

Towards a common European development policy statement?

The European Council and the European Commission issued a first joint statement on an EU development policy in November 2000. This statement defined poverty reduction as the main objective of EU development policy. In the light of the changes in the international setting and in the development process since 2000, EU Development Commissioner Louis Michel made clear upon his appointment that he was planning to create a new framework for development policy covering both the Cotonou Partnership Agreement and other regional cooperation agreements. A wide-ranging consultation process was launched in January 2005 with the aim of getting the various parties involved to take part in the exercise.

Why? Who? What? How?

These are the four questions to which the European Commission sought to find answers in its consultation exercise. The question of 'Why?' is linked to the objectives of EU development policy. Should poverty reduction remain the chief objective, or should the European Commission seek to achieve a much closer link between development and other fields of external action, such as immigration, security and trade? The purpose of asking 'Who?' is to define the actors of European cooperation and to examine how they can be integrated into the EU's development policy. What role should governments play? And what about local governments, non-state actors and the private sector? How should the

Commission's activities tie in with those performed by individual member states? 'What?' means defining the fields encompassed by the Commission's development activities. Should the principle of focusing on certain sectors be retained, despite the fact that it may sometimes make the Commission less flexible in responding to the varying needs of partner countries and regions? Finally, 'How?' is a matter of identifying the way in which the EU's development policy is funded, and the criteria used in distributing aid.

A future European statement on development policy?

One of the key issues in the whole debate is the question of complementarity between the European Commission on the one hand and individual member states on the other, and more generally the effectiveness of EU development aid, representing as it does more than half of all global development aid. The EU has not made a great deal of progress on this issue despite producing a definition of 'concentration sectors' in 2000, which was intended to act as an invitation to the EU member states to arrive at a better distribution of work.

As development is one of the competences that are shared between the member states and the European Community (25 + 1), the 2000 Development Policy Statement applies only to actions funded by the Community. Generally speaking, the EU member states are free to formu-

late their own development policies. At the same time, they do share certain common objectives: reducing poverty and helping countries to attain the Millennium Development Goals. Moreover, the EU as a whole has signed up to a wide range of agreements and international commitments, such as the Monterrey Agreement on the funding of aid.

There is widespread recognition of the problems facing partner countries as a result of the multitude of actors and their differing practices. The question, therefore, is: when will an EU development policy be adopted that will apply not just to the European Community, but also to the EU member states and which could provide a framework for improved coordination and a better distribution of responsibilities among the member states? The advent of ten new European actors in the cooperation field has only served to make the problem even more pressing. It has now become a key issue both for Europe, which stands to gain political influence in the development world from coordinating its policy, and for the partner countries themselves.

The European Commission is urging the adoption of a European development strategy, along the lines of the European security strategy adopted by the EU in 2003. The question is whether the member states will be willing to go down this road.

ACP-EC cooperation in practice

Facts and stories

Hard facts and stories on four aspects of ACP-EC cooperation: money, politics, policies and the EU.

Where does ACP-EC money go?



As part of the debate on the Financial Perspectives (the political and budgetary framework for the EU's external action in 2007-2013), the European Commission presented the EU Member States with its ideas with regard to future resource allocation.

The idea is to apply a common approach to indicative allocations for individual countries, whilst maintaining the current practices in relation to contingency reserves and regional allocations. While helping the Commission to foster development and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, the common approach will also need to take account of the EU's political and economic priorities. The aim is also to base resource allocation on a minimum set of objective and transparent needs and performance criteria, based on internationally accepted indicators.

The EU's Anti-Fraud Unit, OLAF, recently published its annual report. This shows that the EU's humanitarian and development aid is susceptible to fraud due to a lack of coordination in the monitoring and auditing activities performed by the various international donors. http://europa.eu.int/comm/anti_fraud/reports/olaf/2003-2004/en.pdf

What policy debates are taking place?

The European Commission has adopted a comprehensive policy framework to strengthen its efforts in the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. The strategy confirms poverty reduction as the overall focus of its efforts. For the first time, it also proposes to address these three diseases in the context of human rights and human security. Furthermore, it proposes a coherent response to the three diseases across all of its external relations. The European Commission has allocated over 1.1 billion to the fight against the three diseases in 2003-2006.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/theme/human_social/pol_health_en.htm

Where is Europe going?

José Manuel Barroso, the European Commission President, presented the EC's five-year strategy to the European Parliament. Entitled 'Europe 2010: a Partnership for European Renewal', the new strategy was accompanied by a legislative and work programme for 2005 containing a detailed list of EC proposals. For the first time, the European Commission is proposing to undertake a joint programme in partnership with the European Parliament and the European Council. The overriding objective is to build prosperity, solidarity and security in the EU. The Millennium Development Goals for 2015 will guide the Union's development policy, and there will be a flagship strategy for tackling Africa's problems.

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/43&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>
and
http://europa.eu.int/eurlex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2005/com2005_0015en01.pdf



What's new in the political arena?

The European Commission has established an External Relations Group to prepare its decisions. Chaired by José Manuel Barroso,

the European Commission President, the other members of the group are External Relations Commissioner Benita Waldner, Economic and Monetary Affairs Commissioner Joaquín Almunia, Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn, Development Aid Commissioner Louis Michel, Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson and Budget Commissioner Dalia Grybauskaitė. The group will meet once a month to ensure coherence, impact and visibility in the Commission's foreign activities.

Building parliamentary capacity to participate in ACP-EU cooperation

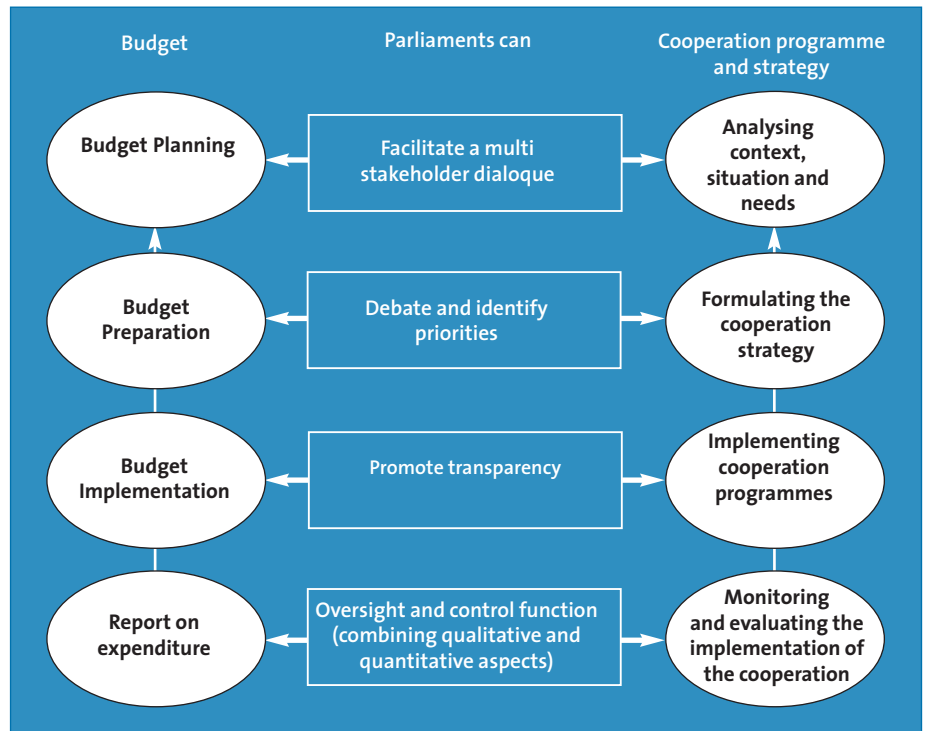
The Cotonou Partnership Agreement emphasises the need to strengthen the Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) as the democratic foundation of ACP-EU partnership. Yet it says little about the role played by ACP national parliaments as an expression of 'elective democracy' in the overall cooperation process. This contrasts sharply with the importance attached to non-state actors, who are said to embody the concept of 'participatory democracy'.

There is no shortage of 'push factors' for associating national parliaments more closely with ACP-EU cooperation. Several ACP countries have a long-standing parliamentary tradition whilst parliaments in many other countries are struggling to become credible institutions. The growing interest in participatory approaches to the formulation of development strategies (e.g. the PRSP) and in the promotion of governance through cooperation programmes is creating new opportunities for parliaments. Changing aid modalities - particularly the shift towards budget support - provide an additional incentive for donors to make sure that parliaments can exercise effective supervision of budget implementation.

The following table shows the roles national parliaments could play in major international cooperation processes, such as the enforcement of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement and the PRSPs.

Yet there are also plenty of constraints preventing parliaments from effectively performing these new roles. These include the absence of a parliamentary tradition, limited access to information, poor institutional capacity, strained relations with the executive branch, and a weak funding base.

Parliaments' Participation in Budget and Cooperation Programmes



ACP-EU cooperation therefore faces four major challenges:

- 1 to mainstream the participation of national parliaments in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of cooperation strategies and policies;
- 2 to extend and refine capacity support provided under National Indicative Programmes;
- 3 to recognise the important contributions that regional parliaments and the recently established Pan-African Parliament of the African Union are capable of making;
- 4 to strengthen linkages between the Joint Parliamentary Assembly and parliaments at other levels.

Suggested Readings

Corre, G. 2004. *Parliaments and Development: The icing on the cake? What parliamentary capacity can mean for cooperation* (ECDPM In Brief 9). Maastricht : ECDPM

www.ecdpm.org

EVENTS

The 80th Session of the ACP Council of Ministers was held from 29 November to 2 December. 2004. Sir John Kaputin, the Foreign Minister of Papua New Guinea, was appointed Secretary-General of the ACP Group. Four Assistant Secretary-General posts are foreseen, to be distributed among the different ACP regions and covering areas such as political affairs and human development; sustainable economic development; administration and finance; and development finance.

On 13-14 January 2005, DFID (UK) hosted a Senior-Level Forum to discuss how to provide effective assistance to 'fragile states'. The forum was organised in collaboration with the OECD/DAC, the European Commission, the UNDP and the World Bank.

ACP and LDC sugar producers met with EU Agriculture Ministers and the EC Commissioners for Trade, Development and Agriculture on 24 January to discuss the potentially devastating impact of the EU's sugar reform on their economies. The sugar producers asked for smaller price cuts and a longer transition period. Most EU Member States and the EC were reluctant to amend the proposal as it stands. The EU is proposing to formulate an action plan for supporting sugar producers, and will take account of trade measures agreed as part of EPA negotiations and in the WTO Doha Development Round. The ACP group will review its position at the Ministerial Sugar Conference to be held in Kenya on 20-25 March.

The ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly will meet in Bamako, Mali, from 16-21 April 2005. Among the items on the agenda one finds rehabilitation in post-conflict situations (including a discussion of the role of civil society), the MDGs, the progress made

in concluding Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), and EDF budgetisation. Work will also continue on the issue of capacity-building for ACP parliaments.

From 9-13 May 2005, the ACP Secretariat will host meetings of the ACP National and Regional Authorising Officers and the Heads of ACP Regional Integration Organisations.

The 2005 annual EADI conference will be on 'Insecurity and Development - Regional Issues and Policies for an Interdependent World'. The conference will be held in Bonn, Germany, from 21-24 September 2005. <http://eadi.org/gc2005/>

READINGS

The UN Millennium Project, an independent advisory body to the UN Secretary-General, has set out its recommendations in a report entitled *'Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals'*. <http://unmp.forumone.com/index.html>

The EU donor Atlas maps development assistance flows and volumes for each EU Member State. http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/tmp_docs/Donor_Atlas.pdf#zoom=100

Dominic Haslam (of WaterAid) examines the European Commission's NGO co-financing budget line, which is currently exclusively reserved for European NGOs. The question is whether or not it should also be made accessible to NGOs in the South. <http://www.bond.org.uk/pubs/eu/0105eu.doc>

ECAS (Euro Citizen Action Service) has produced a guide to European Union funding for NGOs, entitled *'Accessing Europe's largest donor'*. publication@ecas.org

EU Decentralised Cooperation: call for proposals http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/whatsnew_detail.cfm?dat=2004%2F10%2F27&dir=d%3A%5Cdata%5Ccomm%5Ceuropeaid%5Cprojects%5Cong%5Fcd&dir=Programs%20and%20Projects%20%2D%20ong%5Fcd

Herrero Cangas, A. 2004. *The good governance agenda of civil society: Implications for ACP-EU Cooperation. (In Brief 12) Maastricht: ECDPM* (www.ecdpm.org).

The European Commission presents the issues of the debate on the future European development policy in the document entitled *European Union Development Policy - Issues Paper* http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/theme/consultation/doc/Issues_Paper_EN.pdf

ECDPM, ICEI and ODI have undertaken the assessment of the EC development policy on behalf of the European Commission in a report entitled *Assessment of the European Community Development Policy* http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/tmp_docs/ecdpm_report.pdf#zoom=100

Comments, suggestions and requests should be addressed to Jean Bossuyt, European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM). Email: info@ecdpm.org