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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL AND THE
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development – An assessment

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1. PURPOSE OF THE COMMUNICATION

The concepts of “linking relief rehabilitation and development”, and of “developmental humanitarian assistance” originate in the 1980s when both academics and practitioners voiced concern about the so-called "grey zone" between humanitarian assistance, rehabilitation and development (LRRD). This grey zone arises because humanitarian assistance differs from development co-operation programmes. The former addresses the immediate needs of individuals affected by crises and is provided mainly through non governmental and international organisations. The latter aims to support autonomous development policies and strategies and is provided mainly under co-operation programmes agreed with the partner country. In practical terms, this can mean that aid given to implement agricultural reform in order to improve long-term food security may not immediately improve the situation of the populations most in need of help. The corresponding instruments and working methods differ in their time perspective, the implementing partners, the role of national authorities and the content of interventions.

The basic rationale for LRRD as developed by the Commission in 1996¹ is still valid. Disasters and crises are costly in both human life and resources. They disrupt economic and social development. Short-term relief mechanisms do not - and in some cases can not - systematically take into account long-term development issues. Development policy, at the same time, should be better prepared to cope with natural disasters, conflicts and other crises, and the need to protect vulnerable households by helping them to develop coping strategies.

The 1996 Communication noted that if relief and development are appropriately linked, these deficiencies can be reduced. Since then, numerous initiatives have been launched in the Community and in international forums to facilitate a better linkage and fill obvious gaps in a number of post-conflict situations from Bosnia-Herzegovina to Sierra Leone. The experience accumulated since 1996, the changing institutional environment and an increasing international consensus on better co-ordination of aid instruments suggest that the Community should now take stock of achievements and failures, and reassess its own policies towards the linkage issue.

Recent evaluations of Community external aid instruments have confirmed that linkages between relief and development should be improved. Substantial EC assistance was made available in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch, which affected four Central American countries in October 1998. This included 39 million € of emergency aid - of which 6.8 million was decided four days after the event - and 13 million € of food aid. This emergency assistance was delivered on time. However the implementation of the reconstruction programme to which the EC committed 256 million €, has suffered from delays. This was due to a lack of Commission staff to manage such a large programme. Lengthy Community procedures had to be followed to recruit additional assistance, requiring Member States approval and the publication of call for tenders etc. Implementation of a normal development project generally involves a minimum of two years between identification and execution.

The pursuit of effective linkage is not simply a matter of ensuring a smooth transition from emergency to development assistance. It must be seen in a broader context, as part of an integrated approach towards preventing crises and disasters, in particular through disaster

¹ COM (1996)153 final of 30.4.1996

preparedness², as well as preventing and resolving conflicts³ and assuring a return to structural stability. "Gaps" in the international community's response to conflicts can play a role in the development of the conflict itself. This Communication must also be seen in the context of the overall efforts to increase the effectiveness of the Union's external action, including the reform of the Community's external assistance, and to improve the quality of development policy and of ECHO strategies.

There is no unique model or blueprint to address the question of LRRD. Each individual situation will influence the capacity of external donors to ensure the linkage. This Communication describes the difficulties to be addressed, recognises the limits of the approach and identifies a range of measures that could improve the Community's contribution to international efforts in post-crisis situations. Proposals include the following elements:

- Firstly, on the basis of experience gained in international donor initiatives, suggestions are made to facilitate co-ordination on a more systematic basis. The international community must improve its response to disasters and other crises in a developmental perspective. There are no easy solutions to complex situations. Increased co-ordination, systematic exchange of information and better working methods could however reduce the negative effects of the existing gaps. The paper identifies what the Community can contribute to this process;
- Secondly, measures are proposed to readjust and streamline the Community's own instruments, working methods and internal institutional mechanisms. New instruments, and additional funding are **not** proposed. Country Strategy Papers, which form the basis of the new programming process for EC co-operation, must be used as the central reference for guiding different interventions at different stages in the crisis cycle, and, through the inclusion of conflict indicators, as a forward planning and preventative tool. This will allow interventions to be decided in a longer term perspective. In the implementation phase, increased flexibility and rapidity for mobilising development and co-operation funds will be needed with a view to facilitating the take-over from emergency interventions and, where appropriate, from the Rapid Reaction Mechanism⁴.

2. LRRD IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF CRISIS

Successfully linking the transition from emergency aid to rehabilitation and development depends on the context. Each situation will be different. But to facilitate analysis, crisis situations can be simplified into three broad types: natural disasters, violent conflicts and other crises. Each requires a different LRRD response. Obviously the dividing line between these categories is not always clear and a country can be affected by different crises simultaneously (drought, conflicts, etc).

² Vulnerability assessments and the mainstreaming of disaster preparedness measures into EC programmes will be addressed in a Communication on the integration of environment into EC development policy.

³ The Commission is preparing a Communication on conflict prevention. It will in particular consider ways to better integrate conflict prevention in development and co-operation programmes.

⁴ Council Regulation (EC) No 381/2001 of 26 February 2001 creating a rapid-reaction mechanism OJ L 057, 27/02/2001 P. 0005 - 0009

2.1. Emergency/post-emergency created by natural disasters

Natural disasters are generally the easiest category of crisis when it comes to ensuring effective linkage. A relatively simple operation is needed to ensure a linear, co-ordinated and progressive transition from humanitarian aid to normal co-operation instruments. Aid can normally be delivered in a non-hostile environment, in co-operation with governments and as a one-off measure.

That said, such activities are not always straightforward. The response to emergency and rehabilitation needs should not be to the detriment of long-term development programmes. The character of linkage-related activities has to be adapted to the level of development of the affected country. An earthquake in a Least Developed Country, such as Afghanistan, requires more comprehensive assistance and logistics than an earthquake in a developed country such as Turkey. International humanitarian assistance managers (ECHO, agencies, NGOs) must co-ordinate closely with local interventions such as civil protection⁵, and ensure that, whenever feasible, short term, needs-driven solutions to crises do not undermine the capacity of local structures to strengthen their own capacities in the longer-term.

The main challenge, particularly for disaster-prone countries in which natural catastrophes regularly occur, is both to identify appropriate disaster-preparedness measures to enhance the self-help capacity of the population, and to prevent new disasters. This requires the development of suitable indicators of country vulnerability and contingency planning mechanisms. Such measures include Early Warning Systems to prevent famines resulting from crop failures as established in many African countries (e.g. Mozambique, Ethiopia, and Malawi).

The Mozambique flood catastrophe suggests that while there is a specific role for disaster preparedness in the context of humanitarian assistance, the issue of reducing the country's overall vulnerability to crises needs to be addressed over the long term. The EC strategy for food security in Mozambique combines Early Warning Systems with structural interventions to support agricultural development and facilitate internal and regional trade of food. .

Disaster preparedness is the only alternative to putting countries into "intensive care" every time a crisis occurs. In countries which are victims of repeated and foreseeable natural disasters (like periodic floods in Bangladesh, hurricanes in the Caribbean), efforts to increase disaster preparedness must be part of long-term development strategies. The frequency and regular severity of these disasters seriously jeopardise the already fragile development process by undermining and reversing any accrued development gains. Where the population is already intrinsically vulnerable due to prevailing poverty and food insecurity, the impact of these natural disasters is all the more devastating. It is thus evident that any strategy for improving the livelihood of the poorest segment of the population in the most disaster prone areas, such as Bangladesh, must take into account the need to reduce their vulnerability to these disasters.

⁵ Civil protection has been recognised as one of the four priority areas for civilian crisis management by the Feira European Council (in addition to police, strengthening rule of law, and strengthening civilian administration). The Commission's proposals for a Community mechanism for civil protection coordination (COM (2000) 593 final) specifically envisages the mobilisation of member state civil protection teams from willing member states to third countries where the country has requested assistance

The need to pay special attention to disaster preparedness has been recognised in EC policy and programmes. For example, the new ACP-EC Partnership Agreement offers possibilities to improve disaster preparedness in a long-term perspective. This could include support to regional initiatives in this field, co-operation in environmental protection and sustainable utilisation and management of natural resources as well as including disaster preparedness mechanisms in humanitarian assistance⁶. In the same sense, the PRRAC (Action Plan for the Reconstruction of Central America) adopted after hurricane Mitch seeks to strengthen the capacity of the local authorities in the field of disaster preparedness through training and to reduce the vulnerability of the population through awareness-raising. The Food Aid/Food Security Budget, which can be used in a wide range of countries, provides resources to facilitate the building of a coherent response strategy to recurring famines

To help implement these policy orientations, co-operation strategies and programmes should identify whether the impact of natural disasters (floods, droughts, landslides) can be reduced through preventive action (planting of trees, construction of terraces). Strategic environmental assessments⁷ of economic sectors such as agriculture or forestry may help to identify policy options that prevent overexploitation of natural resources (through for example overgrazing of land, misplaced construction of dams, etc) which may lead to environmental problems. An environmental assessment of the issue of land rights may help to prevent eviction of people from traditional lands into marginal lands. Sustainable management of water resources can help in the prevention of floods. For example, hydrological modelling of river basins contributes to assessing the risks, and good collection and management of hydrological data is an essential component of early warning mechanisms for water-related hazards. Such issues will be integrated in the Country Strategy Papers.

Increased attention should be paid to disaster preparedness and prevention both in humanitarian programmes and in development co-operation strategies

2.2. Violent conflicts

This category poses the greatest challenge to ensuring an effective linkage, particularly for countries in protracted crises or long-lasting wars, or where there are recurrent outbreaks of fighting. The transition from relief/humanitarian aid to development co-operation is rarely a linear chronological process. Nor do most crises evolve in a linear way. Rather, they oscillate between phases of deterioration, escalation, acute crisis, and de-escalation towards a more or less stable peace⁸. Furthermore, reversals are frequent. Experience shows that peace or cease-fire agreements are fragile, and donors can never be sure that they will last. The Middle East Peace Process is associated with many emergency and rehabilitation activities in the region. Since independence from the Soviet Union, the situation in Tajikistan remains unstable. Angola, DRC, Afghanistan offer other illustrations of recurrent crises. Furthermore, the phases - emergency relief, rehabilitation and development - often overlap within a single country. In Central and Southern Somalia 'rehabilitation' pockets are found in highly unstable regions. East Timor is a rare example of a fairly linear process, from a violent phase of

⁶ Cotonou Agreement, article 30 §1e, article 32, article 72, §3e.

⁷ Assessments are carried out through the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), a technique used for identifying the environmental effects of policies, plans, programmes and groups of projects. SEA, applied either at sectoral level or more broadly at regional level, provides the opportunity to avoid inappropriate programmes and assists in the identification and evaluation of alternatives.

⁸ The different phases of conflict are described in the communication SEC(1996)332 'The European Union and the issue of conflicts in Africa: peace-building, conflict prevention and beyond'

massive destruction and forced expulsion to the take-over of the rehabilitation process by the UN, and the gradual introduction of development co-operation.

Different funding instruments usually therefore need to be used simultaneously and there is no uniform pattern of chronological transition between them. A linkage strategy must consider complex sectoral and geographical aspects as well as define the appropriate timing for linkages in a highly volatile political environment. The post-crisis strategy should take into account the pre-crisis phase. Violent conflicts are often the culmination of rising tensions over a period of time. The Community should therefore pay attention to factors that lead to crises and to the mechanisms or instruments that can prevent them from escalating. Such conflict and crisis prevention mechanisms should be integrated into development co-operation programmes. During the crises, interventions in support of peace building are also required. Equally important, post-crisis rehabilitation should include strengthened conflict prevention measures in order to avoid future relapses. Donors often face a dilemma in the post-crisis phase. Should they intervene to help implement the peace agreement as soon as it is signed despite the political risks involved? Or should they wait for stronger evidence of a lasting solution? In the first scenario, there is a risk of losing the funds invested if the conflict reopens. In the second, there is a risk of undermining the peace agreement by not providing sufficient financial support for its implementation.

Therefore the 'link' must be seen in a broader context: political, developmental and humanitarian. It should be part of a consistent EU approach towards crises that links Community and Union interventions and instruments in an integrated way. It must complement Common Foreign Security Policy approaches and instruments. It has to become part and parcel of EC co-operation policy and humanitarian aid. The new ACP-EC Partnership Agreement⁹ contains provisions to this end. This is also the case for the new CARDS regulation on assistance for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Yugoslavia, and Macedonia¹⁰.

In post-conflict situations it is particularly difficult to reconcile humanitarian aid and development co-operation, not least because of the difficulty in identifying appropriate implementing partners, both at State level and amongst non-governmental organisations. Where possible, a long-term perspective must be adopted from the start of the conflict and influence the nature of emergency interventions. In development co-operation programmes, particular attention must continue to be paid to the needs of affected populations in order to stabilise the situation. Experience has shown that in post-conflict situations, special attention must be devoted to support for the reconciliation process, institutional capacity strengthening, regional co-operation, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants, return of refugees, the special problem of children affected by conflicts and demining operations.

Assistance, whether of emergency or developmental, can have a negative impact if it is not carefully planned and adjusted to the particular situation. An immediate influx of large quantities of external resources or too long a period of emergency assistance, can encourage corruption, diversion of aid, prolongation of the conflict and an increase in unjustified, often uncontrollable expenditures (including military expenditure). This requires particular attention when designing macroeconomic and sectoral support programmes, which normally would only start in the post-conflict phase.

⁹ Articles 11, 30, 60, 72, 73

¹⁰ Council regulation 2666/2000 of 5 December 2000, Article 2.

In post-conflict situations, the link between relief, rehabilitation and development must be seen in a broader economic, social and political context. These factors must be taken into consideration in the different phases and in the different areas of intervention.

2.3. Structural and other types of crises

Humanitarian aid instruments are currently being used in a number of countries despite the absence of a general emergency caused either by an unexpected natural disaster or by the outbreak of a war. Generally those countries are suffering from dire and declining political, economic or social conditions.

Some are affected by structural crises, such as countries in transition. Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus and the Russian Federation are all recipients of humanitarian assistance from ECHO. Difficulties in these countries can be aggravated by weak, emerging or disintegrating state institutions. In some of them, appropriate development instruments that could facilitate the transition from emergency to stability either do not exist, or are not backed up by sufficient financial resources to meet the needs (physical rehabilitation), or else provide only one type of support (food aid, technical assistance). This is particularly true for countries whose main support is provided through the Tacis Regulation.

Other countries are characterised by the absence of the rule of law, and are under partial or total suspension of EC co-operation, other than humanitarian aid. This may have occurred because of lack of respect for the human rights and democracy provisions of the Treaty, (and where present, of EC co-operation or partnership agreements). In the absence of EC development assistance programmes, a smooth transition may not be possible. In certain cases, the Commission may nonetheless decide that ECHO assistance is no longer appropriate, even though this will mean a reduction in EC assistance.

In specific cases, assistance can be provided after ECHO's withdrawal even though development assistance is not formalised in an agreed document with the beneficiary country. Cuba is such a case, where humanitarian instruments were used in the absence of a humanitarian crisis. A decision was made in 2000 to move from ECHO-funded operations to projects supported by other budget lines (ALA, Food aid, NGOs, etc.), while capitalising on the work done so far. An independent evaluation has since pointed at the negative effects of continued humanitarian aid. The co-operation strategy, while still within the limits imposed by the Council Common Position, has since then been reviewed with a view to better using the different instruments and to adapting co-operation to the Cuban situation.

East Timor illustrates the problem of switching from emergency relief to development in the absence of functioning institutions. After the post-referendum crisis in 1999, ECHO-funded NGOs responded to the humanitarian and health emergency. By the end of 2000, a number of emergency-oriented NGOs had been replaced by more development-oriented NGOs still mostly funded by ECHO (until May/June 2001). However the role of these NGOs has changed from providing emergency aid to being public health services providers at district level. In the meantime, while the development of a public health system has made some progress, all parties agree that this situation is neither sustainable nor desirable in the long run. Alternatives are being actively pursued. The case of Timor, where OCHA took an effective leading role, also demonstrated the need to co-ordinate transition strategies.

In all these cases the provision of humanitarian aid creates dilemmas. Humanitarian aid can be justified to meet the needs of the most vulnerable strata of the population ("poverty pockets") on a temporary basis, and to bridge specific hardship caused by one-off extreme

events. But all donors - and some evaluations of EC aid¹¹ - have identified the negative and potentially distorting effects of prolonged humanitarian aid, such as the creation of dependency, and the fuelling of tension¹². Humanitarian aid may take the reform pressure off the recipient countries. But it can not address the structural causes of the problems, and is not an appropriate substitute for sustainable social and economic policies.

Given this, while some improvements can be made to humanitarian assistance by better targeting existing interventions towards populations in need, a gradual phasing out of humanitarian assistance is necessary. There are also budgetary arguments. ECHO should therefore focus on its "core mandate", i.e., life-saving operations in emergencies which aim for the earliest possible exit, combined with a co-ordinated and progressive transition from humanitarian aid to normal co-operation instruments. The main challenge is to identify the appropriate instruments that can take over from humanitarian assistance and to mobilise them in a timely fashion taking into account each instrument's funding cycle and limitations.

There are other EC instruments which can contribute. The European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights can provide support to civil society in areas concerning human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Interventions in support of food aid and food security, mainly implemented through non governmental organisations, can also help to establish favourable conditions for a dialogue on key sectoral policies. Economic decline often induces structural food insecurity. For countries affected by high indices of food insecurity such as Georgia, Armenia or Kyrgyzstan, support from the food security budget line can promote the structural reforms necessary to improve institutional and legal frameworks and remove obstacles to food production and trade (e.g. trade infrastructure, customs procedures and regulations, tariff and non-tariff barriers). Such interventions are primarily by sector, given the particular situation of these countries, are so far not part of an overall co-operation strategy. They will in the future be integrated into the Country Strategy Papers.

However, while the EC's food security budget line may help to bridge the gap in some situations, it is not always appropriate and the resources available are far from sufficient to meet the needs of all countries affected by this problem.

ECHO should focus on its core mandate. Assistance to countries where there is no humanitarian emergency should be phased out. If the EC is nonetheless committed to continue its assistance, appropriate longer term instruments will have to be mobilised in a timely fashion, where the legal framework to do so exists.

3. INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

3.1. The need for improvements

Delivery of aid to disaster-stricken countries is difficult. Donor co-ordination is often insufficient, reducing the impact and effectiveness of external interventions. The main factors explaining the weakness or lack of co-ordination in post-crisis situations include a multitude of actors in highly visible crises (as experienced in Bosnia, Kosovo and Rwanda); donors' diverging national interests; different assessments of situations and objectives, or political analyses; the difficulty of mobilising funds in an appropriate and timely manner due to

¹¹ Assessment and future of Community humanitarian activities, COM (1999) 468 final of 26.10.1999

¹² DAC Guidelines on conflict, peace and development co-operation, 1997, Section III.

inadequate operational tools and instruments; slow and centralised decision-making procedures. In addition, in countries coming out of conflict, donor interest may increase at the time of a peace settlement. However once the political momentum wears off and the dramatic effects of the crisis disappears, particularly from the media, donor interest, and “donor incentive”, tends to subside. This is above all true for countries that have been involved in long term or recurrent armed conflicts such as Somalia, Sudan or the Congo. The result is that the specific needs of countries and populations in highly vulnerable post-crisis situation are not met optimally. In Guinea-Bissau, after the return to democracy in early 2000, the support provided by donors was not sufficient to stabilise the post-conflict situation, leading to renewed tensions and problems a few months later. In Liberia, despite earlier commitments, very few donors have intervened since 1998. The EC aid programme has been the most significant one in recent years. The Western Saharan crisis has lasted many decades and ECHO is almost the only donor providing support to Saharawis refugees in Algeria.

There have been some improvements. There are more examples of co-ordinated projects, and better sharing of information. The high costs and dangers resulting from uncoordinated action have been recognised. Somalia is a good example of successful donor co-ordination. In the absence of national authorities, a specific co-ordination mechanism, the Somalia Aid co-ordination Body (SACB), has been created with all members of the international aid community active in Somalia. It has played a key role in contacts with Somali local and regional authorities, in planning aid, facilitating the implementation of projects and ensuring the link between emergency and rehabilitation.

At the same time, much remains to be done to achieve a concerted donor strategy. The Rwanda evaluation¹³ found co-ordination performance was mixed, and made a number of recommendations to address the weaknesses identified.

Furthermore, the visibility of common European efforts and of the actions undertaken by the international community as a whole should be improved. After the earthquake in Turkey, for example, the media coverage concentrated on each donor’ interventions on a national basis. Massive media coverage of the Mozambique floods prompted donors to ensure the visibility of their efforts to support the victims and contributed to increasing the number of donors providing emergency aid. On the other hand competition for visibility may have been a disincentive for real international co-ordination.

A pro-active approach to co-ordination is needed. Due to its importance both as a donor of emergency assistance and of development assistance, as well as to its broad international presence, the European Commission has a particular responsibility in improving co-ordination. EC emergency assistance is an important part of its external aid, as it represents 14% of EC assistance to developing countries, compared to 7% for the DAC as a whole.

The Council and the Commission have recently adopted a joint Statement¹⁴ that reorients the Community’s development policy towards the internationally agreed development strategy. This Statement has also been welcomed by Parliament. Better complementarity will be sought both within the Union and with other donors, in particular in the context of country-by-country strategies. This is an important part of the efforts to improve the quality of development policy. In post-crisis and other difficult situations it is particularly relevant. The Commission must relate from the beginning of a crisis to what other donors are doing and

¹³ Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, March 1996

¹⁴ Statement by the Council and the Commission on the EC’s development policy, 10 November 2000.

contribute to a coherent international aid effort in vulnerable post-crisis situations. This includes efforts, together with other major international donors and actors, to increase visibility of individual donors within the framework of common crisis interventions.

Insufficient donor co-ordination in post-crisis situations is reducing the efficiency and impact of the assistance provided, thereby increasing the political risk.

3.2. Co-ordination and complementarity between the EC and its Member States

The Council adopted Conclusions in October 2000 on the effectiveness of the Union's external action and the need to improve co-ordination and complementarity between the Commission and Member States. This is as true for post-crisis situations, and the need to link relief, rehabilitation and development, as it is for other assistance.

Improved information sharing between Commission and Member States at all levels is essential to more effective co-ordination of the identification, preparation and implementation of actions. Following the earthquake in Gujarat in January 2001, the Commission established a local centre, ERIC, to promote co-ordination between member state donors, and to raise the EU's overall profile. This proved successful and the Commission intends to continue this co-ordination role in the subsequent rehabilitation and reconstruction phase.

The need to link relief, rehabilitation and development will be integrated into discussions of Country Strategy Papers for unstable countries. Joint meetings at field level and between the Humanitarian Aid Committee and the geographical committee on specific countries or issues could be considered. The aim should be a division of labour between the Commission and Member States, including co-financing, in particular where rehabilitation requires interventions outside the EC's focal areas. In this process, increased co-ordination on the ground is essential. Delegations will play a crucial role in identifying possible areas of synergy and complementarity and in defining strategic orientations.

The linkage issue should be taken into account in the ongoing discussions on improving co-ordination and complementarity.

3.3. Co-ordination with the UN and other international initiatives

The United Nations play a unique role in pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis situations. In this context the so-called "Brookings Process" and the "Friends of" approach provide useful frameworks for exchange of information and co-ordination. The 'Brookings Process', which started in January 1999, has been facilitated by the Brookings Institution with a roundtable discussion on possible international mechanisms to bridge the gap between humanitarian and long-term development assistance in vulnerable post-conflict situations. It is meant as an informal gathering of donors, launched by the World Bank and UNHCR, with a view to find practical ways of improving donor co-ordination, and raise contributions to crises that have attracted relatively less attention.

The "Friends of" approach proceeds along similar lines. It involves the broadest possible number of international donors co-ordinating their actions in a particular country. This approach was adopted in Sudan, Afghanistan, East Timor, Tajikistan. Those initiatives are however still in their infancy, with the notable exception of East Timor where it is more advanced. Practical ways of bridging the gap between emergency and development assistance still need to be explored and the process should be strengthened.

Closer co-operation (under the form of a "Partnership Initiative") was established for Sierra Leone. Plans for a Strategic Framework for Sierra Leone were drawn up taking the 'gap' into account. Several informal donor meetings took place in 1999 to agree on a number of priority actions designed to support the peace agreement, namely funding disarmament, demobilisation and re-integration of ex-combatants. In the end, however, these actions were only implemented partially and not quickly enough to prevent another outbreak of the civil war in May 2000. The Brookings meeting of 15/16 November 2000 agreed to set up working teams for a limited number of pilot countries: Congo Brazzaville, Rwanda and, possibly Indonesia. The teams will elaborate by February 2001 a joint plan to achieve better linkages for those "pilot" countries. A website to exchange information on strategies and projects will be set up. On the basis of this information the team can then identify gaps in financing and develop proposals on how to fill them.

In East Timor, the UN was pro-active in co-ordinating donors, with a special unit to gather and exchange information.

A case-by-case approach is needed. Nonetheless both frameworks should be more systematically used and set up when a crisis erupts in order to integrate the linkage issue from the very start. Without wishing to propose a pre-ordained - and therefore rigid - system, the Commission believes that organisational improvements are needed in order to achieve greater effectiveness of the "friends of" approach. This could include ground-rules concerning the identification of responsibilities for co-ordination if the country is not in a position to do so, and the setting up of a systematic and adequate information exchange mechanism on individual donors' interventions. A user-friendly and decentralised system using modern information technology will allow the rapid exchange of information on who is doing what. The Commission is willing to participate actively in such initiatives and could for example provide co-ordination facilities.

The Commission should play an active role in strengthening the "Friends of" approach.

3.4. Other actors in a more organised "Friends of" approach

Co-ordination and coherence are necessary preconditions for effective action during the whole spectrum of the crisis cycle. Wherever possible, shared strategic frameworks for action should be agreed taking into account the local, national, regional and international context.

Conflict situations almost always lead to deteriorating social indicators and an increased level of poverty, thereby often exacerbating existing problems. Strategies that address these problems and assist in stabilising an extremely fragile social and economic environment are essential. For many of these countries an early access to debt relief is vital. The concept of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and a co-ordinated approach is highly relevant for countries in post-conflict situations. Where they exist, PRSPs will also become the basis for EC Country Strategy Papers and development assistance programming.

Since the start of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative in 1996, the case of post-conflict HIPC countries has been given a lot of attention. The recent decision of the WB and IMF Boards to extend the sunset clause¹⁵ to end-2002 will allow more countries, particularly those in post conflict situations, to take the necessary steps in order to enter the HIPC debt

¹⁵ The sunset clause defines the deadline for countries to apply for the HIPC initiative. It was initially fixed at end 2000 and has been extended to end 2002.

relief process. The debt problems of those countries will be treated on a case-by-case basis, taking account of the specific constraints of post-conflict countries when assessing their reforms and the sustainability of debt profiles. This is also an important aspect of a co-ordinated strategy.

Other specific instruments such as Trust Funds could in principle help. However they do not appear to be systematically the best suited instrument in post-crisis situations. Indeed, evaluations of the use of Trust Funds in Rwanda, DRC and Sierra Leone have shown rather mixed results. The lack of visibility of each donor's actions is a major impediment to their contributing to global funding mechanisms.

International and local NGOs and other civil society groups should also be associated with discussions of strategic orientations and participate in co-ordination mechanisms. This is consistent with the new development policy approach, which encourages increased participation of a broad range of civil society actors in dialogues on strategies and in the implementation of co-operation programmes. Civil society has valuable expertise and knowledge. "Friends of" experiences have shown their participation to be useful. A dialogue forum should be established on the spot to exchange experiences on projects, identify best practices and share information. The Commission delegation could facilitate this, for example by convening informal meetings and workshops. This should as far as possible be integrated into the "friends of" approach".

Despite occasional negative regional dynamics (Great Lakes region), regional engagement should be supported and the role of regional organisations (OAU, SADC, ECOWAS,...) be strengthened in post-conflict situations. Neighbouring countries, regional organisations and other potential or interested parties should be encouraged to participate in the "Friends of" process. This is fully consistent with EC support to regional co-operation processes as well as the EU's partnerships and dialogues undertaken with groups of countries.

Better organised and increased co-ordination between the various multilateral, regional and non-governmental actors should strengthen the synergies in the international response to crises.

4. TOWARDS AN EC LINKAGE STRATEGY

The European Union (EC and Member States together) is the largest donor of humanitarian aid providing 58% of total DAC emergency aid in 1999 (of which 16% for the EC alone). Its share in long term development assistance represents some 50% of international Official Development Assistance (of which some 10% by the EC alone). In view of its importance as a donor, the Commission must develop a strategic framework to ensure linkage between the different EC instruments.

The Commission's overall objectives are to reinforce the strategic framework in which it intervenes, from the outset of a crisis, up to the resumption of normal development co-operation, and to increase its efficiency, speed and flexibility. Problems encountered in bridging the gaps between relief and development have already partly been addressed in the framework of the reform of the Community's external assistance¹⁶. 'Deconcentration' which will provide Commission delegations in the field with more staff and more decision-making

¹⁶ SEC (2000) 514 of 16 May 2000

power will help, as will a clearer definition of the roles of the Commission and Member States in the approval of strategies, programmes and projects (the “comitology” procedures). There are other problems which are more specific to ensuring effective « linkage ».

4.1. Main problems to be addressed

There are three main problems in ensuring linkage between emergency instruments (ECHO, RRM) and development and co-operation instruments: slow **decision-making procedures**, choice of **implementing partners** and the ability to mobilise **resources** through appropriate instruments.

Procedural constraints and delays arise from the regulations themselves and ex-ante control mechanisms. Evaluations have confirmed the need for more flexible and speedy procedures, including for the Rehabilitation Regulation¹⁷. An evaluation of the budget line for aid to uprooted people in ALA countries¹⁸ over the period 1997-99 identified several procedural constraints and noted increased delays in the signing of contracts, recruitment of technical assistance, transfer of funds and approval of amendments to financing agreements. A recent evaluation of rehabilitation actions in ALA and MED countries¹⁹ showed that the current procedures for the rehabilitation budget lines have not contributed to effectiveness, as they did not provide a quick disbursement capacity or increased flexibility in decision-making. There was no evidence of successful articulation between phases and instruments; and the evaluation also revealed a lack of mechanisms to ensure coherence with country strategies for Asia, Latin American and Mediterranean countries.

Slow decision-making procedures undermining the EU's ability to react to a crisis were the main reason that the Commission proposed the establishment of the Rapid Reaction Mechanism. This permits short term interventions, for not longer than six months. It has world-wide coverage and it can mix a number of measures under one intervention according to the needs of the crisis. The basis of the Mechanism remains existing Community instruments (listed in the Regulation) capable of providing a large spectrum of actions and reactions to alleviate crises. These can include human rights work, election monitoring, institution building, media support, border management, humanitarian missions, police training and the provision of police equipment, civil emergency assistance, rehabilitation, reconstruction, pacification, resettlement and mediation. These same Community instruments will, in turn, remain the basis for any possible follow-up measure which might be required after the first emergency operation has elapsed. The main purpose of the RRM is to deliver urgent support to preserve or re-establish the civic structures necessary for political, social and economic stability and to be a precursor for eventual longer-term assistance.

The necessary approval of projects by governments represents another constraint in some crisis situations. The major development and co-operation instruments (EDF, Tacis, MEDA...) are based on the principle of partnership and cannot be used without the involvement of the government of the country concerned. Some governments may be unwilling or unable to take over projects from ECHO-funded NGOs, particularly if they are located in areas controlled by the opposition. They may also be reluctant to finance certain actions, for example in support of peace processes or reconciliation. In some exceptional cases (Somalia, Congo, Rwanda) the Commission has had to take over the role of the

¹⁷ Regulation (CE) N° 2258/96

¹⁸ Evaluation of Budget Line “Aid for uprooted people in ALA countries 1997-1999”, Council regulation 443/97, Synthesis Report September 2000.

¹⁹ Report of the desk phase, August 2000.

National Authorising Officer. In others, development resources are not available and other financial resources managed on an autonomous basis by the Commission must be found (rehabilitation, refugees budget-lines or NGO co-financing). This is the case for example for Liberia: given that the signature of the indicative programme had been delayed for several months, the resources earmarked for aid to refugees managed with more flexible procedures had to be used.

The Commission has a wide range of **implementing partners** for emergency aid and for development programmes. In 2000, some 65% of EC humanitarian assistance was used to finance NGOs projects, 20% was channelled through the UN family (of which 5% to the World Food Programme) and some 15% via the Red Cross movement and other international organisations. Implementing partners, including NGOs, are often specialised and competent either in emergency or in development. This makes ensuring continuity with a specific set of NGO partners difficult since partners and working methods may change abruptly in the transition from emergency to development assistance. For example, following the Mozambique floods, of the forty proposals received in the framework of the programme designed to take over from emergency relief, only two were from the NGOs who had been involved in the emergency relief phase. The bulk of proposals were submitted by 'development' NGOs. In Lebanon, ECHO projects agreed on the strength of NGO proposals made only marginal reference to the EU Partnership Agreement and MEDA programme; a separate group of NGOs put forward different ideas for rehabilitation funding, with limited relevance to the ECHO programme (with only one rehabilitation project, concerning demining, likely to be a natural extension of an activity begun under ECHO).

A change and broadening of implementing partners may be required in the transition phase. This requires looking beyond NGOs and UN agencies to other bodies, including local organisations, the private sector and consultants for technical studies. Where a decision is made to continue with NGOs, preference should be given to those NGOs that have acquired a proven competence in both emergency relief and development.

The problem relating to **mobilisation of resources** is primarily due to the existence of multiple instruments and budget lines, for example for rehabilitation, which is funded from individual geographical budget lines. This increases complexity, and reduces flexibility, leading to gaps in coverage in an area where rapid interventions are required, especially as these cannot necessarily be predicted over a year in advance when drawing up the budget. In the South Caucasus and Central Asia, a smooth transition from ECHO funding to other programmes is a challenge both because of the nature of current Tacis assistance and its legal base, and because of the insufficiency of financial resources available under the specific TACIS rehabilitation budget line (only € 1.7 m available in 2000). The Food Aid/Food Security budget line has proved to be appropriate for linking relief and development assistance. However, resources are not sufficient to cover all countries potentially concerned²⁰.

4.2. Adapting the Country Strategy Papers

"Country Strategy Papers"²¹ are the main tool used to programme EC assistance. On the basis of an analysis of the partner country's situation, EC priorities and the activities of other major partners, they will be used to guide, manage and review EC assistance programmes for all

²¹ Standard framework adopted by the Council, 10 November 2000.

developing countries receiving assistance from the European Development Fund, under the ALA and MED programmes, and progressively for other countries.

The linkage issue will become an integral part of the CSP in countries where crises and emergencies, or the potential for them exists, particularly where ECHO is active. This will allow the EC to take into account the pre-crisis phase and the opportunities to prevent or prepare for disaster and prevent conflict. It will also enable the planning of the transition from the emergency to the development phase. Such an approach is already foreseen for the ACP countries in the Cotonou Agreement which explicitly refers to the linkage issue²². It is also the case for the new CARDS programme for the Western Balkans, which focuses on reconstruction and stabilisation as well as on longer term objectives of sustainable economic and social development²³. For countries in conflict, the CSP will focus on EC's role in peace building and resolution, which includes linking relief, rehabilitation and development. For countries facing recurrent natural disasters, disaster preparedness must be part of long-term development strategies. From an environmental viewpoint, it can be addressed through appropriate methodologies, namely Country Environmental Profiles and Environmental Assessments. For countries affected by structural crises, institution building and the reinforcement of the capacity of non-state actors must become an integral part of the CSP. CSPs should also address the trade potential and the necessary strategies and reforms to increase productivity and trade.

When ECHO or the RRM starts intervening in a country, the need to adapt the CSP will be considered. Even if the CSP remains valid for the long-term development perspective, the crisis will affect co-operation activities. Therefore an Addendum to the CSP will be prepared in close co-operation with partners in the field. For the ACP countries this process corresponds to the ad-hoc reviews foreseen in the Cotonou Agreement²⁴ and to the new system established for programming and resource allocation²⁵. These provisions allow for the use of flexible and effective procedures. For the Mediterranean countries a comparable review process, required by unforeseeable circumstances, is also foreseen in the new MEDA regulation²⁶. An ad hoc review process is also foreseen for the Western Balkans²⁷. Similar ad hoc reviews could be used in other regions.

The Addendum to the CSP will be based on an analysis of the situation and include information on other donors' interventions, in particular those of Member States. It will define strategic orientations, objectives and priorities. It will link and integrate different interventions and instruments in a mutually interdependent way. In most cases there is no chronological transition between different instruments but simultaneous funding. To establish the link between relief and development, immediate planning is required not only in short-term relief responses, but also in short and medium-term rehabilitation and development actions. This must include where possible a phasing-out for ECHO (the RRM is legally required to phase out after six months and another EC instrument should take over, where necessary).

²² Cotonou Agreement, Article 11 §5.

²³ Council regulation 2666/2000 of 5 December 2000, Article 2§2.

²⁴ Cotonou Agreement, Article 5§2 of annex IV foresees that in exceptional circumstances related to humanitarian and emergency assistance, a review of the country strategy and the indicative programme can be carried out on the demand of either party.

²⁵ Use of the allocation aimed at covering unforeseen needs.

²⁶ Council regulation 2698/2000 of 27 November 2000, Article 5§2.

²⁷ Council regulation 2666/2000 of 5 December 2000, Article 3§1(a)

Humanitarian and development co-operation approaches need to be better matched. In Somalia, free distribution of drugs took place in so-called 'emergency areas', whereas in so-called 'rehabilitation areas', sometimes in nearby neighbourhoods, cost-sharing mechanisms were introduced. Therefore humanitarian interventions should be designed in such a way that they take into account long-term objectives and sustainability, whereas development programmes should increasingly take into consideration the needs of populations as identified in the rehabilitation phase, as well as evolving requirements.

The Addendum will be elaborated by inter-disciplinary teams, since case studies and evaluations have clearly demonstrated that continued internal co-ordination is a key to success. Such groups have shown themselves useful, for example in Mozambique. While the establishment of a working group is necessary to ensure the linkage, it nonetheless can cause problems of timing: it may add to the reaction time for humanitarian relief, while reducing it from the development perspective. The key is to ensure an immediate decision to set up the working group, as well to allocate sufficient staff to it in a flexible manner. Another example of a successful linkage can be found in the Kosovo crisis. The co-ordination mechanisms set up in this case ensured an unprecedented level of co-ordination within the Commission both at headquarters and field level. A crucial factor for success has been the rapid establishment and deployment of the Commission Task Force in the Kosovo province, preceding the Agency for Reconstruction, in parallel with the ECHO presence.

The Addendum to the CSP will be adopted in line with the procedures in the applicable instruments, using the maximum degree of flexibility legally available under each instrument. It will cover the actions envisaged and the different instruments to be used, so that no subsequent approval of individual projects is required, only information. The Addendum to the CSP will also assess the type of skills required and identify appropriate partners. They will as far as possible be discussed and agreed with the partner country.

The Commission will propose simplified and accelerated procedures for the adoption and modification of such Addenda. Experience shows that the evolution of crises, in particular conflicts, is unpredictable and therefore the Addendum to the CSP must ensure sufficient flexibility to allow quick adaptations to changing and unexpected situations. The common objective should be to agree on strategic orientations and leave the maximum degree of flexibility to elaborate and implement work programmes and projects on very short-term basis.

As soon as ECHO or the RRM starts intervening, an Addendum to the Country Strategy Paper including an indicative work programme will be elaborated and adopted using simplified and accelerated procedures.

4.3. Tools and instruments

The Commission is reassessing its own operational tools and instruments to identify areas where linkages can be improved. This review takes place in the framework of the reform of the EC's external assistance. The Commission objective is not to create new financial instruments to ensure a better linkage but to improve existing instruments and their links where possible. A reduction in the number of budget lines is also important, since it is essential to permit increased effectiveness and flexibility in the management of external aid in crisis situations.

Some of the EC's **thematic instruments** (i.e. those addressing broad sectoral issues) are particularly relevant in the immediate post-crisis situation and are relatively well-adapted for

ensuring linkage. This is the case for rehabilitation and reconstruction, aid to refugees and internally displaced persons, food aid/food security, and demining. Others can be used in a complementary way, such as support to democratisation and respect for human rights, NGO co-financing and decentralised co-operation.

Regulation (CE) N° 2258/96 for **rehabilitation and reconstruction** operations in developing countries can be a useful instrument to complement long term development programmes and could also be used to continue finance for actions started in the framework of the Rapid Reaction Mechanism. Procedures for its use, however, need to be improved. As a first step, the Commission will propose the merger of the five existing geographical 'rehabilitation budget-lines'²⁸ into a single line covering all regions. This is necessary to ensure flexibility in response to crisis situations which can rarely be accurately predicted on a geographical basis over a year ahead.

In addition, the scope of the existing Regulation and its associated procedures should be reviewed on the basis of evaluations and the Court of Auditors' report, and taking into account the effect of the reform of external assistance, including comitology and internal procedures. If it is to be more effective as a 'linkage' instrument, this may require greater emphasis to be put on the restoration of institutional capacities and the rebuilding of the social fabric, and not only on physical rehabilitation of basic infrastructure.

The Commission's proposal for a new Regulation for **aid for uprooted people** in Asia and Latin American countries²⁹ includes appropriate provisions to ensure better linkage. Operations under the proposed Regulation are designed gradually to take over from emergency aid and facilitate the transition to a development strategy. They therefore form part of an overall rehabilitation strategy for people who are or have been affected by internal or external conflict.

As part of the forthcoming evaluation and review of the Asia/Latin America Regulation (CE) N° 443/92, the Commission will also examine the arguments for and against merging the activities undertaken by some of the existing 'horizontal regulations' into the main geographical instruments. Possible candidates for such mergers would be aid to refugees/uprooted people and the Rehabilitation Regulation.

In addition to consolidating the number of legal bases and budget lines, a merger would have the advantage of integrating within one legal basis a broad range of activities in any country. This would be consistent with the aim of promoting linkage. However it would be necessary to ensure that a wider Regulation still permitted the existing scope of activity, allowed for sufficiently accelerated decision-making, flexibility in selecting implementing partners, and for decisions to be taken without the agreement of the government concerned.

The Tacis Regulation, which does not currently allow for rehabilitation activity, is next reviewed in 2006. If a merger into the main geographical regulations of some of the horizontal regulations such as refugees and rehabilitation were pursued, a separate legal basis for rehabilitation in Tacis countries would need to be retained in the interim (i.e. the existing Regulation 2258/96).

²⁸ Budget lines B7-303 Asia, B7-313 Latin America, B7-411 Mediterranean, B7-522 Caucasus and Central Asian Republics, B7-641 ACP.

²⁹ COM (2000) 831 of 20 December 2000.

The alternative to merging instruments is to continue to rely on the Country Strategy Paper as the main tool to promote the coherence of different instruments within countries, and to ensure linkage, as previously described. CSPs should cover both the main legal basis/budget line(s) for development assistance, and the separate horizontal instruments/global budget lines for specific post-crisis interventions.

Food aid and food security operations are good instruments for ensuring linkages as short term and long term aspects can both be covered. Thirty percent of its funding is provided for crisis operations (through WFP and NGOs). The remaining funding is used for structural support to food security policies, including support to establishment the conditions needed to start longer-term reform processes. This demonstrates the variety of situations where it can intervene and the flexibility of the instrument. An evaluation of this instrument is planned which will inter alia address questions of linkage and the relationship of this instrument to other Community instruments.

Demining activities are important in a number of pre- and post-crisis situations, and can be an integral part of humanitarian aid, rehabilitation, reconstruction or development projects. Although life saving and human security elements are the core targets of mine actions, the socio-economic impact of antipersonnel landmines (APL) on populations and their negative effects on efforts to reduce poverty and instability cannot be ignored. It is therefore important that the APL issues be integrated into the CSPs and considered within the development cycle of the country. A socio-economic impact assessment of the APL threat is becoming a regular feature in the Commission's approach to regional strategic Mine Action programming. The proposal for a Regulation currently under discussion establishes a clear link between mine actions and overall co-operation strategies with third countries. It foresees possible complementary funding³⁰.

As regards NGO cofinancing, the General Conditions issued in January 2000 foresee giving a priority to, inter alia, developing countries undergoing rehabilitation.

Council Regulations 975/99 and 976/99, the legal bases for human rights and democratisation activities under Chapter B7-7 of Community budget ('the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights'), provide for three possible areas of intervention: protection of human rights; democratisation; and conflict prevention and dealing with conflict consequences in terms of human rights, in particular through support to civil society organisations but also international organisations. These Regulations foresee accelerated procedures for financing projects under 2 M€ in emergency situations. They can therefore be deployed rapidly in pre- and post-conflict situations, and complement other EC activity.

In general, except for the new ACP-EC Partnership Agreement and for the programme CARDS for the Western Balkans, **the other large EC regional programmes** (MEDA, Tacis, Asia and Latin America) are currently not well suited to allow for linkage between relief and development in a flexible and timely manner in post-crisis situations.

Tacis is mainly a technical assistance programme with some scope for undertaking investment actions. It focuses on support to democratisation and the transition process towards market-based economies. The Commission may consider whether the scope of Tacis actions should be extended.

³⁰ Modified proposal for a Council Regulation concerning action against anti-personnel landmines, Articles 1§2 and 2§4

While MEDA does not focus on rehabilitation or crisis issues, it nevertheless allows some kind of take-over of projects from the emergency phase. This has for example been the case in Lebanon for demining.

As regards co-operation with the ACP countries, the Cotonou Agreement offers more flexibility than in the past to cope with the linkage issue. In particular:

1) in countries where the crisis occurs once a Country Strategy Paper and an indicative programme already exist, the following steps can be taken: a review of the indicative programme will take place on the demand of either party, and operations will be decided with a view to easing the transition from the emergency phase to the development phase using effective and flexible mechanisms³¹; where budget funding is not available, emergency and rehabilitation interventions may be financed from the European Development Fund; in any case resources will continue to be available to non-State actors, in particular the share of the long term envelope to which they have direct access³².

2) in countries where, due to exceptional circumstances, no indicative programme has been signed, the Cotonou Agreement foresees that a specific mechanism will be put in place³³. This involves the following elements: except in cases where EC co-operation has been suspended following the procedures of Articles 96 and 97 of the Cotonou Agreement³⁴, a global allocation of resources will be decided and notified; however in view of the difficulties of engaging in a normal programming exercise, only specific measures will be adopted, consistent with the CSP, with a view to ensuring a proper linkage between relief and development assistance. Here again, where budget funding is not available, recourse should be made to EDF funding through the so-called “B allocation”, established to cover unforeseen needs³⁵. Humanitarian as well as post-emergency action aimed at physical and social rehabilitation may be undertaken in this framework, using effective and flexible mechanisms. Resources will also be made directly available to non-State actors.

The CARDS programme will provide Community assistance for reconstruction, aid for the return of refugees and displaced persons, and stabilisation of the region as well as for institutional development, economic reforms, social development, environmental rehabilitation and regional cooperation.

The reform of the Commission has already gone a long way in their assessing and proposing reforms to **internal procedures**. This process needs to be reinforced with a specific focus on the linkage issue. The Commission is reviewing its internal procedures and will propose simplified and more flexible decision-making procedures to be applied as soon as the Addendum to the CSP and the attached work programme have been elaborated. Flexibility must still be increased generally, even if some improvements have already taken place following the creation of EuropeAid Cooperation Office, for example as regards procedures for adopting and amending contracts.

Due to the highly sensitive issues involved and the complexity of situations, decisions are often taken at the highest level in headquarters. Nonetheless, de-concentration of most

³¹ Cotonou Agreement - Annex IV, Article 5§2 and main text of the Agreement Articles 72§6 and 73§1.

³² Cotonou Agreement - Annex IV, Article 4§1(d).

³³ Cotonou Agreement - Annex IV, Article 3§4.

³⁴ Cotonou Agreement, Final Act, Declaration XXI

³⁵ Cotonou Agreement - Annex IV, Article 3§2(b) and main text of the Agreement Articles 72§6 and 73§1.

decision-making from the headquarters to the field level is a main condition for success, as can be seen in Kosovo. The extensive devolution of decision-making to delegations foreseen in the reform of the management of Community assistance will have a positive impact on the linkage issue. Delegations in co-ordination with Member States will play a crucial role in the formulation of the Addendum to the CSP and in the definition and choice of projects and programmes.

Specific changes within existing regulations and in the internal decision-making procedures will be considered with a view to increasing the capacity of the Community to respond in a timely fashion to post-crisis situations.

4.4. Higher risks in transitional environments: Trade-offs between flexibility, speed and control

An efficient intervention in post-crisis situations implies the acceptance of a higher degree of « technical » risk in the implementation of co-operation, notwithstanding the political risk inherent to the country's general situation. It is difficult to act with flexibility and quickly in volatile situations while maintaining strong control and accountability.

This higher technical risk concerns firstly the proposed accelerated procedure for the adoption of an Addendum to the Country Strategy Paper, and the attached work programme. In such a framework, consultations will necessarily be reduced, including, in some difficult cases, with the partner authorities. Furthermore sectoral and other impact studies cannot systematically be carried out before the identification of projects. Feasibility studies, technical design, control of quality in the field, and checking the effective capacity of the implementing partner are all steps which require time.

Secondly it concerns procedures in general. The possibility of providing more flexibility within existing contracts, without necessarily affecting use of similar contracts outside linkage operations, need to be examined. This may mean permitting changes to projects' content or location or accepting a failure to meet objectives or requirements concerning assets. This is a way to avoid a multiplication of riders to contracts, and associated delays.

High political risks are unavoidable. Post-crisis situations often mean that one has to deal with potentially unstable partners. Governments can be short-lived. It also has to be accepted that in certain cases, post-crisis assistance can lead to the consolidation of less than satisfactory governments. In cases of emerging governance, the choice of a partner can be highly sensitive. The government is weak. NGOs are absent or manipulated. UN agencies should be called upon to provide legitimacy and a framework for donors, if appropriate in a "Friends of..." formation.

For all these reasons, it has to be accepted that some decisions have to be made even if the outcome of the intervention is uncertain. A degree of understanding of this is essential if the Commission is to act meaningfully in difficult circumstances.

The Community and its Member States have to make a choice in the trade off between increasing the speed and flexibility of action and ensuring a maximum degree of control and quality. They need to accept the risks involved or decide not to intervene.

5. CONCLUSION - SUMMARY OF POLICY PROPOSALS

Insufficient donor co-ordination and the lack of adequate instruments to respond quickly and efficiently to post-crisis situations reduces the effectiveness and impact of assistance. Experience shows that some improvements have occurred in ensuring the link between relief, rehabilitation and development. However, much remains to be done. All donors are faced with the same type of problems.

Due to its importance both as a donor of emergency assistance and of development assistance, as well as to its broad international presence, the EC has a particular responsibility in this regard.

With a view to optimising the EC's contribution to a more efficient response to post-crisis situations, the Commission proposes the following steps:

- In countries prone to natural disasters, increased attention will be paid to disaster preparedness and prevention both in humanitarian assistance, and particularly in development co-operation strategies and programmes.
- In conflict situations, the link between relief and development must be seen in a broader economic, social and political context. These factors must be taken into consideration in the different phases and in the different areas of intervention.
- ECHO should focus on its core mandate. Assistance to countries where there is no humanitarian emergency should be phased out. If the EC is nonetheless committed to continue its assistance, appropriate longer term instruments will have to be mobilised in a timely fashion, where the legal framework to do so exists.
- Emergency assistance must increasingly be designed in such a way that a take-over is consistent with long term development objectives and sustainability. Development policy must in turn be better adapted to cope with these issues.
- In order to address the problem of insufficient donor co-ordination in post-crisis situations, the “Friends of” approach, in the UN framework, must be strengthened on a more systematic basis while keeping the case-by-case principle. The Commission should play an active role in strengthening the “Friends of” approach, acting in complementarity with Member States
- Better co-ordinated international initiatives must involve the various multilateral, regional and non-governmental actors in order to strengthen synergies and to allow clearer definition of phase-in and phase-out measures.
- In the context of the refocusing of Community development activities on a more limited number of areas, increased co-ordination and complementarity between the EC and its Member States will aim at a division of labour, with a view to providing a better EU response to existing needs in the different phases.
- The European Commission will review its own instruments and procedures with a view to reduce time delays, mobilise adequate resources in a timely fashion, and ensure the involvement of appropriate partners. This will take place in the framework of the reform of external assistance, in particular in relation to the de-

concentration of decision-making and staff to delegations, and to changes in comitology procedures.

- As soon as ECHO or the RRM starts intervening, an Addendum to the Country Strategy Paper, including an indicative work programme will be elaborated and adopted, using as much as legally possible simplified and accelerated procedures. It will cover the actions envisaged and the different instruments to be used so that subsequent approval of individual projects is not required, only information.
- In order to implement this Addendum and work programme, a simplified decision-making process is to be applied within the Commission for approval of individual projects and programmes. Implementation procedures will be reviewed to increase flexibility in particular for selecting implementing bodies, tendering procedures, amendments of contracts. This will apply to key thematic instruments such as rehabilitation, aid to refugees, food aid/food security, and demining.
- As regards the take-over within the large EC regional programmes, adequate provisions have already been incorporated in some of them (CARDS, Cotonou, MEDA); they should be implemented with all the flexibility required. For others (Tacis, ALA), a review might be considered in order to address the question in how far future new Regulations should be extended to cover rehabilitation, aid to refugees and mines, as an alternative to a thematic regrouping of such type of activities.

In order to improve its capacity to respond in a timely and efficient manner to post-crisis situations, the Community and its Member States have to accept a higher degree of technical risk. There is a trade off between increasing the speed and flexibility of action and ensuring a maximum degree of control and quality.

The Commission is submitting these considerations to the European Parliament and the Council. It would welcome further discussions on the ideas put forward in this Communication with a view to translate them into real improvement of its capacity to influence positively the outcome of the crises its partner countries are facing.