EC/United Nations relations: development and humanitarian affairs, reinforcing cooperation

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PURPOSE : to build an effective partnership with the United Nations in the fields of Development and Humanitarian Affairs. CONTENT : relations between the United Nations and the European Union have grown over time into a rich and diverse network of co-operation and contacts. Relations are strong and complex and they now cover virtually all areas of EU external relations, spanning the entire scope of the UN Charter from peace, security, human rights to social and economic affairs, including development and humanitarian activities and trade policy. Improving co-operation with the UN is a major priority to the EU, to its Member States and to the European Commission. The Commission considers that a first step in the direction of a more effective partnership could be taken by enhancing collaboration in the fields of development and humanitarian affairs. The Commission is convinced that the quality and impact of EC development and humanitarian policies and activities can be improved by better clarifying what the Community's role should be in the UN context and what it suggests to contribute to the multilateral system. That positive impact can however only be achieved if on the other hand the Commission specifies what it expects from the partners in the United Nations system. The new strategy for improved co-operation with the United Nations relies upon and benefits from the ongoing overhaul of the Commission's system of operations in the field of external activities (strengthening of the programming process, de-concentration and decentralisation, result-based approach). It pre-supposes increased co-ordination between Member States and the Commission, namely in the international fora and within partner countries. Finally, it is based on the concept of increased complementarity both between the Community and its Member States and the Community and the United Nations. The main goals of the proposed strategy are to strengthen the involvement of the EC in the upstream policy dialogue and to build a more transparent, financially predictable and easier to monitor partnership with chosen UN agencies, funds and programmes. The Commission intends come back to the overall EU/UN relationship and to closer co-operation in the fields of conflict prevention and crisis management in a later Communication, incorporating the conclusions from the current reflection on EC-UN co-operation in the development and humanitarian fields. The Commission has already started discussions with the UN Secretariat · as well as with some specialised Agencies of the UN · on the revision of the existing agreements. In the framework of applicable Community rules, the Commission has started and will continue: · to acknowledge the specific nature of the UN and to follow its procedures, which meet the requirements of other donors, provided that they do not contradict the requirements of Community rules such as verification andproper reporting; · to favour an approach more oriented towards outputs than inputs (such as simplification in terms of definition of eligible costs; explicit provision calling for contracts to aim at well-defined objectives, the attainment of which can be demonstrated by adequate reporting; final payment and financing of new operations dependant on proper performance).