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31st March 2015

Our Ref: AES/SugarCane

When replying please reply to: Edinburgh

Neven Mimica
Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development
European Commission

Dear Commissioner Mimica,

Re: Sugar cane market reform in developing countries

I would like to bring to your attention the issue of diversification in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) areas and Least Developed Countries (LDC).

As you are likely aware, the ending of sugar beet quotas as part of the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has led to questions being asked about the effect this has on sugar cane farmers in both ACP and LDC areas, who grow and export sugar to the West at the expense of the local market.

While I accept the benefit of some limited exports in raising foreign currency, I am less convinced of the positive effect it has for local farmers and the area's food production.

Commissioner, I believe it is absolutely vital that we direct greater EU support for diversification to ensure that farmers in the developing world can focus on providing healthy food for their own populations instead of producing luxury goods for us. This is a waste of prime agricultural land and keeps local farms in a state of effective serfdom.

Given the economic effect this is predicted to have on sugar cane farmers, I would be most grateful if you would update me on the Commission's current work on promoting diversification and any plans to extend this support.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours aye,

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