries, the environment, agriculture, climate change, energy, investment and finance – must support the development needs of LDCs in order to fight poverty and guarantee decent incomes and livelihoods;

Members stress that EU aid to LDCs should be geared primarily to wealth creation and the development of a market economy, which are basic prerequisites for **poverty eradication**. They call for priority to be given to economic growth as a key element for development and overall poverty reduction in LDCs. The EU is urged to honour its commitments in terms of **market access and debt alleviation**. Parliament reaffirms the importance of reaching the ODA target of 0.15 to 0.20% of GNI for the LDCs, mobilising, for this purpose, domestic resources and, as a complementary measure, innovative financing mechanisms. It wants new measures to integrate the LDCs into the global economy and improve their access to EU markets, and calls on the Commission to increase its trade-related assistance to help the poorest countries deal with the competition resulting from market liberalisation. Parliament is aware that the Everything But Arms (EBA) initiative, which was taken after LDC-III and the adoption of the BPoA, has not fully achieved its original objectives and, therefore, that **the quality and the volume of trade from LDCs to the EU market has remained below expectations**, in particular because of a lack of adequate trade-related and port infrastructure. It advocates the development of such infrastructure, which remains the key to increasing trade capacities.

It also calls on the EU, its Member States and the UN, as appropriate, to do the following:

- give priority to food security, agriculture, infrastructure, capacity-building, inclusive economic growth, access to technologies and human and social development in the LDCs;
- take effective measures on price volatility and transparency and on better regulated financial markets in order to protect the LDCs and reduce their vulnerability;
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- establish fair and equitable trade rules and the implementation of integrated policies across a wide range of economic, social and environmental issues in order to foster sustainable development
- discuss the implementation of innovative development financing mechanisms at the LDC IV such as a financial transaction tax;
 - seriously address at LDC-IV the adverse impact of farmland acquisition, such as the expropriation of small farmers and the unsustainable use of land and water;
 - identify the LDCs' needs and strategies, to diversify trade by enhancing fair prices for LDC production and to address supply-side constraints to increase the LDCs' trading capacity and ability to attract investment which respects ILO core labour standards and protection of the environment;
 - in view of the fact that the new US 'Conflict Minerals' Law is a huge step forward in combating the illegal mining of and trading in minerals in Africa, the UN should put forward a similar proposal to ensure the traceability of imported minerals on the world market.

Lastly, Members emphasise the role played by the European Parliament and its decisive role in approving the EU development budget. They are therefore convinced that Parliament should be more closely involved in preparing EU development strategy. They consider it essential, furthermore, for a reporting-back mechanism to be put in place.