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NOTE

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Subject :	Global Climate Change Alliance between the European Union and poor developing countries most vulnerable to climate change - Council Conclusions

At its meeting on 20 November 2007, the General Affairs and External Relations Council, in its formation of Development Ministers, adopted the Conclusions set out in the Annex to this note.

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS
ON A GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION
AND POOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES MOST VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE
CHANGE

Introduction

1. Climate Change is becoming a major threat to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and may have a considerable impact on international security issues. The Council of the European Union is firmly convinced that without urgent action, poor developing countries most vulnerable to climate change will increasingly be affected. The Council encourages all parties to actively and constructively participate in an urgent and global response to the challenge of climate change, on the basis of the principle of common but differentiated responsibility and respective capabilities.
2. In this context, the Council welcomes the Declaration by the Heads of State and Government of the African Union on Climate Change and Development in Africa, adopted in Addis Ababa on 29th January 2007.
3. The Council underlines that adaptation to climate change is a priority for vulnerable developing countries, a majority of LDCs being now in the process of finalising their National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs). It reiterates its statement in The European Consensus on Development concerning the implementation of the EU Action Plan on Climate Change, adopted on the 24th November 2004, notably with respect to supporting Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) in their adaptation efforts.

4. Referring to its Conclusions of 30 October 2007, the Council emphasises the importance of launching, at the UN Climate Change Conference in Bali, in December 2007, a comprehensive negotiation process which should result in an effective and ambitious global post-2012 agreement in 2009. Such agreement should incorporate development relevant building blocs, like enhanced efforts to address adaptation, increased cooperation on climate friendly technology and extension of carbon market. The agreement should outline the necessity of including innovative and enhanced flexible mechanisms, of reducing emissions from deforestation and of sustainable management of forests.

A Global Climate Change Alliance

5. The Council welcomes the Commission's Communication to establish a Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) between the European Union and poor developing countries most vulnerable to climate change, in particular the LDCs and SIDS, which sets a comprehensive political framework. The Council emphasizes the importance of this initiative stressing its timeliness in view of the forthcoming negotiations.
6. The Council endorses the GCCA's objective of helping to ensure that poor developing countries most vulnerable to climate change increase their capacities to adapt to the negative effects of climate change and pursue sustainable development strategies in support of the achievement of MDGs; and where it benefits their poverty reduction objectives, helping such countries to participate in the global climate change mitigation effort.
7. The Council stresses that the GCCA is strictly complementary to and supportive of other ongoing frameworks and processes, in particular within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol, notably adaptation to climate change provided by the Nairobi Work Programme and the Nairobi Framework as well as other work streams.

8. This initiative should be seen in the wider context of Policy Coherence for Development (PCD), which aims at enhancing synergies between development and other policies, within the framework of measures to improve the coherence, efficiency and visibility of the Union's external policies.

Dialogue, exchange and complementarity

9. The Council further endorses that the GCCA will provide for a platform for dialogue, exchange and complementarity, in the EU and with partner countries, on practical approaches to achieving the integration of climate change into national development strategies, plans and budgets; the results of this dialogue and exchange will feed into the development of a post-2012 climate agreement, supporting the convergence of visions between Europe and vulnerable developing countries.
10. The Council recognises that establishing a forum for the exchange of views and experiences with partner countries, in particular LDCs and SIDS outside the context of international negotiations, will help to advance the implementation of the UNFCCC and related agreements. It will also support south-south dialogue and exchange.

Effective Cooperation

11. Dialogue and exchange under the GCCA will be underpinned by technical and financial support for adaptation and mitigation measures, while bearing in mind the need to make optimal use of existing International and European mechanisms and instruments. In this context, the Council recognises the importance of the five priority areas proposed in the Commission Communication: adaptation to climate change, reducing emissions from deforestation, enhancing participation in the Clean Development Mechanism, promoting disaster risk reduction and integrating climate change into poverty reduction efforts. These priority areas will have to be further discussed and refined in the GCCA dialogue and according to partner countries national priorities.

12. This dialogue should be conducted in close cooperation with other actors involved such as bilateral agencies, the European Investment Bank (EIB), and international actors interested in this cooperation, including non-state actors.
13. The Council stresses the importance of screening EC-funded development activities, including at sector or budget support level, for potential environmental impacts, undertaking Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) and systematically addressing climate change considerations, regarding both mitigation and adaptation, in EU development cooperation.

Mobilising Resources

14. The Council recognises that, in order to meet the twofold challenge of adaptation and mitigation, the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable countries, particularly LDCs and SIDS, are such that significant resources must be mobilised as soon as possible, including through an efficient use of existing funds. Therefore the Council welcomes the initial allocation of additional funding, of €50 million by the Commission for the start-up of the initiative, which adds to the budget of the Environment and Natural Resources Thematic Programme (ENRTP), as well as the possible use of other geographic and thematic financial instruments to this end.
15. In this context and without prejudice to support to other initiatives, the Council notes the Commission's invitation to the EU Member States to support the GCCA, including by dedicating part of their agreed commitments to increase Official Development Assistance (ODA) over the coming years in support of the initiative, and invites the Commission to propose to Member States, in the first half of 2008, a detailed plan for the implementation of this initiative.. The Council further invites the Commission to consider innovative means of financing.

16. Support to GCCA will be complementary to existing global funds under the United Nations (the Global Environment Facility, the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund,); and the EU coordinated action in the framework of GCCA will be in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Code of Conduct on Division of Labour.

Follow up

17. The Council is encouraged by the initial positive reactions to the GCCA at the European Development Days in Lisbon and reaffirms the need for continued wide consultation involving all relevant stakeholders, in particular poor and vulnerable countries. The upcoming Bali Conference and the Lisbon EU-Africa Summit in December, should be used to this end.
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