

Strasbourg EP – June 15th 2010

At past UN Summits on development, Europe was a leader: in 2000 at the Millennium Summit; in the 2002 Fin for Dev Conference in Monterrey, at the 2005 Summit on progress on MDG's...

The Commission's first draft of April 21st for the European position for this September's Summit on the MDGs followed these shining examples:

The twelve-point EU action plan in support of the Millennium Development Goals suggested a credible pathway to delivering our aid commitments in 2015, by requiring Member States to establish verifiable annual action plans for reaching their targets and publish their first plans before September 2010; outlining at least the planned ODA spending for the next budgetary year and estimates for the remaining years until 2015; and by suggesting EU-internal 'ODA Peer Review' s, reporting the results to the European Council.

Indeed, the EU is already behind the schedule to reach the collective EU intermediate target of 0.56% by 2010, as a step towards reaching by 2015 the target of devoting 0.7% of GNI to ODA. We have fallen behind particularly because of the disappointing performance of large countries like Germany, France and Italy, Italy being the stingiest of all rich countries at 0.16%.

In the meantime, a lot of noise and political energy has been spent on discussing the need for helping poor countries cope with Climate Change; and on finding new innovative financing mechanisms – including a financial transaction tax. But as long as an iron-clad consensus has not been reached that these resources should be **additional to the existing 0.7 commitment**, this is hot air, distracting from, not contributing to, achievement of the MDG's

Alas, after several rounds of discussions, Member States severely weakened the Commission's draft: they dropped the delivery of annual action plans before September 2010. And some Member States are trying to eliminate the peer review mechanism. In the meantime, Finance Ministers have agreed to peer review each other's budgets: **why can't they include compliance with ODA commitments in that mechanism as the IMF does?**

As Member States are attempting to wiggle out of their commitments which they reaffirmed time and time again, I am most delighted, Mr President, with the resolution which your Parliament has passed, as it calls for:

- The issuing of multi-annual timetables to meet the MDGs;
- Avoiding broadening the definition of development aid (ODA);
- Insisting that funds to help poor countries fight the effects of climate change and the current economic crisis are genuinely additional to existing aid commitments. **I would**

take it, this also applies to the innovative financing mechanisms, the resolution proposes...

(The Resolution also urges to...)

- Agree on a new interim target of 0.63% of GNI as ODA for 2012;
- Untie all aid;
- Improve donor coordination, acknowledging different Member States' comparative advantages in various geographical areas and development sectors. ***Indeed it is time for the EU to implement the agreed EU Code of Conduct to improve the division of labor in order to reduce aid fragmentation!***

I trust you, Mr President, to raise your voice, echoing the millions of European citizens, for the Council to strengthen its spine. Indeed, in the last 30 days the voices of more than half a million European citizens have joined ranks with the 2 million people who stood up across our continent in October 2009 to call on European Leaders to keep their Millennium Development Goals promises.

And this is not just about waving our blue flag with golden stars, or the credibility of our, European, claim to leadership at the global level.

Today, politicians can't ignore the anxiety of European citizens in the present financial crisis. But let them not close their eyes to the fact that that same crisis hit the poorest countries even harder, reversing years of progress with the Millennium Goals, while these same, the poorest, countries are the victims first and foremost of the consequences of climate change and of the volatility of energy, food and commodity prices.

Given the European values, which we claim guide us, investing in the future of poorer countries is simply a moral imperative.

But it is also an essential investment in our *own* future: economic development particularly of our African neighbors is fundamental to our own long-term economic prosperity and security.

And we are just asking for such a modest effort: 0.7% still allows us to spend 99.3% of our National Incomes on our own needs...

(0.7: drop of water from glass)

