European Community's development policy

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PURPOSE : to present a Communication on reshaping and refocussing the Community's development policy. CONTENT: The Commission acknowledges that there have been a number of justified criticisms of the EU's development policy. Stakeholders have especially commented on the lack of an overall strategy and the fact that the objectives of the policy are too numerous, vague, and not ranked in any way. Instruments rather than policy objectives guide policies. There are also concerns about the effectiveness of EU policy in relation to the national development co-operation programmes of the Member States. The Community has certain specific advantages, the key ones being its critical mass in financial terms and its capacity to ensure coherence and synergies between aid, trade and economic co-operation and political dialogue. These are the pillars on which its overarching objective of poverty eradication will be based. Development policy will be supported by commercial policy, the objective of which is to integrate developing countries into the world economy and encourage sound domestic strategies. The Community's development policy will be reduced to six areas where it can offer comparative advantages and added value. These are: -trade for development -regional integration and co-operation -macroeconomic policies linked to poverty reduction strategies, in particular the strengthening of social sectors like health and education. The Commission sees macroeconomic policy as the key to ensuring sustainable and accessible social services. -reliable and sustainable transport which plays a key role in access to basic social services. -food security and sustainable rural development strategies -institution capacity building, good governance and the rule of law. These areas are mutually reinforcing and inter-related. Cross-cutting issues such as gender aspects, environmental sustainability and human rights will be fully integrated into all activities. There will be increased emphasis on budgetary support and sector programming. In addition, the Commission will seek to ensure better coherence between development policy and other Community policies such as trade, agriculture, fisheries, migration and health. At the strategic level, there will be better co-ordination among Member States' bilateral development programmes. A number of reforms are also discussed in the paper, including administrative reform and improvements in internal control. Improvements in the impact of development assistance are also discussed. resources should be allocated not only on need but also according to countries' performance in terms of policy reforms and outcomes.