Action against anti-personnel landmines in developing countries

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PURPOSE : to reinforce the contribution of the European Union to action against Anti-Personnel Landmines (APL). CONTENT : Anti-Personnel Landmines create appalling casualties in many of the poorest parts of the world and are an obstacle to the implementation of a range of European Union programmes. In the period 1992-1998, the European Union therefore committed over EUR 180 million to mine action world-wide to support demining programmes, assistance to mine victims, and research and development of technology. This has been a major contribution to the global efforts of the international community but much remains to be done. With the incentive of entry into force of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and their Destruction, the challenge for the international community is to overcome the landmine problem in the next 10-15 years. Based on its contribution to date, the European Union is expected to be a major player in this activity. Success will only be achieved if the international political and resource committment is sustained, if international co-ordination is improved, if effective national capabilities are established in all of the most seriously mine-afflicted countries, and safer and faster demining techniques are introduced. This Communication summarises the mine actions of the European Union to date and outlines policies that will further enhance the capacity of the European Union to play its leading role in overcoming this world-wide tragedy. These include an enhanced horizontal, distinct budget line that will provide the focus for European Union mine efforts over the coming years. In parallel, the Commission is making a legislative proposal and will introduce internal changes that will strengthen the coherence and effectiveness of its actions in this important area of policy. In conclusion, the Commission recognises the political and humanitarian importance of sustaining the European Community contribution to overcoming the world-wide problems of Anti Personnel Landmines (APL), and intends to do this with even greater resolve, coherence, and effectiveness. The European Parliament and the Council are invited to support the orientations of this Communication and to decide on the proposed Regulation. In addition, the Commission shall submit, by June 2007 at the latest, to the European Parliament and the Council an overall evaluation of operations financed by the Community, including assessments of relevance, cost effectiveness and impact. It is on this basis that the continuation of application of this Regulation will be decided on.