

Leading European NGOs call on EU to agree binding aid targets to reach MDGs

Dramatic drop in EU aid for health and education in Sub-Sahara Africa

BRUSSELS – Alliance2015, a coalition of some of Europe’s most authoritative development NGOs urged the European Commission (EC) at a hearing in the European Parliament to show bold and responsible leadership in the preparations towards the UN Summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Alliance2015’s report *2015-Watch: The EU’s Contribution to the Millennium Development Goals. Keeping the Goals Alive*, launched at the hearing, expressed concern about alarmingly low EU aid levels for food, health and education, especially to Sub-Sahara Africa. EC aid increased from €7.5 billion in 2005 to €12 billion in 2009, but the percentage of allocations to food decreased from 4% of total funding in 2005 to 1.5% in 2008, basic health from 4.7% (2005) to 1.3% (2008) and basic education from 2.7% (2005) to 1.1% (2008).

“These figures are disheartening and require explanation,” said MEP Gay Mitchell, who hosted the hearing. “To reach the MDGs we decided that 20% of aid should be for basic health and education and we reached that target for Asia and Latin America in 2009. In Sub-Saharan Africa especially we need to achieve these targets yet they appear to have plummeted to an all time low of 1.5% for basic health and education combined. I will be asking the Parliament’s Development Committee to seek an explanation for this situation.”

The report calculates that if all donors shared the responsibility for education and health equally, the EC would have to increase funding from €605 million (latest figures) to €971 million annually for education and from €460 million (latest figures) to €1.5 billion for health to help close the financing gaps.

“No donor wants to move first, meanwhile the health and education financing gap is hurting the poor”, said Vagn Berthelsen, President of Alliance2015. “We urge the European Union to agree a legally binding target ensuring that 20% of all aid is allocated to basic health and education, and to strongly advocate for an international target at the UN MDG Summit. This way industrialised and developing countries will finally take joint responsibility.”

“The EU as the largest donor must lead by example”, comments Birgit Dederichs-Bains from the German aid organisation Welthungerhilfe. “The Lancet, the European Court of Auditors and even the IMF have published research showing that capacity in health and education is a key problem which aid through General Budget Support does not resolve. This capacity problem needs to be targeted directly. It is also very clear that political space is needed for countercyclical measures to protect the poor and to ensure they have access to basic social services. As the major aid donor the EU should give a strong lead on this in September in New York.”



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Note to the editor:

The report, 2015-Watch: *The EU's Contribution to the Millennium Development Goals. Keeping the Goals Alive*, published by Alliance2015 is available at:

<http://www.alliance2015.org/index.php?id=2015-watch>

Alliance2015 is a strategic partnership of seven European development NGOs working together to play their part in reaching the Millennium Development Goals. Alliance2015 cooperates at the programme level in developing countries and at the policy level in Europe. For the past seven years, a key focus of that policy work has been Europe's development policies. Members are (list of members with links):

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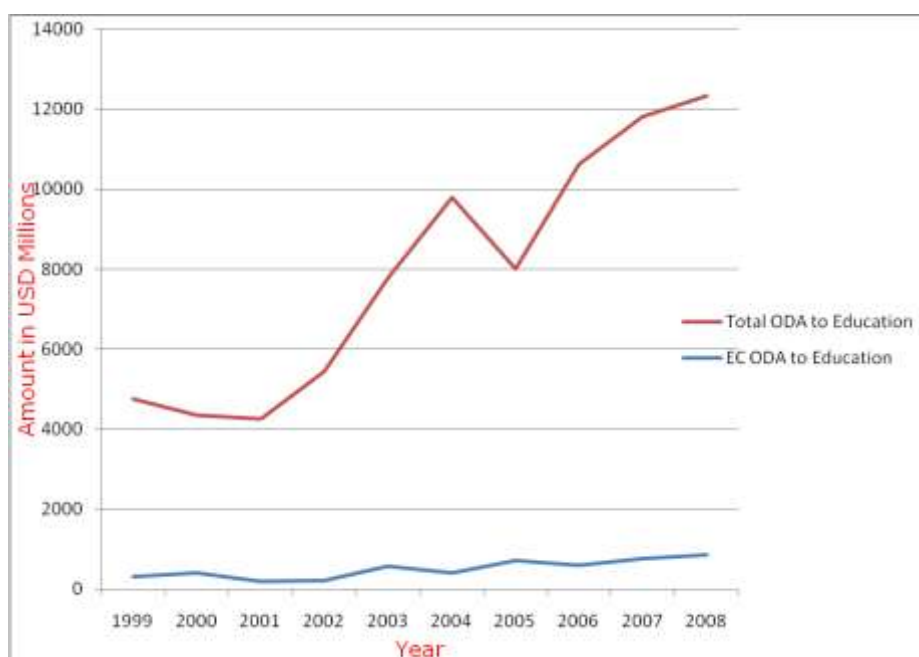
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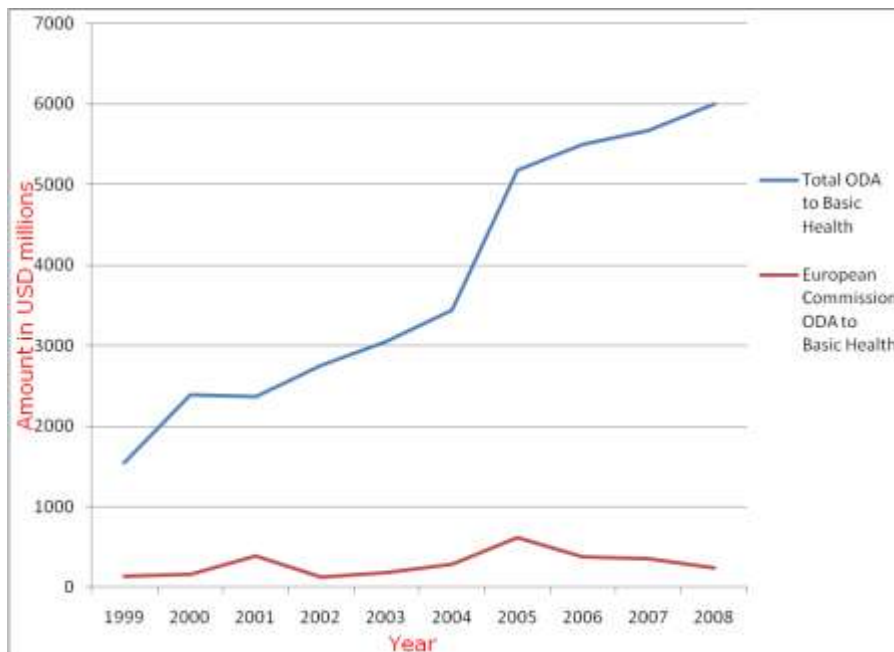
Total ODA versus EC ODA to education and health

(The graphs can be downloaded at <http://www.alliance2015.org/index.php?id=2015-watch>)



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