Resolution on the action against hunger and poverty

2005/2507(RSP) - 24/02/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted by a resolution on action against hunger and poverty.

The resolution had been tabled on behalf of the PES, EPP-ED, ALDE, Greens/ALE, GUE/NGL and UEN groups.

It expresses its grave concern at the fact that, five years after the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted by the UN in December 2000, sub-Saharan Africa has not achieved and is not on track to achieve a single one of the eight MDGs by the target date of 2015. Parliament stresses that, unless the international community dramatically increases both the quality and the quantity of its development assistance, the MDGs will be unattainable for a large number of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), in particular in sub-Saharan Africa. Extreme poverty affects over one billion people, who survive on less than $1 a day, and the difference in per capita income between the world's poorest and richest countries has more than doubled over the last 25 years.

Levels and effectiveness of aid: Members congratulate the four Member States that have surpassed the 0.7% GDP mark for development aid, and urge the remaining Member States that have failed to reach these levels and have not set timetables to do so without delay. They call on the Commission, and Member States, as appropriate, to do the following:

- to suggest establishing an EU timetable for as many Member States as possible to meet the 0.7% target by 2010, and to set longer-term targets for the new Member States. Parliament also wants intermediate annual targets for increasing ODA, monitored by GAERC or ECOFIN;
- to give further attention to the full range of initiatives on 'innovative mechanisms of financing for development' be they public or private, compulsory or voluntary, universal or limited, provided that all such funds must be additional to the standing commitment by governments to give 0.7% of their GDP in ODA;
- to improve the Commission’s own contribution to the MDGs by ensuring that development aid spending on health and education on the ground increases significantly, since in 2003 only 2.4% of EU development spending was earmarked for basic education and 3.8% for health;
- to assess, through the use of ex-ante impact studies, whether its development policy objectives are being undermined by other policy actions;
- to take the lead in swiftly implementing the UN Millennium Project's report 'Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals'.

Debt relief: Parliament notes that aid, debt relief and trade are recognised to be interrelated and actions on all three elements need to complement each other in order to achieve genuine development. All creditors, and especially international institutions and national governments, must agree to phase out the debt of the developing world, giving LDCs priority, and the Commission and Member States must take the lead, in multilateral and bilateral fora, in cancelling the external debt of developing countries. Debt relief should be undertaken with governments which respect human rights, and on condition that money gained by governments from such relief must be channelled towards helping the poorest in their communities.

International trade : the resolution calls on the EU to promote a **free, equitable and development-friendly multilateral trading system** as an effective mechanism for eradicating the root causes of poverty and hunger, whilst ensuring greater market access for the poorest countries and providing

appropriate trade-related technical assistance, in order to maximise the development opportunities stemming from trade. It underlines the need for developing countries to protect their fledgling agricultural sectors, and stresses that the poorest countries must not be subject to demands for reciprocal trade liberalisation. The EU must ensure consistency in its trade, development cooperation and common agricultural policies with a view to preventing any negative impacts on developing countries' economies.