Resolution on disability and development

2005/2623(RSP) - 19/01/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on people with disabilities in developing countries. It pointed out that the latter, in particular disabled women and children, often comprise the poorest, most disadvantaged, and most socially excluded sectors of the population, and are often excluded from development assistance. The World Bank estimates that 20% of the world's poorest people are disabled. The UN's Population Information Network estimates that, out of a population of 800 million, almost 50 million people in Africa are disabled.

Parliament stressed that disability issues should be reflected in the Commission's development policies and in its specific programmes developed to tackle issues of prevention, care, enablement and stigma. Disability issues must be mainstreamed at all levels from policy development to implementation and evaluation, including the EU's action plan for Africa.

It called on the Commission to:

- develop a detailed, technical implementation action plan to implement its Guidance Note. This should include guidelines on inclusive sector policies and an inclusive Project Cycle Management handbook; a training module for services and delegations; and annual reporting to Parliament and the Council;

- ensure that there are appropriate resources allocated for disability-specific actions;

-include disability and people with disabilities in future EU geographical and thematic programmes under the future development cooperation instrument;

- participate in WHO-supported campaigns aimed at tackling preventable impairments such as the WHO campaign Vision 2020, aimed at eliminating preventable blindness by 2020, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, the Global Strategy for Further Reducing the Leprosy Burden and Sustaining Leprosy Control Activities (2006-2010), and the Global Programme to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis;

- include a disability component in its health policies and programmes, in particular in the areas of child health, sexual and reproductive health, mental health, ageing, HIV/AIDS, and chronic conditions;

- promote disabled people's access to assistive technology and equal access to all health services and programmes;

- focus on the prevention of disabilities, given that an estimated 100 million people globally have impairments which are caused by malnutrition and poor sanitation and which are therefore preventable, and an estimated 70% of childhood blindness in Asia and Africa could be prevented;

- ensure that disabled people are no longer excluded from EU development cooperation programmes and to actively seek their inclusion in all EU poverty eradication programmes.

Finally, Parliament insisted that education for children and young people with disabilities is an integral part of the goal of achieving universal primary education, including early intervention services and support for the families of disabled children. It asked the EU delegations to support vocational training, job placements and business development services through community-based projects that are inclusive of disabled people. Developing countries must be encouraged to ratify the International Labour Organization's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983.