



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 6 March 2012

7301/12

**PE 94
INST 178
COHAFA 21
DEVGEM 54
AGRI 129
PECHE 72
COMER 46
CADREFIN 124**

NOTE

from: General Secretariat of the Council
to : Delegations

Subject: Meeting of the European Parliament's Committee on Development (DEVE) on 29
February -1 March 2012 - Summary record

The meeting was chaired by Mrs. Striffler, EPP, FR. A coordinators meeting was held *in camera*.
Items 2 and 4: the agenda and the coordinators' decisions and recommendations of 29 February
2012 were adopted. Item 5 (Question Time): there were no questions to the Commission.

The minutes of the meeting (item 3) below were approved.

- 5 December 2011 PV – PE478.351v02-00
- 8 December 2011 PV – PE478.444v01-00
- 23 January 2012 PV – PE480.618v01-00
- 24-25 January 2012 PV – PE480.614v01-00
- 9 February 2012 PV – PE480.871v01-00

6. Environmental degradation and its impact on poverty

Mrs. Striffler made an introductory statement highlighting the links between environment and development issues.

Panel 1: The environment-poverty nexus was (moderated by Mrs. Lövin, Greens/EFA)

Mrs. Isabell Kempf, Chief Technical Advisor for the Poverty Environment Initiative, DEPI (Division of Environmental Policy Implementation), United Nations Environment Programme Headquarters, made a power point presentation on "The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment: analysing the conditions and trends in the world's ecosystems", which was followed by a debate.

On "The role of EU development aid" Mr. Paul Renier, Deputy Head of Unit, Climate Change, Environment, Natural Resources, Water, DG DEVCO in the Commission, noted that one of the main UN findings in this context was that ecosystem degradation was a barrier to the MDGs achievement. He referred to EU action and instruments to promote sustainable and environment-friendly development through the promotion of inclusive and sustainable growth, and to the need for further efforts in the context of the next MFF.

Panel 2: Case studies: social and environmental effects of oil spills and E-waste

The discussion was moderated by Mrs. Zimmer, GUE/NGL, DE.

Prince Chima Williams, Head of Legal Resources Environmental Rights Action, Friends of the Earth Nigeria made a presentation on "The effects of oil companies' activities on the environment, health and development in sub-Saharan Africa: the Niger Delta".

He noted that most companies operating in Nigeria were European multinationals and pointed out in particular to environmental problems associated with oil-related activities, notably in shipping ports, where the trans-shipment of oil takes place, and where the chronic release of oil into the water through ship leakage, ship maintenance or mishandling is a continuing dilemma. He referred to the cumulative effects of pollution which may have significant impacts on the surrounding ecosystem and its related economic resource base, as people living in those regions lose their livelihoods as a consequence of the high levels of pollution. He referred to other notable problems associated with oil companies activities, including the issue of negative health impacts on citizens resident around areas of oil companies operations. He concluded his presentation with an appeal to the European Parliament to help Nigeria tackle this situation.

The presentation was followed by an exchange of views.

7. The relation between development and EU foreign policy

The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Mrs. Ashton delivered the speech in Annex.

In the exchange of views which followed, MEPs raised a large number of issues. MEPs notably:

- invited Mrs. Ashton to visit more often the DEVE Committee to meet MEPs and have exchange of views on development issues (notably Cortes Lastra, S&D, ES, Zanicchi, EPP, IT, Goerens, ALDE, LU, Newton-Dunn, ALDE, UK).
- asked about the measurements of the success of development aid (Mitchell, EPP, IE), accountability (Deva, ECR, UK) and ways of justifying the EU development policy and its lack of effectiveness at this time of crisis and increasing poverty in Europe (Diaz de Mera, EPP, ES, Theocharous, EPP, CY); about ways by which EP views were concretely taken into consideration on development issues (Keller, Greens/EFA, DE);
- asked about the situation in the Fidji; in Syria (Mitchell, EPP, IE), in Belarus (Kaczmarek, EPP, PL), Somalia, Iran, Sudan and South Sudan (Deva, ECR, UK, De Keyser, S&D, BE), Haiti (Striffler, EPP, FR); raised concerns about the attacks on Christians in several regions of the world, notably in Nigeria (Mitchell, EPP, IE);

- referred to negotiations on the future DCI, to increasing social inequalities despite the growth and huge amounts generated by the development of international trade in recent years and on the need to continue focusing on poverty reduction given the trend to ever growing social inequalities (Cortes Lastra, S&D, ES) as well as policy coherence (Keller, Greens/EFA, DE), efficiency, MDGs (Cortes Lastra, S&D, ES, Goerens, ALDE, LU, Kaczmarek, EPP, PL) and to the need to improve the coherence and coordination between the trade and development policy (Zimmer, GUE/NGL, DE, Goerens, ALDE, LU);
- referred to the need to review aid modalities to middle-income countries (Zimmer, GUE/NGL, DE), notably in Latin America (Cortes Lastra, S&D, ES) and India (Newton-Dunn, ALDE, UK);
- highlighted the importance of adequate agricultural policies for development (Striffler, EPP, FR), of developing early warning mechanisms to prevent famines and of fighting against speculation on agricultural commodities (Guerrero Salom, S&D, ES);
- referred to the need to pay particular attention to finding solutions to unsolved conflicts in the EU neighbourhood, notably in Western Sahara, the Middle East, Syria, and in the Nagorno-Karabakh, while commending the HR's courage for going where the problems are (Vaigl, ALDE, SI).

In answer, the High Representative :

- outlined the state of play, reflexion and action on Syria, Nigeria, the Fidji, Haiti, South Sudan, Belarus, India and Iran; on respectively the Middle-East, Nagorno-Karabakh and Western Sahara, she pointed out that there were no magic solutions; that the EU was doing a lot on each of these dossiers to help finding common ground and make proposals towards solving the issues in coordination with the UN, while noting that at the end of the day, the solutions had to be agreed and accepted by the concerned parties;
- objected that trade would dominate on development concerns, whilst agreeing that trade needed to be integrated in the overall EU strategic approach, and referred to the recent Communication on this issue;
- on the EP involvement, she reassured MEPs that many EP ideas were taken into consideration and sometimes integrated in the EU proposals, while noting that this should be better communicated;

- on that status of the Agenda for Change, she clarified that it would not replace the Consensus for development which remained valid, but that it would complement it.

Mr. Goerens, ALDE, LU made a number of formal requests and proposals in order to improve the EU institutional functioning and governance on development issues.

He considered in particular

- that the holding of two annual sessions of the Council on development policy was not enough to reach the ambitious goals set by the treaty itself and the required levels of policy coherence, coordination and effectiveness of EU policy.
- that the Council was not audible anymore in the new institutional framework set up following the entry into force of the new treaty and complained that the Council was not an interlocutor anymore in DEVE meetings.
- that the Commission ought to be the only one in charge of the overall programming of EU development policy, while the HR should focus on ensuring adequate coordination.
- that a strategic thinking was missing in the overall EU development policy and invited the HR to authorize an exchange of views with the Council on the Agenda for Change.

He finally proposed the holding of a joint EEAS - EP - Council meeting behind closed doors to discuss ways to improve the overall institutional functioning of the EU development policy.

In answer, Mrs. Ashton expressed willingness to meet the MEPs more often and agreed that there was room for improvement as regards the frequency of discussions between Council representatives and the DEVE committee. She promised that the rotating Presidencies would come more often to meet the committee in future. She agreed to put the Commission on the driving seat on programming and clarified that the objective was to have an adequate cooperation and coordination between the EEAS and the Commission in order to have a strategic overview. She acknowledged that this process was work in progress.

8. The impact of devolution of the Commission's management of external assistance from its headquarters to its delegations on aid delivery

The draft report (Rapporteur Mr Kaczmarek, PPE, PL) was adopted with amendments.

9. 2010 discharge: EU general budget, Section III, Commission

The draft opinion (Rapporteur for the opinion: Mr. Berman, S&D, NL, responsible committee: CONT) was adopted with amendments by unanimity.

10. Discharge for 2010: 8th 9th and 10th European Development Funds

The draft opinion (Rapporteur for the opinion: Mr. Berman, S&D, NL), responsible committee: CONT was adopted with amendments by unanimity.

11. Annual Report on Human Rights in the World and the European Union's policy on the matter including implications for the EU's strategic human rights policy

The draft opinion (Rapporteur for the opinion: Mr. Preda, EPP, RO), responsible committee: AFET was adopted with amendments.

12. EU-Central African Republic Voluntary Partnership Agreement on forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber and derived products to the EU (FLEGT)

The draft opinion (Rapporteur for the opinion: Mr. Staes, Verts/ALE, BE), responsible committee: INTA was adopted.

13. Voluntary Partnership Agreement between the EU and Liberia on forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber products to the European Union

The draft opinion (Rapporteur for the opinion: Mr. Sargentini, Verts/ALE, NL), responsible committee: INTA was adopted (no amendments).

14. Engaging in energy policy cooperation with partners beyond our borders: A strategic approach to secure, sustainable and competitive energy supply

The rapporteur for the opinion Mr. Neuser (S&D, DE) briefly presented his draft opinion. In the exchange of views which followed, Mrs. Keller, Greens/EFA, DE on behalf of Mrs. Greze, Greens/EFA, FR and Mrs. Schnieber-Jastram, EPP, DE expressed support for the text and announced the submission of a few amendments, notably on the issues of biofuels mass production and Policy coherence for development.

15. Certain measures in relation to countries allowing non-sustainable fishing for the purpose of the conservation of fish stocks

The rapporteur for the opinion Mr. Ponga, EPP, FR (responsible committee: PECH), in presenting his draft opinion, welcomed the Commission proposal for a Regulation, which offers new tools towards promoting more sustainable fishing practices and suggested amendments aimed at establishing a differentiated approach for developing countries, based on their administrative and financial capacities and suggesting the inclusion of a review clause.

In the brief exchange of views which followed, Mrs. Keller on behalf of Mrs Lövin warned against any exceptions to be granted to individual countries which could entail the risk of lowering overall requirements and suggested avoiding creating loopholes based on preferential trade conditions.

The Commission representative broadly welcomed the draft opinion while expressing doubts on the relevance of a review clause to be included in the Regulation.

The Chair concluded by referring to the Hearing held on illegal fishing on the day before.

- Deadline for tabling amendments: **7 March 2012, 12.00**
- Vote : 27 March 2012

16. Defining a new development cooperation with Latin America

The rapporteur Mr. Cortés Lastra (S&D, ES), in presenting his draft report, expressed support for a differentiated approach for the countries concerned and advocated a transition period for the phasing-out of development aid of four years, as well as reinforcing the Partnership Instrument towards these countries.

In the exchange of views which followed, Mrs. Keller, Greens/EFA, DE expressed full support for the overall approach advocated in the draft report, while announcing some amendments to complement rather than change the draft report on a number of issues (social cohesion, biofuels, cooperation in the field of security and justice and the fight against impunity).

Mr. Fisas Ayxela, EPP, ES and Mr. Diaz de Mera, EPP, ES praised the quality of the report. Mr. Fisas Ayxela expressed disagreement on the phasing-out of EU development aid at this time of crisis and argued that these countries needed help to fight against insecurity and organized crime, as well as high levels of social inequalities and poverty. Mr. Diaz de Mera announced some amendments to complement the draft report.

Mr. Goerens, ALDE, LU considered that the phasing-out of aid was a progressive and appropriate tool to organize the way in which governments from recipient middle-income countries should also take their own responsibilities in reducing the levels of social inequalities in their own societies.

The EEAS Representative highlighted in particular the increase of the overall amounts allocated to the cooperation with Latin America and the efforts to be made in future to enhance south-south cooperation.

The Commission representative notably referred to the need to look for new and more efficient ways to reach those more in need in this region, to focus on areas where the EU can bring added value, to the new instrument of a Latin American Investment Facility and to innovative financing through the blending of grants with loans.

The Rapporteur indicated that the draft report was the result of a cooperation with all relevant stakeholders (EEAS, Commission services, UN and MEPs).

The Chair Mr. Deva, ECR, UK noted that the EP should make sure that the outcome of this reflexion process be duly taken into account during the negotiation with the Council on the DCI.

- Deadline for amendments: 19 March;
- Vote on 27 March.

17. The role of Parliaments in ensuring the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020

The Chair Mr. Deva, Head of the EP delegation to the IV United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries in May 2011, recalled that:

- the EU had been deeply engaged in promoting cooperation with the 48 Least Developed Countries, which are the poorest and most vulnerable countries and the weakest segment of the international community. They have low per capita income, poor human asset development and have extreme vulnerability to both home-grown and external shocks.
- since 1981, the International Community has been running four Programmes of Action for LDCs mobilizing global support for their socio-economic development.
- last year's UN Conference, to which the entire UN system was deeply committed, assessed the results of the 10-year Brussels Programme of Action and adopted a new Action Plan, identifying obstacles, new challenges and opportunities for LDCs and international donors;
- since the III Conference on LDCs in 2001, the IPU and the Office of the UN High Representative for LDCs established a partnership in promoting the implementation of Brussels Programme of Action (particularly in the areas of good governance and capacity building) and were also closely involved in the preparatory process of the Istanbul Conference.
- the IPU organised a parliamentary event on the eve of the Istanbul Conference, which gave an important contribution in strengthening parliamentary ownership, helping to raise awareness of the new commitments in order to facilitate the follow up, monitoring and implementation of the new Programme of Action for the LDCs for 2011 - 2020.

A representative of the Inter-Parliamentary Union made a presentation underlining that the underlying problem of development was rather political than economic, part of the problem being related to issues such as women's empowerment and equality of rights, governance, political institutions, accountability and choices, corruption etc.

MEPs (Kaczmarek, EPP, PL, Keller, Greens/EFA, DE, Mitchell, EPP, IE, Cortes Lastra, S&D, ES) agreed that more should be done in the field of inter-parliamentary cooperation so as to raise awareness on the need to improve issues related to political accountability of the LDCs governments.

18. An Agenda for Change: the future of EU development policy

The Chair invited his colleagues to hold a free exchange of views on the above subject.

The rapporteur Mr. Goerens (ALDE, LU) welcomed the quality of the document outlining the Commission proposals for an agenda for change as a good base for upcoming discussions and agreed on the three proposed priority sectors. He advocated a dynamic and progressive approach for the promotion of human rights, welcomed the approach of the document on social inclusion, stressed the priority to be given to the fight against poverty and referred to the Kaczmarek report.

He made a number of proposals. In particular,

- he suggested holding a joint EP-EEAS-Council meeting behind closed doors in order to facilitate an open exchange of views between institutions and to identify the issues on which the relations between institutions and the functioning of the new institutional architecture following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty could be further improved or reviewed.
- he considered that a few hours segment of a Council session devoted to development issues every six months, with partly limited attendance from the competent ministers, was not the appropriate set-up to reach the treaty objectives about increased coordination, effectiveness and policy coherence for development.
- he suggested organizing an international Conference or meetings with the beneficiary middle-income countries to discuss the modalities of the gradual phasing-out of aid.
- despite the political sensitivity of the issue, he considered that a debate should be held on demographic and birth rate issues, given their impact on growth and development;
- He advocated reviewing the way the EU presents its figures on development aid to publish figures which would reflect real aid in a more transparent and objective way.
- He advocated a dynamic approach on human rights and aid conditionality and further efforts towards improving aid coordination and complementarity between the 28 as a means to improve aid effectiveness.

Mr. Cortes Lastra, S&D, ES on behalf of his group stressed the importance to be given to good governance, human rights, growth, differentiation and better coordination of aid.

Mrs. Keller, Greens/EFA, DE advocated green and pro-poor growth, measures on health, improved PCD, donors' coordination, joint programming as means to foster development.

Mr. Kaczmarek, EPP, PL and Mr. Mitchell, EPP, IE expressed support for the holding of a meeting behind closed doors gathering Council, EEAS and EP. Mr. Kaczmarek, EPP, PL agreed that the focus should remain on poverty reduction and stressed that the promotion of human rights should be pursued in parallel, as history had proven that growth and development did not provide in itself progress on human rights and democracy in a given country. Mr. Mitchell advocated holding an open discussion on birth and demographic issues.

The Commission representative indicated that the document had been prepared by the Commission services in coordination with the EEAS. She stated that the document aimed at reviewing the priorities of EU development policy in a changing world. She clarified that the Consensus for development remained fully relevant and valid, although some of its elements would require some updating, notably to take account of the new post-Lisbon inter-institutional framework.

She clarified the notion of inclusive growth which should benefit to all segments of society, referred to the changing international development context with the emergence of new international donors (notably China), which required the development of a dialogue with the countries concerned; the need for increased differentiation of beneficiary countries, the principle of aid concentration and the need to develop joint programming as a means to reach greater coordination and effectiveness of aid. She stated that priority would be given to good governance and human rights in the context of conditionality.

The EEAS representative welcomed the ideas for increased dialogue with the national parliaments of the beneficiary countries.

The Rapporteur Mr. Goerens concluded by stressing the importance of inclusive growth and of the ownership principle, as well as the need for an open debate both on inter-institutional issues and on birth issues and demographic challenges.

19. Report of the European Parliament Development Committee Delegation to Kenya (31 October - 2 November 2011) - Rapporteur: Michèle Striffler (Head of Delegation)

The parliamentary delegation that visited Kenya last November was composed of Ms Striffler, Ms Sargentini and Mr Cortès Lastra.

Mr. Cortès Lastra on behalf of Ms Striffler, standing rapporteur for humanitarian affairs and head of the delegation, presented the draft report and the main recommendations of the delegation.

This was followed by a brief presentation on the wider issue of today's challenges facing pastoralists in Eastern Africa by a representative from CELEP, an informal advocacy coalition of European organisations working in partnership with pastoralist groups in Eastern Africa, which were associated to the preparations of the delegation. An exchange of views followed.

20. Any other business

21. Next meeting(s)

- 27 March 2012, 9.00 – 12.30 and 15.00 – 18.30
- 23 April 2012, 15.00 – 18.30
- 24 April 2012, 9.00 – 12.30 and 15.00 – 18.30

**Speech by High Representative Catherine Ashton to the
DEVE Committee of the European Parliament,
Brussels, 29 February 2012**

Dear members of the DEVE committee,

it has been a long time since I have seen you and, Madame President, one of the things I hope we can discuss today is how to make sure you get the political input that is so important for this committee. I am very open to ideas that may come from you about how to achieve that. I am in discussion with the Danish Presidency and with the Cypriot Presidency about what more we can do to ensure that the committee is able to get a regular flow of political input.

It is a great pleasure to be here. Madame President, the year we have just finished has been an extremely challenging one. The Arab Spring has dominated the strategy towards our neighbourhood and of course the European economic crisis has been something that has in a sense redrafted our landscape.

There is no question in my mind that in these difficult economic times and in the changes that we see across the world, poverty eradication and sustainable development become even more important. These policies need to lie at the heart of the work of the European Union across the world. We have made some progress without question. With the support of the EU in the field of education more than 9 million people have been enrolled in primary education, and in the field of health 5 million children have been vaccinated against measles and 750,000 people with HIV have received appropriate treatment. The EU Food Facility has helped 50 million people and we can add to the list also our support in the field of infrastructure, of civil society etc.

Since the beginning of the Arab Spring, we see countries that are reaching a decisive point in their transition. Our goal is to make sure that, as they move forward, a number of things is supported in a comprehensive and coherent way: the building of the institutions, the building of the way in which these countries support their population, the political programmes that they need to ensure democracy, freedom, human rights, equality; the assumption that everyone gains from the transition process; the link to the kind of economic growth and sustainable development that they need to ensure every member of society benefits; their education policies, their poverty eradication policies.

The situation is extremely challenging and not just in the countries of our neighbourhood but beyond as we think about the impact of the changing neighbourhood on Sub-Saharan Africa and as we think about the issues that the countries right across Africa, the Caribbean, the Pacific are faced with.

We face a combination of different things. Political dynamics, making sure that the impact of the change of the Arab Spring is felt in a positive way. So we move swiftly to condemn when we can those who would use that change to become more repressive. Recognising the challenges of sustainable development that are faced by many as a consequence of climate change. Making sure that the poverty eradication programmes are in place to support countries in a coherent way and to finally get to the point where in the 21st century we don't have to talk about a famine in any part of the world. One of the real tragedies for me is that we still in 2012 talk about famine.

So what I can say to you is that if you look from the perspective of the Post-Lisbon joined-up coherent strategy, it is very obvious: development, security, foreign policy have to link together in a coherent way because security for people is not just about political issues and ensuring there is no conflict, but also about ensuring that they have food security, that they are free from the effects of climate change, that they live in a society with a safety net; the capacity of governments to be able to help people.

And that is why when we have been developing the strategies, for example, on the Sahel we have tried to include all that, talking with the Foreign Ministers of all the countries concerned. Talking with different groups in their societies to build a strategy that is comprehensive in thinking about how to ensure security. And security means free from famine, free from the effects of those who will take young men and convert them into terrorists, support for the villages, the small communities who need to feel that there is an outreach from their governments to show that they are engaging with them. For example mobile health clinics which is something many countries in the Sahel would like to support, enabling their police forces to operate to keep people safe, enabling food aid to reach people, jobs programmes, support for economic growth and development and support for civil society to grow in order to support all of those communities in terms of human rights, in terms of their ability to focus on the kind of government and governance that they would want.

Madame President, I do this with the great support and in conjunction with my colleagues - not just Andris Piebalgs who is a good friend to this committee and a great friend to development - but also with Commissioner Georgieva where we work on areas of the world which are hit by crisis.

Think of Pakistan, think of Japan with the tsunami, but think also of those countries which go through external turbulence: Yemen, where we have worked closely together to ensure that there was food available for people and that we had a good strategy in place for the short term, as well as for the longer term. Countries where we need to engage like South Sudan. Developing that cooperative culture across the institutions with our respected teams is something we have all invested in. I won't pretend that we don't have to find new ways of doing that, because creating a new service in the EEAS means that you need to find new ways of interfacing with each other.

We all know the spiral down: children out of education, people unable to sustain themselves, unable to develop the economy in any real way. Nothing destroys wealth faster than war. That means developing again the comprehensive approach that will enable us to ensure we have humanitarian support, development and support for peace and security. One of the most obvious examples and one that we've been engaged in for many years, but where we have now developed a more comprehensive strategy, is of course in the Horn of Africa.

An approach that looks at a number of things simultaneously: dealing with the threat of piracy off the coast of Somalia, pirates who now operate rather 11.000 nautical miles from the coast and not just 1,100 nautical miles like in the past; the fear of those who are trying to trade across that coast, the fear of hijack, the fear of being attacked by people who for a whole variety of reasons are engaged in those activities; the concern of those countries with that coastline about the impact this has on their economy: trade, tourism, all of this playing into the inability of countries to develop economically; and ensuring the World Food Program can deliver food to some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world.

We currently have 5 ships off the coast, we often have 12 or 13 ships from 22 member states and helicopter support to deal with piracy. But when you visit our military mission ATALANTA, the first thing they say is that we need to solve the problem on the land, because the solution lies there.

So we need a strong development programme to make real alternatives for those who can be persuaded to take up piracy: often young men, even boys, who are encouraged with thousands of dollars as opposed to the very small income that they can get on the land.

It's about making sure that our policy and strategy join up and doing so with the support of the leadership from the region, support from those African nations, Somaliland, Puntland, the people of the region, Tanzania, Kenya, South Africa, Seychelles, Mauritius, all those countries willing to work together to find a solution. We can engage with them on a political solution, a strong development and humanitarian programme, and support to try and prevent the hijacking of ships and prevent those who would stop food arriving for people in those countries.

If we are going to talk about building prosperity, we need to talk about the role that we can play in the ACP countries as a group; I know that the work you do with the African Caribbean Pacific countries is of great importance for this Committee. We need to make sure that we operate in a strategic approach. You know the EEAS is initiating with DEVCO and our delegations the programming exercise for the next EDF, which is the 11th such programming, and I really do welcome the input from this Committee, from the European Parliament, from Louis Michel in his capacity of co-Chair of the ACP joint Parliamentary Assembly and from all of you.

It is very important in this respect that we build on the experience and expertise here in terms of how we work through our programming requirements and how we develop the comprehensive approach putting development at the heart of what we do, but ensuring that sustainable development linked to strong institutions that can deliver democracy and human rights, is absolutely at the core and the heart of that. I know too that you have discussed the Agenda for Change with Commissioner Piebalgs, who has been a really strong driver and keen deliverer of our aid programmes, to make sure that they reach people in the most appropriate way, to build on the Busan principles for aid effectiveness. All of that needs to be in the framework that recognises that the poorest people often are not in the poorest countries, the poorest people can often live in countries that are what we might describe as middle income.

And that provides in a sense an opportunity as well. As we develop our relationship with those countries, it's about enabling them to have the kind of effective programmes that mean they also take care of the poorest people in their societies. There are many reasons why it doesn't happen, sometimes there are political reasons why those who have money wish to keep it and don't wish to see it actually bring benefits; in many cases it's about the inability of the institutions to be able to offer and deliver on the ground.

Again we need a comprehensive approach in order for communities that are rural and poor to develop. They need to be supported with the safety net of infrastructure, they need to be supported in developing the local economy, they need to be supported in developing local education for young people in their neighbourhoods, they need to have the infrastructure to enable them to get their produce to market more efficiently. I saw this so well in Haiti, where you could see what needed to be done in different parts of the island, to bring a new infrastructure development that could actually enable on the agricultural side the potential to develop beyond simply growing and exporting, to taking on the processing of produce.

And also the opportunity to provide educational opportunities for people beyond simply picking produce to being those who create from that produce new goods, to be able to be engaged in the whole process of food production. There are many examples, but there is something really fundamental in our relationships with those countries that often are doing well, but are not enabling their communities to catch up with them. It's not about trickle-down. Trickle-down is a philosophy that is nice in theory but is hard to find in practice. It's about bottom-up meets topdown, it's about engaging with the kind of effective programmes from the top that can deliver down and it's about encouraging people on the ground to be able to develop their communities and their society themselves.

And I want a lot of the work that we do with those countries, some of them strategic partners, some of them countries we are reaching out to now, some of them countries beginning to move into that bracket, to be able to help them deliver for their own people and for their own people to really have a stake on how we do that.

A few words if I might on climate change. I mentioned earlier that that is a particular issue that we have to build into our development work – sustainable development. It's particularly true for those small countries, small island states in the Pacific and Caribbean which are directly affected. Members of this committee may have seen for themselves the impact of what is happening. We have to have a strong solid approach, again working with the Commissioners who take direct responsibility for these things – first of all mitigating the effect of climate change as they are and as they will be.

There is a real need to think carefully about how to support countries which as a consequence of climate change need to do things differently.

If you have a village which is destroyed year after year by floods, how do you support that community to either rebuild itself somewhere where it isn't going to be destroyed by floods? How do you ensure that you keep what was so valuable about that community? Or how do you find ways to offer them support that allows them to live with the changing landscape and use it to good effect? How do we build within that the linkage between our strategic work which is to have good strong clear values and targets about climate change which in the long run are going to be part of the solution around the world? So that combination of work is so important and that all links back to the same place, which is that development is at the core of everything that we do.

A few words on Sudan and South Sudan, where I have been engaged with the leadership of both countries. I said to the President of South Sudan how proud I had been to stand at the inauguration on a very very hot day and watch the flag unfurl for this new country. But this new country is fragile and it needs all the help and support we can give, both in terms of the growth and development and support to build the infrastructure and also the bringing together of our Member States to work together. In Juba, you see many of the ambassadors and our head of delegation together in the same area and we must make sure the programming is in place and the work is in place to give and deliver what is necessary. That means issues like running the airport. That means helping them solve the political issues between them and the North, supporting what President Mbeki is doing but being clear and firm that they need to find a solution to the pipeline because this is 90 percent of the income of South Sudan. And they need to be able to find ways to diversify their economy so they are able to benefit from some of the agricultural aspects of their country.

A word too on Burma/Myanmar, because what we see has the potential to be quite remarkable. I will go there as you know in April. This has been agreed between myself and Aung San Suu Kyi as the best moment when she would like me to be there. Andris Piebalgs has already been on all our behalves to establish the work that can be done. We have to be clear that we have strong expectations for this. It's not over yet. We have to be clear that we want to see the elections work well. We want to see the remaining political detainees out of prison. We need humanitarian access to the regions where conflicts still prevail and we need an end to those conflicts. I wish all those who are working for reform and for freedom in Burma/Myanmar every possible success and we will stand with them. If all goes well I will go with the intention of opening our Delegation there and with the purpose of ensuring we have a coherent EU approach to that which is so important.

I could talk about many other parts of the world. We could talk about Afghanistan in detail. We could talk about some of the incredible work which is being done all across Africa by our delegations working in conjunction with all parts of the Commission and with the Member States and you will know that I am keen to achieve two things: a greater coherence between the institutions and the Member States to show that our development money can deliver even more than it does now, to make those economies of scale in the best sense of that. I mean by that trying to have a comprehensive approach between us about what we can actually achieve and I'm also keen to make sure that we do that in partnership with those countries, in partnership with international organisations where collaboration especially with the UN is so important but also in partnership with you. And that will be true with what happens on Rio+20; it will be true with everything we do. I want to end with an example of where I think this is so important. This is about trying to get the work that we do specifically linked with investment from the private sector and companies. To persuade the international financial institutions - the World Bank, the IMF, the European Investment Bank, the EBRD - to give loans and grants to support the development especially of small and medium sized businesses in countries that are going through change, in countries where they, like in our countries, will form the backbone of the economy of the future. Working with civil society and NGOs, many of them in countries where perhaps it is for the first time they have been allowed to engage properly.

And I want to pay tribute to members of the European Parliament from the Elections Observations Missions which have been superb and so highly respected when I travel across the world. It is so important in terms of delivery and there is more to do in terms of follow up from that. But also members of the European Parliament who have journeyed with me to some of these countries and who have been willing to demonstrate how important democracy is and work with people aspiring to become political parties or politicians. Women's groups in Libya; the big women's conference that I went to; the groups of people in Tunisia, people in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, all of these countries going through change as well as in the broader context the work that is done through the ACP Assembly and through the work with individual parliaments. Never underestimate just how valuable it is. And I wanted to say an enormous thank you for that.