Development policy: mainstreaming of gender equality in development cooperation, action programme 2001-2006

2001/2193(COS) - 21/06/2001 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : to present a Programme of Action for the mainstreaming of gender equality in Community Development Co-operation. CONTENT : Gender equality is crucial for development in general and the link between gender and poverty has made the relevance of gender mainstreaming in development co-operation more critical than ever before. Gender mainstreaming is a long-term incremental approach of integration of gender issues in policy and planning. There are three main reasons for mainstreaming gender issues in Community development co-operation: - a disproportionate majority of the world's poor are women who, in some instances, lack not only access to important economic and social resources, but also have their human rights as individuals denied to them; - investments in improving the situation of women (providing education, improving health and securing their land and labour rights) translate into higher levels of productivity, and lower levels of infant and female mortality, food insecurity and poverty; - the European Union has a long-standing engagement to promoting gender equality and has played an active role in international conferences advocating womens' rights, notably at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, 1995. It is now time to prioritise positive actions and mainstream gender concerns into every level of development co-operation. This Programme of Action capitalises on these achievements and proposes concrete actions for the future. It proposes to mainstream gender around three major axes: 1) the analysis and integration of gender within the priority areas identified by the Community Development Policy: a) support for macro-economic policies and poverty reduction strategies and social development programmes in health and education; b) food security and sustainable rural development; c) transport; d) institutional capacity building, good governance and the rule of law; e) trade and development and f) regional integration and co-operation. Gender is a crosscutting theme in all these six areas. 2) Strengthening gender mainstreaming within projects and programmes at regional and country levels. 3) Gender capacity building which as an incremental process will underpin the Commission's capacity to effectively mainstream gender issues across board. The Programme of Action is to be implemented during a five-year period (2001-2006). A strong commitment from the EC, developing countries, Member States and other donors will demonstrate that greater gender equality is achievable through a systematic and coherent mainstreaming approach.