



The EU and Peacebuilding 1

Development aid and Conflict-prevention in ACP countries

Background Information

The European Union was founded on a desire to create and maintain peace in a war-torn Europe and over 50 years later peace and security are still of the utmost importance to the EU. Quakers are well known for their commitment to peace, laid down in the Quaker Peace testimony and QCEA has been actively involved in much peace-work at an EU level over the years. The EU is the largest aid donor in the world and to work effectively it needs to make sure that peacebuilding is prioritised and conflict prevention truly mainstreamed within its development and finance structures.

Mainstreaming Conflict-prevention

'There will be no development without security and no security without development'
Kofi Annan 2005¹

The EU recognises the interconnectedness of peacebuilding, conflict resolution and sustainable development in the Cotonou agreement in 2000. As part of the same agreement the EU made a commitment to mainstream conflict prevention in its development work in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. This means that the EU should be systematically incorporating conflict prevention into all areas of EU policy and engagement with these countries, including development aid. Despite these commitments conflict-prevention was not included as one of the EU's cross-cutting themes which have to be integrated into all European Union development work. This means that conflict prevention does not have to be considered within all EU structures and financial instruments that deal with development.

Peacebuilding and the Development Aid

The European Parliament has the final say on the EU budget, which it can accept or reject, giving it influence over EU spending. The European Commission has several financial instruments which it uses for its development work in ACP countries. These include the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) which funds thematic development programmes and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) which aims to support democracy and human rights world-wide. These are financial instruments that fund long term development programmes and fall under the EU budget. Despite EU recognition of the interconnectedness between peace and development neither of these instruments makes

¹ Population Action International, *Security and Development*, accessed May 2009 at: http://www.populationaction.org/Issues/Development_and_Security/Index.shtml

any clear reference to conflict prevention or insists that money used from these instruments have to be conflict-sensitive.

The European Development fund (EDF) is the largest financial instrument for development. It is governed by the Cotonou Agreement, which clearly emphasises the link between development and peace in its objectives. The EDF is, however, the only one of these instruments that is not part of the EU budget and is funded by direct contributions from EU Member states. This is problematic as it means that the EDF is not subject to European Parliamentary approval and the European Parliament cannot monitor its implementation.

The European Commission is a strong advocator of budget support. This means that development aid is often given either as general budget support where it goes directly into a third countries budget or as sector budget support where it goes to support a specific sector of government spending. Forty-five per cent of the 2008-2013 EDF resources will be provided through budget support. There are diverging views on budget support. Some argue that it improves efficiency and country ownership while others claim that third country governments rely on budget support rather than constituent taxes making them accountable and controlled by donors rather than their own people. Issues of corruption and government fuelled conflict may also remain unaddressed through budget support.

QCEA Publications

- ‘Mainstreaming Conflict Prevention - A Study of EU Action in ACP countries’
- ‘Mainstreaming Conflict Prevention - A Study of EU Development Cooperation with ACP Countries
- Both accessible at <http://www.quaker.org/qcea/mainstreamingcp/index.htm>

QCEA Recommendations to the European Parliament

1. QCEA recommends that the European Parliament uses its influence over the EU budget to insist that conflict prevention is considered within the DCI and EIDHR financial instruments and implemented to ensure that development funded by these instruments is conflict-sensitive. QCEA believes that if the DCI and the EIDHR specifically mentioned how they could be used for peacebuilding they would become more powerful and effective instruments for development.

Questions for MEP candidate

- How do you feel the European Union can make sure it’s development work effectively mainstreams conflict-prevention? How will you work towards making sure that conflict prevention is considered within the financial instruments used for development aid that the European Parliament has budgetary power over?

2. QCEA recommends that the EDF be included in the budget so that the Parliament can democratically control that the Commission implements its commitments concerning conflict prevention and development.

Questions for MEP candidate

- Will you call for the European Development Fund to be included in the budget so that the European Parliament can democratically control its implementation?

3. QCEA recommends that the risks entailed in Budget Support concerning conflict be studied further. QCEA believes that European Commission Budget Support cannot be truly effective without the willingness and the ability to discuss conflict sensitive issues.

Questions for MEP Candidates

- How will you put pressure on the Commission to make sure that conflict sensitivity is integrated into aid that is channelled through Budget Support?