

Some input for ITUC Submission on EU Green Paper on Development Policy

General

We are in agreement with the broad thrust of the EU development policy imperatives as set out in the Green Paper. However, we are not sure whether the order in which the key themes are articulated corresponds to our sense of priorities. While recognising the importance of aiming at high impact, we would view it as part of a results-based management system of development assistance rather than a discrete policy area.

We strongly believe that human development should take precedence. The EU development policies need to be aligned with, integrated into and anchored in, national development strategies developed by partners themselves aiming at the achievement of human development. In this regard, we welcome the emphasis on the need for reducing maternal and child mortality, improving the quality of education and access to health and nutrition, water and sanitation and support development assistance for the improvement of basic public services. We are pleased that the EU attaches importance to the decent work agenda including social dialogue and protection and would like to emphasize the need for support for its implementation in partner countries in collaboration with the ILO, governments, trade unions and employers. We hope that the ITUC will stress its relevance for the achievement of Millennium Development Goals, especially, MDG 1B.

We agree on the need for best value added and the value for money. It is of course necessary to ensure proper use and accountability of funds. However, development is, by definition, a long-term process and does not easily lend itself to conventional measures of value for money. The impact of investments made in primary health care at community level, for instance, takes a long time to manifest itself in the form of healthy adults who would in turn contribute to economic growth and wellbeing. The same argument holds for education, water and sanitation or health and safety at work for that matter. We would advise caution in applying the concepts of added value and good value for money and related concepts in the case of sustainable development.

We strongly believe that the trade union movement can play a vital role in gathering support among EU citizens for development cooperation and assistance, especially, in view of the current budgetary constraints facing EU member nations.

We would also welcome EU initiatives to get the trade unions in developing countries involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of its development interventions. The cooperation of prominent national trade union centres in Africa, Asia and the Americas and of course, ITUC-Africa and TUCA and ITUC-AP needs to be enlisted in this regard.

Targeted assistance

We are in favour of the provision of budget support in appropriate cases. Perhaps, part of it could be earmarked for addressing the identified needs in key sectors such as education and health. This could include special incentives for further training and

education opportunities, for instance, in primary health care and teacher training. More education and training opportunities should be made available for personnel in ancillary and support services, thereby giving them opportunities for improving their career prospects. It will also go a long way in improving the effectiveness and efficiency of existing resources within health systems.

Trade unions and professional bodies are in a position to facilitate exchange/twinning programmes for health professionals, where possible and appropriate, so that they are given the opportunities to acquire knowledge, expertise and training. Trade unions also can make a critical contribution to the dissemination of information and advice on reproductive health and related issues through their institutions, structures and networks. Immunisation and family planning advice can be made available to workers, their families and communities through workplace structures. In many developing countries where there is no universal access to health facilities, workplace health centres already provide some of these services.

The enforcement of health and safety measures at work leaves a great deal to be desired in many developing countries. Victims of industrial accidents and occupational diseases are very often workers from poor and vulnerable communities. The ILO estimates that some 4% of the world's gross domestic product is lost through occupational injury, disease and death. We welcome any initiative by the EU for effective enforcement of occupational health and measures on both economic and social grounds through its development assistance programmes. It is also important that EU development policies encourage and facilitate the observance of core labour standards in recipient countries – including the enactment and enforcement of legislation in order to give effect to the rights and entitlements enshrined in the key conventions.

Further learning and skills development

The EU should also encourage further learning opportunities for employees both in the formal and informal sectors perhaps through specially designed schemes such as unionlearn in the UK. <http://www.unionlearn.org.uk>

Climate Change

We welcome the emphasis on climate change, its links to development and the need for factoring it into all development strategies. However, in our view, it is unrealistic to expect developing nations to reduce energy consumption when they are keen on improving the living standards of their own citizens. Developing countries including China, India, Brazil, Indonesia etc are unlikely to accept to limit energy consumption in order to limit the Greenhouse Gas emissions unless economically viable options compatible with their national development strategies are available to them. In India alone, kerosene lamps are used for lighting with associated risks of fire and health hazards by estimated 100m households. It is unlikely that the Indian Government or for that matter any other developing country government accepts to slow down their rural

electrification schemes in order to reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions. It is there necessary to effect transfer of appropriate and affordable technology in terms of renewable energy sources including solar power, wind power, geothermal power and hydroelectricity and other renewable sources of energy, where relevant and practicable. Investments in renewable sources of energy are likely to create jobs on a vast scale in developing countries.

While it is important that EU makes available to developing nations its own expertise where appropriate, it is also necessary to facilitate the transfer of technology between developing nations. Brazil has an efficient, well-developed programme of ethanol production which can be shared with many developing countries in the South.

Related to climate change, is the need for better preparedness for natural disasters whether they are linked to climate change or not. As the floods in Pakistan, the Tsunami in South-East Asia and the earthquake in Haiti have amply demonstrated, natural disasters can set the clock back by decades. The EU should encourage its cooperating partners to develop national humanitarian emergency plans in line with and as part of their national development strategies. It is to be noted that natural disasters occur with sufficient frequency to warrant such action. Instead of reacting to disasters on an ad hoc basis, it should be possible to encourage and facilitate the development and implementation of national humanitarian emergency plans at country level. The EU could provide financial and technical assistance in terms of training of personnel and provision of essential food and medicine. Such assistance might not qualify as ODA. However, they would enable the countries concerned to mitigate the impact of natural disasters which would, otherwise, derail their national development strategies. .

Security and Fragility

We appreciate the emphasis on the nexus between security and development and believe that the EU development policies should contribute to conflict prevention as well as resolution.

In all conflict situations, it is often the most vulnerable sections of society that suffer most. The EU development assistance programmes need to pay particular attention to the needs of children (especially their need for education), the elderly, the sick and the disabled, as they are often neglected in conflict situations. Moreover, governments and civil society organisations do need assistance to rebuild the lives of those affected by conflict in post-conflict period, as was evident in Sierra Leone, Ethiopia and Rwanda. The EU should work in close collaboration with trade unions and other civil society organisations in the rehabilitation phase. In addition, special assistance should be provided to restore essential public services – schools, hospitals, water and sanitation, destroyed or disrupted during conflict. The strengthening of civil society in Sierra Leone through capacity building in the trade union movement has contributed to the political stability and peace in the war-torn country. Support for civil society organisations including trade unions has enhanced their capacity to take part in national reconciliation

and reconstruction programmes. Moreover, the EU needs to take into account genuine security concerns of some its partner countries prone to conflict.

There is need for reducing inequalities in income and access to basic public services for all sections in society, as injustices or perceived injustices in access to resources often lead to violent conflict.

Development Finance

It is nearly forty years since the consensus on the need to devote at least 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) was reached in the UN¹. However, the trends in total ODA disbursements including those in EU contributions have in the past been rather erratic and shown a tendency to even decrease in real terms. Therefore, we are in favour of a EU-wide initiative to ensure adherence to the 0.7% of GNI by all members of the European Community. Some flexibility could be introduced by making sure that 0.7% of GNI is reached in terms of a moving average over a period of three years. This would present a significant advantage for EU governments currently facing difficult financial decisions, as it would enable it to reduce the contribution, for example, for one year in the event of an economic downturn and still be able to adhere to the requirement over the medium-term.

Innovative Financing

The TUC is conscious that ODA disbursements alone will not be adequate to meet the long-term financial needs of developing nations and strongly supports innovative financing schemes such the proposed tax on financial transactions. In this regard, we would welcome the inclusion of an appropriate initiative by the EU as part of its strategy to augment the resource base for development finance and secure consensus on its implementation throughout the Community.

Debt

The EU should also do more to help countries with unsustainable debt and use its influence with international financial institutions to lighten the burden. It also needs to address the problems caused by vulture funds and tax havens for some developing nations.

Migration

EU policies on migration should be fine-tuned to encourage would-be migrants with skills to remain, as far as possible, in their own countries and contribute to their development. Specially targeted budget support schemes could be used to improve salaries and working conditions of prospective migrants with knowledge, expertise and skills in demand in their countries of origin. It is also important that migrant workers when they do arrive in recipient countries are granted the same rights and entitlements as others. EU should also facilitate remittances to their countries of origin.

¹ Resolution 2626 adopted by UN General Assembly in October 1970 recommended 0.7% of GNI as ODA.