Population and development: 10 years on from the Cairo 1994 International Conference on population and development

2003/2133(INI) - 09/03/2004 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Karin JUNKER (PES, D) on population and development, 10 years after the UN Conference in Cairo. The vote was adopted with 287 votes in favour, 196 against and 13 abstentions. Parliament calls for the publication of a comprehensive overview of progress in the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action to mark the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 2004 from every responsible UN body and, above all, from the governments of the EU Member States, the Commission and the ACP institutions, as well as from the non-governmental organisations concerned. It welcomes the organisation of the Round Table on ICPD+10 to review and assess progress made and the remaining challenges for the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, and congratulates the Commission on its support for this initiative. It calls on the European Union to publish a round-up of the initiatives launched so far, and calls on the Member States, in accordance with their undertakings in the area of public development aid (PDA), to make more funding available for the protection of reproductive health. It also calls on the European Union, its Member States and the Accession Countries to meet in full the commitments given by them with regard to the implementation and the financing of the Cairo Programme of Action. The Commission is called upon to make the Programme of Action a key issue in its cooperation with third countries and at international fora and to devise strategies for its joint implementation. According to the Parliament, the EU and its Member States should engage the United States in an informed debate about the impact of the reinstatement of the Mexico City Policy worldwide, encouraging President George W. Bush to rescind it. It calls for a greater share of humanitarian and emergency aid to be used to benefit the reproductive health of people in emergency situations. Parliament considers it essential to treat the poorest of the poor in the countries in question as priority groups, for example through targeted interventions in programming, since these are the people who suffer most from lack of access to reproductive health care measures. It stresses that abortion must not be regarded as a family planning method, but calls for legal and medically safe interventions to be possible for women who have no other way out of their difficulties, in order to protect their reproductive and mental health, which would mean a reduction in maternal mortality in developing countries. It calls on the European Union and its Member States, to that end, to coordinate activities among the donor countries more efficiently and to provide more funds for programmes in the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights in order to fulfil the international commitments made in Cairo in 1994. In the absence of a cure for AIDS, Parliament calls on the EU and the international community as a whole, to increase resources for, and commitment to, international R&D of an AIDS vaccine and comprehensive clinical trials, particularly in developing countries. It stresses the need to improve access for women to education, economic independence and decision-making processes as essential rights and conditions for development, thus reducing gender-related inequality and poverty by empowering women. It calls on the Commission to develop a framework agreement which will encourage implementation of the Cairo objectives by 2015 and coordinate financial cooperation efforts on the part of the European Union, the Member States and the other institutional donors, so that the agreed objectives relating to total resources for programmes in the areas of population and reproductive health, including HIV/Aids, can still be achieved. It considers it necessary to raise the awareness of members of Commission delegations of the objectives set in Cairo and to inform them further on gender-specific issues, in order to hasten the achievement of the health and population goals which have been set. Parliament also calls on the European Union and its Member States, and governments and institutions in the developing countries, to undertake, in cooperation with those countries, widespread information and advice campaigns, as well as other appropriate measures, in developing countries regarding, among other things: - sex education and information for children and

young people in a form commensurate with their age and gender, which must be in keeping with their capabilities and life circumstances, - the fight against sexual exploitation and repression and/or support for victims of sexual exploitation and repression, - the provision of a sufficient supply of affordable medicinal products for the treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, with the pharmaceutical industry also being involved by facilitating treatment with generic medicines, and specific research into child-focussed anti-retroviral therapy, - increased provision of integrated services to prevent the transmission of diseases from mother to child, - the facilitation of medically safe abortions and - the provision of the information required to ensure safe pregnancy and motherhood. Parliament calls on the Commission and the ACP Council of Ministers to give reproductive health protection high priority in the framework of ACP cooperation, and to include the necessary measures in this area in the country strategy papers. It stresses that access to contraceptives, particularly condoms, must be significantly improved, above all for the poorest strata of society in the poorest countries. It calls on all governments to prohibit harmful traditions and practices, such as female genital mutilation, and to launch information campaigns on this subject in order to show that they constitute an unacceptable violation of the bodily integrity of women, are a significant threat to health and may even result in death. Finally, Parliament calls on the Commission to work with developing countries to tackle and prevent fistula problems at childbirth among girls and young women, particularly in relation to early marriage.