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Mobilising parliaments for Africa's Development

Report
Committee on Economic Affairs and Development
Rapporteur: Mr Vidar BJØRNSTAD, Norway

Summary

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is a political initiative launched by African leaders in 2001 to promote peace, security, democracy and good governance while advancing the African Union's socio-economic development objectives in line with the Millennium Developments Goals set by the United Nations in 2000 for achievement by 2015. However, unaccountable governments, waste of resources and corruption have too often hampered sustainable economic growth and equitable social development in Africa. Therefore NEPAD's founders acknowledged that good and responsible governance is key to overcoming the obstacles to Africa's development. Hence the importance of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), an African-led monitoring process that aims to improve governance in participating countries.

There is widespread consensus that the successful implementation of NEPAD, the APRM and the objectives of good governance in general cannot be achieved without the parliamentary system and the role of parliament itself being strengthened and supported. However, it is also widely acknowledged that parliaments, both in Africa and Europe, are not sufficiently involved in the NEPAD process and often not even sufficiently informed about it.

The committee therefore gives its support to efforts to strengthen the role of parliaments in monitoring NEPAD and its implementation. The committee calls on the parliaments of Europe and Africa to step up their scrutiny of development policies, processes and mechanisms with a view to ensuring coherence and good governance and, in particular, to strengthen their oversight of Overseas Development Assistance so as to ensure that it is properly spent in accordance with government policy. The committee also considers that there should be more intercontinental parliament-to-parliament dialogue and co-operation on development assistance and good governance. In this context, the committee recalls the Assembly's agreement concluded in 2005 with the Pan-African Parliament and considers that steps should be taken to implement it more actively.

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A. Draft resolution

1. In 2001, the heads of state of the Organisation of African Unity (now the African Union) adopted the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). This "strategic framework for Africa's renewal" has four primary objectives: *a*. the eradication of poverty; *b*. placing African countries on a path of sustainable growth and development; *c*. the integration of Africa into the global economy and the end to its marginalisation in the globalisation process; and *d*. the acceleration of women's empowerment. The main significance of NEPAD lies in the fact that it is an African led strategy for development and that it entails strong political commitments by the participating heads of state. It therefore represents a benchmark against which leaders can be held accountable and a framework into which the international community's efforts can be placed.

2. NEPAD is a political initiative designed to promote peace, security, democracy and good governance, and at the same time the socio-economic programme of the African Union which is meant to implement the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set by the United Nations in 2000. Under these goals the world community committed itself to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; to achieve universal primary education; to promote gender equality and empower women; to reduce child mortality; to improve maternal health; to combat HIV/Aids, malaria and other diseases; to ensure environment sustainability; and to develop global partnerships for development.

3. The Parliamentary Assembly has repeatedly underlined the importance of the Millennium Development Goals, for instance in its Resolutions 1449 (2005) on the environment and the Millennium Development Goals and 1450 (2005) on the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals.

4. Unfortunately, despite progress, it is widely expected that Sub-Saharan Africa will fall short of the target of reducing poverty by half by 2015. Moreover, the continent is also lagging behind in most other indicators, although evaluating progress in many countries is difficult because statistics are weak.

5. NEPAD's founders acknowledged that good and responsible governance is key to overcoming the hurdles to Africa's development. Unaccountable governments, waste of resources and corruption have for a long time hampered sustainable economic growth and equitable social development. In the NEPAD Framework Document, political leaders take joint responsibility to "promote and protect democracy and human rights in their respective countries by developing clear standards of accountability, transparency and participatory governance at the national and subnational levels".

6. Among members of parliament, both in Africa and in Europe, there is widespread consensus that the successful implementation of NEPAD and the objectives of good governance in general cannot be achieved without the parliamentary system and the role of parliament itself being strengthened and supported. Furthermore, Europe cannot review its development co-operation policies without consultation with Africa and without paying due attention to African parliaments.

7. However, it is also widely acknowledged that parliaments, both in Africa and Europe, are not sufficiently involved in the NEPAD process and often not even sufficiently informed about it, and that parliamentarians are therefore unable to engage in dialogue with their constituents on the important aspects of NEPAD, which means that the NEPAD process is still lacking its grassroots base. Parliaments in Europe are not fully committed to taking the NEPAD process into account in their decision-making on issues of importance to the development of Africa.

8. The Assembly believes that parliaments in Council of Europe member states should involve themselves more closely in development issues. National parliaments might consider the possibility of establishing development cooperation committees where they do not yet exist. The Assembly underlines the importance of parliamentary involvement in and scrutiny of Official Development Assistance (ODA). There should be more effective monitoring of commitments both in quantity and quality. There should be greater policy coherence, notably between donor countries. Parliamentarians must be duly mobilised and informed with a view to taking African and other development issues into account and explaining the importance of these issues to their constituents.

9. The Assembly welcomes the work of interparliamentary institutions and networks in mobilising parliaments in Europe and Africa, in strengthening their capacity and involvement in development issues and in promoting NEPAD. These include the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the European Parliament, the Pan-African Parliament, the Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA), the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank (PNoWB), the African Parliamentarians' Forum on NEPAD, the NEPAD Contact Group of

African Parliamentarians, the African Parliamentarians' Network Against Corruption (APNAC) and, in the context of the preservation of Africa's environment and its capacity to produce its own food, the Parliamentary Network on the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (PNoUNCCD).

10. As representatives of the people, parliamentarians should play their full constitutional role, exercising legislative, elective and budgetary power, holding the executive to account and influencing international affairs. In Africa, there is a need for a greater role and involvement of parliaments in the systematic scrutiny of how development assistance is used, in policy making and monitoring of progress (Millennium Development Goals, Africa Partnership Forum, African Peer Review Mechanism, New Partnership for Africa's Development, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers).

11. Enhancing the role of parliaments in Africa requires capacity building and institutional strengthening. Accordingly, the Assembly firmly supports the principle whereby all Official Development Assistance contributions and agreements should earmark specific amounts for strengthening the capacity of Africa's national parliaments and parliamentary bodies. Such agreements should stipulate that parliaments must be involved in overseeing their implementation in accordance with the principles of good governance.

12. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is an important African Union initiative that aims to improve governance in participating countries, on the assumption that good governance is key to creating a positive investment climate as a prerequisite for sustained economic growth. The Assembly believes that African leadership over the APRM should be maintained but that Council of Europe member states and their parliaments should follow developments critically and sustain their support for this process and for the implementation of the resulting plans of action.

13. The Assembly underlines the need to step up bilateral parliament-to-parliament dialogue and co-operation, at both national and continental levels, with a view to greater mutual understanding with regard to Official Development Assistance and good governance. In this context the Assembly recalls its agreement concluded in 2005 with the Pan-African Parliament and considers that steps should be taken to implement it more actively. Moreover, based on the Assembly's experience as a forum for reviewing such international financial and economic institutions as the EBRD and the OECD, the Pan-African Parliament might consider acting as a parliamentary forum for such institutions as the African Development Bank.

14. The Assembly welcomes the resolution on the state of play of EU-Africa relations adopted by the European Parliament on 25 October 2007 and the joint statement adopted by the European and Pan-African Parliaments in advance of the Lisbon EU-Africa Summit held in Lisbon on 8 and 9 December 2007. Implementation of the joint strategy and action plan resulting from that summit should be closely monitored by parliaments in the EU and Africa.

15. The experience of international co-operation has shown that sharing of experience and good practice improves the quality of policies. Among other institutions, the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity of the Council of Europe (the North-South Centre) has a wide range of experience on which to base new work focusing on global development education and on good governance founded on human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It is vital that the centre regain the full confidence of the Council of Europe member states by pursuing programmes that correspond more closely to the needs and interests of its present and potential stakeholders, with the full support of the Parliamentary Assembly.

16. Therefore the Assembly:

16.1. gives its full support to the efforts made both in Africa and in Europe to enhance the role of parliaments in promoting and exercising oversight over NEPAD and the processes of its implementation and in winning the support and participation of the people;

16.2. calls on the governments and parliaments of the Council of Europe member states to:

16.2.1. increase support and assistance for NEPAD by all appropriate means in order to help it achieve the success the peoples of Africa deserve;

16.2.2. ensure that, in all Official Development Assistance contributions and agreements, specific amounts are earmarked for strengthening the capacity of Africa's national parliaments and parliamentary bodies, and that such agreements stipulate that parliaments must be involved in overseeing their implementation in accordance with the principles of good governance;

16.2.3. follow critically and sustain their support for the African Peer Review Mechanism and the plans of action resulting from the process, over which the African countries should remain in control;

16.3. calls on the parliaments of the Council of Europe member states to involve themselves more closely in development issues, possibly by establishing development co-operation committees where they do not yet exist;

16.4. calls on the parliaments of Europe and Africa to:

16.4.1. intensify their scrutiny of development policies, processes and mechanisms with a view to ensuring coherence and good governance and, in particular, strengthen their oversight of Overseas Development Assistance so as to ensure that it is properly spent in accordance with government policy;

16.4.2. step up intercontinental parliament-to-parliament dialogue and co-operation on development assistance and good governance;

16.5. calls on the governments of the member states to:

16.5.1. keep to their commitments regarding Official Development Assistance in general and for the African continent in particular;

16.5.2. step up their support for and, as the case arises, join or resume their membership of, the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre);

16.6. invites the Bureau of the Assembly to:

16.6.1. take steps to implement more actively the Assembly's co-operation agreement with the Pan-African Parliament;

16.6.2. make fuller use of the Assembly's co-operation agreement with the North-South Centre.

B. Explanatory memorandum, by Mr Bjørnstad

1. Introduction

"…Africa, the biggest moral cause, I think, in the world today…" (Tony Blair, then British Prime Minister, speaking to CNN at the Davos World Economic Forum, 2007)

1. Half way into the time frame the international community has set for itself to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) there is broad consensus that much more needs to be done. According to the United Nations, it is not unlikely that none of the internationally agreed goals for poverty reduction will be met for the African continent. While some progress has been made so far on education and poverty reduction, the political commitment of African leaders and of the international community needs to be sustained and increased in order to speed up progress for improving the living conditions of millions of Africans.

2. NEPAD was launched in 2001 and has prominently been endorsed by African countries and their partners in industrialised countries. It builds on the premise that Africans bear the primary responsibility for the development of their continent and subscribes to achieving the MDGs. On the basis of African ownership and commitment, a renewed form of partnership with the international community has been defined. While African leaders promised to improve governance structures and to take charge of the development process, the international community pledged to increase its financial contribution and its commitment to making aid more effective. The terms of this new form of co-operation were endorsed in the 2002 Monterrey Consensus and the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

3. It is widely acknowledged that good governance is a key element for successful social and economic development. Parliaments are a necessary actor to ensure good governance through their functions in legislation, oversight, and representation, as well as through their budgetary and elective powers and their power to influence foreign affairs. The heads of state endorsing NEPAD have recognised the importance of good governance for African development. It is now also up to parliamentarians to follow up on the African and international commitments and monitor their implementation.

4. The objective of this report is to analyse what role parliamentarians play in advancing the NEPAD agenda and meeting the 2015 target for poverty reduction. It provides background on NEPAD and the commitments of Monterrey and Paris. On this basis, it illustrates the existing monitoring mechanisms and where parliamentarians can play a role both in Africa and in Europe.

5. The Assembly has, with its Resolutions 1449 (2005) on the environment and the Millennium Development Goals and 1450 (2005) on the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals, already contributed to mobilising parliamentarians and governments for development issues by underlining the importance of the MDGs. As part of the yearly report on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the world economy to the enlarged Parliamentary Assembly, the committee also reviews the OECD's work in increasing the effectiveness of its members' development co-operation efforts.

6. The rapporteur would like to thank not only his colleagues who made helpful suggestions but also the experts who contributed to the hearings organised by the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development in the course of the preparation of this report: Mr Eugene Owusu, Senior Advisor, Strategic Africa Partnerships, UNDP Brussels Office; Dr Jeff Balch, Director for Research and Evaluation, AWEPA; Mr David Gakunzi, then Head of the Dialogue Unit, North-South Centre of the Council of Europe; Mr Denis Huber, Executive Director of the North-South Centre; Professor Ben Turok, MP, member of the South African Parliament and Chairman of the NEPAD Contact Group of African Parliamentarians; Dr Eckhard Deutscher, Chairman of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC); Ms Doris C. Ross, Assistant Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) offices in Europe; Mr Jean-Christophe Bas, Development Policy Dialogue Manager for the External Affairs Vice-Presidency of the World Bank; and Professor Uwe Holtz, member of the Society for International Development, former Chairman of the Parliamentary Assembly Committee on Economic Affairs and Development and former Chairman of the German Bundestag Committee on Economic Co-operation and Development. Naturally, the rapporteur bears sole responsibility for his report.

2. The New Partnership for Africa's Development

2.1. Background and objectives

7. NEPAD represents a "vision and strategic framework for Africa's renewal". Drafted by five African heads of state,[1] it was endorsed by the Organisation of African Unity – now the African Union (AU) – at its summit in 2001. Its main significance lies in the fact that it is an African led strategy for development and that it entails strong political commitments by the participating heads of state. It therefore represents a benchmark against which leaders can be held accountable and a framework into which the international community's efforts can be placed. It is so far a programme of the African Union with its own secretariat in South Africa. There are, however, strong advocates for formally integrating NEPAD into African Union structures, which would substantially increase the bureaucratic burden on the programme (*Jeune Afrique* 2007[2]).

8. The strategy centres around four primary objectives: the eradication of poverty, *b*. placing African countries on a path of sustainable growth and development, *c*. the integration of Africa in the global economy and the end to its marginalisation in the process of globalisation,and the acceleration of women's empowerment. In order to achieve these objectives, sectoral priorities have been defined. These are notably infrastructure (such as communication infrastructure, energy, transportation, water and sanitation) and human resource development, but they also include agriculture, the environment, culture, and science and technology.

9. NEPAD's founders have acknowledged the fact that good and responsible governance is key to overcoming the hurdles to Africa's development. Unaccountable governments, waste of resources and corruption have for a long time hampered sustainable economic growth and equitable social development. In the NEPAD Framework Document, political leaders take joint responsibility to "promote and protect democracy and human rights in their respective countries by developing clear standards of accountability, transparency and participatory governance at the national and subnational levels".

10. The most important mechanism to improve governance in participating countries is the APRM, created by the African Union two years after the adoption of the NEPAD strategic document. The voluntary compliance and mutual learning mechanism is open to all 53 African Union states. Historically, African leaders have not been keen to discuss governance issues on a regional or international level. With the adoption of the APRM and despite continuous setbacks in individual countries, there are strong hopes that a genuine discussion on andcommitment to good governance will take hold. The concept of peer review and learning assumes that a noncoercive, gradual convergence of policy and practice in participating countries is more effective for building well-governed systems than coercive attempts or straightforward conditionality.

11. The APRM reflects NEPAD's diagnosis that good governance is key to creating a positive investment climate as a prerequisite for sustained economic growth. The country assessment therefore also includes various dimensions of governance: democratic and political governance including efficient public sector governance and the fight against corruption; economic governance including the implementation of transparent, predictable, and sound macroeconomic policies as well as sound and transparent public finance systems; corporate governance including the creation of a favourable business environment, sound regulations, and codes of conduct for ethical corporate governance. As a further element, the APRM also looks at the socio-economic development of a country and its capacity to shape its own development process and mechanisms for implementing development policies.

12. By now, 28 countries have signed up to the APRM and have thereby in principle declared their readiness to undergo a review of their governance systems and practices. It is interesting to note that six of the participating countries are rated as "not free" and 13 as only "partly free" by Freedom House. This partly dispels fears that only the best performers would stand up to the test. In the first round of assessment, a country committee prepares its own review through a consultative process. After a review visit by a team from a peer country, the country self-assessment report and plan of action are finalised. These form the basis for review by the APRM forum of heads of state or government. The resulting documents provide civil society and parliaments with powerful tools to hold governments accountable. At the same time, throughout the process, it is expected that governments have an incentive to improve their governance to avoid naming and shaming. It is to be hoped that more countries will take part in this constructive evaluation process, which can contribute to a positive development climate, and that the findings will be acted upon.

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1. Those of Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal, and South Africa.
2. See select list of sources at the end of this report.

13. In moving from a framework document to a strategic action plan, NEPAD sets out actions at the African and also on the international level. Subscribing to the Millennium Development Goals, the founders of NEPAD estimate that a total of US$64 billion would be needed annually to reduce the number of people living in poverty by half by the year 2015. It is expected that the bulk of this will have to be levied from external sources and notably Official Development Assistance (ODA). Private capital flows are described as a "longer-term concern." Furthermore, NEPAD calls on developed countries to open their markets for African products.

14. With its emphasis on African ownership in connection with a call for increased financial assistance, NEPAD is in line with the broader context of international development policy making of recent years. A struggle for more (and more effectively used) money for development cooperation has been at the core of international conferences, which followed the UN Millennium Summit in 2000. Country ownership and alignment of aid withcountry plans and strategies is one of the central elements of delivering better money.

NEPAD in the context of international conferences: relationship with the UN Millennium Development Goals, the Monterrey Consensus 2002, and the Paris Declaration 2005

15. At the end of the Cold War, high hopes were placed on new paradigms of development co-operation independent from the great powers' interests and open to genuine partnership. However, ten years later, policy makers had to admit that progress was too little and too slow to contribute significantly to the eradication of poverty and to mitigate global imbalances. The main focus of concern was Africa, where human development indicators showed no signs of improvement. At the UN Millennium Summit in 2000, world leaders thus adopted the Millennium Development Goals as clear and quantifiable targets for improving the living standards of people in developing countries. The overall goal of reducing poverty by half by 2015 is catalysed and complemented by targets in the areas of health, education, gender equality, and the environment.

16. At the Monterrey Conference "Finance for Development" in 2002, over 50 heads of state, finance ministers and foreign ministers reached an agreement on a new partnership between developing and developed countries to achieve the MDGs. They recognised that the main responsibility for progress lies with the governments of developing countries themselves and hinges notably on their ability and willingness to put in place appropriate policy and institutional frameworks. At the same time, they acknowledged that countries would not be able to achieve these goals without significant assistance from the international community. On a quantitative level, participants called on "developed countries that have not yet done so to make concrete efforts towards the target of 0.7% of gross national product (GNP) as Official Development Assistance to developing countries and between 0.15% and 0.20% of GNP of developed countries to least developed countries". On a qualitative level, the agreement calls on donors to make greater efforts to harmonise their procedures, to untie aid, and to adopt frameworks that are owned and put forward by developing countries.

17. The quality of aid was the focus of the March 2005 Paris High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. Improving the quality of aid entails a greater focus on results of development co-operation and the reduction of transaction costs. Core principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness are therefore ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results, and mutual accountability. It was agreed that developing countries would exercise effective leadership over their development process and that donor countries would align their support with national development policies. Through improved co-ordination and harmonisation of procedures aid would be used more efficiently. Furthermore, donor and developing countries pledged that they would be mutually accountable for development results.

18. The commitment to increase Official Development Assistance was prominently reiterated by G8 countries at their Gleneagles Summit in July 2005. Of the additional annual US$50 billion of Official Development Assistance, half was committed to Africa. The continent has been a particular focus of the G8 since the presentation of the NEPAD document and the adoption of the Africa Action Plan at the 2002 Kananaskis Summit. In Evian in 2003, the expanded G8-NEPAD partnership created the Africa Partnership Forum to monitor commitments and generate international support for NEPAD.

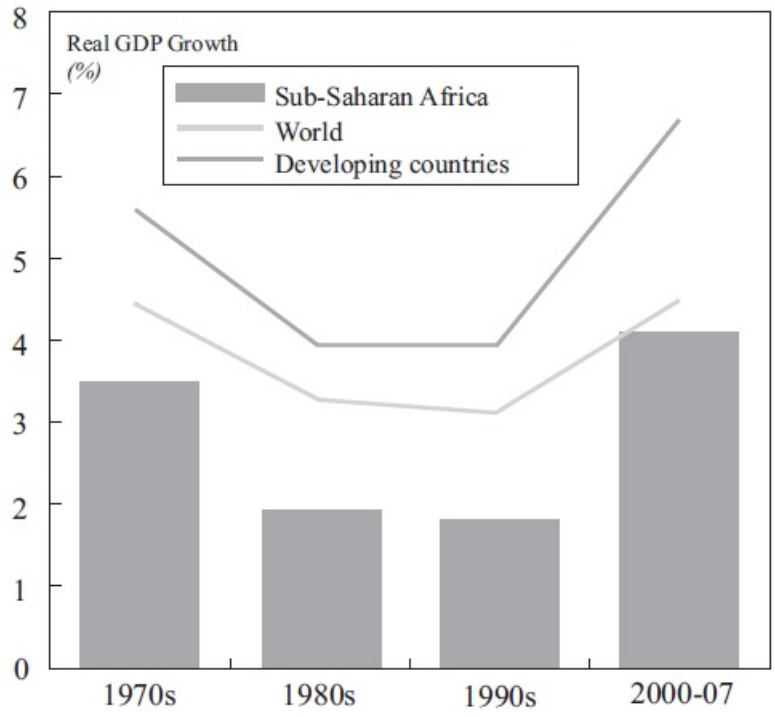
2.2. Progress so far

19. The political dynamic surrounding Africa's development has, at least partly, been underpinned by a surge in economic growth. Since 1997, growth in real GDP in Sub-Saharan Africa has been at 3% or above. In 2005 and 2006, it was even above 5%. It was estimated at 6.6% in 2007 and projected at 6.5% in 2008 (IMF, *Regional Economic Outlook, Sub-Saharan Africa*, April 2008). Although this expansion is attributable to rising production in oil exporting countries, it is interesting that oil importing countries have also experienced high growth rates, due to strong domestic investment fuelled by progress on macro-economic stability and reforms in most countries. The region also benefited from strong demand for its commodities, increased

capital inflows, and debt relief. Despite this positive picture, observers remain critical about the impact of this economic recovery which remains vulnerable to the risks of a global economic slow-down, rising inflation, weak domestic policy implementation and political instability. Although the share of people living in extreme poverty fell by 4.7 percentage points from 1999 to 2004, the number of poor still remains constant at nearly 300 million due to high population growth (World Bank, *Global Monitoring Report 2007*. It is widely expected that the income MDG of reducing poverty by half by 2015 will not be met for Sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, the continent is also lagging behind in most other indicators, although evaluating progress in many countries is difficult because statistics are weak.

Chart 1: Better performance

Growth in sub-Saharan Africa is strongest in decades



Sources: IMF *World Economic Outlook*, and IMF, African Department database

20. Building on the premise of a new partnership approach, a number of monitoring mechanisms have been proposed and implemented for the actions foreseen in the NEPAD framework and the commitments of the international community. At the 2003 G8 summit, African and G8 leaders established the Africa Partnership Forum as a monitoring mechanism for NEPAD. Its mission is to “catalyse action and to co-ordinate support behind African priorities and NEPAD”. Based at the OECD, a support unit co-ordinates the forum composed of personal representatives of NEPAD subscribers’ heads of states, the AU, heads of regional economic communities, the head of the African Development Bank, heads of state of development partners, the president of the European Commission, and heads of selected international organisations.

21. The latest published progress reports (presented in 2006 in St Petersburg) are those on infrastructure, the fight against HIV/Aids, and agriculture. They conclude that “little or no progress has been made” in the field of agriculture. For HIV/Aids and infrastructure they state that steps have been taken in the right direction but that much more still needs to be done. Particular efforts have to be made in accelerating implementation of projects and programmes in infrastructure and in addressing the needs of vulnerable groups in the fight against HIV/Aids.

22. As NEPAD’s core element, the APRM is the focus of particular attention in evaluating NEPAD’s progress. Only three countries have so far concluded the process and published their results (Ghana, Kenya and Rwanda). Two have completed the process but not yet published results (Algeria and South Africa) and another nine have started the assessment. The quality of the process has reportedly been high in Ghana with widespread civil society and parliamentary involvement. In Rwanda, Kenya and South Africa, it is reported to

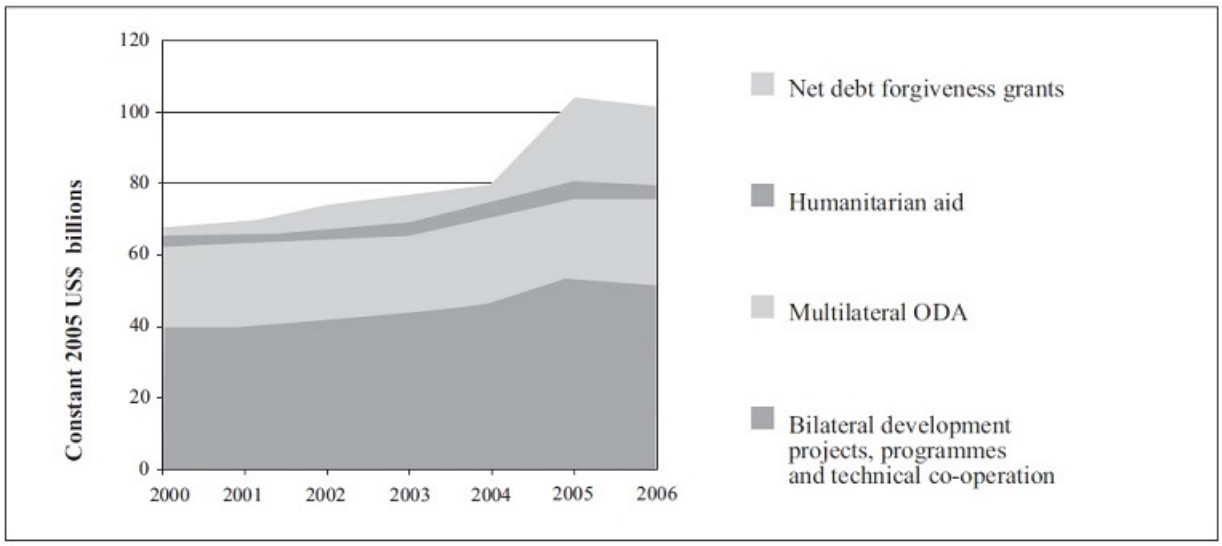
have been dominated by the executive. It has also been noted that parliamentary involvement was very low both in the assessment process and theresulting follow-up of the country action plans. Moreover, there is a growing feeling among the lead actors, including the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and some participating countries, that the mechanism may atrophy if it is not injected with the resources to implement the plans of action emanating from the process. Moreover, concern has been expressed about lack of political will to correct weaknesses that have been identified in the process or even to identify them properly in the first place (Manby, 2008).

23. The ultimate success of the APRM will be determined by how well it walks the thin line between high standards on the one hand and broad adherence by African countries on the other. High and rigid standards might jeopardise the idea of gradual improvement by preventing countries from signing up and concluding the process. Lowering standards puts the credibility of the mechanism with the international community and civil society organisations at stake. This is important in so far as there is an implicit expectation that well-performing countries can expect an increase in aid flows. The main points of criticism are that the APRM is being implemented too slowly and lacks teeth to force real change in poorly governed countries.

24. From the perspective of the international community, the picture in 2006 showed that donor countries were on track to meet the ambitious commitments of Monterrey and Gleneagles. Official Development Assistance had increased since 2004 by US$25 billion to US$104.4 billion, which represented 0.3% of OECD Development Assistance Committee members' GNI. However, the lion's share of this increase (US$18 billion) could be attributed to debt relief, that is, outstanding debt from governments or under government guarantees that is written off by the creditor country. The years 2005 and 2006 saw exceptional debt relief to Nigeria and Iraq, which boosted ODA figures.

Figure 1: Components of DAC donors' net ODA

Most of the recent increase in aid is due to debt relief



Source: OECD/DAC.

25. The influence of unusual debt relief also needs to be taken into account when evaluating the latest OECD DAC figures on ODA in 2006. According to the OECD DAC, ODA from DAC members fell by 4.5% mainly due to a decline in debt relief. On a positive note, ODA did not really fall as much, because the abovementioned debt relief distorts the picture. On a negative note, however, excluding debt relief, ODA still fell by 0.8% in 2006 compared with 2005. The combined ODA of the 15 DAC-EU members rose slightly by 2.9% in real terms (taking account of inflation and exchange rate movements), from US$55.8 billion in 2005 to US$59 billion in 2006. This represented 0.43% of their combined GNI, surpassing the EU collective ODA/GNI target of 0.39%. In order to meet their international commitments until 2010, OECD countries will still have to considerably step up funding for development projects, programmes and technical co-operation. The DAC estimates that "the present rate of increase in core development programmes will have to more than double over the next four years to fulfil the pledges."

26. With regard to their commitment to doubling aid to Africa by 2010, DAC donors are also facing great challenges. Since 2004, aid for development projects, programmes, and technical co-operation to Africa has barely increased. On the surface, ODA numbers look better due to the increase in debt relief and humanitarian aid. Between 2004 and 2006 total ODA to Africa rose from US$29.3 billion to US$43.4 billion[3]However, in order to meet the 2010 goals, aid for projects and programmes has to increase substantially. One factor to be reckoned with is that the target will be all the more difficult to meet in periods of strong economic growth since ODA targets are defined as shares of GDP but budget decisions in parliaments are debated with absolute numbers. This has already spurred the establishment of new financing mechanisms (such as the air ticket levy) and it might well be that debates over adjusting the definition of ODA within the OECD DAC will intensify.

27. As already stated, the international community has not only promised to deliver more aid but also to deliver better aid. The first round of monitoring of the targets for effective aid delivery of the Paris Declaration was completed in 2006. The report showed a mixed picture and considerable need for progress. According to the OECD Secretary-General and OECD DAC Chairman, all donor agencies "have made major efforts to implement the Paris Declaration within their organisations." Donors also seem to increasingly understand that countries need to determine their own priorities, pace, and sequencing of reforms. However, implementation is slow. Countries complain about the slow pace of change in donor practices, especially when it comes to donor-driven technical co-operation and the only reluctantly abandoned practice of tying aid. Donors also have a long way to go in cooperating in their missions and programme implementation. Countries still have to bear a high number of individual donor visits, which are time consuming and entail high transaction costs (in 2005, the 34 developing countries covered by the survey received 10 507 donor missions, more than one for each working day). The next round of monitoring is taking place in the first quarter of 2008 for discussion at the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to be held in Accra, Ghana, from 2 to 4 September 2008.

3. Mobilising parliaments for African development

28. In development policy thinking, the 1990s can be considered the decade which focused on the role of the state in advancing the development of poor countries (see "World Development Report 1997: The State in a Changing World"). The notion of an effective state, however, has been equated with an effective executive (ODI, 2007) and largely focused on civil society for checks and balances. Only slowly, and with increasingly critical thinking about the role of NGOs, have parliaments in developing countries received attention as actors in development. They are formal institutions and draw direct legitimacy from the population through a growing number of free electoral processes. As such, they have come to be seen as actors that should play a greater role in poverty reduction.

29. The new partnership approach to development as described above entails a growing role also for parliaments. It is already a step forward that international agreements on development include clear targets and indicators for monitoring them. Institutional monitoring mechanisms for governmental commitments are, however, until now solely composed of representatives from the executive (such as the OECD DAC or the Africa Partnership Forum). Parliamentarians in both Africa and Europe can take a more active role in monitoring and evaluating progress and implementation of these commitments and policies. This was also one of the recommendations of the Cape Town Declaration of European and African parliamentarians of May 2006.

30. Due to the nature of political systems, the difference in capacities of parliaments, and the various kinds of actions needed, the role of parliaments in Africa and in Europe will be examined separately.

3.1. The role of African parliaments – building capacity and widening parliamentary space

31. The 1990s saw the return of multiparty politics throughout Africa. African parliaments are gradually emerging from their roles as rubber-stamps of the executive and are beginning actively to take part in policy making and in the monitoring of their executives. Although the degree of influence and independence of parliaments varies greatly among countries, they are "arguably more powerful today than at any time since independence" (Barkan et al., 2004). The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's "African Governance Report 2005" found that about a third of African parliaments are "largely free from subordination to external agencies in all major areas of legislation."

3. All statistics in constant 2005 US dollars

32. Although this represents considerable progress, the optimistic picture should not belittle the huge challenges that still lie ahead for African parliaments. Over half of them cannot act independently from other governmental agencies (UNECA, 2005). Constitutional reforms have theoretically increased the power of parliaments but political realities do not always match these prescriptions. Strong executives still shape African politics and the constitutional role of parliaments remains limited in many countries. Few parliaments have independent funding (through dedicated budget lines) which renders them dependent on ad hoc funding by the executive.

33. In addition to these external constraints, there are a number of internal constraints and limits of parliamentary capacity. African parliamentarians are amongst the most poorly remunerated throughout the world. This prevents the best and the brightest from entering parliament or makes parliamentarians rely on alternative sources of income. This not only takes away time from parliamentary work, it also facilitates corruption and favouritism (UNECA, 2005).

34. Furthermore, many parliaments lack basic resources such as offices, libraries, electronic equipment or parliamentary staff. The parliament of Malawi, for example, meets only eight to ten weeks a year due to financial constraints. The Malian parliament employs merely five parliamentary assistants for 11 committees (Barkan et al., 2004; UNECA, 2005). Lack of access to information and means of communication with constituencies prevents informed parliamentary discussion and effective oversight of the executive.

35. In assessing the role of parliamentarians in African development these constraints and challenges have to be taken into account. Calls for increasing their role have to consider the available human and financial resources and how quickly they can be built up. Parliamentary involvement can only be built gradually and according to the institutional setting of a country. Dialogue attempts should be careful not to exclude those which are more difficult to access. At the same time, the lack of parliamentary capacity should not be a justification for sidelining them in development policy making. Capacity building and parliamentary involvement should go hand in hand.

36. Parliament's roles in the various development policy tools and strategies such as NEPAD and the attainment of the MDG is fundamentally linked to the proper functions of any parliament. Among a variety of roles for parliaments and parliamentarians, three stand out as particularly important: legislation, oversight, and representation. Irrespective of the specific shape of political systems or the political culture of a country, these are important channels for parliaments and parliamentarians to shape policies and their country's future.

37. In their capacity as legislators, parliamentarians discuss, evaluate, and pass laws that constitute a country's legal framework and that have an important effect on economic and social development. The Poverty Reduction Strategies initiated by the World Bank are a vivid example for increasing parliamentary involvement in development policy making at a country level. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) are designed as a country's plan for macroeconomic, structural, and social policies for three-year economic structural adjustment programmes to foster growth and reduce poverty. In the past, parliaments have largely been sidelined in the PRSP process. The implementation of PRSPs has, however, frequently met resistance from national parliaments when it comes to introducing or changing the required laws. As a result, there is a growing consensus that parliaments must be systematically involved in the drafting of PRSPs and in subsequent implementation and monitoring.

38. The monitoring of policies and a strong relationship of accountability between the different branches of government are at the core of the NEPAD process. Through parliamentary oversight, governments and the donor community can be held to account if goals are not met as measured by the various indicators attached to development programmes. The APRM provides a powerful tool for parliamentarians to put their governments' feet to the fire. Calling on governments to sign up to the APRM and to undergo a review of the country's governance system will be harder to ignore the more countries sign up. Parliaments must also be involved more systematically in overseeing the implementation of the country action plan that results from the APRM process.

39. The budgeting process is any parliament's most powerful way to ensure oversight and accountability of the executive. Fiscal transparency rules and public expenditure management systems (including gender and development budgeting) are at the core of development programmes that are delivered as budget support and other forms of programme-based approaches. Many bilateral and multilateral agencies now deliver a significant share (between 30% and 50% for the European Commission, the United Kingdom, the World Bank and others) as direct contributions to a country's general budget. These contributions are mostly linked to the introduction of budgetary transparency rules and public sector reform programmes. Parliaments can take

advantage of this new space and transparency and critically analyse and debate budgets. Each ODA allocation should include a percentage of the grant which is set aside for parliamentary oversight by the relevant committee in the recipient country.

40. Where aid flows are not directly linked to a country's budget, the lack of transparency and predictability of aid flows makes it difficult for parliaments to keep track and hold governments accountable. Donors should therefore provide timely, transparent and comprehensive information on aid flows in order to enable partners to present comprehensive budget reports to both their parliaments and their citizens. Donors should allow recipient country parliaments to co-decide on ODA priorities and targets, allow parliament to test objectives against NEPAD goals, and provide resources for inter-parliamentary dialogue on ODA effectiveness between donor and recipient country MPs.

41. The function of representation describes the role of parliamentarians as a link between the executive and the people. It is about collecting, aggregating and expressing the concerns and preferences of citizens. Moreover, parliamentarians are also a voice through which they can explain to the citizens they represent, and inform them, about public policy choices and trade-offs. With respect to NEPAD and poverty reduction, this is an especially vital function. Citizens need to be engaged in the process so that it can establish a solid grassroots base. In order for parliamentarians to act as a voice to the people, they need to have sufficient access to information themselves.

3.2. In Europe (for example, parliamentary committees, and so on)

42. As an African initiative first and foremost, watching over the implementation of NEPAD is primarily a task for African parliamentarians. The role of European parliaments is to support their African counterparts in this endeavour. On the one hand, this means to monitor their governments' commitments to development co-operation. On the other hand, parliaments can engage in dialogue with their African counterparts in order to better inform policy making and streamline policies with development issues.

43. Parliamentarians in donor countries are well placed to play an effective oversight role over their governments' development policies and aid commitments. The mechanisms and intensity with which development issues are followed in national parliaments varies across European countries. Some countries have established parliamentary committees on development policies. Others are mainly concerned with development issues when it comes to budgetary discussions and the allocation of development assistance.

44. The most immediate way for parliamentarians to get involved is by scrutinising their governments' performance on agreed indicators for quantity and quality of aid. The OECD DAC's reports on the quantity of aid delivered by its members provide parliamentarians with a basis for questioning governments if commitments were not honoured.

45. However, development co-operation is about more than delivering aid and supporting development programmes in poor countries. A coherent approach to development policy also includes scrutiny of other policy arenas that have an impact on developing countries. Aid flows become less significant if their effects are offset by distortionary policies such as agricultural subsidies or trade restrictions against developing countries' products. Providing market access for African goods and reducing domestic subsidies is generally considered as an important step towards integrating African countries into global markets and value chains. NEPAD addresses this in its "Market Access Initiative". Other areas with more or less direct impact on African countries are agriculture, migration, employment, finance, environment, science and technology, security and defence.

46. Very few countries have so far introduced formal mechanisms for ensuring policy coherence for development. With its policy for global development, Sweden is the first OECD country to formally require that all policy areas have to contribute to global poverty reduction and the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This policy is accompanied by extensive monitoring mechanisms such as an annual report to parliament. The Netherlands has a unit charged with ensuring policy coherence. It is based at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and provides reports to parliament and issues coherence indices. Such reports would be an important tool for parliamentary debate beyond the development committee.

47. The Center for Global Development highlights the importance of coherence in its Commitment to Development Index. The Washington-based think tank provides an alternative measure of donors' performance. In order to capture a more comprehensive picture of development cooperation, it measures a country's performance in the fields of aid, trade, investment, migration, environment, security, and technology.

For example, the index penalises countries that give with one hand (through aid or investment) but take away with the other (through trade barriers or pollution). Among the best performers on this score are the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries.

48. Information is also a prerequisite for effective involvement of European parliamentarians in NEPAD and African development. While NEPAD attracted considerable attention at its inception and with the endorsement of the G8, its evolution is rarely discussed. This phenomenon not only applies to parliamentary discussions. Media coverage of African issues in general mainly focuses on political and humanitarian crises. Updates on or analyses of progress of NEPAD activities or the APRM are rarely seen.

49. Parliamentarians engaged in development co-operation policies will often find that they need to undertake considerable efforts to explain development policies to their constituents. The practice of tying aid represents a case in point. While development co-operation has often been marketed as fostering market entry for domestic products, governments have committed within the OECD to untie aid. Parliamentarians need to be able to inform and give arguments to constituents and business lobby groups as to why aid should be untied. According to a Eurobarometer 2005 survey, 80% of citizens perceive development narrowly as aid but nonetheless support development aid and their government's pledges. A Eurobarometer 2007 survey confirms this, adding the perception that Sub-Saharan Africa is in greatest need of European development assistance. Relating to constituencies and building public support for comprehensive development policies would also increase the weight of parliamentarians' arguments vis-à- vis the executives.

3.3. African-European Parliamentary Co-operation (Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA), Parliamentary Assembly Co-operation Agreement with the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), etc.)

50. In addition to national parliaments, regional parliaments, parliamentary networks and assemblies play an increasingly high-profile role in fostering development co-operation and dialogue. While they formally lack teeth to hold governments accountable, their resolutions and recommendations are widely acknowledged as important contributions to global policy making. They can provide national parliamentarians with backing for views that would otherwise go unnoticed or be hardly recognised in national parliaments.

51. Perhaps their single most important function is to provide a platform for networking among parliamentarians to exchange views, experiences and examples of best practice. For European parliamentarians, they can be an important source to inform their own policy makers on African issues and development. For African parliamentarians, they are an opportunity to learn about the variety of political systems and forms of organisation in order to see which could be models for their own countries.

52. AWEPA addresses these goals. The core functions of the association are strengthening parliamentary capacity through exchange and raising awareness for development issues. This international non-governmental organisation counts some 1 500 members from parliaments of EU member states plus Norway and Switzerland and from the European Parliament. Its roots lie in the campaign to end apartheid in South Africa. Founded in 1984, the association through its members contributed to the framing of sanction policies through laws, monitoring and implementation. Its present work focuses on supporting parliaments in Africa and keeping African issues high on the political agenda in Europe.

53. The Pan-African Parliament, as an institution of the African Union (AU), is initially designed as a forum for consultation on the AU's policies. Launched in 2004 to ensure that governments carry out their developmental promises, it is envisaged that the parliament will be granted more power in the future. In March 2005, the Pan-African Parliament passed a resolution calling on national parliaments to "urge their governments to accede to APRM as a demonstration of their commitment to democracy and good governance in Africa". Having said that, the Pan-African Parliament includes some parliaments (its second vice-president is from Libya) whose democratic credentials are dubious. Nevertheless, as an organ of the African Union, it is a natural forum for the monitoring of NEPAD's progress. In this context the rapporteur recalls the agreement concluded by the Parliamentary Assembly with the Pan-African Parliament in 2005 and considers that steps should be taken to implement it more actively, notably with a view to strengthening the latter's role as a parliamentary forum for reviewing the activities of such institutions as the African Development Bank. This could be modelled on the Assembly's role as a parliamentary forum for such international institutions as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the OECD.

54. Other interparliamentary institutions and networks involved in mobilising parliaments in Europe and Africa, in strengthening their capacity and involvement in development issues and in promoting NEPAD include the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank (PNoWB), the African Parliamentarians' Forum on NEPAD, the NEPAD Contact Group of African

Parliamentarians, the African Parliamentarians' Network Against Corruption (APNAC) and, in the context of the preservation of Africa's environment and its capacity to produce its own food, the Parliamentary Network on the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (PNoUNCCD).

4. The role of the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre)

55. The European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre) is the Council of Europe's prime mechanism for dialogue with developing countries. As a part of the Council of Europe, it promotes the fundamental values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Its focus is on promoting dialogue between Europe and its southern neighbours from the Mediterranean region and Africa.

56. The North-South Centre has been facilitating dialogue through a series of Europe-Africa meetings. In preparation for the Europe-Africa Summit in Lisbon in December 2007, the centre held a successful Euro-African Youth Summit, to be followed up by a programme from June 2008 to November 2009 hopefully with financing from its co-sponsor, the European Commission, as well as an interparliamentary conference as an opportunity for parliamentarians to provide input to the official summit. At the Cape Town conference in May 2006, organised by the North-South Centre, parliamentarians took a first step. Their Cape Town Declaration calls for parliamentary monitoring of the EU-Africa strategy and activities under the 10th European Development Fund under the Cotonou Agreement.

57. With its expertise in promoting human rights protection and advancing democratic governance, the North-South Centre is well placed to focus on these areas in its exchanges with African parliamentarians. It is furthermore an advantage that the Council of Europe includes countries which have themselves recently experienced and completed the transition to democracy. Sharing this experience with African parliamentarians can be a useful way to engage in a constructive dialogue on an equal basis.

58. The North-South Centre, as a partial agreement of the Council of Europe, is in crisis as a result of the withdrawal of Italy and France, two major contributors to the budget. It is vital that the centre is placed again on a sound financial footing and that its programme of activities correspond more closely to the needs and interests of its stakeholders. The accession of Montenegro on 1 March 2008 is a hopeful sign that the process of restoration of confidence has begun. In an increasingly wide network of parliamentary dialogues and capacity-building programmes, it is especially important that activities are well defined and targeted. Ad hoc and donor-driven conferences are far too often limited to declarations and reports posted on the Internet. While dialogue processes have per se no measurable outcomes, some form of follow-up or implementation of activities ensures the effectiveness of such efforts.

5. The European Union-Africa Summit

59. The European Union-Africa Summit held in Lisbon on 8 and 9 December 2007 adopted a joint strategy and action plan to provide the means and instruments to implement the new strategic partnership that is supposed to characterise the future relationship between the two continents. Although still based on European solidarity towards Africa in the struggle to overcome poverty and fulfil the Millennium Development Goals, the partnership is designed to go beyond the development framework and relations between donor and recipient. The action plan comprises eight separate partnerships for the period 2008-10 (when the next summit is planned): peace and security; democratic governance and human rights; trade, regional integration and infrastructure; Millennium Development Goals; energy; climate change; migration, mobility and employment; and science, information society and space. The objectives, expected outcomes and activities are set out for each area and are to be implemented through more frequent high level political contacts, including between the Pan-African Parliament and the European Parliament and other institutions of the African and the European Union, civil society, joint expert groups, research institutes, and so on. It is to be hoped that national parliaments will also be fully involved in promoting and overseeing the implementation of the joint strategy and action plan.

60. At the Lisbon Summit, the EU signed the country strategy papers of the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) with 31 countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, providing a total of €8 billion over the period 2008-13. These co-operation programmes, worked out bilaterally with each country, detail the priorities and results expected by 2013, and these reflect the eight partnership areas of the EU-Africa Summit action plan. One of the new features of the 10th EDF is that provision is made (totalling €2.7 billion) for an "incentive tranche" to reinforce a mutual commitment to good governance. Strategy papers with the other Sub-Saharan countries are under way. Again, it is impor-tant that parliaments play their part in ensuring the effective implementation of these programmes.

61. In preparation for the Lisbon Summit, on 25 October 2007 the European Parliament adopted a comprehensive resolution on the state of play of EU-Africa relations.[4] Among other things, the resolution stresses that national and continental parliaments in both Africa and Europe have an important role to play in improving governance and accountability as regards aid commitments and better donor co-ordination with a view to taking greater account of the so-called "aid orphans" (paragraph 36). It points out that parliaments should exercise full scrutiny over programming and sees ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly reviews of ACP Country Strategy Papers as a first step (paragraph 47). It acknowledges the usefulness of budget support, in particular for improving basic social services, but underlines that it is not appropriate in the case of fragile states or countries in conflict, and insists that it be accompanied by the strengthening of the capacity of parliaments (paragraph 90). It insists that national, regional and continent-wide parliaments must be expressly considered as beneficiaries of aid (paragraph 100); and it states that parliamentary scrutiny and approval of development assistance packages must be a requirement for the disbursement of funds (paragraph 105).

6. A look at some key issues

62. From the above analysis, it is clear that parliamentary monitoring is important. In addition, through questions and debate, parliaments also contribute to agenda setting. Two issues in today's development discourse should thus be highlighted: the role of good governance for development and the empowerment of women.

63. Good governance has become both a condition for development assistance and a goal in itself. It is widely recognised that good governance is a vital prerequisite for development. The increasing number of indices and reports on governance reflects that there is so far no perfect indicator or methodology for assessing governance. For parliamentarians, the recently established Open Budget Index might be of particular interest. Based on questionnaires completed by local experts in 59 participating countries, the index assesses the availability of key budget documents, the quantity of information they provide, and the timeliness of their dissemination to citizens.

64. As a particular aspect of governance and one of special relevance in most African countries, the fight against corruption has led to the creation of a specialised network. The highly active African Parliaments Network Against Corruption (APNAC) has chapters in participating countries in close co-operation with Transparency International. It provides parliamentarians with tools and information for combating corruption. Most importantly, it provides a platform to exchange experience of what works and what does not.

65. Gender equality and the empowerment of women according to the UN's definition – require improved access of women to rights (equality under the law), to resources (equality of opportunity), and to voice (political equality). Improving gender equality has a positive effect for poverty reduction and growth directly through women's greater labour force participation, productivity, and earnings as well as indirectly through the beneficial effects of women's empowerment on the well-being of children and families.

66. African parliaments are not doing much worse than European parliaments when it comes to the representation of women in parliament. According to statistics by the Inter-parliamentary Union, women in OSCE member countries account for 19.8% of parliamentarians in the single or lower house. In Sub-Saharan Africa, these are 16.8% and thus more than in Asia or the Arab countries. These numbers are, of course, not representative for the situation of women in their respective societies.

67. An important element within the parliamentary process is the scrutiny of the budget from a gender equality perspective (see Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1739 (2006) on gender budgeting). According to the *Global Monitoring Report 2007*, more than 60 countries have, over the last decade, undertaken analyses of public budgets to assess differential incidence and effect on men and women, as well as to measure men's and women's economic contributions. Although it has to be acknowledged that not all parliaments have the capacity for this kind of analysis, public scrutiny of the budget from a gender equality perspective is a useful tool for parliamentarians. It is important for both mainstreaming gender in government policies and empowering citizens to influence policy-making and hold governments accountable for public financial management.

4. A6-0375/2007.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

68. This report has attempted to analyse the role of parliamentarians – in both Europe and Africa – in advancing the agenda of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and in meeting the 2015 target for poverty reduction and other Millennium Development Goals. It has provided background on NEPAD and the commitments undertaken at Monterrey in 2002 with a view to financing the achievement of the MDGs and in Paris in 2005 aimed at increasing the effectiveness of aid. It has taken stock of progress made so far in Africa's development and described existing monitoring mechanisms and the ways in which parliamentarians can play a role both in Africa and in Europe.

69. In general, there is a need to step up bilateral parliament-to-parliament dialogue and co-operation on the subject of Official Development Assistance, whether at the national or continental levels. In this context the Parliamentary Assembly and the Pan-African Parliament should take steps to implement their agreement more actively, and the joint statement adopted by the European and Pan-African Parliaments in advance of the Lisbon EU-Africa Summit in December 2007 is to be welcomed.

70. Parliaments should involve themselves more closely in development issues. National parliaments might consider establishing development co-operation committees where they do not exist. Parliamentarians must be duly mobilised and informed, and in this context the work of such non-governmental bodies as AWEPA and the PNoWB is essential.

71. The APRM is an important African Union initiative that aims to improve governance in participating countries, on the assumption that good governance is key to creating a positive investment climate as a prerequisite for sustained economic growth. African leadership over such initiatives should be maintained but Council of Europe member states and their parliaments should follow developments critically and sustain their support.

72. In Africa, there is a need for a greater role and involvement of parliaments in policy making and monitoring (Millennium Development Goals, Africa Partnership Forum, African Peer Review Mechanism, New Partnership for Africa's Development, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers), as well as a need for capacity building and institutional strengthening. Parliamentarians should play their full constitutional role in relation to the executive.

73. In Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly should endorse and prioritise the concept of parliamentary involvement in and scrutiny of Official Development Assistance. There should be more effective monitoring of commitments both in quantity and quality. There should be greater policy coherence. Parliamentarians should be mobilised to take African and other development issues into account and to explain the importance of these issues to their constituents.

74. The experience of international co-operation has shown that sharing of experience and good practice improves the quality of policies. Among other institutions, the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe has a wide range of experience on which to base new work focusing on global development education and on good governance based on human rights, democracy and rule of law. It is vital that the centre regain the full confidence of the Council of Europe member states by pursuing programmes that correspond more closely to the needs and interests of its present and potential stakeholders, with the full support of the Parliamentary Assembly.

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Members of the committee: Mr Márton **Braun** (Chairperson), Mr Robert Walter (Vice-Chairperson) (alternate: Mrs Claire **Curtis-Thomas**), Mrs Doris **Barnett** (Vice-Chairperson), Mrs Antigoni Papadopoulos (Vice-Chairperson), MM. Ruhi **Açikgöz**, Ulrich Adam, Mrs Veronika Bellmann, Mr Radu Mircea Berceanu, Ms Guđfinna Bjarnadóttir, MM. Vidar **Bjørnstad**, Jaime Blanco Garcia (alternate: Mrs Elvira **Cortajarena**), Luuk Blom, Pedrag Bošković, Patrick **Breen**, Gianpiero Carlo Cantoni (alternate: Mr Dario **Rivolta**), Erol Aslan **Cebeci**, Ivané Chkhartishvili, Valeriu Cosarciuc, Ignacio Cosidó Gutiérrez, Joan Albert Farré Santuré, Relu Fenechiu, Carles Gasóliba i Böhm, Zahari Georgiev, Francis Grignon, Mrs Arlette Grosskost, Mrs Azra Hadžiahmetović, MM. Norbert **Haupert**, Stanislaw Huskowski (alternate: Mrs Danuta **Jazłowiecka**), Ivan Nikolaev Ivanov, Jan Jambon (alternate: Mr Luc **van den Brande**), Miloš Jevtić, Ms Nataša Jovanović,

MM. Antti Kaikkonen, Serhiy Klyuev, Albrecht **Konečný**, Bronislaw **Korfanty**, Anatoliy Korobeynikov, Ertuğrul **Kumcuoğlu**, Bob Laxton, Harald Leibrecht, Ms Anna **Lilliehöök**, MM. Arthur **Loepfe**, Denis MacShane, Yevhen **Marmazov**, Jean-Pierre Masseret, Ruzhdi Matoshi, Miloš **Melčák**, José **Mendes Bota**, Mircea **Mereută**, Attila Mesterházy, Mrs Olga Nachtmannova, Mrs Hermine Naghdalyan, Mr Gebhard **Negele**, Mrs Miroslawa **Nykiel**, Mr Mark Oaten, Mrs Ganira Pashayeva, Mrs Marija **PejčinovicBurić**, MM. Manfred **Pinzger**, Viktor Pleskachevskiy (alternate: Mr Nikolay **Tulaev**), Claudio Podeschi, Jakob **Presečnik**, Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando, Maximilian **Reimann**, Roland Ries, Mrs Maria de Belém Roseira (alternate: Mr Maximiano **Martins**), Mrs Gitte Seeberg, Mr Samad Seyidov, Mrs Sabina Siniscalchi (alternate: Mr Giorgio **Mele**), MM. Giannicola Sinisi, Leonid Slutsky, Serhiy Sobolev, Mrs Aldona Staponkienė, MM. Christophe Steiner, Vjaceslavs Stepanenko, Vyacheslav Timshenko (alternate: Mr Yury **Isaev**), Mrs Arenca Trashani, Ms Ester Tuiksoo, MM. Miltiadis Varvitsiotis, Oldřich **Vojíř**, Konstantinos Vrettos, Harm Evert Waalkens, Paul **Wille**, Mrs Gisela **Wurm**, Mrs Maryam Yazdanfar.

NB: The names of the members who took part in the meet ing are printed in bold.

The draft resolution will be discussed at a later sitting.