

**BOND (British Overseas NGOs for Development) contribution to the PES manifesto for
the 2009 European Parliament election
26 June 2008**

About BOND

BOND (British Overseas NGOs for Development) is the United Kingdom's broadest network of voluntary organisations working in international development, with over 300 members. BOND aims to improve the UK's contribution to international development by promoting the exchange of experience, ideas and information amongst BOND members between networks of NGOs in the UK and internationally, with the UK Government, and between BOND members and other UK bodies with an interest in international development.

BOND's submission

BOND welcomes the opportunity to influence the PSE manifesto for the next European Parliament Elections in 2009.

BOND believes that the European Union (EU) should deliver on its international commitments to eradicate poverty, ensure economic justice and fair trade, equitably address climate change, and realise peace and universal human rights. As a first step towards these goals, the Union should make a significant contribution towards achieving and surpassing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in sustainable, inclusive and equitable ways. It is also our view that the EU should ensure that its policies on trade, migration, energy, and security support, or at the very least do not undermine, the attainment of development objectives.

More and better aid

The European Union provides the majority of the world's development aid, giving it a crucial leadership role in the fight against global poverty and rights for all. Clear commitments have been made by the Union not only to further increase the volume of aid, but also to increase the quality of its aid.

Unfortunately, according to the latest trends, it is clear that the target to raise official development assistance levels to 0.56% of GNI by 2010 and to 0.7% by 2015 will be hard to reach if efforts are not stepped up drastically. Member states need to set out binding year by year timetables showing how they will meet their common commitment to provide more aid.

Furthermore, it is important that what is accounted for as development assistance, is real aid, and not inflated by debt cancellation and other ways to boost up aid figures.

The European Union has defined clear objectives for its development cooperation: it should be aimed at eradicating poverty and reaching the Millennium Development Goals. Aid can only be deemed effective if it contributes to these objectives. Given that 70% of those living in poverty are women and girls, EU's development policy and actions should actively address gender equality issues.

Europe has the ambition and the opportunity to become a leader in the global process of making development assistance more effective. As a signatory to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, it has agreed to a set of principles and has developed policies and instruments to implement these.

The aid effectiveness agenda is not only a matter of technical implementation but also a political one. More transparency and accountability and respect for real, democratic ownership are crucial elements in the process towards more effective aid.

The European Parliament has a key role to play, in terms of its role as democratic watchdog to ensure the EU meets its commitments on ODA volumes and aid effectiveness, as well as championing further European leadership in these issues.

Recommendations:

- EU Member States should scale up to reach the agreed targets by 2015 or sooner (without including debt relief or other 'non-aid' items) and allocate 50% of this increase to sub-Saharan Africa; and to publish a binding year-on-year time table showing how this will be delivered.
- The EU should deepen the commitment to democratic ownership, accountability and transparency which are at the heart of aid effectiveness, and ensure that citizens' voices and concerns are made central to national, regional and local development plans and processes.
- The EU should phase out all economic policy conditionality attached to aid, and agree more mutually accountable, contractual agreements with partner countries, based on locally defined criteria; untie all EU aid to all countries, including food aid and Technical Assistance (TA); and reform TA so that 100% of TA is demand-driven and aligned with national strategies.
- The EU should respect the centrality of human rights, gender equality, child rights, social justice and environmental sustainability, which are absent from the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, and commit to agreeing additional EU targets which demonstrate how progress towards realizing a human rights based approach to development will be made in these areas.

Gender equality and women's rights

Women continue to be disproportionately represented amongst the poorest and most excluded people in developing countries.

The *European Consensus on Development* recognises that the 'promotion of gender equality and women's rights is not only crucial in itself but is a fundamental human right and a question of social justice, as well as being instrumental in achieving all the MDGs and implementing the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* and the Beijing and other UN Agreements'. The 2007 Communication, *Gender equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Co-operation*, sets two objectives for the EU: 'to increase the efficiency of gender mainstreaming' in political dialogue, development co-operation and institutional capacity building and secondly, 'to refocus specific actions for women's empowerment in partner countries' – a twin-track approach. Also it is clear that 'ownership' of development co-operative initiatives meant ownership by 'women beneficiaries themselves'. The [EC MDGs Communication on EU Aid Effectiveness](#) states that '... aid effectiveness must address gender equality and incorporate women's empowerment in national development planning'.

The achievement of women's rights and gender equality is a political project which the PES within the European Parliament is well placed to urge through ensuring:

- Sufficient human and financial resources are allocated to implement the EU policy in Brussels and in Delegations
- EC aid supports specific actions on women's rights and gender equality

- Women's organisations and groups are involved in the planning and implementation of all development co-operation initiatives
- Strong accountability mechanisms are set up to ensure staff implement agreed policy
- Systematic monitoring is carried out on the impact of European aid and trade on gender equality
- Gender thinking is integrated into EU policies and interventions (trade, foreign and security, climate, agriculture, etc.).

Aid and governance

The European Commission has a major role to play in promoting sustainable democracy and good governance, both of which are vital to reducing poverty, gender inequality and social exclusion and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

A key challenge for many developing countries is the building of accountable and democratic governance and increasing citizen's influence in decision-making. Supporting mechanisms to build and strengthen government accountability to its citizens is the most sustainable way to ensure partner country ownership. If the EU wants to see more democratic and legitimate governments and policies in partner countries, it should recognise that civil society has a key role to play.

The EU should:

- Focus on the demand-side of democratic accountability by strengthening civil society to become full participants in the process of building democratic governance
- Improve its own governance and accountability by opening up its policy processes for scrutiny by partner country governments and civil society in Europe and South
- Encourage and support partner country governments to improve and strengthen their accountability to their citizens
- Strengthen policy coherence to ensure that democratic accountability, gender, democracy and human rights concerns are mainstreamed through other policies such as trade, economic, security and foreign policy

Debt cancellation

European Member States are some of the biggest lenders to poor countries. The debt burden of poor countries is still untenable, with low income countries repaying around US \$100 million every day. This level of indebtedness hinders poor countries' efforts to develop their economies and to invest in essential services. Almost \$90 billion in debt cancellation has already taken place freeing up vital resources, but much more is urgently required. A further estimated \$400 billion in debt relief would enable poor countries to meet their people's basic needs¹.

Recommendations:

- The EU should argue strongly at international fora for the extension of multilateral and bilateral debt cancellation to all poor countries that need it, at a minimum all IDA-only countries. The European Parliament should urgently call for expanded debt cancellation from all Member States and from the EC to all developing countries that need it for poverty reduction.

¹ See Jubilee Debt Campaign's new report, [Unfinished Business](#) for details of this calculation, which is based on research by the New Economics Foundation.

- The European Parliament should conduct a parliamentary audit, highlighting cases of outstanding European states' claims on developing countries, which would result in recommendations on debt cancellation and future lending.
- The EU should call for Member States, the World Bank and IMF to audit all their outstanding claims on developing countries, and support any citizens' audit on this that takes place.
- The EU should favour grants rather than loans for poverty-reducing expenditure.
- The European Parliament should endorse and support broadly the Parliamentarians declaration for shared responsibility on sovereign lending.
- The EU should work with Member States and international financial institutions to end the practice of making debt relief and lending dependent on externally-imposed conditions.
- The EU should call on Member States to change their laws to clamp down on vulture fund activity. An EU framework should be implemented in order to prevent predatory practices on developing countries' sovereign debts. The EU should also give judicial and financial assistance to countries in case they are taken to court by vulture funds.

Trade Justice

The consultation paper "Europe in the world" recognises that the EU is an important global player in trade, both bilaterally and as a member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). It sees EU trade policy as an important instrument for achieving the EU's vision of development for itself and for the world.

However it does not contain proposals for ensuring that trade can indeed be an instrument for development. In practice, the EU's trade agenda risks the opposite outcome. At the WTO, developing countries themselves have rejected the aggressive trade liberalisation approach from rich nations, including the EU. Many ACP countries did not sign EPAs before the deadline at the end of 2007 because of development concerns; many of those that did sign, did so under threat that trade preferences would disappear. The European Commission continues to pursue its agenda with scant regard for ACP development objectives and regional integration plans.

The primary goal of the EU's **Global Europe** strategy is greater market access for EU companies in third markets. It involves the EC pushing aggressive and ambitious Free Trade Agreements with a number of nations and trade blocs within developing countries which go well beyond commitments at the WTO. This could cause loss of jobs and livelihoods and create greater inequality and insecurity rather than lifting millions of people out of poverty as claimed.

The Commission has exclusive competence on trade policy, and negotiations are often conducted in secrecy and lack transparency. Without greater transparency and ability to scrutinise policy processes, coherence with development objectives is being de-prioritised. The Lisbon Treaty will extend the Commission's competence to cover additional trade issues such as investment, IP and further aspects of trade in services. The Treaty proposals for new legislative powers for the European Parliament on trade policy are welcome, but not sufficient to ensure full accountability and transparency and we urge Parliament to seize every opportunity to engage, and influence the Commission's own engagement, in trade negotiations and other processes.

Recommendations:

With all these points in mind the European Parliament is encouraged to take a lead in the following actions:

- Challenging the Commission on its aggressive liberalisation agenda, and calling for an urgent, fundamental, review of EU trade policy, including its approach to the EPAs negotiations, so that it delivers sustainable development and respects developing countries' right to determine their own development path.
- Challenging the Global Europe strategy
- Monitoring EU performance against its commitment to policy coherence for development including on trade
- Pushing for greater transparency in trade negotiations, including the de-restricting of access to C133 and Council documents.

Improving Human Security, implementing Conflict Prevention:

There is now an international recognition that conflict is a key obstacle to realizing the MDGs and that preventing the resurgence of violent conflict is fundamental to reducing poverty, protecting rights and thus ensuring sustainable development.

Aid has the potential to play a positive role in preventing violent conflict and development assistance can act as a powerful tool for conflict prevention if it is targeted to address factors that increase the risk of violence, such as poverty, poor governance and inequality between groups. Even well intentioned development initiatives can sometimes end up fuelling or exacerbating conflict if they don't take into account drivers of conflict. Reciprocally, security related programmes like Security Sector Reform (SSR), Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and Small Arms & Light Weapons (SALW) should address the people 'security needs and concerns if they want to achieve sustainable peace.

EU Development strategies and instruments have the capacity to respond to such challenges, provided they are implemented in a conflict-sensitive manner, that is in full understanding of the context in which they operate and of the impact of such programmes on the drivers of conflict.

The EU has adopted a range of strategies and measures in order to enhance its conflict prevention capacity, to improve the control of arms trafficking and transfers and to highlight its responsibility to protect civilians. However, much more can be done to strengthen implementation of these existing frameworks for action whilst introducing new measures to contribute towards increased security and protection for the poor.

Recommendations:

- The EU must ensure implementation of the Council Conclusions on Security and Development and the Council Conclusions of a EU response to situations of fragility, adopted at the 2831st External relations council meeting on 19-20 November 2007, and particularly "further enlarge and improve channels of dialogue and cooperation with civil society, NGOs, local authorities and the private sector".
- The EU must ensure implementation of the "EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts", endorsed by the Göteborg European Council in June 2001, by mainstreaming conflict prevention within its different external relations and development cooperation instruments.
- The EU must adopt a conflict-sensitive approach when designing and implementing development strategies and programmes, therefore basing its engagement on regularly updated conflict analysis so that aid does not contribute to fuel or exacerbate conflicts.
- The EU is strongly encouraged to further support the elaboration of an international Arms Trade Treaty and transform the EU Code of Conduct on Arms export into a legally-binding Common Position.
- The EU should actively support the principle of the 'Responsibility to Protect civilians' in crises.

Climate change

Climate change is an issue of global justice – poor countries have contributed least to the problem but will suffer first and worst. Indeed they are already feeling the impacts to an extent that should galvanize Europe to immediate and urgent action.

Unprecedented action is required nationally, regionally, and internationally. The urgency and extent of the EU's action on climate change has to match the scale of the problem and be commensurate to the EU's values, influence, and wealth. The European Union has a leadership role at the international climate change negotiations. To retain credibility, this international leadership has to be mirrored by strong domestic action. This is crucial to secure a robust and equitable global post 2012 agreement.

Recommendations:

- The EU should lead the way to show how both development and climate benefits could be achieved at the same time. It is the responsibility of EU Member States that have emitted most historically, have industrialised in the process, and have the highest levels of human and economic development to take on the lion's share of the global mitigation and adaptation burden, thereby allowing economic development in developing countries while global emissions limits are not undermined.
- The EU should set domestic only and unilateral targets for renewable energy, energy efficiency and low-carbon growth to help tackle climate change. The level of the targets should reflect the scale of the challenge outlined in recent reports such as the Stern Report and the IPCC Working Group II Report.
- The EU must actively negotiate internationally for a science-based and equitable agreement to control carbon emissions and for adequate funding mechanisms to support adaptation and clean development in developing countries.
- The EU needs to make significant funding available to enable poor, vulnerable countries to adapt to sea level rises, deprivation, increased drought and more extreme weather. The lives and livelihoods of the poorest people in the developing world are already under threat due to Europe's economic activities and it is up to the EU Member States to compensate them for the damage done. This money cannot simply be channelled from existing aid budgets. Instead, the payments should be additional and compensatory.
- While poor countries cannot be held accountable for climate change as it is not a problem of their creation, clean development is both in their interests and in Europe's in order to maintain global greenhouse gas emissions at a level that is sustainable. The EU needs to play a leading role in promoting cleaner, more efficient approaches for sustainable and low carbon development.
- EU Member States must support mitigation efforts in developing countries by facilitating and financing clean, energy-saving, and efficient technologies transfer, carbon proofing investments and also development cooperation initiatives. A significant proportion of the revenue raised by auctioning allocations under the European Trading Scheme and taxing carbon should be used to fund the clean development in poor countries.
- The effort sharing proposal and the review of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS) have an ambition level which is clearly insufficient to achieve the reductions demanded by evidence presented by the IPCC and to keep the rise of global average temperatures below 2°C. Therefore we expect a 30% domestic EU reduction target by 2020 compared to 1990 levels. On top of this the EU must show a clear ambition to support developing countries in addressing their greenhouse gas emissions and in achieving sustainable development.

Future institutional reforms

It is vital that, whatever direction the EU decides to take on future institutional reforms, poverty eradication stays the primary objective of European Development Policy and coherence is ensured between the EU external affairs and development objectives as stated in the European Consensus on Development, to avoid subordinating development instruments to a narrowly defined foreign policy agenda or Europe's commercial objectives. This should be translated into practice by:

- Having a dedicated Commissioner for Development who is in a position to promote the interest of EU development policy within the College of Commissioners and towards the Council. The Commissioner should have a say not only on policy formulation and funding but also on implementation of development policies in order to end the inconsistencies caused by the gap between policy and implementation in the current structure.
- Having a dedicated administrative structure responsible for EU development policy and its implementation that has a clear focus on development objectives and sufficient capacity and is responsible for development policy and programming in all developing countries – African, Caribbean, Pacific, Asian and Latin American countries - to avoid current inconsistencies due to the split between DG Development and DG Relex.

The EU Budget

The EU Budget Review which will be carried out by the European Commission in the coming year is a unique opportunity to ensure that the budget matches the aims of the EU to be able to meet its commitments to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and to engage with global issues such as climate change, globalisation, and public health threats.

The legal instruments covering the EU's cooperation with developing countries should be clearly oriented towards the objectives of the EU's development policy and the EU's budget should promote and anchor poverty eradication as the overarching principle of the EU's international cooperation, including within the fields of trade, development aid, and development education.

¹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, Gender equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Co-operation, COM (2007) 100

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