Strengthening the capacities of the developing countries

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Concepció FERRER (EPP-ED, E) on capacity-building in the developing countries. It wanted to see a refocusing of development policy so that it could be based on capacity-building, underpinned by the following principles: - involvement of aid beneficiaries in the selection of priority development objectives, with the emphasis on adaptation to local needs; - the setting of multidimensional qualitative objectives encompassing the various players within society; - ensuring the continuity and sustainability of the development process; - exchanges of experience between grassroots communities, NGOs, local authorities and the developing countries' state bodies. The report added that the capacity-building process should also include measures designed to establish a universal right to education and to eradicate AIDS and poverty-related diseases. It also stressed the particular importance of capacity-building in the case of parliamentary institutions as a means of ensuring the proper operation of democracy, constitutional government and good governance and of combating corruption. Amongst its other recommendations, the committee urged the Commission to place greater emphasis on building agricultural and trade capacity, on improving knowledge of and compliance with the relevant rules in force in the target countries, and on more extensive monitoring of market networks. Although it welcomed the aid which the EU had provided to set up an office in Geneva to help the ACP countries to increase their capacity in the field of multilateral negotiations, it warned against selective ad hoc technical aid intended solely to enable the developing countries to meet their obligations under trade agreements, which alone was not sufficient to strengthen actual capabilities. Lastly, the report wanted to see the necessary structures put in place in order to guarantee proper coordination of the activities of all the international institutions working in the capacity-building field.