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Subject: Europe's social democrats urged to set up new 'Brandt Commission'

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News from the Party of European Socialists
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EUROPE'S SOCIAL DEMOCRATS URGED TO SET UP NEW BRANDT COMMISSION

The Party of European Socialists was today urged to establish a 'Brandt Commission Mark II' on combating poverty in the developing world.

Glenys Kinnock, co-president of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly of the EU and 77 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, said she was writing to PES President Robin Cook to seek action.

Issues to be addressed by a new Brandt Commission, she said, should include reform of international institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Policy areas she identified include trade, social policy and environment.

Mrs Kinnock was speaking at a Copenhagen conference on globalisation organised by the Party of European Socialists with its European Parliament group and hosted by Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, leader of the Danish Social Democrats.

The original Brandt Commission, led by the former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt, examined the problems of the global economy in the early 80s, calling for a new approach to development policy with emergency measures to end poverty in the world's least developed countries.

Said Mrs Kinnock: 'A new Brandt Commission would clarify the position of European social democrats on crucial issues. Getting agreements will be a formidable task -- but we cannot keep on having conferences where we go over and over the issues.'

A new Brandt Commission, said Mrs Kinnock, should have input from sister parties of the Socialist International in Africa, Asia and Latin America as well as non-governmental organisations.

But she added: 'It would be led and driven by us, with our own politicians and academics in Europe deciding what the agenda is. Then we can have our own benchmarks after drawing on a lot of information, knowledge and expertise from all over the world.'

Mrs Kinnock stressed the urgency of the matter in the light of WTO negotiations and talks between the ACP countries and the EU.

She added: 'Establishing a new Brandt Commission would send a very good signal to developing countries that we are concerned about their situation.'

She expressed the hope that next month's PES Council in Warsaw would take the matter forward.

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