Horn of Africa: EU regional political partnership for peace, security and development

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PURPOSE: to propose a strategy for regional political partnership for peace, security and development in the Horn of Africa.

BACKGROUND: on 20 March 2006, the European Commission outlined at the 11th Summit of Heads of State and Government of IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development) an initial blue print of a strategy for peace, security and development for the Horn of Africa region (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan , Uganda). This communication translates the mutual interest and political will to generate regional stability and solidarity and is the product of high-level consultations that have taken place since then, involving all the IGAD countries and other interested regional players such as the League of Arab States and Egypt.

CONTENT: the Horn of Africa is one of the most conflict-prone regions in the world as well as one of the poorest. The protracted border dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia, the Somalia crisis and the Sudanese and Northern Uganda conflicts all have an impact on the livelihoods of millions of people moving the region away from the Millennium Development Goals' (MDGs).

This communication builds on two important Strategies already being implemented by the EU: the **'European Consensus for Development'** and the **'EU-Africa Strategy'** approved by the European Council in December 2005.

On the basis of this policy framework, the European Commission is now proposing to set up a **'Regional Political Partnership'** with the Horn of Africa, as a test case for applying the EU Africa Strategy. The main objective of the Communication is to contribute to reducing the region's instability, which is a prerequisite for reaching the MDGs. It sets out a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention in the Horn of Africa, tackling in the short to medium term the root causes of instability at both country and regional level and strengthening regional cooperation. It should guide EU external action in the region and the formulation of Country and Regional Strategy Papers.

The **main objective of the communication** is to address and reduce the region's acute instability by developing a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention in the Horn of Africa. It provides a political framework for concrete regional initiatives and programmes. It proposes a three-pronged Strategy revolving around:

1. Key country-level strategic political issues which have regional ramifications;
2. Regional cross-cutting and cross-border challenges in the Horn of Africa;
3. Effective regional political and economic cooperation and integration.

In addition, the Commission proposes **EU accompanying measures**:

- Promote information-sharing and consultation between EU Member States and EU institutions with a view to developing a shared understanding and common approaches as regards the Horn of Africa;
- maintain and develop effective use of existing EU instruments to support improved coordination and dialogue, including Troika missions, joint EU Council/Commission missions and EU Special Representatives. In particular, the EU could promote the International Partners Forum (IPF) as a forum for dialogue with IGAD;
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make full use of Article 8 of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement to facilitate and advance dialogue with key actors (national governments, regional organisations). The EU should ensure that Article 8 political dialogue will include a strong focus on regional issues, in particular the regional implications of actions by individual states;

- promote the micro and meso level of conflict prevention, management and resolution, including non-state actor structures;
- include discussion of relevant Horn of Africa issues in talks and contacts with key stakeholders in the wider African and Arab region, particularly Egypt, the Arab Gulf States, the League of Arab States and Central and East Africa;
- enhance dialogue and coordination on the Horn of Africa with the USA, Norway, Japan, Canada, Russia and China. In addition, there should be structured dialogue with the UN and relevant agencies;
- strengthen the mainstreaming of 'human security' approach including human and social rights and gender, demographic issues and the environment (water, coastal zones and forest sustainable management, desertification and adaptation to climate change) into development programmes and promote integration by the partner strategies in the Horn region;
- dovetail all EU strategies, policies and programmes geared towards countries of the Horn of Africa, to ensure that they take appropriate account of key regional and cross-cutting issues, and contribute effectively to the EU's regional political partnership for the region. In its Country Strategy Papers for the countries of the Horn of Africa, the EU should place particular emphasis on the regional context and analysis as well as an assessment of the root causes of violent conflict;
- when preparing new cooperation strategies with the Horn of Africa and IGAD, the Commission will dovetail EDF 10 country and regional strategies (2008-2013) in support of the Regional Political partnership for the Horn of Africa. Wherever feasible, this will be complemented by support from EU Member States. Governance, natural resources and food security, education and regional integration focusing on infrastructure should be the main areas of cooperation underpinning country and regional strategies.

Other measures are proposed by the Horn of Africa partners such as : (i) debate and promote the regional strategy among Member States, IGAD Secretariat and other policy organs and relevant regional players and civil society organisations in order to obtain a coordinated position and adherence on the part of all stakeholders; (ii) regional partners and organisations would have to be open to systematic dialogue at all levels on key regional challenges, e.g. governance, conflict, food security, trafficking and resource sharing, security and religious fundamentalism, and be engaged in identifying drivers of change; (iii) promote information-sharing and clarity of the respective roles of regional organisations, Horn of Africa partners, neighbouring countries and key regional stakeholders with a view to developing a shared vision; (iv) Horn of Africa countries and regional organisations would have to allocate adequate resources for the dialogue and the work programme, and operationalise the format for enhanced dialogue with the European Union; (v) Horn of Africa partners would have to address sources of conflict and promote crosssectoral cooperation such as, for example, the link between conflicts, share of natural resources, pastoralists and food security; (vi)implement relevant institutional reforms and Member States' commitments to enable the IGAD Secretariat to function adequately; (vii) review and update the IGAD strategy and complete the IGAD sectoral strategy on peace and security.

To conclude, this communication implements the Africa Strategy by introducing an EU regional political partnership for the Horn of Africa based on an analysis of the key regional dynamics and problems in the Horn region. The aim of the partnership is to promote peace, stability and development in the region. It provides a political framework for concrete regional initiatives and programmes and for structured and open dialogue between partners at all levels. Implementation of the partnership will commence in 2007 and it will be jointly reviewed after 2 years to take stock of progress in delivery of the work programme and ensure it is updated and dovetailed to the conditions prevailing in the region.