Linking relief, rehabilitation and development LRRD

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Adopting the report by Mr Raimondo FASSA (ELDR, I), the committee (chairman: Mr Michel ROCARD (PSE, F)) considered it essential that there should be better coordination of humanitarian aid actions between the Community, the Member States and the United Nations agencies. It also called for the common foreign and security policy to be strengthened and for external services to be grouped under a single authority. It called for ECHO to be allocated sufficient financial resources in order to put an end to the practice of setting up a reserve, as this hindered its operation and delayed its intervention. The Commission was therefore called on to reorganize its management structure in order to allow for a more global, coherent and integrated strategy in the complementary fields of humanitarian aid and development aid. As crises of a chronic nature were more and more frequent, rehabilitation efforts should not be short term, designed to facilitate the passage from emergency aid to development, but rather should aim to manage prolonged situations of instability. In general, the Commission's actions should take greater account of the needs of women and children, supporting the functioning of local, regional and national markets by giving priority to local sourcing possibilities. With regard to conflict prevention, Parliament also called for programmes aimed at the prevention of crises. On this point, it called for a study into the possibility of setting up a European corps consisting of civilian and military units in cooperation with the WEU responsible for keeping and re- establishing peace. The committee also recommended a European civil peace corps in order to strengthen humanitarian action, lead to the peaceful settlement of conflicts, prevent the outbreak of new conflicts and provide the necessary measures for confidence-building. Greater attention needed to be given to the early detection of conflicts by creating a European research centre for the active prevention of crises. It also called for a permanent international criminal court to be set up and for measures to promote democracy aimed at achieving fuller social participation and integration of local populations. It considered that prevention policy for both natural disasters and armed conflicts should allocate an important role to the integration and social participation of women. It called for European monitoring of arms exports. Lastly, it was essential for the Commission to define clearly under what circumstances and at which point conditionality becomes an integral part of the relief-rehabilitation-development process and to draw up a timetable for progress to be made. It called for a reform of the CFSP to enable the European Union to combine diplomatic efforts and (military and civilian) humanitarian intervention capacity with trade and development aid policies.