


Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2007/2231(INI)	Procedure completed
Advancing African agriculture - Proposal for agricultural development and food security in Africa		
Subject		
6.30 Development cooperation		
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Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	DEVE Development		
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	AFET Foreign Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	INTA International Trade	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	ITRE Industry, Research and Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	General Affairs	2831	19/11/2007

Key events			
23/07/2007	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2007)0440	Summary
05/11/2007	Vote in committee		Summary
08/11/2007	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0432/2007	
15/11/2007	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
19/11/2007	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		Summary
29/11/2007	Results of vote in Parliament		
29/11/2007	Decision by Parliament	T6-0577/2007	Summary

29/11/2007

End of procedure in Parliament

Technical information

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Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document	COM(2007)0440	24/07/2007	EC	Summary
Committee draft report	PE394.067	18/09/2007	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee	PE396.460	11/10/2007	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading	A6-0432/2007	08/11/2007	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading	T6-0577/2007	29/11/2007	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2007)6527	18/12/2007	EC	
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2008)0413	05/02/2008	EC	

Advancing African agriculture - Proposal for agricultural development and food security in Africa

PURPOSE: to present a proposal to strengthen cooperation on agricultural development in Africa.

BACKGROUND: agriculture remains the economic base for the majority of the poor in Africa and accounts for about a third of Africa's GDP and for the bulk of employment. It is regaining economic prominence, with a marked increase in agricultural sector growth: 2.7% in 2002, 3.0% in 2003 and 5.3% in 2004. Favourable price movements for a number of products have contributed to this trend, while improved production conditions have been another factor for growth. However, for sustained poverty reduction, agricultural growth will need to speed up further, particularly in low-income rural societies, where agriculture is likely to remain the main driver for economic growth and employment creation.

Agriculture is predominantly a private-sector activity, but will require significant public sector involvement. First, market failures have been prevalent and have negatively affected socially and geographically marginal groups. Second, environmental externalities exist, which require public regulation and intervention to maintain sustainability. Third, agriculture works much better when public-domain functions are more effective.

CONTENT: this paper proposes principles and key areas for EU-AU cooperation on agricultural development in Africa, focusing on regional and continental levels. Cooperation at these levels will complement and stimulate agricultural development at the national level, which is where the most intense cooperation will continue to take place. It will build on the policy orientations set out in the 'European Consensus' and the EU Strategy for Africa. Both documents reiterate that agriculture and rural development are crucial in terms of reducing poverty and stimulating growth. To contribute to growth, the Community has indicated it will focus on the sustainable intensification of production, competitiveness on regional and international markets and risk management. This should be facilitated in Africa by making use of technological development, supported by agricultural research and extension. Cooperation will be closely aligned with Africa's agricultural agenda and aims to stimulate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Broad-based agricultural growth has direct significance in attaining the first MDG (eradicating extreme poverty and hunger) and will be a strong factor in progress towards the seventh MDG (ensuring environmental sustainability).

Africa's Agricultural Agenda: to foster agricultural development, the AU and NEPAD have launched the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), while Heads of State agreed to significantly increase the share of national budgets for agriculture and rural development. The CAADP initiative takes a continent-wide view, but builds on national and regional plans for the development of agriculture. It contains a set of key principles and targets, in order to (i) guide country strategies and investment programmes, (ii) enable regional peer learning and review; and (iii) facilitate greater alignment and harmonisation of development efforts. For development partners, CAADP offers important opportunities for progress on the Paris Declaration. The December 2006 AU Summit called for some selectivity in pursuing the CAADP commitments, based on a recognition that limited resources and institutional capacities require priorities that will lead to quick but sustainable gains in terms of achieving food and nutrition security.

EU-AU cooperation on agriculture development: cooperation will be based on the following principles:

- Commitment to the Millennium Development Goals, with specific reference to the 1st and the 7th MDG.
- Alignment with African priorities, based on the CAADP processes, principles and targets.

- Donor harmonisation and alignment, following the principles of the Paris Declaration.
- Building on other AU-EU Partnerships and Facilities, complementing EU initiatives which directly or indirectly support rural development in Africa and using existing Africa-Europe partnerships.
- Drawing lessons from relevant EU experiences and good practice, building on nearly 50 years of agricultural policy experience in the EU.
- Application of subsidiarity, supporting only those regional and continental functions that add value to national level interventions.
- Policy Coherence, between EU development policies and agricultural, fisheries, trade, consumer and energy policies.

In line with CAADP demands, cooperation will focus on capacity building and institutional strengthening of regional and continental organisations. Cooperation will foster a more strategic and effective role for the State in agriculture, based on the view that the State will primarily: provide an effective policy and regulatory framework, create an enabling environment; intervene in situations of market failure; provide services with a public goods character; create safety nets; and be restrictive in its use of subsidies.

Priority Areas for Cooperation: 7 cooperation areas are listed in this paper provide a long-term framework for assistance. In a geographical sense, there is a focus on Sub-Sahara Africa, where the agricultural problems are most pressing. Nevertheless a continental scope is relevant in view of the alignment with AU initiatives and as several cooperation areas will have an Africa-wide dimension. These are as follows:

1) Agriculture in Development Strategies: this area will address the need for agricultural development to be an integral and strategic part of the development agenda at national, regional and continental levels, recognising agriculture as a key sector for economic growth and poverty reduction.

2) Sector Governance: this cooperation area will assist in capacity building at regional and continental levels, with a view to improving governance in the agricultural sector at national levels. Improved governance is expected to contribute to a smoother transition of smallholder farming towards commercially viable and sustainable family-based agriculture.

3) Research, Knowledge Systems and Dissemination: the aim of this cooperation area is to increase the impact of agricultural research and knowledge systems on rural productivity, poverty reduction, food security and sustainable management of natural resources, taking into account challenges posed by climate change. There will be an emphasis on multidimensional research approaches, on sustainable agricultural production systems and on research with positive impacts on the rural poor.

4) Trade Facilitation, emphasising Quality Assurance and Improvement: the aim of this cooperation area will be to strengthen Africa's ability to make markets work for poverty reduction, focusing on regional markets for agricultural produce. Current trade negotiations (EPAs, DDA) are meant to lead to enhanced agricultural trade opportunities for African countries requiring an appropriate supply response. Proposed cooperation includes strengthening the ability to influence, set and adhere to meaningful production and trade standards in order to (continue to) access remunerative markets for agricultural produce and to guarantee product safety for consumers.

5) Natural Resource Management: Land, Fisheries, Forestry: this cooperation area will back improvements in governance and management regimes for land, fish and forest resources that aim to combine environmental sustainability and biodiversity with profitable utilisation and poverty reduction.

6) Livestock Development and Disease Control: this cooperation area will enhance the sustainability of the livestock sector and its contribution to poverty alleviation and growth, with an emphasis on strengthening animal disease control knowledge and systems. Cooperation will aim to reduce animal mortality, lower livestock production risk and improve public health prevention, as well as to improve access to regional and international markets, facilitate rational land use and reduce livestock related environmental problems.

7) Risk Management: this area of cooperation will address capacities for reducing risks related to climate change, natural disasters and price shocks, with a focus on organisational questions and financial instruments. Cooperation will combine a competitiveness orientation, focused on productivity and growth, with broad-based development, focusing on poverty alleviation and social cohesion. For both aspects, regional markets for agricultural products will need development, underlining the importance of regional integration and trade facilitation. Moreover, sustainable production systems will be promoted, recognising the need to adapt to external challenges like climate change.

Coordination: coordination on EU-Africa agricultural development cooperation will have three interlinked dimensions: (i) with African institutions; (ii) with other donor coordination and (iii) intra-EU. Coordination with African institutions will use the CAADP framework and will be under the leadership of continental and regional organisations, with a central role for AUC/NEPAD. Donor coordination and harmonisation and alignment around CAADP will be enhanced by the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD), of which the EC and various Member States are members. Coordination within the EU will be reinforced through a proposed EU working group on African agriculture, technically supported by CTA. The working group will strengthen synergies in and improve the quality and visibility of EU financing for African agricultural development.

Monitoring and review: progress in implementing CAADP and in cooperation on agricultural development will be monitored predominantly at the CAADP Partnership Platform and the Africa Partnership Forum (APF). The relevance of the policy orientations and strategic directions of EU-Africa cooperation in agricultural development will be subject to the same review process as the overall EU-AU cooperation agenda, as currently covered by the EU Strategy for Africa.

Advancing African agriculture - Proposal for agricultural development and food security in Africa

The Committee on Development unanimously adopted the initiative report by Luisa MORGANTINI (GUE/NGL, IT) welcoming the Commission's communication on advancing African agriculture ? a proposal for agricultural development and food security in Africa.

Firstly, the report highlights that agriculture and rural development are crucial in terms of reducing poverty and stimulating growth. MEPs wish to reinforce the idea that for growth to have a poverty reducing effect, it needs to be broad-based, small-holder oriented and result in enhanced labour opportunities.

Competitiveness on regional and international markets is a priority according to the report. In this context, it underlines the importance of giving support and assistance to small producers allowing them sufficient access to these markets. It stresses the importance of integrating regional markets in Africa and to gradually lift barriers between African countries in order to enlarge markets for producers.

The report emphasises the need for policies to be implemented which will counter imports of devastating agri-food products which are

damaging to local production. MEPs insist that food-aid policies and programmes must not prevent the development of local and national food-production capacity or contribute to dependence, the distortion of local and national markets, corruption and the use of foodstuffs which are harmful to health (GMOs).

They call on international bodies to implement policies which will gradually take the place of food aid by promoting support for, and the development of, local agriculture. If food aid is the sole alternative, MEPs insist that priority be given to local purchases, and/or purchases in areas adjacent to a country in difficulty or in the region.

The report stresses the importance of increasing the financial resources allocated by donors to rural development and food security and emphasises the need for African governments to include the agricultural sector among their political priorities in order to receive EDF support.

Other salient issues covered in the report can be summarised as follows:

Wider consultation: although the committee welcomes the wide consultation approach that the Commission adopted for issuing the Communication, it hopes that such an approach will not remain an isolated case but will form part of a mechanism enabling civil society and democratic institutions in Europe and Africa. It requests that the Commission set in motion a process of negotiation with parliaments and civil society actors regarding their roles in implementing and monitoring the Joint EU-Africa Strategy. MEPs stress the importance of promoting greater involvement on the part of governments, local authorities and both national and regional parliaments in decision-making processes relating to agricultural policy and food security, and also of facilitating more extensive participation by civil society. In this context invites the Commission to support the formulation and the application of regional common agricultural policies, with the effective participation of stakeholders. They express great regret at the prospect of the attendance of international outcast Robert Mugabe at the Lisbon EU-Africa Summit this December, whose presence will do much to discredit the good work of the Summit on democratic governance. The African Union is called upon to revisit with renewed vigour its commitment to the values espoused in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which the predecessor to the AU, the Organisation of African Unity, pioneered, and to which Zimbabwe is also a signatory. Lastly, the report points out that the proposal to cooperate mainly with African continental and regional organisations, notably the AUC, NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) and RECs (Regional Economic Communities), should also involve mechanisms to include interest groups, grassroots movements and civil society to better enable poor rural farmers to influence policy processes in a meaningful way.

Coordination: MEPs point to the need for the Member States and the Commission to ensure that development aid is coordinated and harmonised to a greater extent and, in general, to meet without delay all the other objectives set as part of the process of enhancing the effectiveness of European development cooperation. They stress how important it is for the Commission and the Member States to indicate clearly the way in which the beneficiary countries and civil society will secure full control over their development policies and to introduce performance indicators enabling national and regional parliaments and civil society to monitor the impact of development aid. The report stresses the importance of negotiations at European level including exchanges of views with consumers, producers and sectoral organisations, including from development countries, with a view to ensuring that the agro-industrial and processing sectors play a full, rather than a secondary, role. It stresses the need to strengthen a knowledge based African bio-economy, and therefore calls on Member States to share their agronomic know-how with African researchers and farmers and to share technology as well as other innovative methods in the agricultural sector with African countries in order to enhance their competitiveness and to increase the added value of agriculture on the continent. In the light of transparency, the committee calls on the Member States to indicate annually and with the utmost transparency their financial commitments to development aid and for the amounts assigned to initiatives which are not directly related to development (such as debt relief) to be specifically excluded from the calculation of the total expenditure on development aid.

Coherence: MEPs stress that EU policies in different fields should be coherent as regards their overall objectives. They insist that the EU trade policy and the Common Agricultural Policy should be coherent with the EU development policy. They stress the need to lift tariff barriers on all agricultural products - raw and processed goods - in order to rapidly open the European market for all agricultural products from the African continent. They call on the EU to establish a timetable leading to the abolition of agricultural export policies which are damaging to vulnerable agricultural businesses in the developing countries and to put pressure on other international actors to do the same.

Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA): the report recognises that the EPAs can become an important tool for African trade and regional integration, but only on condition that they are "development-friendly", allowing for exemptions and long transition periods where needed in order for domestic producers and industries to adapt to new market situations. The committee asks to postpone the deadline for the conclusion of the negotiations and asks for possible alternatives to EPAs to be explored for the countries that will not sign them and in any case calls for the adoption of specific measures to mitigate the impact of EPAs on vulnerable groups. MEPs restate the need for development-aid policies and programmes to support the right of each individual people to establish its own food strategies and to protect and regulate national agricultural production and the local market.

Agriculture and women: the report highlights the importance of the role played by women in African agricultural production. It points out that agricultural-development measures in Africa should be directed first and foremost towards women, with specific policies being introduced to ensure access to and control over productive resources, particularly land rights, capacity building, funding for micro-enterprises, better living conditions, food and health welfare, education and more active involvement in social and political life. Aid should be directed, as a priority, to the less-favoured groups and less-favoured areas (remote rural areas - RRAs) first, where geographical isolation and physical constraints on agricultural productivity exacerbate the level of chronic poverty.

Sustainable agriculture: the report emphasises the need for European countries to honour the commitment to achieving a lasting peace as a precondition of food security and thus to put a particular priority to the promotion of peace. It urges the governments of both North and South to seek peaceful solutions to conflicts and reiterates the need to put a halt to trafficking in weapons and in anti-personnel mines. MEPs call for the right to water for all to be upheld at international level. The African governments are called upon to promote agrarian reforms in their countries in order to allow the rural population improved access to land and to production resources, particularly in the case of country families who have no property title. In this context, the committee calls for the Action Plan accompanying the [Joint EU-Africa Strategy](#) recently adopted (see [INI/2007/2002](#)) to put a high priority on the establishment and improvement of Land Registries, and on the strengthening of legal systems to allow tribunals to effectively enforce property law. Furthermore, the committee calls on the African governments to encourage greater diversification in production models so as to avoid the institution of intensive monocrop systems.

Improving development through training: MEPs call for measures to be taken to improve training to enable young people to pursue higher education in agricultural science and technology, as well as to create job opportunities for agriculture graduates with the main purpose of reducing migration from rural to urban areas, and indeed, from developing countries to developed countries. They call for a joint strategy to address the root causes of migration and to pay particular attention to the issue of brain drain. The report draws attention to the need for a comprehensive approach in the field of migration policy to be promoted on the basis of the principles of solidarity with African countries and of

co-development, and calls for a stronger partnership between local institutions and those based in the Member States. It supports the Commission proposal to encourage circular migration in order to encourage the circulation of acquired knowledge and experience.

Advancing African agriculture - Proposal for agricultural development and food security in Africa

The Council adopted a series of conclusions on a communication from the Commission on agriculture in Africa. These may be summarised as follows:

- the Council welcomes the objectives and principles set out for cooperation on agricultural development at regional and continental levels in Africa. It recalls that agriculture is the main economic base for the majority of Africans and accounts for about one-third of Africa's gross domestic product;
- in its conclusions (see also Council document [14914/07](#)), the Council recognises the crucial importance of broad-based sustainable agricultural growth for poverty reduction and food security and for attaining the UN's Millennium development goals in Africa. In this regard, it welcomes the decision by African heads of state to increase the share of national budgets allocated to agriculture and rural development and appeal to them to honour their commitments;
- the Council also welcomes the increased attention given to agriculture, food security and rural development for Africa under the EU's 10th European Development Fund (EDF);
- with respect to cooperation on agricultural development at the continental and regional levels, the Council endorses the Commission's communication. Specific areas on which to focus collaboration will be decided in consultation between the EU and the African Union.

Advancing African agriculture - Proposal for agricultural development and food security in Africa

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Luisa MORGANTINI (GUE/NGL, IT) welcoming the Commission's communication entitled "Advancing African Agriculture - Proposal for continental and regional level cooperation on agricultural development in Africa". The report pointed out that in Africa, up to 80% of the population live in rural areas and 73% of the rural population in Africa consists of smallholder subsistence farmers, dependent for a large part of their livelihood on food production through farming or livestock keeping.

Parliament agreed with the Commission's view that for growth to have a poverty reducing effect, it needs to be broad-based, smallholder oriented and result in enhanced labour opportunities, but regretted that this statement appeared only in the annexed Staff Working Document and not in the text of the Communication itself. It concurred that competitiveness on regional and international markets was a priority, underlining the importance of giving support to small producers. Parliament stressed the importance of integrating regional markets in Africa and of gradually lifting barriers between African countries in order to enlarge markets for producers. It emphasised the important role which the EU should play, in international institutions such as the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, defending vigorously the right of African States to protect national and regional markets on the African continent against imports threatening the survival of local producers of essential agricultural products. It hoped that such an approach would not remain an isolated case but would form part of a mechanism enabling civil society and democratic institutions in Europe and Africa to participate. The Commission was asked to set in motion a process of negotiation with parliaments and civil society actors regarding their roles in implementing and monitoring the Joint EU-Africa Strategy. It regretted the fact that in the EU-Africa Joint Strategy, the problems relating to rural development and food security in Africa are only briefly outlined, and hoped that this would be compensated by more substance in the Action Plan that is foreseen to accompany the Joint Strategy.

Members expressed concern at the lack of clarity as regards the Communication's decision-making process, both within the EU and outside (as it relates to negotiations with African governments). They called for greater transparency in the negotiations which the Commission was conducting with African governments for the purpose of establishing EU-AU cooperation in respect of agricultural development in Africa. The proposal to cooperate mainly with African continental and regional organisations, notably the AUC, NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) and RECs (Regional Economic Communities), should also involve mechanisms to include interest groups, grassroots movements and civil society to enable poor rural farmers to influence policy processes in a meaningful way.

On food aid, Parliament called for international bodies to implement policies which would gradually take the place of food aid by promoting support for local agriculture. Should food aid be the sole alternative, it insisted that priority be given to local purchases, and/or purchases in areas adjacent to a country in difficulty or in the region.

It went on to stress that EU policies in different fields should be coherent as to their overall objectives. EU trade policy and the Common Agricultural Policy should be coherent with the EU development policy. Parliament therefore stressed the need to lift tariff barriers on all agricultural products - raw and processed goods - in order to open the European market for all agricultural products from the African continent. There must be a timetable leading to the abolition of agricultural export policies which are damaging to vulnerable agricultural businesses in the developing countries.

The resolution recognised the opportunities afforded by EPAs in facilitating agricultural trade, but reminded the Commission, in this connection, that those agreements have not yet been signed and that there are still a number of contentious issues to be resolved. The EPAs could become an important tool for African trade and regional integration, but only on condition that they are "development-friendly", allowing for exemptions and long transition periods where needed in order for domestic producers and "infant" industries to adapt to new market situations. Parliament stressed the need for policies to counter imports of devastating agri-food products which are damaging to local production and which take into account the geographical, historical and cultural diversity of African countries. It regretted the fact that the Communication lumped together the market in biofuels with other niche markets, since the expansion of the emerging biofuels industry could also have a detrimental effect on food supplies, given that the growing of biomass could take land, water and other resources away from agricultural production. Parliament insisted that the production of biofuels were of potentially high importance to the agriculture in African countries, but that the environmental benefits depend largely on the type of energy crop as well as on the energy absorbed in the whole production chain, whereas the real benefits in terms of CO2 reduction still need to be ascertained. The highest priority should be given to avoid the possible damage to nature and the environment of an uncontrolled increase of the production of biofuels.

Parliament drew attention to the inconsistency of the Communication, which highlights the importance of the role played by women in African agricultural production, but does not mention them in the chapter concerning areas of cooperation. Agricultural development measures in Africa should be directed first and foremost towards women, with specific policies being introduced to ensure access to and control over productive resources, particularly land rights, capacity building, funding for micro-enterprises, better living conditions, food and health welfare, education and more active involvement in social and political life. The Communication also misses a seemingly obvious point that aid should be directed, as a priority, to the less-favoured groups and less-favoured areas (remote rural areas - RRAs) first, where geographical isolation and physical constraints on agricultural productivity exacerbate the level of chronic poverty.

Parliament went on to stress the importance of promoting micro-finance instruments, particularly micro-credit programmes, as an essential component in economic development policies in the agricultural sector. It called on African governments to promote agrarian reform in their countries in order to allow the rural population secured access to land and to production resources, particularly in the case of country families who have no property title. The Action Plan accompanying the Joint EU-Africa Strategy should put a high priority on the establishment and improvement of land registries, and the strengthening of legal systems to allow tribunals to enforce property law.

Members called on the EU to promote a more effective integration of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) national plans into the national development strategies of African partners. They invited the Commission to build effective collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) based on the comparative advantages of these institutions in the field of agricultural and rural development. They supported efforts at national and regional level to involve rural stakeholders and their representative organisations in the consultation process on policy issues which affect them, noting that capacity building in people-centred advocacy for rural populations is essential to this process.

Lastly, the report emphasised the need for European countries to honour the commitment to achieving a lasting peace as a precondition of food security and thus to put a particular priority to the promotion of peace. It urged the governments of both North and South to seek peaceful solutions to conflicts.