Implementation of the action programme of the Population Conference in Cairo

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At the Cairo conference, it was established that the issues of population, poverty, methods of production and consumption, development and the environment were all closely dependent on one another and that this interdependence was largely based on women and, more precisely, on their lot in life. It was for this reason that in adopting the report of Mrs Antoinette FOUQUE (ARE, F), Parliament took the view that policies which dealt with the issue of population should be an integral part of economic, social and cultural development, their aim being to improve the quality of life for everyone (and for women in particular). . On the subject of family planning, Parliament reaffirmed that freedom to procreate was a fundamental right of the individual and condemned any policy of family planning which was discriminatory or indirectly coercive or violent. In order to avoid resorting to compulsory sterilisation and to directly or indirectly enforced methods of birth control, Parliament called for the methods of contraception being proposed by the various EU-funded population programmes for developing countries to be subject to scrutiny. It condemned any policy which involved using women from developing countries as guinea-pigs for testing new contraceptive products and called for provisions on family planning to be incorporated into genetic health care. In addition, the demographic policy and the health policy in respect of reproduction should be devised, decided and implemented with the participation of the local people, and in particular with the female population. It was also important to ensure proper education and to provide services which matched local conditions, so as to protect men and women from the spread of AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. In the area of education and development: Parliament stressed that it was necessary to put an end to all forms of discrimination against women (equal opportunities, better access by women to education, credit, property ownership, rental agreements and employment, and equal opportunities for women in the field of politics and economics and in society in general). It also called for programmes to be set up for the creation of SMEs which would give priority to local employment initiatives for women. The latter should participate systematically in all development projects and programmes, and should be involved in these right from the outset. In this respect it called for a minimum of 10 % of MEDA funds, for cooperation with Asia, Africa and Latin America, to be allocated to specific actions to promote 'employment and education for women"; the same percentage would be earmarked for 'employment and education for women' under specific population programmes and projects. Parliament called on the EU to act as a catalyst in promoting current efforts towards achieving equality for women and took the view that existing efforts in this area should focus more intensively on the developing countries, on the CEECs and on the states of the former USSR. .On the question of funding, Parliament stressed that the EU and its Member States should honour their financial commitments in line with the Cairo Conference. It recommended that at the same time all international financial institutions should, when drawing up their various policies and programmes, take into account the needs of the communities in respect of the environment, health, education and housing. It also called on the World Bank and the other financial institutions to publish a list of donor countries which make financial commitments but fail to honour them. In view of the difficulties of implementing the Cairo programme, Parliament urged the EU to promote the creation of networks, analysis and exchange centres and new forms of partnership and called for the introduction of a system to exchange information on the initiatives and actions financed by the Community, the Member States, the EIB and other donors. Parliament called on the Commission to submit an annual assessment of the cooperation activities, of the current situation and of the level of cooperation between the Commission and the various international organisations and agencies (UNFPA), together with a list of experts from the Commission and from international organisations and agencies who cooperate in population programmes and development programmes. In the same connection, Parliament called for a framework agreement to be set up to hasten the implementation of the Cairo decisions in cooperation with the UNFPA. Finally, Parliament asked the Commission for information on the impact of certain budget headings on family policies in the developing countries and expressed the

view that coordination would be required in this area in order to maximise the effects of the actions which had been taken.