



**EUROPEAN UNION**  
DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**United Nations Economic and Social Council**

**High-level debate**

**Development Cooperation Forum**

**Keynote speech by**

**Mr Louis Michel**

**European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid**

**"A new vision for development cooperation  
in the 21st century"**

**New York, 30 June 2008**

Mr President,

Deputy Secretary-General,

Ministers and Heads of Delegation,

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

When the Millennium Goals were set in 2000, the means to achieve them had not been identified. Since then the global partnership for development has gradually taken shape, at least on paper. The Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and, at EU level, the commitments made under the 2005 European Consensus on Development are the key drivers of this global partnership.

The European Union has played, and intends to continue playing, a very active role in this area.

Unfortunately, today, all the evidence points to the same thing: the **level of achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is well below expectations. This is a worrying situation.** Substantial progress has been made in some countries, but others fall far short of the targets. New challenges such as climate change and the food crisis add to the problem.

Still, it is encouraging to note that countries which put in place coherent, proactive and systematic policies manage, when aided financially, to alleviate poverty and make progress in areas such as health, education and equality between men and women.

The vision is there. We know what has to be done. But we are not doing it enough. And when I say "we", I mean of course donors - but also developing countries themselves, whose primary responsibility is clear. I am well aware of the role and ethical responsibility of the industrialised rich world. But we cannot ignore the decisive influence of the domestic policies of partner countries (-> political dialogue).

**The major events of 2008 – Accra, New York and Doha – must mark a decisive turning-point. 2008 must create a genuine opportunity to reposition our strategies and reframe our development policies.**

It is on the basis of this strong conviction that the **Heads of State and Government of the European Union adopted very ambitious conclusions 10 days ago.**

Let us look first of all at the **volume of aid.**

**The EU reconfirmed, at the highest political level, its financial commitments for 2010 and 2015** and the Member States undertook to draw up multiannual timetables showing the budgetary feasibility of their promise.

I will not hesitate to point out here that the **EU remains by far the most important partner** for the developing countries, contributing 60% of world aid. The EU will also provide 90% of the increase in international aid in the period 2006-2010 and the same percentage of additional aid to Africa promised by the G8 in Gleneagles.

This situation is difficult to accept. **It is imperative that efforts be shared equitably. Today, the increase in international aid is being almost exclusively shouldered by the EU. This is proving increasingly problematic for public opinion.**

The partner countries have to deal with a plethora of rules specific to each donor's national legislation.

All the donors agree: the work has to be divided up better. But when they are asked to actually do this, the old nationalistic, egocentric reflexes kick back in.

I often quote these figures, but they are striking: is it normal that

- in Tanzania, 600 projects of less than a million dollars each are underway in the health sector alone?

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nets, save the lives of 4 million children every year, ensure that 21 million births are assisted by qualified staff, etc.

Similarly, in **education**, the EU would increase its financing in 2010 by 4.3 billion euros, thus enabling 25 million children to access primary school and 6 million teachers to be recruited and trained.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

**The situation is urgent.**

**The developing world is in serious crisis.**

First of all a **food crisis**, which is hitting the world's poorest hardest and jeopardising years of social, financial, economic and political progress.

**In response to this crisis, Europe has risen to its responsibilities.**

In the **short term** first of all. After the first signs of crisis we substantially increased our budget, setting aside 550 million dollars for 2008.

And I intend to do more. Looking beyond the immediate situation, **the medium term** is just as crucial. Resources are needed to help the developing countries cope with the rise in prices and in particular prepare for the next harvest in terms of seeds and fertilisers.

Finally: even if prices stabilise in the coming months, the impact of **this food crisis will be felt for a long time**. It is essential – and I have been saying this now for many years – to put policies in place that sustainably increase productivity and production in the agricultural sector.

In this respect, issues such as

- organisation of the production and marketing system,
- access to land,
- access to inputs and seeds,
- price guarantees,
- technology transfers,

- infrastructure to reduce isolation,
- energy and transport prices,
- the effects of climate change,
- land-use planning,

are all factors that interact and determine the capacity of poor countries to resolve this existential issue – in both the literal and the figurative sense.

We also need to clarify a number of controversial issues, such as the appropriateness of, and conditions for, the promotion of biofuels. Similarly, we need to overcome the ideological block where GMOs are concerned.

There is also the **crisis** – different in nature but just as serious – **of climate change**.

The world is up against an alarming paradox. It is the poorest countries that are worst affected by climate change, but it is the **developed world, and increasingly the emerging countries, that are largely responsible** for the build-up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. It is there ~~crisis~~ **crisis** the **TT4** 1slare largee

I wish to conclude by sharing with you both my frustration and my hope.

Frustration: at the international community's inability to help a large part of the world out of a poverty exacerbated by the combined impact of climate change and food prices, even though we have never before had such extensive technical, financial and human resources.

But also hope: in "POLITICS", which, I firmly believe, will take full cognisance of the challenges facing us and provide the impetus for the quantum leap necessary to meet them.