The impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations in developing countries

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The Committee on Development adopted the own-initiative report by Mónica Silvana GONZÁLEZ (S&D, ES) on the impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations in developing countries.

The report stressed that the impacts of climate change undermine countries' development prospects, act as a risk multiplier for drought, famine and hence conflict and forced displacement, and deepen existing vulnerabilities, inequalities and gender discrimination.

The report also noted that the impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations can exacerbate migratory flows to the Member States. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has drastically increased vulnerabilities in developing countries.

Climate responsibility

The report recalled that the world is badly off track to reach the agreed objective of limiting global heating to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels while pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C. Members are alarmed by the adverse impacts of this on developing countries. They regret the lack of ambition and urged world leaders to take the appropriate and necessary action.

They called on the EU to show climate and biodiversity leadership and to make its European Green Deal an example of such necessary action and insisted that it must contain a stronger external dimension to support partner countries in their efforts to adapt to climate change, taking full account of the particular needs of the most vulnerable populations and groups suffering from discrimination.

Climate finance

The EU, its Member States and the European Investment Bank together are the biggest contributor of climate finance to developing countries. Members reiterated their call for a commitment by the EU and its Member States to set their official development assistance (ODA) contributions at 0.7 % of gross national income (GNI) by 2020 in order to significantly increase their support for adaptation, disaster risk reduction, preparedness and resilience, prioritising grants-based finance, in particular for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Members called for additional support towards delivering the EU's fair share of the pledged new and additional climate finance from developed countries to developing countries, which should have reached USD 100 billion per year by 2020.

The report called for the post-2025 target for climate finance to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable countries are met. Future finance goals should take account of the needs of developing countries, as well as the Paris Agreement's equity principle, in determining EU contributions.

A comprehensive strategy

The Commission is called on to prepare a comprehensive strategy for a substantively reinforced EU contribution to limiting the impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations in developing countries through, *inter alia*:

- the reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions, through cuts to the EU's own emissions and ambitious objectives in all sectors of the economy, in terms of both internal and external policies of the EU, in line with the objectives of the Paris Agreement and prioritising climate change adaptation within partner countries;

- the reduction of general vulnerability through eradicating poverty, fighting inequality, and supporting the development of resilient and universal social protection systems;

- increasing support for developing countries' capacities to limit the impact of climate change on vulnerable people, through adequate funding for mitigation and adaptation, including for averting, minimising and addressing loss and damage;

- introducing a circular economy and an effective waste management system to prevent the exporting of plastic rubbish and hazardous waste to developing countries and environmental degradation outside the EU.

Funding actions to limit and manage the impacts of climate change

The report called for funds to be earmarked within the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) for specific actions to limit and manage the impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations in developing countries and for proactive use of the NDICI's rapid response pillar for prevention and management of climate-related crises and climate-induced displacement.

It recalled its position that 45 % of NDICI expenditure should contribute to climate and environmental protection and disaster risk management objectives.

Reducing vulnerability

Members stressed that the strategy must include efforts to eradicate poverty, reduce inequality and strengthen good governance and human rights in general as a means to reduce vulnerability to risks and harm caused by climate change.

The Commission is called on to address the health consequences of climate change, work to mitigate health risks related to disasters, improve access to basic healthcare services and enhance cooperation between health authorities and other relevant stakeholders to strengthen capacities for disaster risk management and the building of resilient health systems.

Lastly, Members called on the Commission to invest in programmes that accelerate the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement with a view to eliminating the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin, including through climate change mitigation and adaptation. The EU is called on to provide adequate responses to climate displacement, and to include the gender perspective in all migration polices, with a view to safeguarding climate justice.