



CONCORD Cotonou Working group
Briefing paper

HIV/AIDS & ACP-EU COOPERATION

Most of the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries are increasingly affected by the AIDS pandemic. Stopping the spiral of deaths and new infections will require strong support from their main partner: the European Union.

1. HIV/AIDS and Development

The HIV virus was discovered twenty-six years ago. Since then, over 25 million people have died of AIDS and currently 40 million are living with the virus, mostly in developing countries. The necessary tools to prevent, treat and care for patients do exist, but are not available for many of the poorest and most vulnerable populations.

AIDS is a pandemic that disproportionately affects women and young people, both in the contraction of the virus, in the persistent challenges in accessing information and services and in the burden of care. HIV/AIDS is fuelled by poverty, gender inequality, social exclusion and persistent human rights violations. **The stigma and discrimination experienced by a number of vulnerable groups and populations key to the pandemic**, including sex workers, injecting drug users, men who have sex with men, ethnic minorities, prisoners, children, young people, women, older people, refugees, migrants and persons with disabilities, **remains a key driver of the pandemic in many countries.**

In 2001, in the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on HIV&AIDS, for the very first time, world leaders acknowledged that **HIV/AIDS is not just a health issue but a “global emergency and one of the most formidable challenges to human life and dignity”**. Six years later, the AIDS emergency still demands unwavering political leadership, significantly increased and predictable human and financial resources and a comprehensive and effective rights and evidence-based response.

At the G8 Gleneagles Summit, the Millennium Summit in 2005 and the 2006 UNGASS on HIV and AIDS, world leaders recommitted to reaching the goal of **Universal Access to prevention, treatment, care and support for all those who need it by 2010**. This goal requires proper programming and long term and sustainable resources, from the International community and affected governments. If HIV/AIDS is to be fully recognised as a global emergency, the quantity of aid must substantially **increase** over time in a sustainable and predictable manner. At least \$23bn is needed by 2010 for a comprehensive response to HIV and AIDS in low- and middle-income countries.¹ The current global annual funding gap is approximately \$11bn.

2. What is the European Union doing?

The European Union’s political strength, financial capacity and its promotion of human rights means that it has a critical global leadership role in the response to HIV and AIDS and the achievement of the Universal Access target by 2010.

The Cotonou agreement expressly recognises the importance of prioritising actions to confront HIV/AIDS in ACP-EU cooperation in its article 25. The EU’s policy is framed by its Programme for

¹ The Global Fund, Resource need for the Global Fund 2006-2007 and 2008-2010. Geneva 2006.

Action to confront HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria (2007-2011), adopted in 2005 (<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/r12537.htm>), and is based on the promotion and implementation of comprehensive and evidence-based responses to address the prevention, treatment and care needs of developing countries populations.

During the last years, the EU has released multiple political declarations on its will to confront the AIDS pandemic. More recently, the EC has committed to allocate at least €100 million per year to the Global Fund to confront HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria until 2010. Yet, there is a continuing gap between agreements, commitments and visible action by the EU institutions and Member States. **Concrete implementation and planned and allocated sustainable resources are still unclear.** The allocations to human and social development in the EDF are unacceptably low in comparison to other areas. New aid modalities such as general budget support have not yet proven to be the best way to ensure resources reach the needs of the poorest populations, in particular the needs of those groups most affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic

3. Our recommendations

The members of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly can play a determinant role in ensuring that HIV/AIDS promises and commitments are followed by real actions from the EU and the ACP governments, showing greater leadership, raising awareness, promoting participation by all stakeholders and working in collaboration with civil society.

In particular, we ask the members of the JPA to raise the following recommendations in the exercise of the competences attributed to them by the Cotonou agreement (e.g. resolutions, parliamentary questions, workshops, etc.):

- ***The 2005 EU Policy framework and Programme for Action to confront HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria in External Action should be resourced and implemented without delay.***
- The EU must support ACP countries in setting national targets to achieve Universal Access and the ACP countries must include civil society in the determination and discussion of those national targets.
- ***The EU must strengthen political dialogue with ACP countries to promote the respect, protection, and fulfillment of human rights, with particular attention to ending violence against women and girls, and address stigma and discrimination .***
- ***EU policies on trade and pharmaceuticals must promote and not undermine the use of TRIPS flexibilities, in the line of the Doha Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health. Allowing generic production is the most efficient and sustainable way to ensure access to affordable medicines to those who need them most.***
- ***EU cooperation with ACP must stop dismissing the relevance of investing in health and education services. Funding to social sectors from both financial sources must be prioritised and ring-fenced where appropriate. The EC and especially the EU member states must evaluate current aid modalities, to ensure that resources actually reach those who need them most.***
- ***The EU and ACP countries must establish the necessary mechanisms to effectively engage people living with HIV and AIDS, key populations and women's groups in their political dialogue and country programming. The EU should fund and implement programmes that strengthen and encourage participatory approaches within communities.***

For further information Tel. +32 472 346 311