

Work of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in 2010

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The Committee on Development adopted the own-initiative report by Filip KACZMAREK (EPP, PL) on the work of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) in 2010, welcoming the fact that in 2010 the JPA continued to provide a framework for an open, democratic and in-depth dialogue between the EU and the ACP countries on the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, including the EPAs, and also the Regional Strategy Papers for the six ACP regions. However, it stresses the need to **pay more attention to the outcomes of the work of the ACP-EU JPA**, and to ensure coherence between its resolutions and those of the EP. The report asks for more participation and involvement of MEPs in its meetings and activities.

Members regret the fact that the **EU Council was absent from the 20th Session** which was held from 30 November to 3 December 2010 in Kinshasa (DRC). They urge the High Representative to ensure that the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS) will lead to a clarification of the role of the EU Council and a clear delineation of responsibility between the EEAS and the Commission in terms of the implementation of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement.

The report stresses in particular the **crucial role of the ACP national parliaments** in managing and monitoring, and local authorities and non-state actors in monitoring, the Country and Regional Strategy Papers and the implementation of the European Development Fund (EDF), and calls on the Commission to guarantee their involvement. It also stresses the need for close parliamentary scrutiny during the negotiation and conclusion of EPAs.

Members call on the parliaments of the ACP countries to insist that their governments and the Commission involve them in the process of drafting and implementing the Country and Regional Strategy Papers relating to cooperation between the EU and their countries over the period from 2008 to 2013 and ensure their full participation in the EPA negotiations. It calls on the Commission to supply all available information to the parliaments of the ACP countries and to assist them in exercising democratic scrutiny, in particular by means of capacity-building.

Members draw attention also to the **need to involve parliaments in the democratic process** and in the national development strategies, stressing their vital role in establishing, following up and monitoring development policies. Together with ACP governments, the Commission and the JPA, national parliaments are asked to:

- exercise close parliamentary scrutiny of the EDF. Members highlight the JPA's key position in this debate and calls on it and the parliaments of the ACP countries to take an active part therein, in particular in connection with the ratification of the revised Cotonou Partnership Agreement;
- take steps to tackle climate change that take account of the need to maintain growth, eradicate poverty and guarantee fair access to resources, and the Commission is to verify that the European Water Fund, established to provide the very poor in the ACP countries with a water supply and basis sanitation facilities, is being properly used and proving beneficial;
- uphold the full right to land and to take measures restricting the phenomenon of land hoarding that could lead to severe environmental damage, the migration of local smallholders and workers, exploitation of resources and the loss of means of subsistence and food security;

The committee goes on to call on the EU and the ACP countries to encourage citizens, and particularly women, to **participate on issues such as gender violence** or human trafficking, since the involvement of society is vital if progress is to be made in resolving these problems. It acknowledges the problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills of women, and **urges the Commission and the JPA to include more women in task forces** and working groups dealing with issues such as family life, child care, education, etc.

The Commission is also asked to:

- update the JPA on the state of play of the ratification of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, as revised in Ouagadougou on 22 June 2010;
- promote equitable and sustainable development incorporating the social dimension, which supports new forms of enterprises (e.g. cooperatives);
- provide the members of the JPA with information on the Community financing granted to host countries in the form of budgetary support. Members stress that some States benefiting from budgetary support have a controversial political system and that Members of the European Parliament should be informed of the Commission's assessment of the eligibility criteria for budgetary support and of the monitoring thereof.

Noting that the budget of the ACP Secretariat made it possible for two **fact-finding missions**, to Madagascar and Haiti, the report calls on the JPA to continue to monitor the situation in Haiti, Madagascar and South Sudan, and to send an observation mission to monitor the level and effectiveness of humanitarian aid to the populations struck by famine in the Horn of Africa. It draws attention to the need to cooperate closely with the new Haitian authorities and to support them as they structure their institutions, move towards a fully operational democracy and throughout the whole of the reconstruction process.

Lastly, the committee deplores strongly the fact that virtually no mention was made during the JPA in Kinshasa of the increase in acts of mass sexual violence and of general impunity, particularly in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.