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Commissioner Piebalgs and Prime Minister Matata Ponyo sign €620 million new EU programme for the Democratic Republic of Congo

Today EU Development Commissioner, Andris Piebalgs, and the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Augustin Matata Ponyo, signed the National Indicative Programme for the 11th European Development Fund for the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The new programme, which will cover the period 2014-2020 and amounts to €620 million, focuses EU support on four main areas: health; environment and sustainable agriculture; roads; governance and the rule of law (with special attention to police, justice and defence). Public finance management will also be prioritised as a cross-cutting issue.

Commissioner Piebalgs commented: *"The agreement we are signing here today represents one of the largest packages of EU assistance in the world. It illustrates the importance of the partnership between the EU and the DRC. It also shows that the EU stands side by side with the people of the DRC in the fight against poverty, for democracy and human rights, as well as for peace and stability."*

The EU remains a committed partner in the Great Lakes region. The National Indicative Programme (NIP) for DRC is to be seen in the political context of the Peace, Security and Co-operation Framework for the DRC and the region, which was signed in Addis Ababa in February 2013. The NIP will be followed shortly by the adoption of a Regional Indicative Programme for Central Africa, including the Great Lakes region.

Background

NIPs represent an important step in the programming of EU aid under the European Development Fund. They define the strategy and priorities for EU aid and are prepared in close cooperation with the partner country; in order to ensure that they support national priorities where the EU has a value added.

Under the 11th EU EDF, for the first time, NIPs are based on governments' own policies and strategies reflecting their analysis of needs. They are in line with the EU's vision for future development cooperation, the "Agenda for Change", which calls for resources to be targeted where they are most needed and can be the most effective. EU funding will focus on a maximum of three sectors per country (possibly four in the case of fragile countries) to achieve maximum impact and value for money of EU cooperation.

Under the 11th EDF NIP, the European Union has three strategic objectives in the DRC:

1. Fight against poverty by promoting inclusive and sustainable growth benefiting the population and preserving natural resources.
2. Entrench democracy and human rights.
3. Contribute to peace and stability in the region.

EU assistance focuses on four areas of concentration:

Healthcare combined with linking relief, rehabilitation and development (€150 million): Work will focus on access to quality healthcare, improving the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Health (at central and provincial level); and the integration of health zones covered by humanitarian interventions.

Environment and sustainable agriculture (€130 million): Activities will aim to protect and enhance forest ecosystems in the DRC, promote the socio-economic development of local communities through the use of renewable natural resources of protected areas and fight against climate change. Other actions will work to strengthen value chains of an efficient sustainable agriculture and improve the sanitation system of Kinshasa.

Strengthening governance and rule of law (€160 million): EU activities will contribute to improving governance, entrenching democracy, fighting against impunity and promoting a fair and lasting peace in the DRC by supporting reforms in the justice, police and army sectors. Particular attention will be paid to strengthening the management of public finances.

Rehabilitation of Route National 1 (€150 million): This funding will go towards the reopening of Highway 1 between the port of Matadi and Mbuji-Mayi in the centre of the country. The work will be carried out on the section Tshikapa - Mbuji-Mayi on a length of 150 km.

For more information

Website of EuropeAid Development and Cooperation DG:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm

Website of the European Commissioner for Development Andris Piebalgs:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/piebalgs/index_en.htm