



ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

**21<sup>st</sup> SESSION**

**16-18 May 2011**

**BUDAPEST (Hungary)**

**REPLIES GIVEN BY THE COMMISSION TO ORAL QUESTIONS**

## QUESTION 1

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Filip Kaczmarek

**Subject:** A ten year strategy for Africa

**Question text:**

According to the Vice President of the World Bank for the Africa region, Ethiopia, Malawi, Ghana, and Cape Verde are four nations which will achieve the MDGs either by 2015, or soon afterwards. Though these nations are on track to meet the MDGs, they continue to face development challenges. The World Bank has responded to these challenges by devising a ten year strategy for Africa, based on two pillars: “Competitiveness & Employment and Vulnerability & Resilience”.

How will the EU Commission and ACP countries implement support for the World Bank’s strategy to address development challenges?

## REPLY

When formulating and managing its development assistance programmes, the EU consults the authorities in partner countries and regions, resulting in an agreed country and regional strategy paper.

In Africa, the European Commission is implementing, within the framework of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) adopted in 2007 , the JAES Action Plan (2011-2013 ) focusing on: Peace and Security; Democratic Governance and Human rights; Trade, Regional Integration and Infrastructure; MDGs; Energy; Climate change and Environment; Migration, Mobility and Employment; Science, Information society and Space.

Initiatives undertaken as part of this comprehensive Action Plan, which covers eight thematic areas, support and go beyond the strategic pillars of the World Bank's Africa Strategy: Competitiveness and employment; Vulnerability and resilience; and Governance and Public Sector Capacity.

Some of the deliverables achieved under the JAES so far, include the € 1 billion support to the African Peace and Security Agenda and Architecture, the Food Facility (€1 billion) to not only combat vulnerability but also build resilience, €2 billion for infrastructure projects in Africa to ensure sustainable economic growth that creates employment, better access to sustainable energy services which strengthens public sector capacity, and the African Research Grants and awards to promote science and technology in Africa, which are crucial for competitiveness.

## QUESTION 2

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Douglas Slater (St. Vincent and The Grenadines)

**Subject:** EU Development Policy

**Question text:**

The European Commission published the Green Paper on “EU development policy in support of inclusive growth and sustainable development. Increasing the impact of EU development policy”. Noting that the Green Paper earmarks the priority areas of development cooperation as climate change, renewable energy and agriculture and food security, can the Commission confirm the continuation of support for the social sectors, namely education, health and science and technology, being engines of development and critical for the realisation of results and impacts in the earmarked priority areas, within the framework of Intra-ACP Development Cooperation?

## REPLY

The Green Paper focused on how the EU could help to facilitate more inclusive and sustainable, growth in developing countries. Growth per se is not enough, and the Commission fully recognises the importance of continuing to support the social sectors. This will mean promoting and supporting sustainable and relevant projects for development and growth. The Commission will focus its efforts on sustainable agriculture and energy, together with investment in health and education systems – areas where development potential and growth opportunities are the brightest.

The Commission is strongly committed and will continue to provide investment in a healthy population and skilled human capital, which contributes to improving the quality of life of individuals, building democratic and peaceful societies, strengthening human rights and promoting gender equality and active citizenship. Without a food-secure, educated and healthy population, a country can never grow and pull itself out of poverty.

## QUESTION 3

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Ibrahim Bundu (Sierra Leone)

**Subject:** Future financial framework of the ACP-EU cooperation

**Question text:**

At 35th Session of the ACP-EC Council of Ministers in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso in June 2010, the ACP Group expressed concern that the second five-year Revision of the Cotonou Agreement has been presented for approval without any financial commitment by EU.

The second five-year of the Cotonou Agreement 2011 – 2015 was approved on the assurance of the EU. Soon the revised Cotonou Agreement will be presented to the various Parliaments of the ACP States for ratification.

We would like to know whether the EU is now in a position to share with us the future financial framework of the ACP – EU Cooperation.

#### REPLY

The revision of the Cotonou Agreement is independent from a specific financial framework related to the ACP – EU cooperation.

It should be noted also that the bulk of the period from 2011 till 2015 is covered by the existing financial framework set out in Annex Ib. of the Cotonou Agreement, and runs from 2008-2013.

The Cotonou Agreement foresees a performance review of the 10th EDF to be undertaken by the EU Council, together with the Africa Caribbean Pacific (ACP) States, on the basis of a proposal prepared by the European Commission, which it is about to release. The Cotonou Agreement also indicates that the analysis provided in this performance review of the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF shall contribute to a decision on the amount of the financial cooperation with ACP States after 2013.

The Commission is currently also finalising its proposals for the instruments and related funding as part of the future multi-annual financial framework (post-2013) under the EU budget, i.e. beyond the European Development Fund. It is in this context that, following discussions by the EU Council and the ACP States on the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF performance review, the more specific proposals by the Commission regarding the financial cooperation with ACP States after 2013 will be made.

In the context of the Monterrey commitments in relation to official development aid, the Commission's aim will be to ensure the appropriate financial resources are available for the new period following the 10th EDF that reflect the will to meet the new challenges, to improve the quality of life of the poorest people in the ACP countries and to eradicate the scourge of poverty and poverty-related diseases.

#### QUESTION nr 4

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Michèle Rivasi

**Subject:** The future of the EU-ACP Partnership

**Question text:**

The Cotonou Agreement will come to an end in 2020. In that context, what is the significance of the introduction at this stage of parallel strategies, such as the EU-Africa strategy?

How will these strategies and the EU-ACP Partnership coexist until 2020 on both a financial and a political level? To what extent is it certain that the EU-ACP Partnership will end in 2020 and will not be renewed in one form or another?

In what form will the priority for development and the creation of shared institutions, as pillars of the EU-ACP Partnership, be maintained in post-2020 relations?

## REPLY

The EU-Africa, EU-Caribbean, EU-Pacific strategies are complementary to the Cotonou Partnership Agreement and address the respective specific challenges of the African, Caribbean and Pacific regions. The second revision of the Cotonou Agreement has reinforced the three levels of programming: national, regional and intra-ACP, which are not undermined by the strategies. The strategies mainly focus on political dialogue and are financed under the EDF Intra-ACP cooperation chapter and DCI thematic programmes.

As far as the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) is concerned, it is important to recall that this Strategy incorporates certain unique features which distinguish it clearly from the EU-ACP Partnership. On the one hand, the JAES is a strategic policy framework and not a legally binding international agreement. Unlike the Cotonou agreement, the JAES is not underpinned with a specific financial cooperation instrument and relevant programming- and management arrangements, nor with a specific institutional framework or joint institutions. On the other hand, the JAES has a distinct geographical coverage, including the entire African continent (South Africa, the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, and Northern Africa) but not the Caribbean or Pacific countries. The JAES has also a different set of objectives, namely to put EU-Africa relations on a new, strategic footing, and to move them a) 'beyond development' and the donor-recipient patterns, b) 'beyond Africa' by promoting shared values and shared interest, and by enhancing political and policy dialogue and cooperation in the international arena, and c) 'beyond institutions' by establishing a people-centred partnership where non-state actors such as the civil society, parliaments, local authorities or the private sector can play a major role in the monitoring and the implementation of the partnership and its successive Action Plans.

As to the future of the EU-ACP Partnership beyond 2020, it is at this point in time impossible to predict accurately how the Partnership will evolve in the long term. This evolution will notably depend on the capacity to effectively address the development and other strategic concerns of both sides.

In any case, Article 95 of the Cotonou Agreement provides that "eighteen months before the end of the total period of the Agreement, the parties shall enter into negotiations in order to examine what provisions shall subsequently govern their relations." Therefore, the future of EU-ACP relations after 2020 is a matter for negotiation between the EU and the ACP States. However, the objective of the EU development cooperation will remain, in line with Article 208 TFEU, to reduce and ultimately to eradicate poverty in developing countries. To this aim, Article 209 provides that the EU may conclude agreements with third countries, such as the

Cotonou Agreement. The EU will remain committed to the fight against poverty, and shall work to a high degree of cooperation to this aim, in accordance with Article 21 TEU.

## QUESTION 5

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Everistus Jean Marie (St Lucia)

**Subject:** EDF Mid-Term Review

**Question text:**

The Mid-term review of the EDF is currently ongoing in various ACP countries. Based on the performance of these countries, proposals for allocation of increased support will be made for "good performers". In fact, the amount of 300mn Euros has been set aside under the MDG initiative for countries that pass the evaluation test.

Can the Commission provide more specific information on the criteria that will be used for the disbursement of the 300mn Euros?

## REPLY

The MDG Initiative is composed of two distinct windows: (i) one of 300 M€ reserved for the 19 "good performer" countries according to the results of the 10th EDF Mid-Term Review (MTR); (ii) another one of 700 M€ open to all ACP countries. With respect to the first window, the financial topping up is granted because of these 19 countries' past good performance, as established through a performance assessment as part of the MTR along four key dimensions of performance: governance, economic situation (macro- and micro-), efforts related to poverty reduction and to progress towards achieving the MDGs (millennium development goals) and implementation of EC cooperation. For the second window, ACP governments are invited to provide with a proposal and a possible financial topping up depends on the assessment hereof according to predefined criteria.

To fulfil the strong consensus which emerged during the UN summit in September, it was decided that, in these 19 countries, the topping-up should focus on programmes or projects for the globally most-off track MDGs - child health mortality and maternal mortality (MDG4 and 5) and access to sanitation (MDG7) - and for the area of agriculture and food security (MDG 1c). This is important given the EU's pledge in New York to act on these priorities.

Given that this window falls under the umbrella of the MDG initiative, any funds committed under the MTR must produce High Impact in terms of demonstrable and identifiable results, appropriate scale, high and long lasting impact, leverage and measurable benefits and the actions taken must be directly and evidently targeted at achieving a given MDG. In the event that these countries already met the above MDGs, as they meet high levels of health, nutrition and sanitation, the Commission is

willing to consider, on a case-by-case basis, directing funding to achieve other MDGs in these countries, if they are clearly off track.

As the MDG Initiative looks for results in a relatively short timeframe, it will be essential to avoid disruption to ongoing programmes. Existing aid delivery mechanisms should be used as long as there is a clear and direct link with the identified MDGs. Monitoring of progress will therefore depend of the identified project.

## QUESTION 6

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Rajeshree Kumaree Nita Deerpalsing (Mauritius)

**Subject:** Commission Green Paper on EU Development Policy

**Question text:**

We welcome the preeminence given in the Green Paper to agricultural development, food security and renewable energy permitting inclusive growth and a green economy, key for islands like Mauritius.

We are concerned about the proposal on differentiation among MICs, between types of EU partners and support to them.

Mindful of the EU policy of non-discrimination, will the Commissioner assure us that, in the new EU development policy, he will not discriminate against SIDS given their relative high per capita income, but will instead consider such factors as composite vulnerability index, food security, small size, situational handicaps and their specific needs?

## REPLY

The development landscape has considerably changed in the past years, both with respect to beneficiaries and donors. This is the reason why the Commission stresses the need to differentiate even more than before, in terms of policy mix and cooperation programmes. In particular, there are today a number of more advanced developing countries with which cooperation does not necessarily need to be supported with financial transfers, notably grant-based aid. On the other hand, several countries remain heavily dependent on external support for the provision of basic services to their populations.

Therefore a differentiated EU approach to aid allocation and partnerships is key to achieving maximum impact and ensuring that aid is primarily destined to those countries that need it the most.

In order to capture and adapt its response to the variety of situations and country contexts, including that of SIDS, the Commission's development aid will be awarded to countries on the basis of several criteria, including country needs

## QUESTION 7

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Waven Williams (Seychelles)

**Subject:** Development Assistance

**Question text:**

In 2009 the European Commission put in place the Vulnerability Flex to assist ACP countries which were most affected by the world financial crisis. Now, the world is faced with yet another crisis in the form of increase in prices for fuel, food and other commodities.

Could the European Commission inform whether the Vulnerability Flex would be extended or whether a new mechanism will be put in place to assist the most vulnerable ACP countries affected by this new crisis?

## REPLY

It is not foreseen to extend the V-Flex mechanism which had been set up for the years 2009 and 2010 only. However, the second revision of the Cotonou Agreement has broadened the scope of the current Flex mechanism, whose objective is to mitigate the adverse effects of exports losses.

The Commission launched a study on the issue of compensatory schemes for exogenous shocks, which will present a set of options for a future mechanism, on the basis of lessons learned from Flex, V-Flex and the food facility and other non-European schemes.

The objective could be to have one established mechanism which can respond to various types of shocks, instead of having a number of ad hoc- shock-specific mechanisms. This would avoid the need to set up new schemes in a rush when partner countries are confronted with a new type of shock. It would allow a quicker response, which is a key element for such a scheme and one of the main shortcomings of the current Flex mechanism.

## QUESTION 8

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Patrice Tirolien

**Subject:** Commission Green Paper, 'Increasing the impact of EU development policy'

**Question text:**



In its Green Paper on increasing the impact of EU development policy, the concept of best value for money is broadly used:

- Does this approach not risk leading to a gradual abandonment of aid for the poorest countries to the benefit of the developing countries that have a better capacity to absorb the funds?
- Can the Commission guarantee that actual need will continue to be the fundamental criterion for allocating EU development funds?
- Finally, have the ACP countries been informed of this process and invited to respond to the consultation? And if so, how?

## REPLY

The Commission agrees that the focus on results must not lead to a risk-averse development policy that only focuses on "easy countries". Focusing on poor and fragile countries remains essential and impact of EU development policy should also be "high" in those countries.

The Commission fully recognises the need for a country-based approach to capturing impact so that local circumstances are fully taken into account when evaluating success.

In its aid allocation decisions, the Commission takes into account a series of criteria, such as: country needs; performance, governance, capacities; country policy commitments towards MDGs. The criteria will be further discussed in the context of the forthcoming proposals.

ACP countries have been informed and were invited to contribute to the consultation on the Green paper on EU development Policy. Numerous consultation events have been organized by EU delegations in many ACP countries and the Commission has received a number of written contributions from Several ACP States.

## QUESTION 9

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Gabi Zimmer.

**Subject:** Food prices and speculation

**Question text:**

While the world production of crop rose only 1,5 % during the last 6 years, the mass of capital in this sector multiplied by 30 in the same period of time.

Does the Commission study the link between the highly increased volume of investment and the price volatility in agriculture commodities, in particular crop prices?

How does the Commission want to tackle the high food prices and with which measures can food prices be stabilised at an affordable level for poor countries in order to fight hunger?

## REPLY

The Commission has recently adopted a Communication on 'Tackling the challenges in commodity markets and on raw materials'<sup>1</sup>. It recalls ongoing initiatives for improving the integrity, transparency and stability of commodity derivatives markets. However, the impact of the sharp increase in financial investment flows to commodity derivatives markets observed in recent years is still unclear. There is no conclusive evidence on the link between financial market activities and the rise in and volatility of food prices.

The Commission published 3 Communications on food prices/chain.<sup>2</sup> To summarise the analysis undertaken in this context: reasons for price pressure are a combination of supply and demand developments, exacerbated by short-term economic and policy factors, among which restrictions on exports. As outlined in accompanying papers on derivatives, factors specific to financial markets might have amplified price changes.

Global price movements are correlated with changes in supply and demand - and they are a normal element of market functioning. The more transparent a market is, the smoother price development usually happens. The Commission therefore encourages increased market transparency and predictability. This will thus reduce the likelihood that a price increase will take the form of a 'shock'.

Moreover, markets are expected to respond to the current high prices as they did during the price spike of 2008, when supply rose substantially in the EU and at world level, in effect bringing down prices to pre-spike levels.

Given the long-term trend of growing demand and the large number of uncertainties concerning global production levels (such as effects of climate change and pressures on natural resources), it is expected that food prices will continue to be structurally high and volatile in the years to come. Greater investment in sustainable agriculture and food security is urgently needed if we truly want to reduce hunger and achieve inclusive and sustainable growth in developing countries.

Here the Commission would like to underline that it is crucial that such investments be focused on increasing the production of smallholder farmers and stimulating geographically varied production areas to contribute to world production, particularly developing countries. For this it is needed to step up investments in agricultural research and extension, ensuring they are in the public domain. Similarly, greater investments in infrastructure, storage and reduction of post-harvest losses will be essential.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0025:FIN:EN:PDF>

<sup>2</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/foodprices/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/foodprices/index_en.htm)

Of course, the Commission must also stress that this needs to go hand-in-hand with support for safety net systems and targeted nutrition interventions in order to ensure households' sustained capacity to cover their food needs.

Such a comprehensive approach<sup>3</sup> for food security has been adopted by the Commission last year and firmly sets out the EU agenda for the coming years.

## QUESTION 10

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Fuad Khan (Trinidad and Tobago)

**Subject:** Threats to the implementation of the CARIFORUM-European Union EPA

**Question text:**

The CARIFORUM-European Union EPA is being implemented, while the region continues to fall victim to policies which undermine its provisions, including unilateral discriminatory taxes by some European countries on travel from the Caribbean, which will be discussed at this JPA Session.

Another threat is the discriminatory treatment to be accorded Angostura bitters in one European State when similar products will be granted more favorable treatment, contrary to European Council Directive 92/83, resulting in a 50% loss in sales. Would the Commission, if requested, consider initiating measures for reclassifying Angostura bitters to reflect its content? How long would that process take?

## REPLY

### **Response to question on travel tax**

Air Passenger Duties belong to a category of levies and taxes which are not harmonised at EU level. However, the Commission monitors the application of such taxes in order to ensure that they are not levied in such a way that they would discriminate among destinations served within the European Union.

It is for the Member States to determine the arrangements for the application of such taxes on flights serving destinations outside the European Union. Concerns should be addressed in bilateral discussions between the country or countries and Member States concerned.

As regards to goods which have no commercial character brought from a third country into the EU in the personal luggage by passengers then Directive 2007/74/EC on the exemption from value added tax and excise duty of goods imported by persons travelling from third countries applies.

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<sup>3</sup> COM(2010)127, An EU policy framework to assist developing countries in addressing food security challenges

### **Response to question on Angostura bitters**

Since the Commission has already issued clear rules on the classification of the product, we see no need to neither modify these rules or to install extra measures. However, in order to assess possible wrongdoings in the Member States, the Commission would need full details about such matters.

## **QUESTION 11**

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Ole Olesen

**Subject:** FTA negotiations with India

### **Question text:**

The Commission is currently negotiating an FTA with India on behalf of the EU Council. It seems that this FTA will contain a chapter on intellectual property rights that will consequently mean that India can no longer produce generic medicine. India is often known as 'the pharmacy of the third world'. If India can no longer produce this medicine it is very likely that people in the third world will suffer as a consequence.

How does the Commission justify that poor countries in the third world will no longer have the same access to cheap medicine, if the FTA with India contains a chapter prohibiting that India produces this generic medicine?

## **REPLY**

The Commission is equally concerned about the risk that the current trade negotiations with India could have a negative impact on India's role as an exporter of essential medicines to developing countries, in particular to Africa.

It is the possible introduction of a new intellectual property right (IPR) of 'data exclusivity' into the Indian legislation that is of particular concern to me, as it is expected to reduce competition and increase prices for some generic (off-patent) medicines produced in India. India being a major exporter of low-cost essential medicines to the developing world, this will have a negative impact on access to some medicines in Africa, where even limited price increases can cause serious damage to an already low access to essential medicines.

That is why the Commission welcomes the clear statements by Trade Commissioner De Gucht in public and before the European Parliament that these risks are being taken into account in the negotiations and that nothing in this bilateral FTA should have an impact on access to medicines in developing countries.

In order to prevent such risks in the future, the Commission thinks that future negotiations for bilateral trade agreements should generally require a comprehensive assessment on the impact of additional IPRs on the access to essential products and

services in third (poor) countries, and not only on the impact in the EU and the trading partner country alone.

## QUESTION 12

**Name of Parliamentarian:** David Martin

**Subject:** Banana Accompanying Measures

**Question text:**

Can the Commission give the timetable and information on regional allocation for the disbursement of the financial support within the Banana Accompanying Measures?

Can the Commission further explain why there has been a delay in this disbursement?

## REPLY

The proposal for Banana Accompanying Measures (BAM) was adopted by the Commission on 17 March 2010. The procedure for adoption of this development programme, which will be included in the Development Cooperation Instrument, involves the European Parliament and the Council.

In the framework of this co-decision procedure, the Council presented its Opinion on the Parliament's first reading on 13 December 2010 and the European Parliament voted on its second reading position, amending the BAM proposal on 3 February 2011.

Throughout this process, the Commission has been working to facilitate a solution. And indeed, the Commission is pleased to say that the three institutions agree on the substance: The BAM should come into place, as soon as possible.

However, the BAM have been drawn into a wider inter-institutional debate. The discussion regarding the so-called "delegated acts" affects the EU's external action instruments, thus also the DCI. This discussion is a challenging one, as the Council and the Parliament's positions are opposed. The amendments concerning delegated acts inserted into the BAM proposal by the EP have not been acceptable to the Council. There is consequently a delay in the adoption of the legal basis for the BAM.

This delay in the adoption of the legal basis prevents the Commission from disbursing any funds. The Commission cannot disburse any EU financial assistance – as long as the EU's legislative and budgetary authorities, i.e. the Parliament and the Council, have not adopted the necessary legal basis.

Therefore, it would be merely speculation to discuss the timetable for disbursements. The Commission can only present such a timetable once there is a legal basis. The

same applies to allocations – which incidentally will not be regional, but country-specific.

The Commission is aware of the impasse and working actively to find a solution to the problem.

### QUESTION 13

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Linda McAvan

**Subject:** Cotton support regime and Policy Coherence Development

**Question text:**

Following the reform of the CAP, a new aid regime for cotton was adopted by the Council in 2004 whereby 65 % of the previous aid has been "decoupled".

Whilst this change is a welcome first step, EU cotton production continues to have an impact on developing countries, particularly on ACP countries in Africa. EU cotton producers still grow more cotton than in Burkina Faso and export (outside the EU) more than 80% of their production (ICAC).

What measures can the Commission take to ensure more policy cohesion and prevent EU CAP policy from contradicting some of its development policy goals?

### REPLY

Regarding the impact of EU cotton-production on developing countries.

The EU is a rather marginal producer of cotton: total EU cotton production is currently estimated at around 1% of world production<sup>4</sup>. The EU share in world exports is only 3% (+/- 250,000 tons per year) and is concentrated on two markets: more than 50% goes to Turkey, 21% to Egypt. Moreover, the EU share in raw cotton world imports is 2% and the EU imports have dramatically dropped over the years (from almost 700 000 tons in 2003 to 165 000 in 2010)

The EU has gone through a major reform of the cotton sector since 2004. In that reform, domestic support has significantly decreased (so called Amber Box support was eliminated and the major part of remaining support was decoupled) and became much less trade distorting. As a result, the production area, the production levels and the average yields of cotton in the EU decreased due to generally less intensive production methods. In addition, the EU market for cotton is completely open (duty and quota free), there are no import duties or export subsidies for cotton.

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<sup>4</sup> (225 000 tons in 2010/11, coming down from a share above 2% in the beginning of this decade)

In terms of development cooperation, the EU supports African cotton sectors in the framework of the EU-Africa partnership on Cotton. Since 2004, the EU has committed 320 million EUR to cotton in Africa (56%, i.e.179 million EUR from the EC, 44% from the European Member States). This makes the EU by far the largest provider of development assistance to cotton in Africa. Also in the near future, the EU will remain engaged with African cotton. Regarding the impacts of CAP reform on policy coherence, it should be noted that the EU already eliminated the most trade distorting subsidies for cotton. Full decoupling of EU support was not considered possible because Protocol No.4 attached to the Greece's Accession Treaty of 1979, ratified by all Member States, requires the European Community to continue to support the production of cotton. In particular, paragraph 3 of the Protocol stipulates that support for cotton has to include the grant of an aid to production. To take into account these obligations, the CAP includes some sector-specific support for cotton.

More broadly, policy coherence for development is both a legal requirement under the Lisbon Treaty and can have a huge impact on the poorest countries' capacity to reduce poverty and grow. The Commission is determined to tackle policy coherence for development more proactively and at an earlier stage of preparation of new initiatives.

#### QUESTION 14

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Assarid Ag Imbarcaouane (Mali)

**Subject:** Cotton

**Question text:**

At the 2005 Hong Kong Ministerial Conference, the EU and the United States promised to put an end to internal and external support for their cotton growers in order to tackle its repercussions on growers in Mali, Benin, Burkina Faso and Chad.

Can you tell us what measures have been taken at EU and at WTO level to implement the decisions taken in Hong Kong?

#### REPLY

With the Hong Kong declaration, the EU, together with other WTO Members, reaffirmed its commitment of having an explicit ambitious, expeditious and specific decision on cotton in the following manner:

- All forms of export subsidies for cotton would be eliminated by developed countries in 2006.
- On market access, developed countries will give duty and quota free access for cotton exports from least-developed countries (LDCs) from the commencement of the implementation period.

- Members agree that the objective is that, as an outcome for the negotiations, trade distorting domestic subsidies for cotton production be reduced more ambitiously than under whatever general formula is agreed and that it should be implemented over a shorter period of time than generally applicable.

The EU has already implemented the Hong Kong mandate:

- in market access, the EU market for cotton is already duty-free and quota-free;
- there are no export subsidies for cotton;
- when it comes to domestic support, the most trade-distorting subsidies to cotton production have already been fully eliminated from 2004. The major part of this highly trade distorting support was decoupled. What was left was a Production limiting Blue Box spending up to a ceiling of €272 million.

The EU remains fully engaged to work with others to look at every possible solution that will allow other Members, just as the EU has done, to comply with the Hong Kong declaration.

## QUESTION 15

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Maurice Ponga

**Subject:** Combating the volatility of agricultural prices

**Question text:**

The volatility of prices on the agricultural markets has negative consequences for both producers and consumers in ACP countries because it results in alternating explosions and collapses of the prices of agricultural products.

As the world's largest exporter and importer of agricultural products, the EU can play a major role in combating this price volatility.

When preparing the new CAP, what measures does the Commission intend to take to stabilise agricultural prices, thereby regulating the markets, from the point of view of both production and marketing?

## REPLY

- Commodity markets have displayed sharp price increases and volatility in recent months, reminiscent of the price surge of 2007 and 2008, which increased calls for policy responses to mitigate the negative effects of such movements on both producers and consumers, especially the most vulnerable ones. Although prices are high in world markets and in net food importing countries, globally we are not in a situation as in 2007/2008, as harvests in many developing countries have been good.
- Food security and volatility are part of the key considerations in the Communication on the CAP towards 2020 adopted in November 2010. The Communication on the 'CAP



towards 2020' outlines the objectives of future policy changes, of which market instruments would be envisioned in the context of an increasingly competitive world market environment. As such, 'traditional' market intervention measures would keep their current role of safety-net instruments in times of severe market disruptions. The single payment scheme will continue to provide decoupled incomes. In addition, the Communication calls to include a set of tools for more efficient income and market volatility risk management.

- In the past two years, the Commission published three Communications on food prices and the food chain<sup>5</sup>. These Communications addressed several issues relating to food prices, including developments in agricultural commodity derivatives markets. Against the background of increased volatility, it is important that futures markets keep serving their initial purpose of hedging and price discovery.
- The 2009 Communication<sup>6</sup> on a better functioning food chain launched a series of actions to enhance transparency along the food chain. A European price monitoring tool was set up and it should be extended to a greater number of food products and chains. Proposals were announced to improve the oversight and the overall transparency of EU agricultural commodity derivatives, both on-exchange and over-the-counter. The follow up of the proposals on derivatives will be part of the overall approach proposed by the Commission on derivatives.<sup>7</sup>
- The Communication on commodities and raw materials adopted in February 2011 covers agriculture and includes linkage with food security. The Commission will organise a major conference on raw materials and commodities in mid-June – to feed to the G20 Agriculture Ministers' meeting on 22-23 June.
- The issue of agriculture and food price volatility has a global dimension. Thus, it is also under discussion in international fora, particularly the G-20, where it forms one of the priorities set by the French Presidency. G-20 Ministers of Agriculture will address these issues in June. There is a broad consensus among G-20 members that market transparency in terms of quality of information, particularly as regards the short-term forecasts and the level of stocks, plays a role in addressing price volatility.

## QUESTION 16

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Christa Kläß

**Subject:** Protecting, education and empowering vulnerable young and adolescent girls with G8/G20 development assistance initiatives

**Question text:**

In the developing world, the forgotten situation of young and adolescent girls is a major challenge to improving global health, reducing poverty and strengthening

<sup>5</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/foodprices/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/foodprices/index_en.htm)

<sup>6</sup> The 2009 Communication as well as the accompanying papers are available here [http://ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/articles/structural\\_reforms/article16028\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/articles/structural_reforms/article16028_en.htm)

<sup>7</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/financial-markets/derivatives/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/financial-markets/derivatives/index_en.htm)

development. In high AIDS burden countries, three-quarters of HIV infected young people are girls. One girl in three is married before age 18. Every year, 70 000 girls aged 15-19 die from childbirth.

Last year an accountability framework for G8 commitments was made on maternal, newborn and child health. But what financial and political efforts is the European Commission undertaking to ensure adequate attention is being paid to overcoming the vulnerabilities of girls in developing countries?

## REPLY

The European Commission fully supports the implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (Cairo, ICPD, 1994), and of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the achievement of the MDGs. They are all focusing on human rights, gender equality and women empowerment, completing primary education and universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights for all, including young and adolescent girls.

Through our policy dialogue financial support to partner countries we emphasize equity and the need to ensure that vulnerable populations are protected and can benefit from education and health services. The Commission has been campaigning against child marriage, early pregnancies, female genital cutting and gender based violence. We have addresses these issue in our Global Health Communication (2010) and

At the Commission we are striving to implement a gender-responsive approach to reducing poverty which is based on coordination across all sectors, and all Commissioners are involved in one way or another. Protecting and empowering vulnerable young and adolescent girls is prominent in our EU Gender Action Plan (2010), also stressing the importance of involving boys and men and addressing their responsibilities. One of the objectives of the GAP is to deepen cooperation between the EU and the UN on the promotion of gender equality, notably at the field level. However, to make real progress in this field, all stakeholders including the EEAS and the EU Member States, as well as our partner countries should be equally committed.

Education ranks as the most powerful tool for reducing girls' vulnerability. The policy document "More and better education in developing countries" issued in February 2010 emphasizes the pivotal role education plays in enabling long-term growth, eradicating poverty, improving health, empowering women and reducing inequality. The European Commission supports girls' education also through the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) since its inception.

The Commission has financially supported the programs and policies which aim at protecting girls through country programmes – especially our support to education and health - and through thematic support, such as for gender equality, protection of children, sexual and reproductive health and rights, fight against HIV/AIDS, education and research. To give an impression about the volume, approximately EUR

2 billion has been allocated for Education and EUR 4.2 billion for Health under the current programming cycle 2007-2013.

We have allocated approximately EUR 57 million in the thematic instrument, *Investing in People* for 2007-2013 in order to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. . Under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights we also finance a number of projects to promote women and girls' rights.

## QUESTION 17

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Michael Cashman

**Subject:** Gender equality and women living with HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa

**Question text:**

In Swaziland, the Constitution grants identical legal rights to men and women, but Swazi general and customary law continue to restrict women in inferior roles. Several discriminatory laws are still in force.

Swaziland has also the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in Sub-Saharan Africa, and women appear to be the most vulnerable due to current legal and traditional practices. How is the Commission helping gender equality to be enforced in practice and not only in legislation in ACP States? How is the Commission including in its political dialogue with ACP States, as defined within the Cotonou Agreement, the situation of women living with HIV/AIDS?

## REPLY

The Commission thanks the honourable Member for his question on gender equality and women living with HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. The impact of HIV/AIDS in countries such as Swaziland, which has the highest prevalence in the world, cannot be overstated.

Women account for about 60% of HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa. The European Union, through its development aid, is helping other countries worldwide to restrict the spread of HIV/AIDS infection in two ways. Firstly, through support to partner countries in designing and implementing their national health policies. Secondly, by financing the provision of antiretroviral treatment, and treatment that prevents mother to child transmissions, as well as providing counselling, special care services to orphans and vulnerable children. This notably goes through the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), to which the European Union has contributed over half of its resources and the Commission 6% of it. Around 750,000 people with advanced HIV infection have been provided with antiretroviral combination therapy over the last 4 years.

The Commission strives to better divide the work among Member States, other donors, and international organisations, according to the respective expertise. For instance, the European Commission works with the United Nations Programme on

HIV/AIDS which provides technical assistance in Benin, Swaziland, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ghana and Malawi.

Furthermore, the Commission adopted the **EU Gender Action Plan** applicable to the Commission, Member States and the EEAS, and which aims to improve the effectiveness of our work on gender in the aid programs. In addition, the EU Guidelines on Violence against Women and all forms of Discrimination against them addresses violence against women, and particularly sexual violence, which is a key factor that affects HIV prevalence. .

**The European Programme for Action to Confront HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis through External Action (2007-2011)**, forms the basis for collective EU action in this area. In terms of specific initiatives, under Investing in People thematic program, the Commission is currently funding a 3- year programme with UN WOMEN on **Supporting Gender Equality in the context of HIV/AIDS** which promotes the leadership of HIV-positive women's and gender equality advocates, to ensure that gender equality priorities are implemented and budgeted in national HIV and AIDS responses.

#### QUESTION nr 18

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Niccolò Rinaldi

**Subject:** Natural disasters and ACP countries

**Question text:**

An estimated 97% of natural disaster-related deaths occur in developing countries and these countries bear the heaviest burden in terms of livelihoods lost. In 1996 ECHO launched a specific programme DIPECHO (Disaster Preparedness ECHO) dedicated to disaster preparedness, which has been expanded over the years and now covers seven regions: the Caribbean, Central America, South America, Central Asia, South Asia, South East Asia and South East Africa and South West Indian Ocean.

Will it be possible to further enlarge the impact of this programme and which are the future steps that the European Union intends to realize in this field?

#### REPLY

As rightly indicated, the DIPECHO programme started in 1996 and, since then, DIPECHO activity has progressively increased. Almost 15 years of existence have demonstrated the relevance of community-based models, which are now being disseminated.

There is no doubt that the DIPECHO programme contributed to save lives and assets. Although the number of lives saved or the value of the assets preserved cannot be quantified, there is clear evidence that prepared communities withstood the impact of natural disasters in a much more robust way than those who had not been target by a DIPECHO project.

This was possible also thanks to the initiative of the European Parliament that substantially increased the funds allocated to the DRR budget line of the humanitarian budget (from EUR 6.3 million in 1996 to EUR 34.3 million in 2011).

This has enabled the EU to progressively include, in the DIPECHO programme, new regions (i.e. Caucasus and Pacific) as well as intensify the activities in the others. Currently the DIPECHO programme covers 9 regions.

In addition to the DIPECHO programme, other more targeted DRR activities such as drought preparedness (in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel), disaster preparedness in south Caucasus and the Pacific, epidemic preparedness, and a new livelihood support programme in South America, have been funded and implemented within the EU humanitarian framework.

As far as the future, the EU intends to step up its efforts to better link DIPECHO action with its relief work and integrate a maximum of disaster preparedness components in humanitarian aid projects.

However, a lasting effect can only be achieved when governments make disaster risk reduction a priority in their own efforts, DRR is fully integrated in development policies and strategies and adequate LRRD policies are fully implemented.

In this respect, there is a growing need to improve synergies between humanitarian aid and development policies. All interventions in DRR should be implemented with the final aim of facilitating the integration of disaster risk reduction into long-term development and national strategies.

Finally, coordination (both at political and operational level) is an essential element to ensure a timely, efficient and effective delivery of our humanitarian and development aid and use of budgetary resources.

First of all, the impact of climate change should be dealt with in a coherent, integrated, coordinated and flexible way while ensuring the contribution of all the communities concerned: development, climate change, environment, disaster risk reduction and last but not least, the humanitarian.

Co-ordination should be improved (both at political and operational level) to ensure a timely, efficient and effective delivery of humanitarian and development aid and an effective and efficient use of budgetary resources.

The local institutions should also be more involved in national planning as well as in the elaboration and implementation of adaptation policies and projects and the coordination between adaptation policies and measures adopted on the national level, and their counterparts at the local level, be enhanced.

Involve more the private sector and encourage partnerships between private and civil society institutions. Adapt existing DRR and adaptation funding mechanisms and actions in order to respond more efficiently to the changing needs of the vulnerable people.

## QUESTION 19

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Horst Schnellhardt

**Subject:** Disponibilité des médicaments vétérinaires et des soins vétérinaires de base en Afrique

**Question text:**

More than two-thirds of transmissible animal diseases classified by the OIE as particularly dangerous and with the potential to cause serious socio-economic consequences and considerable public health risks are widespread in many African countries, which lack the suitable and safe veterinary medicines or basic veterinary care needed to prevent and treat them. The situation is exacerbated by ignorance of the dangers of fake medicines and a lack of appropriate channels for providing farmers with information.

1. How does Commission development aid address this problem?
2. What measures does the Commission plan to take to support African countries in their efforts to improve the situation?

## REPLY

The availability of veterinary medicines and veterinary services to livestock farmers in Africa is an important part of the EC's efforts to strengthen livestock production. Animal health attracts significant funding under the various EU development assistance instruments. The objectives include (i) to contribute to poverty reduction and food security, including nutrition; (ii) to enhance safe trade in agricultural products; and (iii) to implement the "One Health" concept to address health risks at the interface between humans, animals and ecosystems.

Here are some examples of what the EU is supporting in Africa:

In Africa successive programmes financed under the EDF for a total amount of nearly EUR 200 million have led to the eradication of Rinderpest, whose global eradication will be officially declared in 2011.

The Commission has recently approved a programme for EUR 30 million to improve the Governance of Veterinary Services in Africa. Under the Food Facility, a continental programme currently covers vaccination against neglected animal diseases (VACNADA), affecting disproportionately the poor. It includes support to the African Union Pan African Veterinary Vaccine Centre (AU-PANVAC) for quality assurance in vaccine production on the African continent.

The EC also supports the Partnership for Livestock Development, Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Economic Growth in Africa, which comprises also a multi-stakeholder platform. One of its key areas is the availability of animal health services.

Various continent-wide or regional programmes also address sanitary measures.

In addition to the provision of effective medicines and veterinary services, training of livestock keepers is important to maximise results. Training extends beyond "traditional livestock" such as cattle, small ruminants, pigs and poultry, to bee production, aquaculture, game farming, etc. Besides technical matters, training encompasses other skills such as entrepreneurship, management, organisational issues, advocacy, conflict resolution in pastoral areas, etc.

## QUESTION 20

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Michèle Striffler

**Subject:** European Programme for Action to confront HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis through external action

**Question text:**

In implementing the Communication on the EU Role in Global Health, how does the European Commission plan to keep a policy focus on the three diseases, HIV/AIDS, Malaria and tuberculosis? Concretely, does the Commission plan to develop a detailed strategy on the three diseases within the EU Global Health Action Plan or to prepare a new Programme for Action as requested by the Council?

Moreover, how does the Commission plan to broadly consult all relevant stakeholders, including the European Parliament and civil society, on those developments in the next months?

## REPLY

The Communication on the EU Role in Global Health recognises the absolute need, and the Commission's full commitment to continue the fight against the three diseases. The Communication also recognises the results achieved by the Global Fund for HIV / AIDS, Malaria and TB (Global Fund). The Communication outlines how supporting developing countries to strengthen their health systems in a comprehensive manner is the key to achieving health sector impact and results – including progress against the three diseases.

The Commission recognises that in the fight against the three diseases all must work in a complementary manner, to our added value, supporting comprehensive national strategies. The EU has added value in helping countries to strengthen their health systems, given the Commission country presence and range of aid instruments, including budget support. The stronger the health systems of a country the better it can use the vital disease-specific funding provided by the Global Fund and others.

The Commission provides over EURO 500 million per year to support health programmes in developing countries. Given that much of this support is to comprehensive health systems it makes an important contribution to the national fight

against the three diseases. The Commission has also provided 6% of total funding to the Global Fund, with the EU providing 51% of total funding.

The European Programme for Action to Confront HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis through External Action (2007-2011), forms the basis for collective action of the European Commission and EU Member States to fight the three diseases. At country level, the Programme for Action proposes action on policy dialogue, capacity-building and provision of resources to help bridge the financing gap for the three diseases. During 2011 the Commission will determine whether to prepare a follow-on Programme for Action for the three diseases or whether to incorporate these commitments into a broader Global Health Programme for Action.

In taking forward any new Programme for Action in the Community Legislative Work Programme the Commission will, of course, ensure that the voice of relevant stakeholders, including the European Parliament and civil society, are properly represented and will help shape the new Programme.

## QUESTION 21

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Catherine Bearder

**Subject:** Commission plans for spending and staffing of work on the social sectors in DG DEVCO

**Question text:**

In recent years, the European Parliament has been advocating that 20 % of the EU's development aid budget be spent on basic social sectors. With less than 5 years to go before the MDG deadline, a deadline which makes no reference to persons with disabilities, this need is more important than ever.

In the current restructuring of the European Commission's development DG (now DG DEVCO), how will the work on social sectors be staffed? Can you provide breakdowns by some key sectors such as health and education as well as by groups of the population such as persons with disabilities?

## REPLY

**As regards the spending of aid:**

Education and health play a key role in reaching the Millennium Development Goals. In line with this, the European Commission has committed approximately 2 billion Euros in direct support to education for the period from 2007 – 2013, and over 700 million Euros annually in support for health systems in more than 80 countries worldwide.

The Commission made the commitment in the framework of the DCI to provide 20% of its assistance to basic and secondary education and health, through project, programme or budget support linked to these sectors. In the table below, it is evident that the Commission has widely used this approach in providing assistance across all geographical areas, as well as applying a degree of flexibility, if necessary.



DCI Geo	OECD Sectors	2007	2008	2009	2010
Basic education	112*	51	138	147	91
Secondary education	113*	17	29	60	18
Basic health	122*	162	75	97	209
Total Basic Education & Health		230	241	304	317
Total DCI Geo (19 01 04 01 incl)		1362	1370	1399	1422
Benchmark		16,9%	17,6%	21,7%	22,3%

This table shows that the level of commitments, even without budget support, has been above the 20% benchmark for the past two years.

As a most recent example of this social focus of our aid, Education and Health have just been chosen as priority sectors of cooperation with the new authorities of South Sudan. Furthermore, a large part of MDG initiative is focused on maternal and child health.

**As regards staffing:**

The situation prior to the reorganisation was not satisfactory: Commission staff specialised in the social sectors were clearly not enough in numbers, as pointed out repeatedly by the Court of Auditors. In the policy area, the Commission was relying heavily on experts seconded by the Member states. Overall, social sector staff was divided between two units, one in DG DEV focusing on policy work, the other one in AIDCO offering country-support, not to mention other entities tasked with managing the financial instruments IIP or intra-ACP.

The reorganisation does not bring more staff, but gave the opportunity to regroup our social sector expertise in one single thematic unit that will cover Health, Education, Culture and Research. Meanwhile, it was also decided to transfer some of the sector experts to strengthen geographical and other policy directorates.

The commission will maintain our collective expertise, and to exploit synergies between operations and policy work. One way to do this will be to establish a close network between the new thematic unit and experts in geographical directorates, including also social sector colleagues posted in Delegations.

**QUESTION 22**

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Iva Zanicchi

**Subject:** Sport and Development

**Question text:**

Sport plays a significant role as a promoter of social integration and economic development in different geographical, cultural and political contexts. Sport is a powerful tool to strengthen social ties and networks, and to promote ideals of peace, fraternity, solidarity, non-violence, tolerance and justice.

From a development perspective sport could be used to reach out to those most in need including refugees, child soldiers, victims of conflict and natural catastrophes, the impoverished, persons with disabilities, victims of racism, stigmatization and discrimination.

Given all of these reasons, does the European Commission intend to allocate new funds to promote projects related to sport and to help developing countries?

### REPLY

The European Commission can agree with the view expressed by Ms Iva Zanicchi, MEP, that sport can be an effective and inexpensive way of promoting human and social development in developing countries.

Several partner countries have asked for sports projects to be implemented (for instance South Africa); moreover sport is included in priority No 3 of the chapter on Democratic Governance and Human Rights in the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership Action Plans for 2008-2010 and subsequently for 2011-2013.

The priorities for the Commission's current multiannual financial framework were adopted during programming. Because of the limited resources allocated to the programmes, it is unlikely that any new initiatives will emerge before 2013.

After that date, however, and in the context of the new financial perspective, the Commission would be willing, in response to a request by the partner countries, to look into the best way of including projects that highlight sport as a factor of social cohesion and solidarity in developing countries.

### QUESTION 23

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Maria da Graca CARVALHO

**Subject:** Lack of health professionals in poor countries

**Question text:**

Health is the number one policy in terms of aid to development. However, one of the problems in poor countries is the lack of health professionals, doctors and nurses as poor countries do not train enough professionals and on top of this, rich countries attract professionals from poor countries

What measures does the Commission foresee to minimise the negative effect of this situation?

## REPLY

The Commission is taking a number of specific actions to help developing countries improve their Human Resource for Health (HRH) situation. Training more health professionals and ensuring that the majority remain working in their country of origin are indeed essential.

The Commission recently developed a number of policies aimed to help developing countries train and retain HRH, specifically:

The 2006 EU Strategy for Action on the Crisis in Human Resources for Health (HRH) in Developing Countries

Recent EU migration policy, including the EU Blue Card scheme for highly qualified workers, which applies to some categories of health care workers, reducing the chances of non-ethical EU recruitment from countries in an HRH crisis

To implement policy the Commission developed the EU Programme for Action to tackle the critical shortage of health workers in developing countries (2007 – 2013), for coordinated implementation by the Commission and Member States. The September 2008 progress report on its implementation confirmed that the EU had already made good progress to increase the capacity of developing countries to train, manage and retain their health workers.

Under the EU Investing in People (2007 – 2013) programme **EUR 40 million** is given to support developing countries that face an HRH crisis. The programme funds the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Global Health Workforce Alliance (GHWA) to implement the principles of the EU HRH policy. It also funds civil society to support national policies, capacity building and skills transfer

The EU supports significant research in the HRH area, with **EUR 7 million** provided to analyze health worker retention and circular migration issues and assist in policy formulation.

More broadly, the European Commission provides over **EUR 600 million per year** to support health programmes in developing countries, and much of this funding goes to health systems strengthening. Our support to health systems, through budget support if possible, is vital to enable developing countries to retain health workers by improving salaries and working conditions. Indeed, overall, the EU supports health programmes in 51 of the 57 countries experiencing an HRH crisis

Finally, the Commission has strongly supported WHO in its mandate to develop the Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel, approved at the World Health Assembly in May 2010. This is a voluntary Code, which all 193 UN Member States (including EU countries) have agreed to implement.

## QUESTION 24

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Françoise Castex

**Subject:** Family planning in the context of the G8 commitments on maternal and child health

**Question text:**

The growth of the world's population poses a real challenge for global health, socioeconomic development and environmental protection. In this regard, the G8 and G20 summits are the ideal platforms for highlighting the value of investing in family planning and in women.

What efforts is the European Commission making in the framework of the financing and monitoring commitments it made in Muskoka in relation to maternal and child health, in particular to ensure that adequate attention is paid to improving access to family planning services in developing countries.

## REPLY

Support to family planning is one of the major components of the Muskoka Initiative. Family planning is also one of the key areas for action of the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health which is closely related to the Muskoka Initiative and which was launched at the MDG Summit of 2010 by the UN Secretary General.

Under the Muskoka Initiative the Commission has pledged Euro 50 million additional funding for the years 2011 – 2013. Part of this amount is intended for increased support to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Euro 13.8 million) and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (Euro 20 million). The remaining Euro 16.2 million will come from the MDG Initiative in support of ACP countries, where a significant number of proposals are expected to target MDG 4 and 5. Country proposals are to be submitted before the summer, and allocation decisions will be made in the latter part of 2011.

Support to family planning is also through thematic funding under the Investing in People Programme. For example, family planning was part of the last year's call for proposals on reproductive health rights. Under the same programme, the Commission contribute Euro 7 million to a UNFPA/UNAIDS project on linkages between HIV/AIDS and Sexual and Reproductive Health and is about to support the UNFPA with a contribution of Euro 23 million.

The Commission also participates in international partnerships and contributes to international initiatives and events. For example, the Commission is member of the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (RHSC), a global partnership of organizations dedicated to ensuring reproductive health commodity security, for people in poor countries. RHSC has launched a "HandtoHand" campaign with the

goal of 100 million new users of modern contraception by 2015. The Commission recently joined the West-African Conference on Population and Family Planning and is actively involved in a Conference to be held in November 2011 in Dakar.

## QUESTION 25

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Jo Leinen

**Subject:** Securing water resources in ACP States

**Question text:**

Access to clean water is a basic human right. What progress has been achieved by the European Union in improving the situation regarding water security in ACP States? How does the Commission intend to contribute to achieving the MDG on access to clean water?

## REPLY

The Commission recognises that access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene are basic human needs and a critical element of the fight against poverty. For billions of people worldwide, access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation is still a matter of life and death. Diarrhoea, for example, kills 4,000 children each day, often because the water they drink is not clean or they lack basic sanitation facilities.

While the world as a whole is on track to meet the MDG target for access to safe drinking water it is not on track to meet the target for sanitation and the total number of people without access to improved sanitation facilities is increasing. Thus, it is important that progress is made more quickly, and on a larger scale, than is currently being achieved.

To respond to the need for increased focus on water in development policies, the EU launched the EU Water Initiative (EUWI) in 2002. It is a political initiative that seeks to assist partner countries in the development and implementation of policies and strategies for the water and sanitation sector. In that framework, the EU and the ACP countries launched the ACP-EU Water Facility in 2004 with 700 million of Euros of grants devoted to projects for the period 2005-2013. All projects supporting water and sanitation include building the capacities to ensure proper maintenance of the infrastructures.

The Commission approach to development of actions in the water and sanitation sector is based on an integrated framework for collaboration with our partner governments, EU Member States and all concerned stakeholders. The ACP-EU Water Facility is part of this integrated framework for financing water and sanitation, which includes also the National and Regional Indicative programmes, and the Africa-EU Infrastructure Partnership Trust Fund.

Since 2004, more than 32 million people have gained access to improved water supply and 9.5 million to sanitation facilities thanks to support from the European Commission. Under the 10th European Development Fund and the budgets of 2007-2011, support amounts to €1.2 billion of grants. Of this, 500 million of Euros will be

directly invested into projects, 700 million of Euros being paid out as sector budget support.

We have made substantial headway, but there must be absolutely no let-up in our efforts to meet these goals. The EU, together with our partner countries, is ready to act where progress has been lacking, moving from declarations to action. The new MDG Initiative will provide an extra €1 billion for African, Caribbean and Pacific countries and has a focus on those MDGs that are most off-track, including water and sanitation. Also, access to water and sanitation are priority areas under the new Action Plan of Africa-EU MDG Partnership endorsed at the EU-AU Summit in December 2010.

Moreover, the benefits of proper water management can significantly raise opportunities for the poor by increasing income levels and improving living standards. As the Commission stated at the occasion of World Water Day 2011, the management of water resources affects all sectors that are important for inclusive growth and sustainable development, such as energy generation, agriculture, food security, and the environment. We will therefore prioritise sustainable water management in our future development policy.

## QUESTION 26

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Licia Ronzulli

**Subject:** Water for all

**Question text:**

Almost 1 billion people today still do not have access to a safe water supply, while some 2.6 billion people do not have any access to basic health services. In the developing countries almost 2.2 million people, mainly children, die every year from illnesses linked to a lack of drinking water, inadequate sewage treatment and poor hygiene.

The lack of drinking water is due to the absence of investment in water systems and poor maintenance of such systems.

What measures does the European Commission intend to take to ensure that the aid does not result merely in simple loans but in real investment in infrastructure?

## REPLY

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## QUESTION 27

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Norbert Neuser

**Subject:** Universal Energy Access by 2030 (& Conclusions from Fukushima)

**Question text:**

Would the Commission outline how they see the future of universal energy access, above all for the poorest in the developing countries, and how they go about achieving the universal energy access by 2030 (the UN target)?

What conclusions does the Commission draw from the Fukushima nuclear catastrophe in this context?

## REPLY

### **Response to 1<sup>st</sup> Question: What will the Commission contribute to foster energy access to modern energy for the poor?**

Access to modern energy services is **pre-requisite for economic and social development**, and key to achieve the MDGs.

The aim of the United Nations to reach universal energy access by 2030 is a **challenge for all involved**: the multilateral organisations, the industrialised and developing countries, **social and private sector actors** - but also the poor people themselves who must be ready to switch to modern energy services.

The forthcoming **Communication on EU development policy** will stress the need to forge **partnerships for inclusive and sustainable growth** with a broader range of actors, notably the private sector, emerging donor countries and local and regional authorities. A strong emphasis will be on **sustainable energy as a driver** for inclusive growth.

The Commission sees a need for **high impact aid, by blending grants and loans**. There will be an increased focus on energy in Commission programmes and on energy access including renewable energy, use of decentralized solutions and regional cooperation to increase energy security. Security at macro-level means **reliable access to energy at household level**.

The EU can draw on a comprehensive **series of European investment facilities** covering all geographical regions where we are active. For instance, the support to the energy sector **increasing in the 10th EDF**.

**Climate funds** will be used for providing access to energy. The Commission sees investments in **renewable energy as important elements of global and EU efforts to promote climate-compatible development** pathways.

### **Response 2<sup>nd</sup> Question: What is the EU doing in response to the Fukushima accident under the INSC?**

The Fukushima accident demonstrates that **safety must be the first priority everywhere** nuclear activities are implemented or planned.



The **Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation** can provide for supply of equipment or expertise by EU experts, directly or through cooperation with one or more Member States.

Even if **Japan is not a target country for the INSC**, the programme can intervene to support Japan in their efforts to mitigate the consequences of the 11<sup>th</sup> March earthquake and tsunami.

The **Japanese Authorities have to ask the Commission for the assistance** and for the type of intervention. Such an intervention can be provided without harming the activities foreseen in third countries.

Modalities of this cooperation can be discussed during the **next EU-Japan summit in May 2011**.

## QUESTION 28

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Fiona Hall

**Subject:** Treatment of returned asylum seekers in DRC

**Question text:**

With reference to the written answer to question 23 put to the Council for the 20th session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in Kinshasa, what measures is the Commission taking to ensure that the Qualifications Directive, the Return Directive and the Asylum Procedures Directive are being fully implemented by Member States?

## REPLY

- The Commission, as the guardian of the treaties, constantly monitors the implementation of the Qualification Directive<sup>8</sup>, the Return Directive<sup>9</sup> and the Asylum Procedures Directive<sup>10</sup> in Member States.
- The Commission uses a wide range of **formal and informal means to obtain information** on the application of these rules by Member States as well as to **act in case of partial or incorrect application**. The aim is to ensure full conformity

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<sup>8</sup> Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 on minimum standards for the qualification and status of third country nationals or stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection and the content of the protection granted (OJ L 304, 30.9.2004, p. 12)

<sup>9</sup> Directive 2008/115/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third country nationals (OJ L 348, 24.12.2008, p. 98)

<sup>10</sup> Council Directive 2005/85/EC of 1 December 2005 on minimum standards on procedures in Member States for granting and withdrawing refugee status (OJ L 326/13, 13.12.2005, p. 13)

of national legislation and practice with the *acquis*. However, it is the primary responsibility of national competent authorities, including the national courts, to ensure the correct implementation of EU law.

- The Commission takes relevant action in different contexts, such as practical cooperation activities, political level contacts, the provision of financial support to Member States, monitoring activities as well as infringement proceedings. To this end, the Commission can also rely on individual complaints sent by individuals who consider that their rights under the Qualification Directive, the Return Directive or the Asylum Procedures Directive were infringed.
- Up-to-date and quality **information on countries of origin of asylum applicants** is essential for the review of qualification criteria and for good asylum procedures. That is why the Commission has been promoting and supporting for several years exchange and dissemination of information and projects of cooperation between Member States including about the situation in the DRC.
- In particular, the implementation of the asylum *acquis* in relation to asylum seekers from the DRC was discussed in June 2010 at a meeting of the EURASIL network of experts from Member States' administrations, chaired by the Commission and also attended by experts from the UNHCR. The meeting allowed for an exchange of country-of-origin information available on DRC, with a view to facilitating convergence of approach toward the assessment of the protection needs of asylum seekers from this country.
- The newly established **European Asylum Support Office** will have among its missions to organise, promote and coordinate activities enabling the exchange of information on various countries of origin. It will also organise, coordinate and promote the exchange of information between national asylum authorities and between the Commission and national asylum authorities concerning the implementation of all asylum instruments.
- As far as the transposition of the Return Directive is concerned, the Commission sent letters of formal notice to those Member States which did not transpose the Directive in time (i.e. 24.12.2010). It should be underlined that those provisions, which directly confer rights on migrants, may be, and already are, invoked in proceedings before national courts, and directly applied at the national level, regardless of whether national transposition legislation is in place.

## QUESTION 29

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Olle Schmidt

**Subject:** Cotonou agreement and Cuba

**Question text:**

Civil and political rights continue to be severely restricted by the authorities in Cuba. Government critics are imprisoned and restrictions on freedom of expression are commonplace. The government also curtails freedom of association and assembly. All

these factors urgently need to be improved in Cuba, to the benefit of the Cuban people. This would additionally enable Cuba to sign the Cotonou agreement.

What kind of initiatives does the EU support to strengthen civil society and democracy in Cuba?

#### REPLY

Human rights matters, including the question of political prisoners and fundamental freedoms, have been and will continue to be addressed consistently during the EU-Cuba political dialogue meetings and during bilateral meetings with the Cuban authorities at the highest level. Within this context, the HRVP C. Ashton welcomed, on 23 April, the recent release of 126 political prisoners including all the remaining 52 of the group of the 75 imprisoned in 2003 (“Black Spring”), with the mediation of the Catholic Church and the support of Spain. The High Representative underlined the need to continue to make progress towards full respect for all human rights in Cuba.

Support to civil society in Cuba has been channelled through the DCI thematic programmes focusing on issues related to social cohesion and cultural initiatives as a way of expressing individuality, personal choice, intellectual independence, artistic freedom and social development. In addition, through its cooperation, the EU supports the important on-going decentralisation management process in the agriculture sector.

#### QUESTION 30

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Teshome Toga (Ethiopia)

**Subject:** EU’s Engagement with North and South Sudan

**Question text:**

The population of South Sudan, during their referendum in January 2011, overwhelmingly voted for the secession of the South from the rest of the Sudan. In view of the official inauguration of this new State in July 2011, how is the EU planning to adjust its engagement with both South and North Sudan?

#### REPLY

The EU wishes to see South Sudan developing into a democratic, peaceful & prosperous place. The main challenges South Sudan will be facing are: an overall lack of capacity at all levels of Government; an almost total oil revenue dependency; the urgent need to deliver basic services to its population and the need to improve the security situation. The EU will support the Government of South Sudan's efforts in tackling these challenges;

Last year, the EU made €150 million in Special Funds available for the needs of the most vulnerable populations in Sudan, in the South but also in some regions in the North. This year, the Commission has proposed to allocate further funds exclusively

for the South. These amounts will be a strong testimony of the EU's commitment to South Sudan's independence and development. The funds will be spent for basic services, notably education and health, agriculture, food security and democratic governance.

In order to be able to better respond to South Sudan's development challenges, the EU has embarked on a joint programming exercise together with its Member States. The future assistance to South Sudan will be programmed in close coordination with the Government of South Sudan and other international partners.

The main challenges North Sudan will face will relate to achieving sustainable economic growth after secession of the South and making this growth equitable. In addition, the public finance management systems of the Sudanese federal states need to be improved to allow for an efficient allocation of resources;

EU is genuinely interested in engaging with North Sudan despite the government's decision not to ratify the revised Cotonou Agreement. From the Special Funds mentioned above, 40% have been earmarked for the Transitional Areas, East Sudan and, the security situation allowing for it, Darfur. The EU will also remain engaged in the North through the ongoing projects and other financing instruments;

The EU believes that the Cotonou Framework offers ways and means on how we can dialogue with each other, on political and other issues. Both sides should make good use of it and seek common ground on issues of joint interest.

### QUESTION 31

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Marielle de Sarnez

**Subject:** Electoral crisis in the Central African Republic

**Question text:**

The EU has to a large extent funded the organisation of the elections in the Central African Republic without any assurances that the electoral process will run smoothly. In the light of the problems, the irregularities, the suspected impartiality of the Independent Electoral Commission and the hasty responses of the Constitutional Court to the actions brought by opponents, what measures are envisaged to ensure that the real choice of the people prevails?

Given the instability and risks of renewed violence, what measures are envisaged, having regard to Articles 8 and 9 of the Cotonou Agreement, which provide for political dialogue, and Article 96, which provides for appropriate measures to deal with cases of violations that could lead to a situation such as the present situation in Côte d'Ivoire?

### REPLY

The European Union is and has been closely following the electoral process in the CAR, since the first preparations began. During this whole process, the EU has made

demarches, both locally and from Brussels, pointing out the importance of a well organised, credible and transparent voting system.

Moreover, the EU sent an electoral evaluation mission composed of two experts before the electoral campaign began, which has followed the whole process from start to finish. According to the draft report of the mission, the two rounds of general elections on 23 January and 27 March last took place in a calm atmosphere, but demonstrated some significant failures. As for the legislative elections, their credibility was marred by irregularities which could be termed fraudulent. A declaration by the spokesperson for the High Representative for foreign affairs and security policy and Vice President of the Commission, published on 28 January 2011, called upon all parties to use legal methods to ensure the transparency of follow up to the two rounds of elections, and to remain engaged. In this declaration, the HR also invites the authorities of CAR to guarantee that all complaints are treated impartially and with complete transparency by the Constitutional Court.

The HRVP wrote to President Bozizé on 7 March 2011 to point out the EU's concern regarding the political situation in CAR. She requested the opening of reinforced political dialogue according to Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement, which could provide a framework for addressing questions linked to the electoral process and democratic governance.

On 27 March, the spokesperson for HRVP made a declaration expressing concern over the restrictions on freedom of movement of some members of the opposition and over the cases of arbitrary detention which had been pointed out.

The EU is currently awaiting the reaction of President Bozizé to the letter of the HRVP requesting the opening of reinforced political dialogue particularly with regard to the electoral process. The follow up to be given regarding relations with the CAR will depend on President Bozizé's reply. The EU continues to follow attentively the political situation in CAR. The EU considers that all avenues offered by Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement should be explored before resorting to other options.

## QUESTION 32

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Elie Hoarau

**Subject:** Situation in Madagascar

**Question text:**

Could the European Commission provide an assessment of the current political situation in Madagascar and outline its position with regard to this process?

## REPLY

The current political situation in the country is that a road map has been put in place by the High Authority for Transition, proposed via SADC mediation, which has only

been signed by the authorities in power and some political parties but not by the supporters of ex-Presidents Raatsiraka, Zafy and Ravalomanana.

This road map has not yet been agreed upon by the International Community. During the recent Summit of the SADC organisation Troika in Livingstone on 31 March, this regional organisation took note of the progress via its mediation and recommended that an Extraordinary Summit of SADC be called for to discuss this issue in depth. In this context, and having regard to the EU decision with regard to Madagascar which expires on 6 June 2011 (procedure foreseen under article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement) the Commission and the EEAS have launched the prolongation of the period of application of this decision for a supplementary period of one year.

This decision can be re-examined at any time. Consequently, if an agreement can be reached by the competent regional organisations and the International Community, the EU could modify the length of application of this decision and accompany the process politically and financially.

### QUESTION 33

**Name of Parliamentarian:** Musikari Kombo (Kenya)

**Subject:** Tuberculosis

**Question text:**

Considering that Tuberculosis (TB), which was declared a global emergency by the WHO more than 16 years ago continues to kill approximately two million people each year world-wide, with Sub-Sahara Africa leading with cases of TB, while MDR-TB has been on the rise especially in Eastern Europe, what measures has the Commission put in place to support development of effective TB prevention, control and treatment programmes?

### REPLY

The Commission shares the awareness of the public health threat posed by TB, the number of lives lost to TB, and the additional threat posed by drug resistant infections such as multi- (MDR) and extensively drug-resistant (XDR) TB.

The 2010 Communication on the EU Role in Global Health recognises the absolute need, and our full commitment, to intensify the global fight against TB and other major communicable diseases. The Commission's approach is to support partner countries to strengthen health systems in a comprehensive manner, which is the key to achieving health sector impact and results – including progress against TB. The Commission believes in the full application of Aid Effectiveness principles and International Health Partnership principles in health sector and while cooperating with partner countries.

The Commission provides up to 700 million Euros per year to health through development programmes. In many developing and middle-income countries such programmes contribute to national action on TB. The Commission will continue to ensure significant funding for health in the next 2013 – 2020 Financing Framework.

The Commission recognises the added value of strengthening the support to the Global Fund for HIV / AIDS, Malaria and TB (Global Fund), which has helped countries to achieve impressive results against TB. The Commission has provided 6% of funding to the Global Fund since its inception 10 years ago, and the EU combined has provided 51% of funds.

Through its Research and Health Programmes the Commission is investing in projects to address the issue of drug resistant infections, including TB. The Commission has supported two major research projects addressing MDR and XDR TB, with an estimated 1.6 million Euros budget.

The European Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) seeks to accelerate the development of new and improved drugs and vaccines, including against tuberculosis with an overall 400 million Euros budget. It has so far financed 18 clinical trials on tuberculosis in Africa.