Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
https://pace.coe.int

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 992 (1984)[1]

Conference "North-South : Europe's role" (Lisbon, 9-11 April 1984)

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Reiterating its concern at the persisting problems of poverty, hunger and underdevelopment with which many parts of the developing world are confronted, and stressing the need for the Council of Europe member states - together with other developed nations - to assume greater responsibility in promoting sustained self-reliant development in the developing countries and an international economic and financial system which is better geared to their needs ;

2. Mindful of the importance of education and the expansion of human skills in all development co-operation ;

3. Aware of the cultural implication of rapid social and economic change, and of the importance, for both developing and developed nations, of open and equal exchanges on the intellectual and cultural level ;

4. Having regard to the results of the Conference "North-South : Europe's role" held from 9 to 11 April 1984 in Lisbon, and in particular to the Declaration adopted by the parliamentarians from the Council of Europe member states attending the Conference, appended to this recommendation ;

5. Emphasising the need for a better co-ordination of the development co-operation policies of the Council of Europe member states and the European Community which, taken together, have a substantial influence on the external economic and financial conditions of the developing countries ;

6. Welcoming in this connection the agreement reached by the Committee of Ministers in April 1983 to continue its discussions on North-South issues, and hoping that these will lead to the necessary overtures and action to break the present stalemate in the North-South dialogue ;

7. Expressing its satisfaction at the fact that the Lisbon Conference provided for the first time an opportunity for members of government and parliament from Council of Europe member states to discuss Europe's role in North-South relations in the light of the views expressed by leaders of the developing world and the international organisations concerned ;

8. Attaching the highest importance to ensuring a positive follow-up to the Conference with a view to realising the aims of the Lisbon Declaration ;

9. Welcoming the conclusions of the International Conference on Population held in Mexico in August 1984, which echo and enlarge on the Lisbon Declaration ;

10. Reaffirming that the Council of Europe, of which an essential aim is to safeguard the dignity of man, cannot remain complacent about the widening gap between rich and poor countries and persisting hunger in the world,

---

1. Assembly debate on 1 October 1984 (15th and 16th Sittings) (see Doc. 5271, report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, Doc. 5285, opinion of the Political Affairs Committee, Doc. 5294, opinion of the Committee on Science and Technology, Doc. 5279, opinion of the Committee on Agriculture and Doc. 5286, opinion of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography). Text adopted by the Assembly on 1 October 1984 (16th Sitting).

11. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

11.1. take such action as is necessary to realise the aims of the Lisbon Declaration, both in the framework of the Council of Europe and through action by member states ;

11.2. continue and intensify its discussions on North-South questions with a view to better coordinating bilateral development co-operation policies of its member states, as well as multilateral aid in the framework of the European Community and the United Nations system ;

11.3. give the Assembly the necessary assistance and support for the organisation of a European public campaign on North-South interdependence and global survival, and institute to this end cooperation with the European Community.

Appendix APPENDIX - The Lisbon Declaration of the Conference ""North-South : Europe's role"

Preamble

1. We are gathered together in the belief that every person shares - through birth and work - a right to a life-giving planet, to the resources of the land and the riches of the ocean, that all people should be free from hunger, oppression and discrimination, and that all children should in due course be able to master their own destiny.

2. We are gathered together in the belief that all governments, of developing and industrialised countries alike, have a shared responsibility and must make their contribution to the achievement of these objectives. Creative co-operation which respects the rule of law, traditions and each other's possibilities must aim to strengthen the global economy, based on the common interests of all people and not on narrow self-interest, and enable the Third-World countries to promote their own development.

3. Europe - together with high-income nations elsewhere - has a crucial role in solving the economic and social problems which confront humanity. This has its roots in Europe's past, in the leading role played by European nations in creating the current international institutions, and in the traditional European leadership in the development of democracy, law and human rights. These reasons are reinforced by Europe's economic strength, which matches that of the superpowers, and by its close links with the nations of the South.

4. There has been a growing awareness in recent years that the fortunes of Europe and other industrialised countries will rise or fall with the fortunes of the Third World. A stronger North-South relationship and an expanding world market will accelerate Europe's economic growth and the reduction of unemployment. The strength of the global financial system, in which there is a major European role, is linked to the debt problems of developing nations. In international trade, in the preservation of the environment, in energy supplies, through global communications and through transnational corporations, every European nation is constantly influenced by events in the South.

5. Recently, the dangers of a world economic crisis have been plain to see and they remain real even though growth in production is now resuming. Unemployment remains high. Commodity prices have recovered, but only partially. External debt problems remain grave. Interest rates are still too high. The food situation overall is improved but starvation is widespread in certain regions. We should strengthen the international approach to the solution of these problems, avoiding the temptation for every country to safeguard itself while ignoring the effects on others. We must not narrow our vision at the very moment when our focus should be global.

6. We therefore call for a new opening in the North-South dialogue. We believe that without a concerted European effort the present deadlock in global negotiations will not be broken and that it is our duty to spare no effort to create a truly global approach and a constructive North-South relationship.

Proposals

1. International assistance should focus on the promotion of self-reliant, self-sustaining social economic development. It should thus emphasize programmes that promote health care, education and vocational training at every level, create employment opportunities and strengthen rural development. The important role played by women in the overall development process should be explicitly recognized and urgently promoted. Life styles and production methods that do not waste resources should be encouraged.

2. In order to reduce starvation and under-nourishment, which at present afflicts about one-eighth of mankind, it is necessary both to help avert immediate hunger crises and increase long-term food production in developing countries. Agriculture should, more than is the case at present, be seen as the crucial stepping stone for economic development. Governments of developing countries should be encouraged to introduce structural measures which stimulate domestic food production and thus reduce dependence on imported food. Genuine rural reforms should be implemented which recognise the specially important role of small agricultural producers, men and women. These should be accompanied by investments to improve food and water hygiene in rural infrastructure (inter alia, to reduce post-harvest losses), in reafforestation and in professional training in agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries. Industrialised and developing countries should together ensure a more prudent use of pesticides and other dangerous products and do their utmost to avoid a further narrowing of the genetic base of crops and plants in general. For these purposes European countries should substantially increase their contributions to multilateral agencies such as the FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the International Development Association (IDA), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), or alternatively increase

bilateral aid. They should do their utmost to attain the internationally accepted target of 0.7% of their GNP for official development aid by 1990 at the latest. A sub-target is also noted of 0.15% of GNP for aid to the least developed countries, accepted by the Special Conference held in Paris in 1981 for implementation by 1985. Meanwhile and as part of an integrated programme, European countries should radically increase their emergency assistance, through the World Food Programme and other means. This is necessary to combat the catastrophic situation in various areas in the developing world, especially in Africa, a situation which is made worse by drought, civil unrest and conflict. The aim of emergency aid is to secure the survival of millions of people facing famine in many parts of the developing world where the highest death rates occur.

3. Rapid population growth is a serious hindrance to socio-economic progress in developing countries and increases the pressure of demand on world resources. As such, it requires concerted international action, within the framework of the World Population Plan of Action. European countries should increase their multilateral and bilateral aid to population programmes, particularly to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. They should focus on priority areas and policies, identified jointly with developing countries and interested organisations, intended to have a direct impact on demographic variables. In doing so they should place special emphasis on :

3.1. the observance of human rights ;

3.2. the right of couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children ;

3.3. the availability of health care facilities, including family planning services ;

3.4. the protection of the environment.

The Council of Europe and its members should stimulate and facilitate co-operation between demographic and related institutes, particularly in Europe, in order to increase the exchange of information and assist the training of experts for the development, implementation and evaluation of population programmes.

4. The Second Lome Convention, which expires in March 1985, should be succeeded by a new strengthened convention expanded to include Angola and Mozambique. The new convention should consolidate the existing progressive elements in Lome II including Stabex, regional co-operation and priority for the less developed. It should focus directly on the promotion of the sustained self-reliant development of the ACP countries, with a major priority aim of aiding the attack on hunger and malnutrition. Increasingly, the food aid of the European Community, emergencies apart, should be integrated into development activities of this kind instead of existing as an end in itself.

5. The Council of Europe and its members should give increased priority to steps to strengthen the developing countries' own capacity in the fields of training and scientific and technical research, thereby enabling them to master those technologies which are best suited to their development. This could be achieved by such means as :

concerted European support for the United Nations Financing System - UNFSSTD ;

agreement on universal norms and standards on the transfer of technology through the speedy conclusion of the proposed United Nations International Code of Conduct ;

the encouragement and, where necessary the inception, of locally based learned societies and professional associations ;

the mobilisation of advanced technology, notably in energy and space (for earth observation, resource management, communication and broadcasting to rural areas) ;

joint planning with developing countries of projects such as an international satellite monitoring agency, to ensure world-wide access to satellite-gained remote sensing information.

6. European countries should give priority to regional and national programmes in the Third World to combat ecological deterioration and to promote a more rational use of resources. It is particularly important to stop desertification, which has now reached alarming proportions, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Support should be given to programmes promoting improved use of land and other resources, including improved management of grazing land and afforestation programmes. Greater assistance is also required for promoting the use of alternative sources of energy so as to replace reliance on fuelwood and to economise on the use of oil.

7. The Council of Europe fully recognises the cultural implications of rapid social and economic change. It therefore regards it as of the utmost importance to have regard for the cultural dimension in all development co-operation. It is particularly concerned with the need to protect the artistic heritage, and to support cultural institutes in developing countries.

8. The World Bank should have a greater capacity to finance development projects to keep pace with the expansion of needs and opportunities in the Third World. For this purpose European countries should support an increased lending capacity for the World Bank by a substantial capital increase. This would also enable the Bank to increase its borrowing on world capital markets, by means of which the bulk of its loans are financed. The Bank should also be encouraged to increase co-financing with private banking institutions and European countries should continue to support the creation of an energy facility within the Bank. European countries should make a joint effort to reverse the USA decision to limit its contribution to the 7th IDA replenishment to $750 million (corresponding to a total IDA 7 of $9 thousand million for three years) and, in any case, to undertake a collective effort to provide IDA with a total replenishment of $12 thousand million. Regional development banks have an important role to play and European countries should maintain, and whenever possible, increase their support for these institutions.

9. Technical assistance is an often neglected but critical component of development co-operation. Education and the expansion of human skills is indispensable for the effective use of capital investment and for self-reliance. Developing countries must be assured of access to objective and unbiased sources of technical assistance geared to their particular needs. In this respect, the integrative role of the United Nations Development Programme, as the central organ of the United Nations' system for technical co-operation, must be sustained through reinforced efforts to reach the UNDP 1982-86 target of US $6.5 thousand million, with an assurance of continuity and predictability in its access to resources from member governments. European universities, with their multi-cultural richness and autonomy, should play an important role in development co-operation between Europe and developing countries. Such co-operation is vital for developing countries since it increases their knowledge and makes them less dependent on imported technologies. European governments can also play a useful role in inducing technology transfer from industry in their countries, and encouraging joint ventures and export oriented manufacturing in developing countries. Governments of developing countries, in turn, should avoid legislation which discourages such investments.

10. Serious and sustained attention should be given to alleviating the debt problems affecting many developing countries. Their inability to sustain existing levels of debt hinges crucially on an improvement in their terms of trade, and expansion of their exports to the industrial countries, and lower world interest rates. European governments should endeavour to strengthen the role of Special Drawing Rights as a genuine international reserve asset and to work towards a more regular allocation of SDRs, taking into account the special needs of the poorest developing countries. The role of the IMF as the central monetary institution should be strengthened. To become more effective the Fund needs both greater resources and a flexible, varied and sensitive approach to the policy advice it gives to governments of developing countries. It should also pursue a more active counter-cyclical role by varying the volume and conditionality of its assistance in line with the evolution of the world economy, thus giving greater weight to output growth and employment, as well as the control of inflation and payments deficits. In order to seek a more permanent and comprehensive solution to the present weaknesses in the international financial system, European countries should support a world conference on the reform of the international financial and monetary system. Such a conference would, however, need careful preparation and proposals to be submitted to it could best be prepared by a special working group of high-level experts from the North and the South.

11. Realising that the revenue from trade is critically important to the developing world, European countries should :

a. resist protectionist pressures ;

b. reduce protectionist measures which place an additional burden on developing countries ;

c. adhere to the principles of multilateral trade, non-discrimination and transparency in the formulation of their international trading policies ; and

d. increase preferential treatment to the developing countries, in particular the poorest

Export revenues from commodities should be stabilised and increased by adopting constructive attitudes in the negotiations on international commodity agreements, by promoting speedy implementation of the integrated programme and the Common Fund for commodities of UNCTAD, and by working for the strengthening of such international mechanisms as the Compensatory Financing Facility of the IMF and the Stabex scheme of the European Community.

12. The European countries should take an action-oriented and positive approach to the global round of economic negotiations, recognising that the developing countries play an important and growing role in the international economic system. In this respect the following actions are of fundamental importance if lasting improvements in North-South relationships are to be obtained :

12.1. It is necessary to achieve closer co-operation between, and better co-ordination of the activities of the United Nations specialised agencies and other international institutions such as OECD and the European Community.

12.2. In order that the negotiations be as productive as possible priority should be given to those subjects and issues which are ready for resolution. European countries should support the suggestion that the negotiations be conducted in two phases, as proposed by the New Delhi Summit in 1983 and the ministerial meeting of the Group of 77 in Buenos Aires and as outlined by the informal North-South exploratory group in February 1984. European countries should be ready to proceed with detailed negotiations and implementation even if a complete global consensus is lacking.

12.3. Government leaders from the North and South should hold small informal meetings at auspicious moments in order to discuss specific issues and thus impart impetus and political will to the negotiation process.

12.4. The co-ordination of new negotiations should be undertaken by the United Nations which for this purpose may set up a representative and efficient body, in which the management of the Bretton Woods institutions should be included.

12.5. The European countries should strengthen the management of the world economy by taking a more independent position in economic affairs and through a more systematic harmonisation of their policies, having due regard to the differing economic needs of the various categories of developing countries. They should also support increased co-operation among developing countries.

13. Rising military expenditure absorbs a large volume of resources which could be put to constructive use both within the industrial nations and in the Third World. European countries should support stronger international action for an effective and balanced worldwide détente in the interests of peace and with a view to an overall and verifiable decrease in armaments expenditure. The countries of Europe should forcefully support comprehensive studies of the nature of the links between the arms race and the constraints on the development of the world economy, and to evaluate the concrete ways and means of reallocating resources to alternative uses.

14. Without political measures no change can be promoted. It is necessary for Europe to act as a focal point for international co-operation and to promote action on the above policies. In this respect we note the agreement reached by the Committee of Ministers to continue their discussions on North-South questions within the framework of the Council of Europe, as stated in their communique of 28 April 1983. We underline the important political role of the Council of Europe in discussing North-South questions among governments and parliamentarians from member states. The Council's traditional concern for human rights and social justice should also extend to the peoples of the Third World. It is especially important to institute a closer coordination, at both ministerial and parliamentary level, of the development policies of European countries and to create appropriate mechanisms for this purpose. There is a need for greater exchanges of information on existing aid policies, and for improved co-ordination of these policies both within and between member states. The Council of Europe should encourage regular interchanges on a regional basis between leaders from Europe and the South. Moreover the countries of Eastern Europe should also be encouraged to participate more actively in the development of the Third World. A European public campaign on North-South interdependence and global survival should be promoted by the Council of Europe and the European Community, involving trade unions and other non-governmental organisations active in the field of development cooperation. The implementation of the proposals included in this Declaration should be evaluated systematically within the Council of Europe. A comprehensive review will be made within the framework of a special conference organised for that purpose in four years' time. In the meantime thorough discussion should take place on an annual basis

15. We call on the peoples, the parliaments and the governments of Europe to spare no effort in building a new international system which, through stronger global institutions, helps to create a world where every citizen is free from hunger and oppression, and where all children are offered the opportunity to master their own destinies.