

Welcome speech by Co-President Glenys Kinnock

MEP

**At the Opening of the 13th Session
Of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly
On 25th June 2007**

Federal President Kohler

President in Office

President Pottering

Prime Minister Koch

Lord Mayor City of Wiesbaden

Co-President

Honoured Guests

Fellow Parliamentarians

This meeting of our JPA, **as always**, is an opportunity for us to take stock, to assess progress on

- The Millennium Development Goals
- On The Doha Development Round,
- On EPAs

and many other subjects related to our Cotonou Partnership.

- Ours is a world of wealth and opportunity – yet it is a world where millions are being denied the right to grow and develop.
- Ours is a world where scientists can map the human genome and yet each year, more than half a million women die due to pregnancy-related complications and childbirth, 99% of these in developing countries – even more shocking is that this number hasn't changed over the last 20 years
- Ours is a world where women are routinely denied their right to self-development and face impenetrable social and cultural barriers.
- Ours is a world where there is a tide of disease and suffering and where 10 children die every minute from hunger.
Behind this stark reality is their desperate poverty.
- Ours is a world where today 80 million children will not see the inside of a classroom, or hold a pencil – most of them little girls.

- Ours is a world where, in ACP countries, – people have watched their water sources dry up and their crops fail.

They are beginning to see the clear connection between **their** problems and the unfettered resource use in richer countries.

The ethical imperative is that those of us that contribute the most to global warming have an obligation to those that are suffering the most. This is a subject we will be debating in plenary in Rwanda because we know that ACP countries are experiencing unprecedented droughts, floods, desertification.

And Caribbean, Pacific and African islands are vulnerable to extreme weather conditions - here severe flooding could take place if the ocean temperatures rise by only a few degrees.

- Ours is a world where one third of the world's people live in countries without enough water. By 2025 it will be two thirds. Lack of clean water is the number one killer of children in the world.

Colleagues,

By 2015, when the Millennium Development Goal target to halve global poverty will be assessed, it is estimated that around 600 million people will still be living in extreme poverty.

Many of these people will live in fragile states, and states affected by conflict.

The MDGs carry unprecedented, timebound promises made by world leaders to address development, human rights, peace and security.

These **promises** must be our compass, and now we have to hold our governments, each other, and **ourselves** accountable.

Two years ago the leaders of the rich world met at the G8 Summit in Gleneagles and undertook to double aid to poor nations to \$50bn and pledged 100% debt cancellation.

The leadership had already been provided by the EU on these priorities.

I'm regret to say that on the eve of the G8 Summit, held earlier this month in Germany, it was **already** clear that the rich world was well off track.

Global aid from rich countries fell in 2006 for the first time in ten years, and aid to Africa has grown by only 2% since 2004.

Excluding debt relief, and adjusting for inflation, a number of Member States of the European Union are falling behind. Although this practice is permitted under OECD rules, we can fairly say that aid **will have to rise at a much faster pace** if we are to double aid to Africa by 2010.

The Iraq and Nigeria debt deals, are counted in a way which distorts the true picture on actual aid and by 2010 it will have been largely accounted for and will no longer substantially bolster the amount of aid donor countries provide.

Worse still, there is still no **year-to-year** timetable for the doubling of aid.

And this, when last year alone, the rich world spent more on bottled water than on aid to Africa, and when globally a trillion dollars is spent on arms.

A mere 1% of that trillion dollars would be enough to save the lives of 3 million poor people a year.

The Heiligendamm G8 was a **reiteration**, a **confirmation** of the 2005 promises made in Gleneagles.

But we need more clarity on whether the G8 pledge to scale up universal access to HIV/AIDS treatment by 2010 for 5 million people is a **global** figure, because if it is, it is well below what is needed.

We don't want, or need, any new initiatives or any more short-termism because what we are still lacking on these, and other, priorities are firm timetables and **binding, practical** commitments.

Then, and only then, can credible, costed plans be put in place by ACP countries.

To those who say that aid and debt relief don't work, I would say – as you, President Kohler, have said all the

evidence contradicts that view. There are some **real** success stories. –

Look at Ghana - when our JPA mission met the President, he told us, with pride, that it is confidentially predicted, that his country will halve poverty by 2015, and achieve middle income country status.

In Zambia when the debt burden was lifted, the Government introduced free health care in rural areas for the first time in their history.

In Tanzania, where before their unsustainable debt was written off, 2 million children were not in school and the country was spending 6 times more on debt payments than on education.

Now debt relief to Tanzania has been used to abolish school fees and school enrolments have doubled.

We know that for 80 million of the world's children, school remains a distant dream and they are starved of possibilities and denied their right to fulfil their potential.

Nearly one billion people enter the 21st century unable to read a book or sign their names – much less operate a computer or understand a simple application form.

Education has that power to emancipate, but in dark and hot classrooms where they are sitting on sacks on the floor– I have to ask exactly how emancipating will that education be? Much more now needs to be done to tackle the quality of education in badly equipped and staffed schools.

Colleagues,

We are looking forward this week to a very busy, and I trust, productive, agenda, and we have planned to debate the urgent situations in Darfur and Zimbabwe.

The tragedy of Darfur continues but we are encouraged by the fact that Khartoum has at last agreed to allow a 19,000 strong force to go to that region where violence has killed more than 200,000 people and made 2.5 million people refugees. Now the international community has to ensure that the agreement brokered is honoured, that a new ceasefire agreement is reached and that it is understood

that new negotiations for a political deal are now of paramount importance.

And on Zimbabwe we will also have our discussions because of course, we must express our deep regret at the violent attack made on our MDC colleague Nelson Chamisa as he travelled to our meeting in March.

And we must reflect on the mediation efforts entrusted to President Mbeki by SADC and hope that the initiative will bear fruit, and that Zimbabwe can move towards an election conducted fairly and peacefully.

Finally I turn to trade and, of course, and we are aware that a deal was not reached between the US, EU, India, and Brazil in Potsdam last weekend and the possibility of gaining the support of the WTO's 150 members was lost.

I must once again touch upon two commodity issues which continue to concern us in this JPA.

On bananas we regret that Ecuador, with the support of other Latin American exporters, has again challenged the banana regime and the safeguards and protection that it

offers to ACP suppliers – some of whom depend on this trade, because they have little or nothing else to export.

They are small players that pose no threat to a country that dominates the world, and European markets. I trust that the EU will not waver in its robust defence of ACP interests and our obligations to safeguard their banana trade. The EU must fight on in the WTO and make sure that small, vulnerable banana producers are not pushed over the edge.

And sugar continues to be critical for the sustainable development of a number of ACP states. Now we learn that the Sugar Protocol is under threat. This is in spite of having a strong development dimension which sits well with the ambitions of the EPA and Doha Development Round negotiations.

I will be seeking a formal legal opinion on this matter from the legal service of the European Parliament on the issue of the renunciation and whether the Joint Review can be carried out on anything other than an all ACP basis.

As always Economic Partnership Agreements will be the subject of debate and discussion. It is the case that as the

December 31 deadline approached the ACP maintain that they are committed to meeting the deadline.

I would say here that if EPA negotiations cannot be completed before the end of this year there should be clarification on how arrangements can be made to avoid the uncertainty for importers and exporters from the ACP.

This means that we need to see a possible GSP+ offer to ACP countries so that they have an option to maintain the terms and conditions of access to the EU which would be equivalent to the current Cotonou arrangements.

In addition many ACP colleagues continue to highlight capacity problems, and point out that discussion substantive issues has barely begun. This includes on product coverage, sensitive exclusions, transition periods, rules of origin and supply side constraints.

There is a great deal which remains to be done and we should recall the fact that the South Africa Trade and Development Agreement took two to three years longer than what is being proposed for EPAs.

Conclusion

Ours is a fragile world where we must learn to live in a peaceful and sustainable way.

That means rolling up our sleeves to tackle how we deal with the fact that 1 billion people struggle every minute, of every day, for survival:

- a struggle to get food on the table,
- a struggle to deal with the pathogen in the water that could kill your child
- a struggle against a mosquito bite or another killer disease for which there is no affordable medicine available.
- Precious lives lost because there is no affordable medicine available.

When confronted with huge challenges we are tempted to think that progress is impossible.

We are the first generation with the resources and technology to offer development and opportunity to everyone and free the entire human race from want.

Colleagues,

We face choices which will determine the future of **our** lives and our children's lives, and of generations to come.

As Jeffrey Sachs has said, "No problem of human destiny is beyond human beings."

That is why business as usual will not do and action must be scaled up now.