

# ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

ACP-EU 3752/05/fin.

## RESOLUTION<sup>1</sup>

### **on the progress made in achieving universal primary education and gender equality in the ACP countries in the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG)**

*The Joint Parliamentary Assembly,*

- meeting in Bamako (Mali) from 18 to 21 April 2005,
- having regard to Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
- having regard to Article 25(1) of the Cotonou Agreement,
- having regard to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly,
- having regard to ILO Convention 138 (1973) on the minimum age for employment,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by its General Assembly Resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989,
- having regard to the 1990 Charter of the Rights and Welfare of the African Child,
- having regard to the United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the Barbados Plan of Action of May 1994,
- having regard to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994 and to the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCM) held in Beijing in 1995,
- having regard to the World Summit on Children held in Jomtien in 1990, the UN Social Summit of 1995, and the World Education Forum held in Dakar (Senegal) in 2000,

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<sup>1</sup> Adopted by the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly on 21 April 2005 in Bamako (Mali)

- having regard to the Millennium Declaration adopted by the world's leaders at the Millennium Summit of 2000<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to the joint Commission and Council Declaration on Development Policy of 10 November 2000,
- having regard to the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children held in New York in 2001,
- having regard to the European Parliament resolution on primary education in the developing countries adopted on 6 September 2001 in the context of the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children held in September 2001<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to the International Conference on Development Funding held in Monterrey in March 2002,
- having regard to the EP report on basic education in developing countries in the context of the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children held in May 2002 (A5-0278/2001),
- having regard to the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in September 2002,
- having regard to the Commission communication on education and training in the context of poverty reduction in developing countries (COM(2002) 116 – C5-0333/2002<sup>4</sup>),
- having regard to the Council Resolution of 30 May 2002 on aid to education,
- having regard to the EP report on the Commission communication to the Council and the European Parliament on education and training in the context of poverty reduction in developing countries (A5-0126/2003),
- having regard to the UNDP report of 2003 'The Millennium Development Goals: Progress, Reversal and Challenges' and to its Human Development Reports 2003 and 2004,
- having regard to the Joint Parliamentary Assembly resolution on children's rights and child soldiers in particular (ACP-EU 3587/03/fin),
- having regard to the 2004 annual report on development policy and EC external aid of October 2004,

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<sup>2</sup> General Assembly Resolution 55/2

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 72 E, 21.3.2002, p. 244.

<sup>4</sup> Not published in the OJ.

- having regard to the Global Monitoring Report 2004 - Policies and Actions for Achieving the Millennium Development Goals and Related Outcomes (March 2004),
  - having regard to Regulation (EC) No 806/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on promoting gender equality in development cooperation<sup>5</sup>,
  - having regard to the report of the UN Secretary-General of 27 August 2004 on UN implementation of the UN Millennium Declaration,
  - having regard to the Commission's report of November 2004 on the Millennium Development Goals 2000-2004,
  - having regard to the UNICEF reports on the state of the world's children (2004 and 2005),
  - having regard to the three UNFPA Reports: State of the World Population 2004 - the Cairo Consensus at Ten: Population, Reproductive Health and the Global Effort to End Poverty; International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994; and Investing in People - International Conference on Population and Development - 1994/2004 (ICPD at 10),
  - having regard to the Mauritius Declaration of January 2005, particularly the provisions relating to the vulnerability and specificity of Small Island Developing States,
  - having regard to Rule 17(1) of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Social Affairs and the Environment (ACP-UE 3752/fin.),
- A. whereas Article 26 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and Principle 7 of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child consider education to be a fundamental human right and whereas, as such, it is a universal and indivisible right which leaves no room for any form of discrimination on grounds of gender, disability, ethnic or racial origin, religion or culture,
- B. having regard to the Millennium Declaration adopted by the world's leaders at the UN Millennium Summit in 2000, which establishes a set of clear and measurable development objectives with specific deadlines,
- C. whereas the Millennium Development Goals resulting from the Millennium Declaration include as Goal No 2 the achievement of universal primary education, and set as an objective to ensure by 2015 that each child can complete a full primary education cycle,

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<sup>5</sup> OJ L 143, 30.04.2004.

- D. whereas the Millennium Development Goals attached to the Millennium Declaration include (goal No 3) the promotion of gender equality and the autonomy of women, and set the objective of eliminating gender inequality in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and at all levels of education by the end of 2015,
- E. whereas Article 10 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) says that signatory States shall take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure that they have equal rights with men in the field of education,
- F. whereas the 1990 Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child committed all States to the full realisation of the right to education, with a particular focus on free and compulsory basic education,
- G. whereas the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) states the need to promote sustainable development on a people-centred basis, including sustainable economic development by means of the following measures focussing on the interests of girls and women: basic education, education for life, literacy and training, and family healthcare;
- H. whereas the European Parliament and the Council, in their Regulation 806/2004 (21 April 2004), asked to finance specific measures related to women's access to resources and services, especially in the areas of education and training, health, economic and social activities, employment and infrastructure, and participation in all political decision-making processes;
- I. whereas the UN International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo (5-13 September 1994) adopted a declaration stating that education is one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills, and self-confidence necessary for participating in the development process;
- J. whereas questions relating to access to education, health, food, drinking water and employment are closely linked, and whereas action needs to be taken on these multiple aspects of human development in order to achieve the Millennium Goals in the field of universal primary education,
- K. whereas ILO Convention 138 (1973) on the minimum age for employment, which stipulates that the permissible age of entry into employment 'shall not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling and, in any case, shall not be less than 15 years',
- L. whereas the development of global education is one of the most effective strategies available for breaking out of the poverty cycle; whereas it is a key element of sustainable human development and of the efforts to meet the human development objectives agreed for 2015 in the international arena;

- M. whereas the joint Commission and Council Declaration of November 2000 endorses the need for a world-wide commitment to universal primary education, and classifies education as a development priority,
- N. whereas 121 million children have never been to school, 65 million of whom are girls, and girls have a higher dropout rate,
- O. whereas many disabilities are not visible, such as speech and learning difficulties and physical, genetic (from birth), sensory, and emotional disorders; whereas children also suffer from HIV/AIDS and other debilitating diseases,
- P. whereas most heavily indebted developing countries which are subject to structural adjustment programmes lack the requisite budgetary room for manoeuvre to enable them to increase their social spending,
- Q. whereas education and training for girls and women are of vital importance in the fight against poverty and disease; supporting, therefore, the political commitment of the international community to increased funding for education and training in its development cooperation actions,
- R. whereas the efforts made in the area of education are being seriously undermined by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which is predicted to kill an estimated 10% of primary school female and male teachers in the countries most affected in the next five years; whereas it is predicted that more than 20% of children of school age will be AIDS orphans,
- S. whereas 40 million of the world's out-of-school children have some form of disability and, in developing countries less than 5 % of disabled children attend school and only 5 % amongst them conclude basic education; whereas disabled girls and women are even more discriminated against than boys and men in the school when they try to find a job,
- T. whereas sexual and reproductive health education and information and access to reproductive health services are the best guarantees for the prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases,
- U. whereas the cultural traditions of many developing countries are deeply rooted in patriarchy and therefore place women in a subordinate role in the social order,
- V. whereas women are a key force for economic and social development; whereas investment in education for girls and women must be an integral part of development plans and of strategies for fighting poverty in the developing countries,
- W. whereas global economic inequality and the debt burden have left many governments without the necessary resources for providing all children with education, and whereas structural adjustment programmes have obliged governments to cut spending in the public sector, with particularly adverse consequences for girls,

- X. whereas it is important to set realistic timetables for drawing up national education participation plans, in view of developing countries' limited capacities,
- Y. whereas child labour keeps many children out of school,
- Z. whereas primary education, as a fundamental right of the human individual, must be free and compulsory, and consequently education costs must be borne by the State,
- AA. whereas violence against girls in school or on the journey to and from school contributes in a significant way to lower rates of girls' enrolment and completion in schools,
- AB. whereas the Education For All Fast Track Initiative and the Commission's declaration of supports for it are welcomed,
- AC. whereas the achievements of Small Island Developing States in the ACP both in universal primary education and gender equality, notwithstanding their vulnerabilities, peculiarities and specificities, have been considerable;
- AD. whereas the failure to achieve a modicum of progress since the Dakar conference, and the lack of interest in coordinating the international efforts to tackle the education crisis are highly regrettable,
- AE. whereas in 2003 the Commission's allocation to education in general in the countries covered by the DAC amounted to 6.24% of the total budget for funds earmarked for development aid (general EC budget and European Development Fund), and the allocation to basic education stood at only 2.4%,
- AF. whereas the Commission's budget for primary education suffers from lack of coordination with national measures of ACP countries, a situation which needs to be reassessed,
- AG. whereas education for girls has not to date been included as a central issue in connection with the funding of eligible proposals under the regulation on promoting gender equality in development cooperation,
- AH. whereas the political undertakings by the international community to increase funding for education and training in its development cooperation actions have not brought about substantial funding increases for education programmes,
- AI. whereas the leaders of the most developed countries, meeting in Davos, and the leaders of developing countries, meeting in Porto Alegre, called once more for partial or total cancellation of external debt, especially for Least Developed Countries,
- 1. Recalls that the Millennium Goals, as accepted by the international community, set the achievement of universal primary education and the promotion of gender equality and women's autonomy as universal objectives for 2015;

2. Deeply regrets that the target of achieving gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2005 will not be reached by the vast majority of developing countries;
3. Believes that the ability of the authorities in the developing countries to fund basic social services depends, in part, on the cancelling of the debt and the cutting of their military budgets so as to achieve the Millennium Goals;
4. Notes with concern that the goal of achieving universal primary education by 2015 will be extremely difficult to meet, given that at the moment 121 million girls and boys do not have access to any schooling at all;
5. Expresses its firm conviction that achieving the Millennium Goals, in particular Goals 2 and 3, rests in the hands of national governments and international donors, and issues a strong appeal for them to join forces to this end;
6. Recalls that 65 million girls are still not attending school, and stresses the vital need for governments, aid organisations and international institutions to take practical steps to change their situation;
7. Calls for a full-scale assessment of the impact of current trade liberalisation policies on poverty in general in the ACP countries and on education in particular and asks that the results of this assessment be used to draw up clear guidelines for development cooperation in particular in the context of EPA negotiations;
8. Asks for special attention to be paid to primary education for girls by adopting a multisectoral policy towards girls' education, since girls face more obstacles and barriers than boys (cultural factors such as early marriage, discrimination, role in society and the family, etc.) to go to, stay at and finish school;
9. Considers, moreover, that investing in girls' education is the most effective development strategy since educated girls generate smaller and healthier families, leading to increased productivity and poverty reduction;
10. Stresses the importance of the education of girls and women for improving health, including such aspects as sexual and reproductive health, and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) such as HIV/AIDS, and diseases related to the water supply and hygienic conditions such as tuberculosis, malaria, cholera and diarrhoea;
11. Considers that information on the existing education and training programmes is a key factor for their successful implementation, and calls on the Commission to make all efforts to ensure that women and girls are properly informed, since education can help them protect themselves against exploitation of whatever kind;
12. Calls for national education policies to be adequately funded in order to enable all children, and especially girls, to stay at school and finish their compulsory education, ensuring that they stay at school until they have reached the

minimum age for entering the job market as laid down in ILO Convention 138, and include solutions to the problem of dropout children;

13. Calls on the Commission to include in Country Strategy Papers for the ACP countries, specific reference to MDG 2 and 3 and the necessity of getting girls into primary education;
14. Calls on ACP countries which are not yet benefiting from the Fast Track Initiative to initiate 'Education for All' plans;
15. Calls for schools to be 'girl-friendly' and closer to girls' habitats, with an adequate budget in order to solve the practical difficulties which can prevent girls in particular from attending school, such as poor roads, lack of transport and lack of sanitation in school buildings, with community help and participation, flexible timetables and, preferably, female teachers, as well as curricula adapted to girls' lives and environment;
16. Stresses the need for all educational institutions to impart democratic values with a view to encouraging tolerance, active citizenship, social responsibility and respect for differences of gender, ethnic group and religion, and to encourage the participation of the pupils in the planning of the education and the way of working in the schools;
17. Highlights the need to provide appropriate training for female and male teachers to actively combat any discrimination based on sex, ethnic group or religion;
18. Calls for ACP countries to incorporate in their national education strategies initiatives for actively recruiting female teachers in larger numbers; highlights the positive effect female teachers and female staff can have in preventing violence against girl pupils at school;
19. Appeals to all the world's governments to ratify and apply, without any reservation, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its optional protocol;
20. Calls on ACP governments to recognise publicly that violence against girls in schools is a serious obstacle to improving their attendance levels and academic achievements;
21. Highlights the need to establish complaints systems in schools and to recruit women to deal with complaints arising;
22. Notes that very large class sizes and a harsh teaching regime can act as a deterrent to girls attending school;
23. Calls on ACP governments to enact and/or implement domestic legislation to prohibit violence and discrimination against girls in schools and out of them, systematically monitoring compliance, with appropriate international assistance where necessary;

24. Stresses once again the need for the European Union to give preferential support to countries undertaking education strategies that include free and universal primary education, gender equality, broad access, high quality, decentralisation of reform and special assistance for the most vulnerable, including the poorest, the disabled and orphans;
25. Firmly underlines that primary education, as a fundamental right of the individual, must be free, compulsory and guaranteed by the State, and that consequently all related costs (registration, canteens, transport, uniforms and materials) must be met by the State;
26. Calls upon the international community, especially the Bretton Woods institutions and the European Union, to recognise that the classic method of assessing Small Island Developing States, based solely on GDP per capita, needs to be reviewed in order to take into account their high vulnerability in the provision of development assistance, debt relief and trade preferences, in particular the need for special and differential treatment in the World Trade Organisation;
27. Calls on the Commission and Member States to prioritise budget support for free universal primary education in those countries where education costs cannot currently be borne by the State;
28. Highlights the role that school meals can play in improving children's health and learning abilities; calls on ACP governments to support programmes designed to achieve this;
29. Calls on ACP governments to distribute the resources available for education fairly and transparently, so as to ensure a balance between rural and urban areas, private and public, confessional and secular, and to draw up special programmes to educate AIDS orphans and those orphaned in violent conflicts, combining basic education with training adopted to their specific needs;
30. Calls on the Governments of the ACP countries to implement their commitments in respect of 'Education for All' under the Dakar Framework for Action giving disabled persons and their families equal access to education;
31. Calls on the Governments of the EU Member States and the EU institutions to support the ACP countries in promoting inclusive education for the disabled;
32. Calls on the EU institutions and the Governments of the ACP countries to implement the recommendations of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in its resolution on the rights of the disabled people and older people in ACP countries (ACP-EU 3313/01/fin.);
33. Calls on the national authorities in ACP countries to include in their government programmes sensitisation actions aimed at enabling parents and society in general to understand the importance of education for girls and boys;

34. Underlines, in this context, the importance of a quality education, with quality teaching and learning materials, a safe and healthy environment with basic health services and sanitation, free from corporal punishment, harassment and discrimination and thereby a positive experience that can attract children and their parents;
35. Emphasises that universal full-time education requires the effective outlawing of child labour and an education system that includes strategies for the incorporation into full-time education of children who are in work or are not attending school for other reasons; calls on the European Union to ensure that all education programmes financed by it contain wide-ranging strategies including social motivation and recovery courses for older children;
36. Calls on the Commission, the ACP Member States and other developing countries and the private sector to create a system for counteracting and eliminating child labour, which might, in specific circumstances, include part-time schooling;
37. Stresses the importance of bridge courses for older children, preferably within the mainstream of education, so that children who are currently not in school can be integrated,
38. Calls on the EU Member States to use their votes on the board of the IMF to ensure that the conditions set by the IMF to approve its loans do not prevent ACP countries from investing in social services, including the education sector;
39. Stresses that many girls and boys who are affected by wars, armed conflicts, displacement, drought, hunger, natural disasters, or AIDS or the girls and boys which have been used in human trafficking must receive special psychological care, where possible within the education system, and welcomes the appeals made in this context by international organisations such as UNICEF;
40. Stresses the key role that schools can have in post-conflict situations, highly dependent on their capacity to provide children not only with a quality education but also with physical protection, psychological assistance and basic services such as health care, water and sanitation;
41. Recalls that in the 2001 and 2002 budget negotiations the European Parliament stressed, jointly with the European Council, the need to increase the European Union's level of educational aid and noted that the budget headings in the regional field had included concrete objectives for education expenditure, whose implementation is vitally important to the ACP countries;
42. Regrets that in 2003 the European Commission allocated only 2.4% of the total budget for funds earmarked for development aid to basic education in the countries covered by the DAC, which is far below the amount called for by the European Parliament and does not correspond to the priorities expressed by the European Union in the field of human development;

43. Calls on the Member States, the Council and the Commission to coordinate their various cooperation measures on education policy, and asks that the EDF be budgetised and given adequate resources to ensure that it can meet its goals in the field of development;
44. Calls on the Member States, the Council and the Commission to coordinate their various cooperation measures, and asks that in the next financial framework the ACP be given adequate resources on a predictable basis to ensure that it can meet its goals in the field of development in particular to meet the MDGs;
45. Recalls that the European Parliament introduced in the 2005 budget a benchmark of 20 % of total annual commitments for external assistance to be allocated to activities in the sector of basic health and basic education, including sectoral budget support to health and education ministries where it is to serve basic health and basic education;
46. Calls on the Commission to include education for girls and public awareness of the importance thereof as a central issue in the next round of funding proposals under the regulation on promoting gender equality in development cooperation,
47. Appeals to all the industrialised countries, particularly those in the European Union, to earmark at least 10% of official development aid for basic education and to fulfil their pledges to allocate at least 0.7% of GDP to development aid, with 0.15% going to the least developed countries; stresses the need to extend the Fast Track Initiative to more countries and ensure the rapid financing of its requirements;
48. Calls on the EU to take firm measures to combat poverty, seeking to ensure consistency in its policies in the areas of trade, development cooperation, agriculture and fisheries, so that they do not have any direct or indirect adverse effects on the economies of the developing countries, with a view to ensuring a decent income for ACP populations;
49. Calls on the Commission to establish a benchmark for monitoring European Union and bilateral educational aid, in the light of the Dakar undertakings and the Member States' commitment to increasing their volume of aid for education;
50. Appeals to the Commission, in the context of its current revision of development policy priorities, to ensure that children's rights are directly addressed, that a prominent place is given to basic education, and that gender equality is definitively established as a horizontal priority across all sectors;
51. Believes that the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals of guaranteeing equality of men and women and universal education by 2015 is seriously undermined by the lack of any real wish on the part of world leaders to tackle the structural causes of poverty;
52. Requests the governments of the most developed countries to give serious study to the proposals for the partial or total cancellation of debt, especially for Least

Developed Countries (LDCs), and in particular where this is done in exchange for improvements in national education systems;

53. Welcomes the Commission's proposal for making aid from the budget strictly conditional on the recipient country having a general Education For All plan; calls on the Commission to provide legal guarantees to back up budget aid based on revisions of public spending always respecting the 'property principle' and the 'principle of sincere cooperation';
54. Takes a positive view of the function carried out by civil society and NGOs dedicated to promoting education and combating discrimination against girls, and calls on the Commission, the Member States and the ACP countries to support them in their work;
55. Welcomes the links being developed between local authorities in EU and ACP countries, and calls on ACP local authorities to support education for girls as a priority,
56. Stresses, with respect to the need to measure progress towards the Millennium Goals, the importance of reliable statistics and information on education in general and on training of girls and women in particular and supports the efforts made by the UN, World Bank and certain NGOs in this direction;
57. Calls on the Commission to supply the Joint Parliamentary Assembly with a progress report, one year on from the adoption of this resolution;
58. Instructs its Co-Presidents to forward this resolution to the ACP-EU Council of Ministers, the European Commission, the EU Council of Ministers, the UN Secretary-General and the African Union.