

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

# Working Documents

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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

tabled by

Mrs BONINO, Mr COPPIETERS, Mr PANNELLA, Mr CAPANNA,  
Mrs CASTELLINA, Mr GENDEBIEN, Mr BLANEY, Mr CECOVINI,  
Mrs SPAAK, Mr de GOEDE and Mrs DEKKER

with request for urgent debate

pursuant to Rule 14 of the Rules of Procedure

on world hunger



## The European Parliament

### Considering

- that unless adequate counter-measures are taken in 1979, which has been proclaimed by the United Nations as the Year of the Child, 17 million children under the age of 5 will die of hunger,
- that we cannot resign ourselves to this daily mass murder without calling into question our own claim to be civilized human beings,
- that this message of death should simply not be accepted and that we should try to snatch as many children as possible from a fate that is all too readily accepted,
- that every human life snatched from a death that is a blot on the conscience of each one of us pushes outward the limits of human dignity by a certain span and marks a victory for life over that faceless mass death which some terrible mental torpor induces us to dismiss as unimportant,
- that this slaughter of children by hunger and malnutrition is only one aspect, albeit the most serious one, of the daily violence perpetrated against the developing world,
- that this mass murder is seeping into the subconscious mind of our age and will inevitably end up by corrupting the very rules governing human and civil coexistence and the behavioural patterns of our society, destroying that society's sensitivity to daily mass violence,
- that the attempts of international organizations and numerous unofficial and non-governmental charitable bodies to counter hunger and death have so far been inadequate and have failed even to make any headway towards reversing the present trend and that they will continue to be inadequate and powerless unless supported by coordinated and effective action on the part of national governments and by a vast mobilization of public opinion, which has been lulled into regarding this anonymous mass murder as something morally unimputable and therefore irrelevant,
- that the white and civilized citizens of the industrialized countries must realize that this holocaust is not the result of an inescapable Biblical curse but stems from an unequal distribution of wealth and development, that there is a precise correlation between income and mortality, particularly infant mortality, and that the terms of this equation can be corrected,
- that the prior objective of the foreign policy of the Nine must be to introduce both qualitative and quantitative change into their relations with the developing countries,

- that we must first of all augment the financial resources allocated for public aid to development, as these resources are today grossly inadequate and are spent in a spirit that seems to be . . . . . is largely prompted by a desire to exploit,
- that in response to the United Nations Resolution (No. 2626) inviting the industrialized countries to set aside 1% of their gross national product for development aid, of which 0.7% should take the form of public development aid, the resources allocated by the Member States of the European Community in 1978 for this purpose have been grossly inadequate, so much so that only the Netherlands surpassed the target indicated by the United Nations, Denmark and France came close to it and all the others, including the German Federal Republic and the United Kingdom, were far below it,

pointing out

- that for years now, since the 1973 energy crisis at least, we have been increasingly insisting on the need to put relations between the industrialized and the developing countries on a footing of equal cooperation rather than aid, thus establishing a new international economic order based on a more rational international division of labour and production and on a more equitable distribution of the available resources,
- that events on the world economic scene from 1973 to the present day have only served to reaffirm this need and to make it increasingly evident that there is an economic interdependence between the rich and the poorer countries, each one of which must make its own contribution to overcoming the economic crisis and expanding the world's economy, the industrialized countries with their financial, industrial and technological resources and the countries of the Third World with their raw materials, their large reserves of manpower and their demand for goods and services,
- that unfortunately the industrialized countries, notwithstanding their vague declarations of goodwill and good intentions, have dug themselves in in a last-ditch defence of the old order and the structures that at present govern the operation of international financial and commercial markets in the conviction that essentially the best way for them to overcome the crisis is to restore the stronger economies, even at the cost of demanding greater sacrifices from the weaker economies, which would then supposedly enjoy the benefits of this at a later stage,
- that these erroneous ideas are reflected in the approach of the Western countries to the UNCTAD negotiations on a common fund to stabilize prices for raw materials, the accumulation of debts, the transfer of technologies, access to the international capital markets, reform of the international monetary system, etc.,

- that as a result of this approach on the part of the Western countries the Manila Conference did not produce the results that were needed and might well have been expected, particularly in regard to:
  - (a) the concept of the interdependence of economic problems and systems,
  - (b) the inauguration at international level of a policy for restructuring productive activity,
  - (c) the promotion of international trade by eliminating protectionism and adopting measures designed to facilitate access for the Third World's industrial production to Western markets,
  - (d) an increase in financial aid to the more backward countries so as to enable them to bridge as speedily as possible the gap between them and the other developing countries,
- that this approach helped to create a climate of mistrust which deepened the conviction, unfortunately not altogether without foundation, of the developing countries that the industrialized countries are only interested in perpetuating under a new guise the old colonial philosophy based on the idea of exploitation,
- that this feeling is confirmed by the fact that the gap between industrialized and developing countries has not become any smaller in recent years but that on the contrary the rich have become richer and the poor poorer,
- that any increases in the gross national product of the developing countries have been almost entirely wiped out by population increases,
- that the developing countries' debts are now approaching an all-time record figure of 200,000 million dollars, thus seriously jeopardizing any prospects for the expansion of their production,
- that certain forms of industrialization and development imported from the outside world without any attempt at critical evaluation have proved to be absolutely opposed to the real needs of the developing countries with their own distinctive cultural traditions and social structures; the consequences for the development and harmonious growth of these societies have been disastrous,
- that more than 800 million people in the various countries of the Third World live in such backward conditions that they cannot even succeed in satisfying basic human needs: food, housing, health, education,
- that this situation is intolerable not only from the moral but also from the political and economic point of view, in view of the fact that there is no conceivable way of tackling the clear structural crisis affecting the Western world without also involving the countries of the Third World and also that it seems impossible to forge a stable and lasting peace in a world that will shortly contain 7,000 million people, of whom

- only one-quarter can enjoy relative prosperity or wealth, while the other three-quarters are condemned to underdevelopment and hunger,
- that in the light of this tragic situation the resources at present being poured into military uses are enormous and come to about one million dollars per minute,
  - that world expenditure on military purposes in 1976 was about twice that spent on health and even more than was spent on education, while 1,500 million people lack proper medical care, 250 million children do not get any schooling and 800 million people are completely illiterate,
  - that world military expenditures taken as a whole are equal to roughly two-thirds of the gross national product of all Third World countries, more than that of Latin America and twice that of the African countries, as well as being more than 20 times the amount of aid given by the industrialized countries to the Third World (public development aid),
  - that this enormous waste of economic resources is accompanied by a no less serious waste of talent and intelligence, which are even more valuable and important resources, particularly in the field of development,
  - that half of the world's physicists and engineers engaged in research and development are working full-time on military research and development,
  - that if these scientists were to expend their energies for peaceful rather than military purposes they would bring about an enormous improvement in the living conditions of all mankind and help to realize at the highest level that new world economic order of which we all speak and for which nobody works,
1. Considers that dialogue and cooperation with the developing countries is of such urgency and prior importance that it should be ranked ahead even of dialogue between East and West,
  2. Feels that within the framework of political cooperation the Nine should, as far as possible, attempt to take a common line in all the international fora in which dialogue is pursued, beginning with UNCTAD, and that they should be the driving force behind this dialogue rather than a brake upon it, as has, in fact, been the case up to now with a few laudable exceptions, the most important one being the open and farsighted position adopted by the Government of the Netherlands,
  3. Invites the governments of the Nine to take practical and substantial action as a matter of urgency to put an end to the frightful massacre of human beings, and in particular of children, brought about every year by hunger, misery and underdevelopment,

4. Requests the governments of the Member States:
  - to make a formal commitment to reach as from next year the figure for public development aid indicated in the United Nations Resolution No. 2626, namely, 0.7% of their gross national product;
  - to allocate for this year only the difference between their present contribution in the form of public development aid and the figure envisaged in the United Nations' resolution, thus taking extraordinary action to snatch from the jaws of death the greatest possible number of children amongst those who are already statistically doomed to die;
5. Requests the Commission to take urgently all the measures permitted it by the Treaty, so as to reduce as much as possible the dimensions of the ghastly tragedy of millions of human beings dying of hunger,
6. Requests the Commission and the Council to make a radical change in their approach to the problem of cooperation in development and to be guided by the general principles outlined in this resolution, both in their relations with the ACP countries and in the more general question of their relations with ~~the non-associated~~ developing countries and bilateral relations with regional communities or individual countries,
7. Stresses the urgent nature of measures of this kind if the International Year of the Child, so solemnly proclaimed by the United Nations, is not to be reduced, as only too often happens, to a tragic farce and to pass into history as the Year of the Dead Child.

REASONS SUPPORTING REQUEST FOR URGENT DEBATE

The request is prompted by the conclusions of the recent World Food Conference and by new information indicating that the death rate from hunger and malnutrition in the world is likely to increase still further and to exceed the present figure of 50 million deaths each year.