Sustainable development: towards a global partnership

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The committee adopted the report by Paul LANNOYE (Greens/EFA, B) on the Commission communication ahead of the world summit on sustainable development (WSSD) to be held in Johannesburg in September 2002. With a view to achieving the "Millenium Goal" of reducing poverty by half by 2015, the committee called on Member States to increase their development aid, first of all, to an EU average of 0.39% of GDP and then to 0.7% by 2010. It also urged them to agree on an immediate moratorium on debt servicing for all countries belonging to the group of HIPCs and/or LDCs and to waive all remaining bilateral debts for those countries. MEPs further suggested that the EU should propose the introduction of a currency transaction tax to the Johannesburg Summit. The report deplored the fact that GDP growth was still viewed as the single most important indicator of progress in society and urged the Commission to work for an agreement in Johannesburg to complement present-day national accounting with indicators that reflect social and environmental aspects of development. It welcomed the decision to introduce Sustainability Impact Assessments (SIAs) for all major Community policy initiatives and called for SIAs to be a pre-condition for all EU trade agreements and programmes. It also called for a halt to pressure on developing countries to open their markets to foodstuffs imported from the EU where there would be an adverse effect for small producers or food safety. In order to conserve natural resources the committee called for the Summit to develop specific initiatives based on the work undertaken at Rio in areas such as the oceans and seas, coastal zones, mountains, tropical forests, desertification, waste and air pollution and also demanded a new partnership with third countries on fisheries agreements. Moreover, the EU was urged to take the lead in examining the possibility of setting a target of 25% of all energy supplies to be from renewable sources by 2020. Lastly, the committee called for the establishment by 2004 of a legal framework governing the economic, social and environmental responsibilities of EU private corporations which would require private investors to comply with national and international labour and environmental standards.