



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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Annex to the :

Communication from the Commission

Accelerating progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals

The European Union's contribution

Impact assessment

{COM(2005)132 final}

1. THE ISSUE

In September 2005 the UN General Assembly will review progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were agreed by the world community in 2000. These MDGs have become the central theme of global development cooperation efforts, and the MDG stocktaking at the forthcoming UN High Level Event (HLE) is generally seen as the key international development event of 2005.

The EU has at several occasions underlined the importance of the MDG Review, as a decisive opportunity to accelerate progress towards achieving the MDGs. In November 2004, Council invited the Commission – in preparation of the EU contribution for the HLE – to ‘prepare specific and ambitious proposals for action, in particular in the areas of **finance** for development, **coherence** for development and focus on **Africa**’.

2. THE OBJECTIVE

This Communication aims to present the general, political, reply to the above Council request.

It presents the Commission approach on the three topics identified. Two of these (finance and coherence) are discussed in more detail in separate Communications (*see impact assessments attached to these Communications*). The third (Africa) is explored in this text. The following paragraphs will focus on this specific dimension.

This Communication proposes to strengthen the EU focus on Sub-Saharan Africa, to give a political priority to Africa and to accelerate the EU’s action on a limited number of selected areas. All reports and analysis available, including the UN Millennium Report and the Commission for Africa report, indicate that many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa lag far behind the rest of the world in reaching the MDGs. The EU therefore needs to do more to put Africa back on track towards the MDGs.

3. THE APPROACH

The Cotonou Agreement, as recently revised, represents a privileged but non exclusive framework for strengthening the EU focus on Africa. Through this approach, the Commission wants to fill existing gaps and catalyse other actor’s actions in sectors where the EU has a specific experience or comparative advantage and where it can deliver rapidly. The EU shall frontload efforts on key sectors where the EU is in a pivotal position to lead international action. A benchmark of its success will be if it will be able to act as catalyst for other donors action and rally the largest possible support.

In the Focus on Sub-Saharan Africa, the Commission proposes key commitments for action in three areas amongst which identified by the Africans themselves as crucial for their development. The ambition is a qualitative jump on three key multipliers for development, i.e. elements decisive for development if they are met and if progress is made, but without which no lasting development is possible. The three areas are the following:

(i) *The improvement of Africa’s governance.* In order to give a decisive incentive for the reform of Africa’s governance, the Commission proposes to support the implementation of

reforms that the Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) will trigger. The Commission also proposes a replenishment of the Peace Facility so as to provide the African Union and the sub-regional organisations with the necessary financial muscle to cope with Africa's conflicts.

(ii) The interconnection of Africa's networks and trade. The Commission proposes a Europe-Africa partnership on infrastructure. The Partnership, based on the AU/NEPAD strategies, will support the establishment of sustainable cross-border infrastructure essential for the interconnectivity of the continent. Finance provided will leverage private sector investments.

(iii) The strive towards equitable societies and access to services. The Commission proposes the introduction of a Covenant for Equity as part of the criteria to determine the aid allocations of countries. This will ensure that there will be additional resources available for countries that show that they are willing and able to address issues of inequality and marginalisation.

4. THE IMPACT

The anticipated impact of these actions would be to enhance the quality of the EU support to Africa, notably but not exclusively in the context of development cooperation, and – through this process- to put Africa in a better position to attain the MDGs.

5. MONITORING

Monitoring of progress will take place through all the reporting, reviewing and evaluation mechanisms that are already in place in the context of development cooperation between the EU and (the countries of) Sub-Saharan Africa.

6. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

The Communication replies to a specific Council request, and builds on the national MDG reports prepared by Member States. The approach presented in this report is based on discussions with the African Union, and supports priorities identified in the context of the AU's NEPAD programme.

7. THE COMMISSION PROPOSAL

The Commission proposes Council to strengthen its focus on Sub-Saharan Africa, along the lines set out in this Communication. Further, more detailed proposals will follow later this year, in the context of a specific proposal.