Aid effectiveness and corruption in developing countries

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Margrietus van den BERG (PES, NL) on aid effectiveness and corruption in developing countries. MEPs pointed out that corruption hurts the poor disproportionately, restricting their access to public goods and lowering the quality of basic services. Many actors - including politicians, government officials, civil society, the media, multinationals and international donors - had a role to play in the fight against corruption. The report called on all the EU Member States to ratify the 1997 OECD Convention on the Bribery of Public Officials and the 2003 UN Convention against Corruption. And it urged the Commission and the Member States to establish "an international system of blacklisting to prevent banks from lending large sums of money to corrupt regimes or individuals representing a government".

MEPs asked the Commission, when designing its development programmes, to focus more specifically on issues of accountability and transparency. They stressed the need to support national parliaments in developing countries in their work as budget authorities by means of dialogue, information-sharing and capacity-building. The EU should also give greater support to projects assisting or strengthening a free and independent media in partner countries. The report stressed the need for the establishment of watchdogs by civil society in developing countries, involving a system of checks and balances of their governments, and called on the Commission to support this process by reserving an appropriate percentage of budget aid for civil society watchdogs.

Other recommendations included: more transparency in EU budget aid programmes, with the publication of information on the aid spent in each recipient country; the earmarking of budget aid for a specific sector; and the provision of technical and financial support for regional initiatives such as the African Peer Review Mechanism. Lastly, MEPs called on Member States with major financial centres on their territory to take legal and administrative measures to ensure that funds acquired illegally are repatriated to the country of origin.