

Intervention by Baroness Patricia Scotland, alternate representative of the UK Government, at the Convention plenary devoted to civil society on 24/25 June 2002.

Development

It is right that we should hear a strong voice from civil society on development issues. The EU and its member states combined are a major force in the fight against global poverty, providing the bulk of global development assistance. Our efforts will play a large part in determining whether the key Millennium Development Goals set at the UN Millennium Assembly are met. Goals such as halving by 2015 the proportion of people living on incomes of under a dollar a day; reducing maternal mortality rates by 75%, providing primary education for all children.

To do this we need an efficient, poverty-focussed programme. Then, combined with a pro-development trade policy and access to the world's largest single market, our development programmes could galvanise an enlarged EU behind huge resources and progressive policies. That is certainly the UK's ambition: to make a difference.

We must build on the clear EC Development Policy agreed in 2000, and the Commission's own management reforms. EC aid should add value to Member States' efforts, delivered strategically and efficiently.

We must make good our Treaty-commitment to ensure all our policies – including choices at the mid-term CAP review – are consistent with our development goals. This will help us reduce absolute poverty in developing countries.

Europe's people are concerned about the poor of the world. Let's show that our governments and institutions can meet their aspirations.