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Cotonou Agreement

Time to rethink EU-ACP development cooperation

The 20-year Cotonou Agreement signed between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries in Benin in 2000, is due for a mid-term review in 2010. Commenting on today's EU Parliament adoption of her report on the review, Green MEP and European Parliament Development Committee chair **Eva Joly** said:

"I am very pleased that the European Parliament has shown clear support for substantial revisions to be made to the EU-ACP development cooperation agreement. The mid-term review of the Cotonou Agreement presents an excellent opportunity to rethink the disastrous free market development model, which led to a multidimensional crisis on finance, food, energy and climate change.

The time has come for serious policy change. EU policies on trade, fisheries and agriculture must be coherent in order to support sustainable development in ACP states. Agriculture must be placed at the heart of development policy in order to combat poverty. ACP farmers need market regulation to encourage production for local consumption and to ensure fair prices for their goods.

The ACP-EU negotiators must also address the land grab threat linked to future food crises. In the wake of spiralling food prices in 2008, government-backed foreign investors bought farm land, particularly in Africa, to secure their countries' food security at the expense of local food security. If this trend continues, poverty will deepen and the threat of violent conflict and food riots will rise. Guiding principles are needed to recognise the control of vital natural resources - such as land and water - as a fundamental human right of the population.

As the crisis continues to bite deep across the globe, action must be taken to stem developing countries' loss of financial revenue through tax avoidance and evasion. The losses amount to ten times the sum developing countries receive in development aid. Multinational corporations must be made to declare their profits and tax payments in each and every ACP country. European Investment Bank policy regarding offshore financial centres must also be overhauled to serve the development needs of ACP countries."

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