



A LOOK BACK AT THE BELGIAN EU PRESIDENCY

BY THE BELGIAN PLATFORM OF CONCORD

CNCD **11.11.11**
UN COMBAT DE PLEINS DROITS

11.11.11
VECHT MEE TEGEN ONRECHT

BELGISCH PLATFORM
PLATE-FORME BELGE
CONCORD
11.11.11 CNCD-11.11.11
COPROGRAM ACODEV

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	
Six months to make progress towards coherent European policies	3
INTRODUCTION	
The Belgian NGOs and the European Presidency	4-6
THE BELGIAN PRESIDENCY AT A GLANCE	
A Presidency praised by all? Yes but...	7-8
FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT	
Belgium defends a tax on financial transactions to finance development	9-11
FOOD SOVEREIGNTY	
Pretending to want while preventing to do	12-14
CLIMATE	
The process is saved... but not our climate	15-17
DECENT WORK	
Or the difficulty to put words into practise	18-20
ACTIVITIES	
The Belgian NGOs mobilise around the Millennium Development Goals	21-23

Contributed to this publication Nicolas Van Nuffel, Marc Maes, Rudy De Meyer, Véronique Rigot, Jean-Pierre De Leener, Stéphane Desgain, Saartje Boutsen, Gert Vandermosten, Gérard Karlshausen, Alexandra Breedevelt, Caroline de Vrièse, Tania Farkh, Jasse Cnudde
Lay-out Dominique Hambye / **Printing** Druk in de Weer. Printed with vegetable-based ink on recycled and chlorine free paper / **Photos of Covers** Michel Dubois/CNCD-11.11.11, Alexandreeron.be, Oxfam International, Tineke D'haese/Oxfam, poffet.net, 11.11.11, OIT
Responsible Editor Arnaud Zacharie, quai du commerce 9, 1000 Brussel



EDITORIAL

SIX MONTHS TO MAKE PROGRESS TOWARDS COHERENT EUROPEAN POLICIES

Ten years after the adoption of the Millennium Declaration for development, in September 2010 the United Nations met to assess the progress towards the commitments made. Two years after the financial crisis, and in the face of an emerging new food crisis, our leaders had to admit that the results were poor. Still development aid has increased, debt relief measures have been taken, and commitments have been made to improve aid efficiency. But that is not where the problem lies.

The main reason why the Millennium Development Goals have not been met is that the international community has failed to make the necessary reforms to deal with multiple crises: the financial crisis, the food crisis, but also a deep social crisis and the climate change crisis. As a consequence scant progress has been made in the fight against poverty.

The European Union (UE) lacks a true common project and bears a heavy responsibility for this multiple crisis. As the world's biggest donor, the EU has failed to adapt existing policies to more effectively fight against poverty and promote sustainable development, even if these objectives are explicitly stated in the Lisbon Treaty. This is why Belgian NGOs chose the Belgian Presidency of the EU as a key moment for questioning these policies. In doing so, the NGOs chose not to confine themselves to development aid, but rather to explore the coherence of wider European policies with stated development objectives.

For six months, the number of awareness raising activities, capacity building activities, debates and advocacy activities increased. These activities supported the search for sustainable solutions to issues such as the regulation of international financial markets, the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, the fight against climate change or the struggle for decent work.

The Presidency was seen as not only providing six months to move the discussions forward, to obtain some concrete political progress, but also as a mean of highlighting longer term struggles for just policies at the Belgian and European levels. A righteous struggle.



THE BELGIAN NGOS AND THE EUROPEAN PRESIDENCY

Holding the rotating Presidency of the European Council implies being in the spotlight and being at the front of the European stage for six months. It is an opportunity for a Member State to draw the general public's attention to European policies and to put some priorities on the European agenda. Civil society has aspirations as well and seizes this opportunity to bring them forward.

INTRODUCTION

During the Presidency, the Belgian organisations of the North-South solidarity movement operated through the Belgian platform of CONCORD, the European Confederation of Development and Humanitarian NGOs. CONCORD is made up of 25 national platforms and 18 international networks and represents over 1600 NGOs from all over Europe.

The Belgian Platform of CONCORD is composed of two NGO “federations” and two NGO umbrella organisations. Acodev and Coprogram are the two federations that officially represent their members in the discussions with the public authorities on the legal status of NGOs and subsidy rules. Alongside these federations, two umbrella organisations unite the North – South solidarity organisations: 11.11.11, for the Flemish part of the country, CNCD-11.11.11 for the French speaking part. Their remit is to organise awareness raising activities towards the general public, advocacy work towards policy makers and fund-raising.

So during the Belgian Presidency, the programme of the Belgian platform was of course carried out by the two umbrella organisations. The priorities of the programme were closely linked to current affairs, the priorities and the areas of expertise of their members, and the CONCORD agenda. The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals was the common thread. But in a broader sense, both umbrella organisations seized the moment to echo the issues they have been working on for several years at the European level. Namely the work on financing for development, food sovereignty, decent work and the fight against climate change.

Therefore, a joint Memorandum with eight major demands which lie at the heart of the work of NGOs, was compiled:

FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT

1. More aid (0.7% of GNP) and more efficient aid
2. A financial transactions tax and regulation of financial markets

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

3. More attention for sustainable family farming in European development policy
4. Trade and agricultural policies in favour of sustainable agriculture

CLIMATE

5. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2020
6. €35 billion a year for a United Nations climate fund

DECENT WORK

7. Trade and investment agreements that favour decent work
8. Social traceability of products sold in Europe

Obviously these recommendations can not all be realised in six months time. However the Belgian EU Presidency offered the opportunity to draw the attention of the general public and policy makers to these issues; acquire new knowledge and deepen understanding; discuss the issues mentioned and achieve some concrete steps forward.

Advancing European policies to make them coherent with international commitments is a long-term project. The six-month Belgian Presidency of the EU was an excellent sounding board for work at the European level, but it must be continued in the years to come, so that the steps forward presented here can gradually lead to more lasting results.



THE BELGIAN PRESIDENCY AT A GLANCE

A PRESIDENCY PRAISED BY ALL? YES BUT...

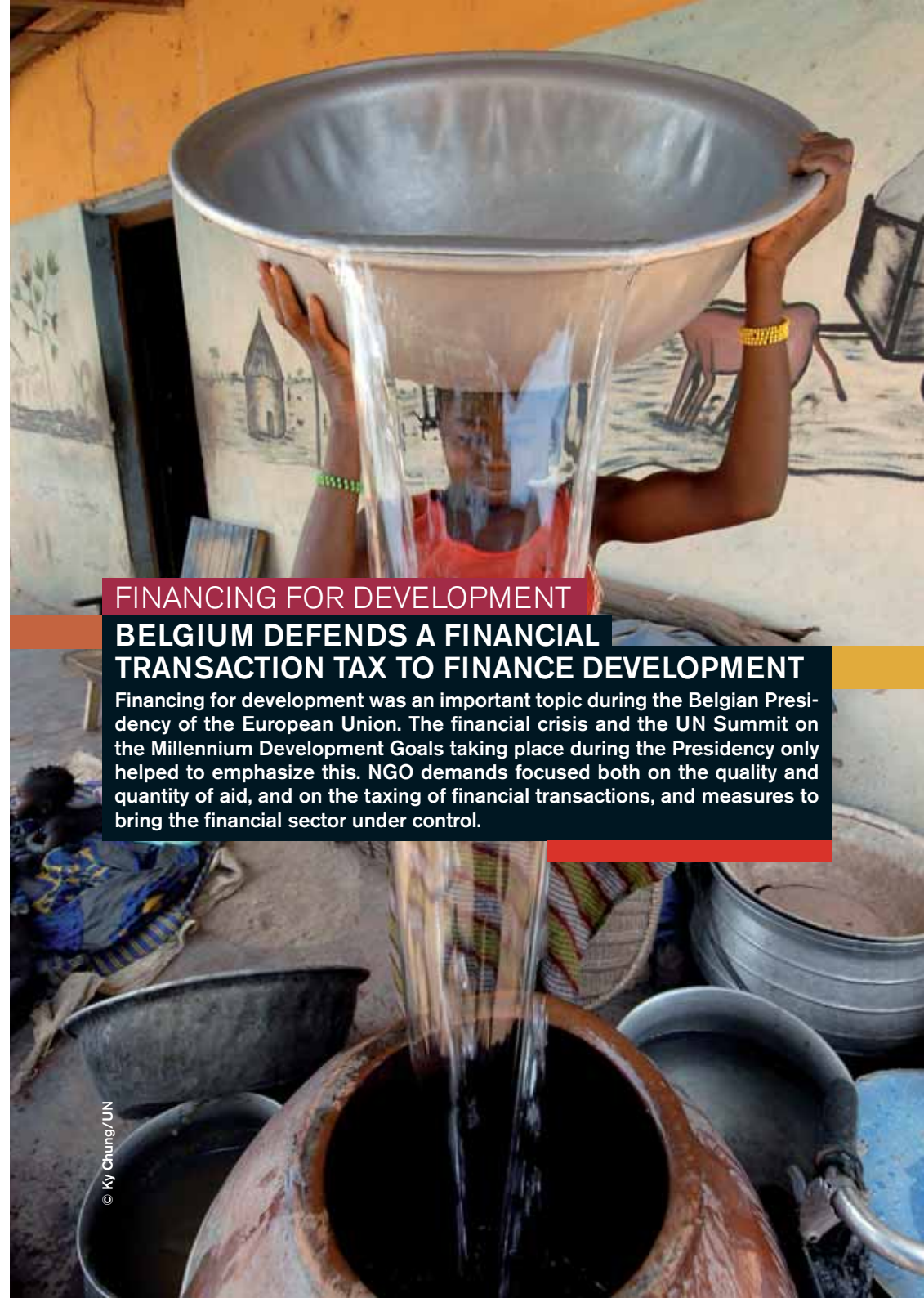
When assessing the six-month Belgian Presidency of the European Union, all observers praised the way our country had played its role with verve. By resolutely adopting a new vision of the Presidency, Belgium positioned itself as the technical coordinator of the EU Council of Ministers. However this 'low profile' stance of Belgium also permitted the emergence of a High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs, who seems to largely disregard issues related to developing countries...

The Lisbon Treaty has profoundly modified the division of labour within the EU. The rotating Presidency is now supposed to centre its work on the technical coordination of issues that are already on the agenda. Spain had taken up the presidency role “in a traditional way” during the first semester of 2010, partly because of the delay in setting up the new institutional order, and also because of the Spanish government’s desire for visibility. Belgium, a founding member of what has become the EU, was clearly committed to a new approach by putting itself at the service of the new institutional actors, in particular the home-grown President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Catherine Ashton.

This policy was most apparent with regard to foreign policy. The exception to this was the 8th Asia- Europe Summit (ASEM), organised in the beginning of October in Brussels, which Belgium wanted to turn into a flagship event of its presidency. At first sight, the Belgian low profile stance only seems to have an internal dimension, related to the functioning of the European institutions. But it could have long-term consequences for EU policy towards developing countries. Catherine Ashton is in fact gradually establishing herself as the cornerstone of the Union’s foreign policy, including development policy. She chairs the External Relations Council, and has insisted that it should include the Ministers for Development. This carries the risk that development policy will gradually be subordinated to European foreign policy interests. This in despite the EU commitments to more policy coherence for development.

Nevertheless, under the Belgian Presidency there has been progress on several issues that directly or indirectly concern the countries of the South. The economic and financial governance of the Union has been reinforced, which should promote more effective action against the harmful effects of speculation both inside and outside of Europe. The debate on the introduction of a financial transaction tax has started, and, even though there is no progress so far, Belgium defended it both at the Council of Finance Ministers and at the UN Summit on the Millennium Development Goals in New York in September.

Another important result of the Belgian Presidency regarding developing countries was obtained in Cancun. There, the Belgian delegation contributed to assuring Europe’s leading role in the international climate negotiations. A considerable result, taking into account that the amount promised to the South to fight climate change is close to today’s overall amount for development aid!



FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT

BELGIUM DEFENDS A FINANCIAL TRANSACTION TAX TO FINANCE DEVELOPMENT

Financing for development was an important topic during the Belgian Presidency of the European Union. The financial crisis and the UN Summit on the Millennium Development Goals taking place during the Presidency only helped to emphasize this. NGO demands focused both on the quality and quantity of aid, and on the taxing of financial transactions, and measures to bring the financial sector under control.

“THIS IDEA WAS CONSIDERED ABSURD JUST A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO BUT HAS RALLIED SUCH AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF SUPPORT SINCE THE FINANCIAL CRISIS, TO THE EXTENT THAT IT HAS BECOME A PRIORITY OF THE BELGIAN PRESIDENCY.”

2010 was a pivotal year for Belgium: it vowed to spend 0.7% of its GNI on development aid by 2010. As such, the Belgian NGOs have put a lot of pressure on the Belgian government to reach this target, even if it were only to prompt other European countries to do the same. To date, Belgium spends about 0.65% of GNI on development aid, debt relief measures included. Even if Belgium doesn't entirely reach its target, the Belgians did push the debate on financial resources during the EU negotiations and in the discussions on the mandate of the UN Summit for MDGs.

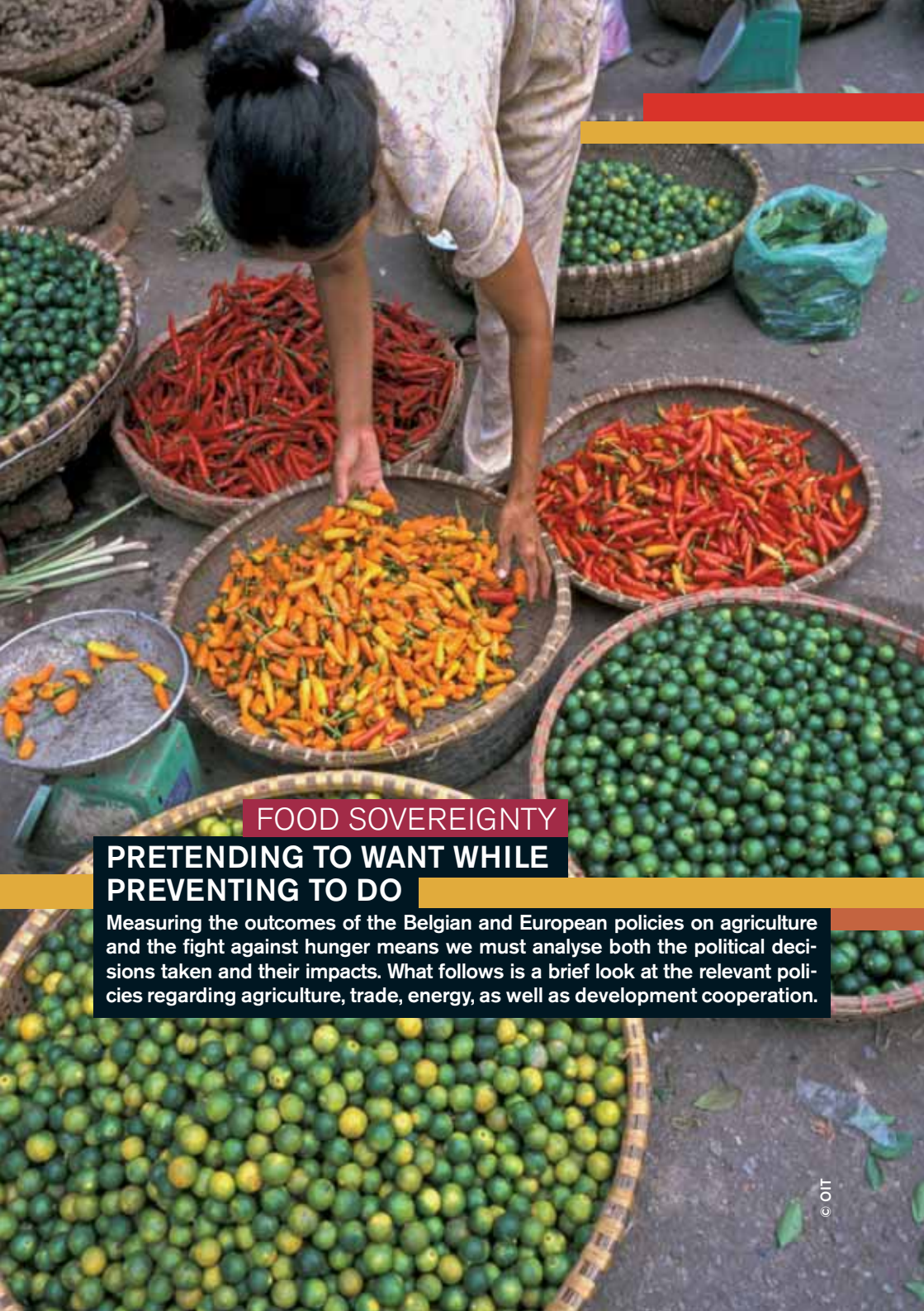
There has actually been little discussion on the quality of aid, except for the preparation of the Aid Efficiency Conference that will take place in South Korea at the end of 2011. Work in preparation for the Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC) also took off. The Belgian delegation announced at the UN Summit in New York that it would invest €400,000 in the preparation of the LDC Conference.

Actually, the debate on the quality of development aid surfaced most when considering the shift in decision-making power from the rotating Presidency to the “European Minister for Foreign Affairs”, Catherine Ashton. The main question pending is whether this power shift won't diminish the involvement of Member States and divert their attention away from development objectives. Belgium has never opposed Mrs. Ashton, but it is important to note that it held the reins of the preparatory working groups of the Council of Ministers for development cooperation, until the final Council meeting on December 9.

Furthermore, as NGOs and social organisations have underlined for years, the debate on financing for development is not limited to aid. The taxation of financial transactions is a case in point: this idea was considered absurd just a couple of years ago but has rallied an enormous amount of support since the financial crisis, to the extent that it had become a priority of the Belgian Presidency. Both Prime Minister Leterme and Minister Michel actively defended the introduction of a tax on foreign exchange operations and on financial transactions, both within the European Union and at the United Nations summit. Even Finance Minister Reynders, formerly opposed to this idea, has come to defend it. Through CONCORD and other networks, NGOs have managed to keep the issue high on the EU agenda. Interventions in Council working groups, contributions to the public consultations carried out by the Spanish Presidency, the Belgian Presidency and the Commission, and at the roundtables organised in New York have all strengthened and broadened political support. But opposition, notably from the United States and the United Kingdom, remains strong.

The results on other initiatives to curb the financial sector (the fight against bank secrecy and tax havens) are much more disappointing. The Belgian EU Presidency did not take any initiatives. Both on the European and international level (G20) the interventions were too limited compared to the problems and risks incurred.

Before concluding, the excellent contacts with the Belgian civil servants to prepare the European conferences of the Presidency should be noted. Their willingness to listen was much appreciated.



FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

PRETENDING TO WANT WHILE PREVENTING TO DO

Measuring the outcomes of the Belgian and European policies on agriculture and the fight against hunger means we must analyse both the political decisions taken and their impacts. What follows is a brief look at the relevant policies regarding agriculture, trade, energy, as well as development cooperation.

The best way for a Member State to advance the debate at the EU level is by setting an example. In terms of development cooperation policies, Belgium committed itself to tripling aid for agriculture to 15% in 2015, and has proposed similar commitments at the European level. The Coalition against Hunger unites the Belgian NGOs working on this issue and has been lobbying to improve development cooperation policy in favour of agriculture for more than five years. The coalition played a considerable role in the new 'agriculture and food security' strategy paper, which aims to focus the Belgian development cooperation programmes more on domestic agriculture, and on support for the private sector in particular.

It is impossible to speak about development cooperation policies and agriculture without mentioning the often contradictory policies regarding trade and energy. Free trade agreements signed by the European Union discriminate against local markets and threaten domestic agriculture. The Energy Directive increases imports of bio fuels from countries who suffer from hunger. Investment protection treaties only protect the interests of investors and consolidate land grabbing. There are plenty of examples of this with negative impacts on human rights. Therefore these agreements are inconsistent with development policies, particularly where these aim at supporting domestic agriculture for local markets. That is why the improvement of development policies cannot be separated from the promotion of greater coherence in European trade, energy and agriculture policies.

Concerning the EU agricultural policies, Belgian NGOs focused on the dairy sector and the preparation of the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) 2013-2020. The milk strike of 2009 demonstrated that the European policy of deregulation both threatens European agriculture and increases the threats to farmers in the South. The conclusions of the high level group established to review the functioning of dairy supply chains did not question the European Commission's intention to abandon quotas and to raise production. The high level group's sole decision to tackle the issue is to rely on inter-professional organisations. But these will be unable to withstand power plays or to guarantee a fair price. Both structural overproduction and export to international markets will continue, which will reinforce the destructive effects of unstable international markets that take away any future prospect for the sector.

Concerning the CAP, the Belgian Presidency did not move much as the initiative lays with the European Commission. The change of Commissioner coincided with a shift in political direction, with less deregulatory positions, a more democratic functioning and consultations on the future of the CAP in which the Belgian NGOs actively participated. But the EU is still stuck in a paradigm of assuring international competitiveness, in order to gain new markets or to strengthen the competitive advantage of the agro-industry. Yet this stance contradicts the social, environmental and international solidarity objectives that the EU has set for itself. As a result, the EU pretends to protect its farmers and pretends not to threaten farmers in other countries while in fact it holds on to policies that make achieving these objectives impossible!

CLIMATE

THE PROCESS IS SAVED... BUT NOT OUR CLIMATE

Within the current political and economic context, the environmental issues have somewhat taken a back seat. Still the Cancun summit in December, from which, according to our politicians, we were supposed to expect "nothing", concluded on a more positive note. Nevertheless, the results of the Belgian Presidency with regard to climate issues leave a rather mixed impression.



“IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT EVEN WHEN THE FINANCING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION MEASURES IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, IT DOESN'T EXCUSE THE INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRIES FROM THE OBLIGATION TO REDUCE THEIR EMISSIONS.”

The day after the disillusion of Copenhagen, the ambitions for the continuation of the negotiation process were drastically downgraded: troubling demands, notably binding commitments and objectives for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, were removed. Re-legitimizing the negotiation process of the United Nations was the main concern for Cancun and the Mexican Presidency chose a piecemeal strategy to achieve this.

Despite the declared success, the results are rather mixed. Negotiators and observers agreed: “The process has been saved... but not the climate”.

The European Union has certainly played a positive role on the international stage by restoring confidence between the parties. At the heart of the negotiations, the Belgian negotiators juggled with the technicality of the matter and with the European and international issues at stake. They played an intelligent and wise game that advanced the European ambitions and contributed to the progress of the negotiations.

At the political level however, Belgium was hardly visible. In addition to the absence of a dialogue between Minister Schauvliege (who led the ministerial delegation) and civil society, Belgium didn't take the place it could have had on the European stage. In Cancun, it was European Commissioner Hedegaard who spoke on behalf of the European Union. Her characteristic pragmatism helped to reach the objectives set out by the EU: to make financial commitments quickly, and to reach a package deal of decisions in Cancun.

But as mentioned before, sensitive topics were left out of the preparations for Cancun. As such, the expected decision for a 30% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions at the Environment Council was postponed until spring 2011. Weakened by internal tensions, the European Union thus showed a lack of ambition.

The commitments made in Cancun fall short of the scientific recommendations. They will certainly not suffice to limit the rise in temperature to 2°C. Furthermore, the financial

resources to help the most vulnerable adapt to the effects of climate change and opt for clean development are far from being guaranteed. It also seems a hard task to make new and additional resources available to countries in the South. The “Fast-Start” report on the European Union shows that the money promised, (and sometimes already spent), is mainly composed of recycled development financing. Moreover, it consists of loans rather than gifts, which increases the debt burden of developing countries.

These contradictions clearly highlight the challenges faced in creating a ‘Green Climate Fund’, as announced in Cancun. The financing should not only be new and additional, but also public and foreseeable, which is certainly not assured now. These conditional terms are necessary to assure that developing countries have the resources needed to fight climate change. The Green Fund thus clearly is a real step forward, but its implementation must be monitored closely.

Throughout a number of seminars the Belgian NGOs made it clear to the representatives of the North – South movement and to policy makers that the EU has a historical responsibility for global warming and that it should therefore finance climate adaptation and mitigation in the South. Climate financing should be additional to the resources made available to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. At the same time it was shown that the management of climate financing cannot be put into the hands of the World Bank, which continues to support fossil energy projects today, contrary to the reduction targets proposed by the the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPPC).

Finally, it must be remembered that even if the financing for climate change mitigation measures is very important for developing countries, it doesn't excuse the industrialised countries from the obligation to reduce their emissions.

DECENT WORK

OR THE DIFFICULTY TO PUT WORDS INTO PRACTICE

The decent work agenda was launched by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) at the end of the nineties, and has gradually established itself within the political discourse. The launch of the international campaign in 2007, and the implementation on the Belgian level have surely contributed to this. But the economical and commercial interests at play impede turning the rhetoric into actual decisions...

Between 2008 and 2010, the Belgian NGOs and their two umbrella organisations, partnered with the trade unions to campaign for decent work. With some tangible results achieved, this Decent Work Coalition decided to keep the theme high on the agenda during the Belgian Presidency of the European Union. Even when the awareness of the importance of decent work rises in Belgium, a lot of decisions that impact social rights in the South are taken at the European level. The policy for the regulation of large transnational companies, on the one hand, and trade policy on the other hand, are two clear examples of this.

When it comes to regulation of the private sector, progress has been achieved since the financial crisis of 2008, but mainly concerning financial regulation. Even when large companies have to report on social policies in some EU countries, the legislation concerning reporting on activities outside of the EU remains very weak. The legislation particularly fails to take a global approach and incorporate the entire chain of production. If multinationals generally offer fairly good conditions to their employees, the problem is with the subcontractors and the subsidiaries. On October 5 the Decent Work Coalition organised a seminar in the margin of the Asia-Europe Meeting, with testimonies from the textiles sector in Bangladesh, Indonesia and India. It demonstrated again the need for more transparency in global production chains.

The European Parliament has already asked the Commission to take an initiative within the next two years to develop a social label for this sector. This demand should lead to a real breakthrough regarding decent work. European consumers could in the future have information about the conditions in which clothing has been manufactured.

The Belgian Presidency of the EU took place at a key moment in the history of the Union, namely during the gradual implementation of the Lisbon Treaty. The Treaty transfers a set of competencies from the Member States to the European institutions, including the negotiation of investment protection agreements. This development could have major consequences for workers in the South. It is essential that the mandate given to the Commission to negotiate these future agreements guarantees respect for social rights and for social and environment policies in partner countries. The discussions on this mandate began in 2010 and continue today. The Decent Work Coalition has turned it into one of its priorities. The pressure exerted by the Decent Work Coalition has contributed to Belgium taking a position in favour of the inclusion of social and environmental clauses and corresponding control mechanisms in investment agreements. Belgium managed to include a reference in this regard in the European Council conclusions. However the debate is still ongoing and it is difficult to predict whether this position will be reflected in the initial negotiating mandates for specific countries.

It is clear that the matter of decent work, and in particular the integration of decent work into European policies, constitutes a long-term struggle. Adding decent work to the Presidency programme of the Belgian platform has anchored the European agenda at the heart of the activities of the Decent Work Coalition. Even if its campaign towards the general public ended on 7 October 2010 by handing over 167,269 signatures to the Belgian Parliament, Belgian NGOs and trade unions will continue to work together to turn decent work into one of the pillars of Belgian and European international policies.



THE BELGIAN NGOS MOBILISE AROUND THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Presidency programme of the Belgian platform of CONCORD was based on the three types of activities that are traditionally part of the Presidency programmes of the CONCORD platforms: awareness raising, capacity building and advocacy. However the Belgian platform decided to invest very heavily in public awareness raising. In a year where the EU Presidency coincided with the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the Millennium Declaration for Development, this seemed an obvious choice.

“AVEC LE SUD POUR NE PAS PERDRE LE NORD” / “SOUTH AND NORTH UNITE TO KEEP A GRIP ON THE WORLD”

For its campaign, CNCD-11.11.11, the French-speaking umbrella organisation, worked together with Pierre Kroll, a famous Belgian cartoonist. He created nine cartoons linked to different themes in international solidarity: food sovereignty, access to water, women, education etc. Based on these cartoons, a series of awareness raising tools for the MDGs were developed and displayed at several festivals by the volunteers of CNCD-11.11.11. Eight major cities, numerous schools and cultural centres in Brussels and Wallonia all actively took part in this campaign. The playful and original cartoons by Pierre Kroll helped make the campaign a big success, both with the general public (reaching over 35,000 people) and in the media.

Another highlight of the campaign was the “Millenium” concert on November 6 in Liège. Keziah Jones, a singer with Nigerian roots, and Arid, an independent Belgian rock act drew over 1,300 people to this evening in support of international solidarity, packed with music and culture.

ASIA – EUROPE PEOPLE’S FORUM

In addition CNCD-11.11.11 also invested much in the organisation of an Asian-European civil society forum in Brussels parallel to the 8th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). Asian et EU civil society groups mobilised their forces to underline the message that people should be at the heart of the relations between the two regions. The forum allowed the 400 participants to discuss development related questions such as trade, food sovereignty, climate, decent work, peace and security. Following a debate with Belgian Prime Minister Leterme, participants met with the European Commission and members of the European Parliament. www.aepf.info

“WACHT MEE!” / “WAIT WITH US!”

In Flanders, 11.11.11, the Dutch-speaking umbrella organisation, worked together with the broader NGO coalition “2015-De Tijd Loopt” (“2015-Time is running out”), which was established in 2000 to focus on the MDGs. The coalition wanted to address a broader and particularly young public. Therefore it chose to use new media: video clips, you-tube videos, online petitions and a real ‘video petition’.

11.11.11 developed 11 unique “video petition booths” that travelled the country and were set up at different locations and events: libraries, schools, evening information sessions, annual fairs, concerts, music festivals, etc. Staff members and volunteers of 11.11.11 and the coalition “2015 – Time is running out” handed out leaflets to the public and invited them support the video petition. In the video petition Booths participants could record messages in which they showed how much they were growing impatient and were waiting for results. More than ten 10,000 video messages were collected and displayed on the website “wachtmee.be”. Video clips on regional and national TV further supported the awareness raising campaign. At the same time, local committees invited the Flemish municipalities to adopt a motion on the MDGs which, two thirds (203) did.

15,000 PEOPLE TAKE PART IN “WACHTNACHT” / “A WAITING NIGHT”

The highlight of the awareness raising campaign was a mass rally in Ghent on September 11th. No less than 15,000 people showed up to support a call to the UN MDG Conference. On the site of the rally, participants were offered a mixed programme of information and entertainment: a debate, a film and video messages on the MDGs, information stands, an exhibition, live music (including Youssou N’Dour) etc.

In the early evening a video message was recorded with all participants present. This message was later taken to Belgian and European policy makers including Belgian Prime Minister Leterme, the Minister for Development Cooperation Michel, European Commissioner Piebalgs and European Council President Van Rompuy. The video was also shown on a side-event during the UN conference in New York. This campaign was mentioned over a hundred times in the press and the unprecedented media coverage further contributed to the dissemination of its message.

ADVOCACY WORK AND POLITICAL DIALOGUE

The awareness raising campaign intended to reach and inform the general public and rally public support around the issues highlighted. At the same time, the Belgian platform’s member organisations and working groups organised seminars and workshops to build capacities and to dialogue with their members and partners of the Belgian and European coalitions and with policy makers

On March 23, prior to the official launch of the Presidency programme, the working groups on food sovereignty together with farmers organisations organized a well-attended colloquium on the future of the European Common Agriculture Policy. Both the Flemish and Walloon Minister of agriculture attended. The event stressed the importance of sustainable, small-scale agriculture and food sovereignty.

The official launch of the campaign took place on June 3. About seventy representatives from member organisations gathered to discuss the issues at stake during the Belgian Presidency, the common demands and the programme of activities. CONCORD platform representatives from Spain and Hungary, who make up the EU Presidency “trio” with Belgium, were present as well. It allowed for a fruitful exchange of experiences, best practices and plans.

Other events of the programme include: a seminar on climate change on June 15; on decent work and transparency of the chain of production on October 5; on the European development policy for the least developed countries – in collaboration with the AidWatch coalition – on November 3; on climate change financing and the World Bank on November 17th; on the EU – Africa strategy on November 23.

The highlight of this part of the presidency programme was undoubtedly the international conference on October 14 which attracted 250 participants, including representatives of the CONCORD platforms, trade unions and farmers’ organisations from the South.

The conference reviewed the outcome of the UN summit on the Millennium Development Goals in the presence of European Commissioner Pielbags and Belgian Minister for Development Cooperation Michel.

The programmes and the reports on the activities mentioned are available on the presidency pages of the CONCORD, CNCD-11.11.11 and 11.11.11 websites:

www.concordeurope.org/presidency
www.cncd.be/présidenceUE
www.11.be/EUvoorzitterschap

MORE INFO



THE BELGIAN CONCORD PLATFORM

consists of the following organisations and federations:

CNCD-11.11.11

Quai du commerce, 9 – 1000 Bruxelles
www.cncd.be

11.11.11 – Koepel van de Vlaamse Noord-Zuidbeweging

Vlasfabriekstraat, 11 – 1060 Brussel
www.11.be

ACODEV

Bld Léopold II, 184 D – 1080 Bruxelles
www.acodev.be

COPROGRAM

Vlasfabriekstraat, 11 – 1060 Brussel
www.coprogram.be

CONCORD

Sq. Ambiorix, 10 – 1000 Brussels
www.concordeurope.org

