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Horsens, Denmark, 28-30 May 2012

**Directorat-General for Communication
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

Overview of the 23rd ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly

ACP-EU Assembly warning on consequences of Libyan conflict for the Sahel

The EU should step up its support to the Sahel region in the fight against terrorists and criminals who have taken advantage of the proliferation of arms following the end of the Libyan conflict, said MEPs and their counterparts from African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, at the 23rd ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in Horsens, Denmark, on 28-30 May 2012. They also proposed measures to contain food price volatility and called for strengthened governance for mining in ACP countries.

“Nowhere have the consequences of the Libyan conflict been more devastating than in Mali,” cut into two since the March coup d'état, the Touaregs' self-proclaimed independence in the north and the presence of international terrorist groups, stressed Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) Co-President Louis Michel. The implosion of Mali could have devastating consequences for its neighbouring states, he added.

The domino effect throughout the region would hit Niger, Mauritania, Senegal, but also Algeria, Burkina Faso, and even Libya itself, Mr Michel continued, warning that the crisis in the Sahel region could not be solved without both political and military intervention.

Impact of Libyan conflict, volatility of agricultural prices and mining issues

The JPA adopted three resolutions submitted by its committees.

The Political Impact of the Libyan conflict on neighbouring ACP and EU States, by David Casa (EPP, MT) and Assarid Imbarcouane (Mali), urges the EU to provide humanitarian assistance to the north of Mali as a matter of urgency.

In order to guarantee the security and democratic prospects of the Sahel region, the EU should intensify its support to the region in the fight against terrorists and criminals who have taken advantage of the proliferation of arms following the end of the Libyan conflict. Special attention should be given to the situation of women, refugees and migrants, the resolution says.

Price volatility, the functioning of global markets for agricultural products and their impact on food security in ACP countries, by David Martin (S&D, UK) and Eunice Kazembé (Malawi), calls for more spending on agriculture, better support for smallholders, especially women and the young, and measures to fight commodity speculation, as key elements in the battle for food security in ACP countries.

Adequate storage facilities and enhanced regional trade can provide producers with a more stable market environment, MEPs and ACP MPs said, adding that EU barriers to trade should gradually be dismantled, MEPs and ACP MPs add.

The social and environmental impact of mining in ACP countries, by Michèle Rivasi (Greens/EFA, FR) and Job Ndugai (Tanzania), stresses that the benefits of the mineral wealth of ACP countries should be distributed more equally and not benefit just small elites and foreign investors.

Effectively addressing child labour in the mines and enforcing environmental protection rules and labour standards should be high on ACP governments' agendas, delegates say. They

also want to see the culture of secrecy surrounding the extraction contracts broken and corruption eliminated.

Urgent resolution: Nigeria

In an urgent resolution on the security situation in Nigeria, MEPs and ACP MPs condemn the recent violence, especially the acts perpetrated by fundamentalist Islamic sect Boko Haram, call on the government to disarm all those illegally possessing arms and encourage all communities to strengthen dialogue. Socio-economic causes of the recent violence, such as poor distribution of wealth in one of the world's largest oil producers, must also be addressed, they say.

Declaration on the impact of common fisheries policy reform on ACP countries

In a declaration on the reform of the European fisheries policy and its impact on ACP countries, the ACP-EU JPA calls on the EU to ensure that fisheries relations with developing countries contribute to transparently managed, sustainable fisheries, while giving priority to ACP fishermen and supporting the local processing industries and decent employment.

Co-presidents' declarations on Mali, Sudan and South Sudan and Madagascar

On 30 May 2012, the two JPA co-presidents approved three declarations on the situation in Mali, the situation in Sudan and South Sudan and the situation in Madagascar.

Debates without resolution

The JPA was opened by Prime Minister of Denmark Helle Thorning-Schmidt, with the participation of the Speaker of the National Assembly of Denmark Mogens Lykketoft. The Assembly held debates with EU Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs, Climate Commissioner Connie Hedegaard, Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht, and representatives of the Council of the EU.

Among the topics discussed were the Rio+20 conference, the consistency of development policy and urban development issues in the ACP countries.

Next meeting in Suriname

The 24th session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly will take place in Paramaribo, Suriname, from 26 to 28 November 2012.

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Urgent humanitarian assistance for the north of Mali needed

Urgent humanitarian assistance should be provided to the north of Mali by the EU, which should also step up its support for the countries of the Sahel in their fight against terrorism and organised crime, in order to guarantee security and democracy in the region, members of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly plenary said Wednesday 30 May.

For the EU and especially its southernmost member states, the massive arrival of immigrants –legal and illegal- was one of the major consequences of the Libyan conflict. However, it was the African countries neighbouring Libya that faced the greatest challenge in terms of migration, members say in a resolution adopted today, calling on the EU to provide help for setting up the infrastructure necessary to receive these people in the African countries.

The parliamentarians also point out the precarious situation of ACP migrants forced to return to their countries, which are, in turn, forced to shoulder the heavy costs of receiving and reintegrating them.

Stopping arms proliferation

Members also underline how, following the Libyan conflict, vast quantities of weapons are now in circulation, often in the hands of terrorists, criminals and drugs traffickers, posing a serious threat to the security, stability and territorial integrity of all countries in the Sahel-Sahara region. Arms proliferation must be stopped and national borders controlled and secured, they told the countries in the region and the new Libyan authorities.

“Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration must be a priority for the stabilisation of Libya and its neighbouring countries,” says the resolution.

Stabilising the region

The EU and ACP have “a shared interest in supporting democracy building in this region”. To this end, the EU must enhance its cooperation with the countries of the region and the Economic Community of the West African States (ECOWAS) in the fight against terrorism and organised crime.

They also insist that it is essential to reinforce the capabilities of the Joint Staff Operations Committee (CEMOC) set up in 2010 by Algeria, Mali, Mauritania and Niger.

Protect women and the young

Members also condemn and call for an inquiry on the atrocities committed against the civilian population and women in particular, by the forces occupying the north of Mali. Abduction and rape as a weapon of war is particularly condemned. They call on the EU and its member states to pay particular attention to the situation of women in the Sahel region and take all measures necessary for their protection.

It is essential to support targeted actions on youth employment and educational training to help counter the appeal of terrorism and the recruitment of youth by terrorist and other criminal groups, they also say.

Co-rapporteurs : Mr. Assarid AG Imbarcaouane (Mali) and David Casa (EPP, MT)

Mining must benefit all of society and be sustainable

Mining revenues in ACP countries should benefit more than just small elites and foreign investors or serve to finance internal conflicts, deputies say in a resolution approved by the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly Plenary session this Wednesday. They add that governments must also address child labour and enforce environmental protection rules.

Most African, Caribbean and Pacific nations have enormous mineral wealth, but local populations only marginally benefit from these riches which so far have mostly served to fuel internal conflicts and corruption. Mining, deputies insist, should be placed at the heart of these countries' development policies and the "resource curse" must end.

Breaking the culture of secrecy

To achieve this, ACP governments should renegotiate or review existing mining contracts in order to increase mineral tax revenues and ensure greater transparency of these contracts. National parliaments and civil society organizations must play an important role in the fight against the culture of secrecy, the parliamentarians said.

European mining companies should be transparent and accountable on the moneys paid to the local, regional and national governments of third countries, members say, while this Thursday 31 May, the European Parliament's Legal Affairs Committee is set to decide on proposed legislation that goes in this sense.

Against child labour

Members call on African governments to enforce respect of fundamental rights and child protection rules as child labour remains widespread especially in small-scale and artisanal mining operations, exposing even the youngest to fatal dangers. Access to microcredit should help miners equip themselves with safe and environmentally friendly technologies, the text argues.

Rules for environmental protection

ACP countries are urged by the members to include legally binding environmental standards in their laws and the mining licences they issue. The use of toxic substances such as mercury and cyanide must be banned and national monitoring agencies strengthened, the parliamentarians said.

Background

Global production of the 14 principal minerals passed from one million metric tonnes in 1990 to almost 2.5 million in 2008, with demand for copper, iron ore and aluminium expected to double over the next 15 to 20 years.

According to Global Financial Integrity, illegal capital flight from Africa, including tax evasion is believed to have reached 865 billion dollars between 1970 and 2008. Money laundering alone is believed to have totalled 337 billion euros in West Africa alone according to GIABA, the West African governmental action group against money laundering.

Co-rapporteurs: Job Ndugai (Tanzania) and Michèle Rivasi (Greens/EFA, FR)

Agriculture in ACP countries: increase spending and stop abusive speculation

Protecting farmers in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries from wild fluctuations in agricultural prices and giving them the means and tools to increase their output, are key elements of any policy to ensure food security for the developing world, the MEPs and ACP MPs said in a resolution approved on Wednesday by the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly.

Parliamentarians called for a substantial increase in financial aid to ACP agriculture, including disbursing all of the US\$ 22 billion committed by the G8 in L'Aquila in 2009 to support farmers and fight hunger in the developing world. In the same spirit, considerable contributions from the ACP governments themselves are also needed to fill the investment gap in rural development, as they have undertaken with the 2003 Maputo Declaration by which they committed themselves to allocate a minimum of 10% of their annual budgets to agriculture. This should include investment in education, training and microcredit programs specifically targeted at women and young smallholders, with involvement of local associations.

Small-holders' property rights should be reinforced to protect them against large scale land acquisitions and outright "land-grabbing" by foreign investors and calls on the European Commission to improve its monitoring of such acquisitions, involving European investors.

Prevent abusive speculation

Furthermore, the JPA called for action to prevent abusive speculation in agriculture commodities, using high quality and timely information on global food markets, alongside the creation of mechanisms to prevent excessive price fluctuations. The AMIS global agricultural market information system for wheat, maize, rice and soybeans was singled out for praise by the parliamentarians who also called for improved regulation of futures markets, in order to limit excessive price volatility in the international markets.

Lower trade barriers, scrap biofuels subsidies

To limit excessive price fluctuations and promote food security, export restrictions in producer countries should be eliminated and trade barriers should also be lowered, through a transparent multilateral trade system that will gradually lead to the elimination of distortive export subsidies by the EU and by its WTO partners. Market distorting biofuel fiscal incentives must be eliminated to ensure that biofuel crops are only produced where it is economically and environmentally viable and does not endanger food production.

Finally, members underline that adequate storage facilities and enhanced regional trade can provide producers with a more stable market environment, strengthening food security in ACP countries.

Background

Close to a billion people suffer from hunger in the world today while demand for agricultural products could double by 2050 according to FAO. Development aid to the agricultural sector stands today at as little as 3.8% of total Official Development Aid (ODA), having declined sharply since the 1980s while ACP government investment in agriculture has been reduced to just 7% of total spending. Of the US\$ 22 billion committed during the L'Aquila G8 meeting in July 2009, only about 20% have so far been disbursed.

Co-rapporteurs: Cornelius Mwalwanda (Malawi) and David Martin (S&D, UK)

*Press Release 30 May 2012
23rd Session, Horsens (Denmark)*

ACP/EN

Nigeria: Boko Haram violence calls for specific answers

Recent violence in Nigeria, particularly acts perpetrated by the Boko Haram sect must be addressed by both short and long term measures, says a resolution adopted Wednesday by the ACP-EU JPA plenary. The roots of insecurity in the country are multiple and include corruption, poverty and inequalities in wealth, members say.

"Nigeria has not been faced by such a security challenge since the end of the civil war in 1970," Mohammed Mukhtar Ahmed (Nigeria) said during the debate preceding the adoption of the resolution. "All elements of chaos and civil war are now present in the country", warned Mariya Nedelcheva (EPP, Bulgaria).

Members strongly condemned recent acts of violence, particularly those perpetrated by the Boko Haram fundamentalist Islamic group which is believed to be responsible for more than 1500 of deaths and to have been directly involved in attacks against police posts, military facilities, mosques, churches, banks and schools.

The activity of Boko Haram, which is deploying increasingly sophisticated weapons and improvised explosive devices, is currently the greatest security challenge facing Nigeria, members say. This crisis is, however, compounded by the proliferation of small arms, especially following the ousting of the Gaddafi regime in Libya.

Disarm and restart dialogue

Members call on Nigerian authorities to end the violence and disarm urgently all persons and groups in illegal possession of firearms in the country. During the debate in plenary, several members insisted on the need to act fast to avoid repercussions on other countries in the region. "The rise of Boko Haram is linked to what is happening in Libya and Mali", Abdourahamane Chegou (Niger) underlined, while Zita Gurmai (S&D, Hungary) insisted on the need to pre-empt any "synergies between Boko Haram and AQMI" (Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb).

Nigerian authorities must continue to encourage interfaith dialogue and enhance freedom of thought, conscience and religion, the resolution says. All communities in the country should also seek peaceful solutions to the differences between ethnic and religious groups, according to the members of the Assembly.

Multiple causes must be addressed

The causes of recent violence in Nigeria cannot, however, be reduced to ethnic - religious conflict, members say. The resolution recalls that although Nigeria is one of the world's largest oil producers and exporters, 60% of the population lived on less than one USD a day in 2011. Pervasive poverty, the absence of mechanisms for redistribution of wealth and endemic corruption contribute to the general insecurity in the country, the resolution points out. Growing unemployment is behind the vulnerability of youth to indoctrination, manipulation and recruitment by fundamentalist groups, the report points out.

ANNEXES

Declaration by the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly on the situation in Mali

Mrs Louis Michel and Musikari Kombo, Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, have been closely monitoring recent developments in the political, military and humanitarian situation in Mali.

The Co-Presidents welcomed the statement by the High Representative/Vice President Ashton, on 6 February 2012, recalling “her attachment to Mali’s territorial stability and integrity, and to peace, democracy and stability in the region”.

The Co-Presidents paid tribute to H.E. Mr. Alassane Dramane Ouattara, President of Côte d’Ivoire and Chairman of the ECOWAS Heads of State Conference, and H.E. Mr. Blaise Compaoré, President of Burkina Faso and designated Mediator, for their role in the search for a solution to the Malian crisis.

The Co-Presidents welcomed the signing of the framework agreement between the National Committee for the Re-establishment of Democracy and the Restoration of the State (CNRDRE) and ECOWAS, which outlines a series of measures that are expected to lead to the re-establishment of constitutional order.

The Co-Presidents noted with satisfaction the recent progress made towards full restoration of constitutional order in Mali with the establishment of a 12-month transition period and the maintenance of interim President, Mr. Dioncounda Traoré, the Prime Minister, Dr. Cheick Modibo Diarra and the Government, to oversee the transition.

The Co-Presidents expressed support and encouragement for the transition authorities to successfully accomplish the priority tasks that they have set themselves, notably the restoration of social cohesion, recovery of Mali’s territorial integrity, and the organisation of free and democratic elections, within twelve months, to complete the process of restoring constitutional order.

The Co-Presidents expressed, nonetheless, their deep concern and consternation at the attack against President Dioncounda Traoré on 21 May 2012, and roundly condemned this despicable act, which is an affront to democracy, and called for the perpetrators to be caught and brought to justice.

The Co-Presidents urged the Malian junta to return to their barracks and to participate fully in the fundamental mission of the Malian Army, which is to defend that country’s territorial integrity and national sovereignty and to respect and protect the legal and legitimate institutions of the transition.

The Co-Presidents urged Mali’s political class and civil society to assume their responsibilities to expedite the return to constitutional order and to assist in strengthening the democratic institutions.

As regards the rebellion in the North of the country, the Co-Presidents strongly rejected the declaration of independence of the North of Mali by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), considering it to be invalid and ineffectual, and reaffirmed their attachment to Mali’s unity and territorial integrity.

The Co-Presidents expressed their continued support for the actions conducted by ECOWAS to address the Malian crisis, including the rapid deployment of ECOWAS troops, to restore Mali's stability and territorial integrity and to thwart the ambitions of the attackers whose two main groups, the MNLA and ANÇAR-EDDINE, had recently joined forces to create an Islamic State in the occupied territory. They urged ECOWAS to take the necessary steps to prevent the crisis from spreading to the sub region and called on the international community, notably the EU, the United Nations and the African Union, to provide financial and material support for ECOWAS' initiatives.

The Co-Presidents firmly condemned the terror, human rights violations, acts of vandalism and other atrocities committed in the towns in the North of Mali by the occupying forces and called for an immediate halt to such acts. In that regard, the Co-Presidents called on the International Criminal Court's prosecutor's Office to start up indictment procedures according to the Statute of Rome with specific regard to the perpetrators of the atrocities committed in Aguel-hoc and other towns in the North of Mali.

Considering the humanitarian crisis that has resulted from the occupation of the regions of the North of Mali by the combined forces of the MNLA, ANÇAR-EDDINE, ACQMI and other armed groups, the Co-Presidents urged the international community and the EU, in particular, to provide emergency aid to relieve the daily suffering of the people of the North, internally displaced peoples, and those who have sought refuge in neighbouring countries, and to give adequate assistance to the neighbouring countries that are receiving increasingly large numbers of refugees, such as Burkina Faso, Niger, Senegal and Mauritania.

Declaration by the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly on the political situation in Madagascar

Mr Louis Michel and Mr Musikari Kombo, Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, draw attention to the need to comply with the road map to the letter and to take, as a matter of urgency, the measures to reduce tensions set out in that document, in particular the immediate halting of the persecution of political opponents, the release of all political prisoners, the re-opening of private radio and television stations which do not support the regime in power, the restructuring of all institutions on the basis of balanced power sharing and the unconditional return of all political exiles, including President Marc Ravalomanana, without which democratic elections recognised by the international community cannot be held.

They emphasise the vital role of the SADC in implementing the road map and that body's duty to take all relevant measures, including the imposition of sanctions in the event of non-compliance with the provisions of the road map.

They call for a summit to be held which brings together the four main political leaders in Antananarivo, with a view to initiating a national dialogue in Madagascar and thereby bringing the interminable crisis in the country to an end, in keeping with the recommendations of the SADC.

The Co-Presidents reiterate the need to put an end to the suffering of the Madagascan people.

Declaration by the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly on the situation in Sudan and South Sudan

Louis Michel and Musikari Kombo, Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly are following with great attention the latest developments of the political, military and humanitarian situation in the border region between Sudan and South-Sudan.

The Co-Presidents welcome the statement by the EU High Representative/Vice President Ashton of 23 May 2012, recalling her commitment to the concept of two viable states as a framework for future development cooperation, as well as for establishing a dialogue based on the principles of democracy, rule of law and human rights.

The Co-Presidents fully support the process that followed the adoption of a Roadmap by the AU Peace and Security Council on 24 April which was endorsed by the UN Security Council in its Resolution of 2 May, and which was agreed by both sides. They welcome the commitment of both sides to immediately cease hostilities, as a first step in the right direction.

The Co-Presidents underline that in order to fulfil the Roadmap for Sudan and South Sudan further actions on the ground must follow; they also emphasise that there can be no military solution to the conflict in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, and stress the urgent need for a political and negotiated solution. They call on President Bashir and President Kiir to fulfil their responsibilities to maintain peace and stability in Sudan and South-Sudan and urge them to recommit to resolve all outstanding issues through peaceful dialogue.

With regard to the issue of border demarcation, the Co-Presidents call for the immediate activation of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) in accordance with UNSCR 2046 of 2 May, which set a deadline of 9 May for its activation with the support of the UN Interim Security Force in Abyei. The Co-Presidents stressed that the issue of the share of oil revenues, which should be solved in a clear, balanced and unequivocal way, based on African best practices and international principles.

The Co-Presidents warmly welcome the role of the African Union and the mediation of Mr. Thabo Mbeki with regard to the imminent resumption of direct negotiations, in particular on the mentioned key issues.

The Co-Presidents also stress that an agreement should include the cessation of harbouring of, and support to, rebel groups against the other state.

The Co-Presidents condemn all acts of violence committed against civilians in violation of international humanitarian law and human rights law. They call upon both parties to promote and protect human rights, including those of refugees and displaced persons, women and people belonging to vulnerable groups, to comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian and international human rights law, and call for those responsible for serious violations of such law, including sexual violence, to be held accountable.

The Co-Presidents strongly urge Sudan and Southern Sudan to permit humanitarian access to the affected population in the areas of the conflict, ensuring the safe, unhindered and immediate access of United Nations and other humanitarian personnel, as well as the delivery of supplies and equipment.

The Co-Presidents call on the Commission, the EU Member States and the international community to honour their funding commitments to the region, particularly to address severe

shortages of food aid, emergency shelter and protection. The Co-Presidents call for close attention to the food security situation and other preventive measures to be put in place.