European Community's development policy

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The Swedish Presidency concluded that the Council had noted the following: - Progress had been made, but some things remained to be done. - Improved focus on results-orientation, always bearing in mind the international development targets, is an absolute necessity. The gap between commitments and disbursements has to decrease. Further collaboration and co-ordination within the EU and with other donors is required, based on partnership and national plans such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) and through sector programmes. The indicators in the Annual Report should assess impact of EC assistance in terms of poverty reduction and targets, and indicate where improvements have been made in quality and effectiveness, including integration of horizontal issues and coherence aspects. The Council agreed conclusions on improving the effectiveness of external action, including holding an orientation debate at the beginning of each year starting in 2001. Improving quality and efficiency is its core priority. It called on the Commission to present: - an Annual Report on Community Development Policy, which should, inter alia, inform on the results and achievements of Community policy; inform on progress in the concentration of assistance into the six priority fields; inform on progress made on the mainstreaming of horizontal aspects; cover impact measured against horizontal indicators, including a synthesis of project score card and evaluation results. - a Programme of Action which should be forward looking, and cover all actions required to translate the Community's development policy into reality in all developing countries. It should inform on the intended outcome of each action, the target date for completion, and report on progress to date.