Resolution on the World Food Summit FAO, Rome, June 2002

2002/2551(RSP) - 16/05/2002 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

MEPs adopted a resolution on the United Nations World Food Summit which will take place from 10 to 13 June in Rome. The House stressed that 'food security and sustainable rural development' are priorities of the EU's development policy. Parliamentarians also underlined that hunger and malnutrition result from above all bad distribution and supply systems. Furthermore, it was recognised that patents on seeds and genetic resources for use in food production and agriculture threaten sustainable agriculture practices and increase the monopolies of trans-national corporations on technologies, seeds, genes and medicines. The House considered that the creation of an international alliance against hunger and poverty will require reform of the EU's development policy. Better co-ordination is required in policy formulation and the work of international organisations. Accelerated action will also be required if the target of halving those suffering from hunger by 2015 is to be achieved. MEPs noted that hunger is both the cause and effect of extreme poverty. The development of local markets, including giving priority to local practices and to the processing of food products locally were considered essential. It reaffirms its commitment to poverty eradication, sustainable development and the achievement of the development goals set out inat the Millennium Summit and at the UN conferences, but warns that current data indicates that the number of undernourished is falling at an average rate of only 6 million each year - far below the rate of 22 million per year needed to reach the World Food Summit target. The House deplored the fact that government of food-insecure countries have let military spending prevail over the nutritional requirements of their populations. The WTO, according to the House, should concentrate its attention on food security, which will require the adjustment of the Common Agricultural and Fisheries Policies to take account of development objectives. The WTO Member States should also clarify the TRIPS agreement with the aim of banning the patenting of living organisms and guaranteeing the free access of local people to their genetic resources. Furthermore, Parliament calls on Council to include the European Development Fund into the EU budget in order for overall financial clarity. MEPs recognised the importance of the EU's 'Everything but Arms' proposal which grants unlimited access to EC markets for all goods of the Less Developed Countries with the exception of munitions. They called on other developed countries to follow this example. A call for an end to exporting pesticides to developing countries whose use is banned in Europe was also supported. Finally, the House called for an international code of conduct on the right to adequate food.