Development strategy for Africa

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The committee adopted the report by Maria MARTENS (EPP-ED, NL) on a development strategy for Africa . It began by pointing out that the EU was by far the largest donor in Africa , but was lacking the necessary leadership and vision to build a coherent approach. An integrated EU strategy for Africa must address the lack of coherence between other policy areas and development policy, including issues such as export subsidies, tied aid, debt burden, export credit and commercial use of food aid. The report called for increased coordination of European aid, between national and EU-level strategies and actions, but also between Member States themselves, to avoid aid fragmentation and duplication, and to enable the EU to assume the global leadership role it ought to play in the fight against poverty. And MEPs reiterated their longstanding demand for budgetisation of the European Development Fund.

On good governance and capacity building, MEPs highlighted the overall needs for capacity building, especially in the fields of administration, healthcare, education, economics and democratisation, in the public as well as in the private sector.

The committee also stressed that the EU must implement "concrete policies and programming" aimed at reducing the spread of HIV-AIDS and its impact on children, their families and the communities they live in, as the impact of HIV/AIDS was threatening to undercut the development gains in most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The report stressed that a successful conclusion of the WTO Doha Round must contribute positively to developing countries, in particular in Africa . It said that this included applying Special and Differential Treatment to developing countries and abolishing all trade-distorting agricultural subsidies.

The committee also welcomed the EU Member States' commitment to the target of increasing development aid to 0.7% of GDP by 2015 and called for "a continued investigation into innovative sources of finance which could provide much-needed funds beyond 0.7". It also welcomed the renewed commitment on granting 100% debt relief to 18 of the poorest and most heavily indebted countries made at the meeting of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and African Development Bank.

Lastly, the report stressed the importance of the education of girls and women for improving health, and said that "investing in girls' education is the most effective development strategy", since educated girls generate smaller and healthier families, leading to increased productivity and poverty reduction.