

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(93)123 final

Brussels, 24 March 1993

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

THE RUN-UP TO 2000: IDENTIFYING PRIORITY AREAS FOR THE COORDINATION
OF DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION POLICIES BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY
AND THE MEMBER STATES
based on a review of the texts adopted by the
Council (development cooperation) since 1981



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Introduction

In their declaration of 18 November 1992 on development cooperation policy in the run-up to 2000, the Council and the representatives of the Member States' governments underlined the need for the Community and the Member States to pursue complementary development cooperation policies, as provided for in the Treaty on European Union. Development cooperation objectives will be attained more effectively by closer coordination at policy formulation and operational levels, in international bodies and where appropriate by joint operations.

The Council therefore called on the Commission to put forward proposals for enhanced coordination procedures and to conduct a review of past Council resolutions and conclusions so as to identify priority areas where closer policy coordination could increase the effectiveness of development assistance. In its choice of priority areas the Commission should consider the content of its communication of May 1992 on development cooperation policy in the run-up to 2000 and take account of the issues covered by existing Council texts and the existence of other forums for coordination between all aid donors, in order to avoid duplication.

Various coordination strategies and bodies, mainly operational, have existed for quite some time between the Community and the Member States, generally based on the pragmatic, voluntary and "à la carte" approach advocated in the Council resolution of June 1984. A more systematic, reciprocal form of coordination, involving the various levels mentioned above, has on the other hand emerged only more recently and in just two areas: democracy and human rights; structural adjustment and management of counterpart funds.

This relatively recent move to step up coordination, especially policy coordination, is certainly in part due to changes in the actual content of development cooperation, particularly with regard to the Community in the context of the Lomé Conventions. Basically, the approach has shifted from programming a list of projects (Lomé II) to cooperation focused on sectoral policy support (Lomé III), and then to dialogue on overall economic recovery (Lomé IV). It has become increasingly necessary to ensure that policies are consistent and therefore to coordinate at the policy formulation stage.

Stepping up policy and operational coordination and extending it in modulated fashion to other priority areas implies establishing more precisely a more systematic yet sufficiently flexible approach in order to tailor coordination to the various areas in question. In a parallel communication to this one, the Commission puts forwards proposals on these lines, based on a study of existing and possible future coordination procedures and mechanisms and taking account of past experience and the new legal framework.

In addition, since coordination is not an end in itself, particularly in terms of policy formulation, and since it is bound to cost money, the priority areas in which the modulated stepping up of coordination will bring about "comparative advantages" must be identified. These areas could then be the subject of Council resolutions establishing the foundations of systematically strengthened coordination, following a similar approach to that already adopted for democratic consolidation or structural adjustment.

In this communication three types of criteria are used to identify the areas proposed as priorities for coordination and particularly for policy coordination. The guidelines for each area should be laid down in Council resolutions:

- the area is considered a priority in terms of the general development cooperation objectives pursued by the Community and the Member States;
- strengthened cooperation in the area can achieve much more effective results than dispersed or poorly coordinated operations and, in some cases, than possible coordination outside the Community;
- the area is dealt with very inadequately or by existing Council texts which have been overtaken; otherwise the political basis for reinforced coordination already exists and so problem is rather that of putting it into operation.

It will therefore be made clear that priority areas in terms of development cooperation objectives (first condition above) are not necessarily all priorities for policy coordination in the years to come, either because operations undertaken individually may be reasonably effective or because such coordination is already fully provided for in relatively recent Council texts (it is therefore more a question of taking the necessary steps for their implementation).

Section 18 of the Council declaration gives the four major objectives of development cooperation which are laid down in the Treaty on European Union (Article 130U) and explained in more detail in the Commission communication of May 1992. Each of the four objectives covers a variety of themes, sectors and cooperation instruments (see sections 34 to 38 of the communication and Chapter 3, points 3.2.2 and 3.3, of the Annex to it) which constitute the priority areas of development cooperation policy for the Community and the Member States in the years to come.

In political terms democratic consolidation entails guaranteeing certain fundamental freedoms, strengthening the rule of law, ensuring leaders assume responsibility vis-à-vis the people and act with transparency, which

often involves a reform of the state and its political and administrative structures. In economic terms it implies development through participation, decentralized cooperation and support for private initiatives.

Sustainable economic and social development clearly involves a wide variety of aspects which hinge on three main components: restoring the major internal macroeconomic balances (budget, money) and external macroeconomic balances (balance of payments, debt, exchange rate), taking account of the possible deterioration in the social or political situation; economic restructuring with a view to establishing the conditions for sustainable growth and more often than not involving gradual internal and external liberalization measures, support for productive investment, a fair incomes policy and specific policies geared to each situation (rural development, controlled urban growth, promotion or support for certain industries); longer-term programming, notably for policies on population, environment, and human resources development (in particular health and education).

The smooth integration of the developing countries into the world economy clearly calls on their part for competitive economic, institutional and technical structures, appropriate trade and exchange policies and moves towards regional cooperation or even integration. It also, however, requires certain measures on the part of the developed countries - aid certainly but also measures to improve the developing countries' international economic climate, measures in the field of trade relations, as underlined by the Commission communication, and in the field of financial relations, particularly the external debt problems of many developing countries. It is worth recalling here that development cooperation policy forms part of the Community's external relations policy, the various aspects of which must take due account of development objectives.

The campaign against poverty ties in clearly to a large extent with sustainable economic and social development. It depends on a resumption in growth, the establishment of viable economic structures and the ironing-out of inequalities, an aspect which is specific to poverty issues. The Commission communication also underlines the priority which should be given here to human development objectives, in particular health and education policies, not forgetting food security and employment. These medium and long-term policies must be backed up by targeted operations designed to relieve situations of dire poverty, to cope with emergency needs or to offset the social costs of other policies or the economic development process itself.

These then are the main priority objectives of development cooperation to be pursued by the Community and the Member States in the years ahead. In each of these areas what needs to be looked at is the extent to which it is covered by existing Council texts and the advisability of stepping up coordination.

All the texts adopted by the Council since 1981, discussed in this communication, currently provide the main basis, common to the Member States and the Community, of the principles and objectives of development cooperation and possible policy coordination. The older texts can hardly

be considered pertinent any longer, especially since the Council (development) did not meet as regularly then. The first ten resolutions, adopted in 1974 are, however, rather special and will therefore be referred to when the relevant areas (trade and financial relations) are dealt with.

It is immediately clear from the review of Council texts that the priority areas are covered to a very varying degree by the 24 resolutions, 30 conclusions and 4 other texts (including the declaration of 18 November 1992) adopted by the Council (development cooperation) between 1981 and 1992.

With regard to the objective of democratic consolidation, recent Council resolutions cover most of the political aspects, including coordination, despite a certain lack of focus, for example on operational implementation, understandable enough in this area. Economic aspects are dealt with more cursorily. There are, however, references in other texts, although often imprecise or summary.

Certain aspects, including coordination, of sustainable economic and social development are dealt with satisfactorily by the resolutions on structural adjustment (although insufficient attention is given to international trade and financial relations and to the respective roles of the state and the private sector). The same can largely be said for population and environment policies whereas to date there is almost no trace of social issues and the development of human resources in Council texts on development cooperation (apart from a number of conclusions on the role and status of women).

Council texts on the many topics connected with integration into the world economy, on which the results of all other areas of development cooperation to a large extent depend, are on the whole very inadequate (especially on trade relations) or non-existent (financial relations and debt issues). However, a set of resolutions adopted in 1974 (in other words prior to the period being examined here) explicitly tackled all these issues (generalized preferences, commodities agreements, volume, conditions and geographical breakdown of aid, debt problems).

The Commission is currently preparing a communication on the campaign against poverty in general, which it will present to the Council in the course of this year. As has already been stated, however, existing Council texts on specific social policies are very inadequate: those on health policies cover only the AIDS pandemic and there is nothing at all on education or employment policies.

The structure of this communication ties in with the themes of Council texts adopted since 1981, classified by area (basically following the classification used in the "Compilation of Texts" published by the Council; the list is given in the Annex). In addition, a number of areas so far not dealt with by Council texts but which are priority areas in terms of the development cooperation objectives given above, are covered: education and training, employment, the fight against poverty, aid and debt issues. Although there are no texts to discuss, these areas must none the less be considered in terms of the possibilities and advantages of increased coordination.

Chapters 1 to 7 deal with "sectoral" and "trans-sectoral" fields: agri-food, health, environment, population, role and status of women, education and training, employment.

Chapters 8 to 13 cover areas connected with general development policies: structural adjustment and counterpart funds, democracy and human rights, investment and the private sector, trade relations, the fight against poverty, aid and debt.

Chapter 14 comments more briefly on texts on other instrumental and organizational issues: emergency aid, cooperation with NGOs, European public opinion, programming and evaluation, coordination.

For each area covered by at least one Council text since 1981, consideration will be given to the quality and the up-to-dateness of cover by the existing text(s), in terms of both development cooperation objectives and more specifically future policy coordination priorities.

In essence, for each area dealt with (except for the last two chapters) this paper gives:

- a brief description of the main conclusions of existing texts;
- a critical assessment of their content;
- an assessment of their contribution in terms of coordination;
- an assessment of how up to date they are and the extent to which they are priorities;
- conclusions and recommendations for the next few years, particularly the degree of priority in terms of policy coordination.

The short description of the content of existing texts briefly outlines the main provisions and guidelines in order to give an overview of the objectives and other essential aspects of each area and any developments during the period in question.

The assessment of the content of existing texts primarily covers, for each area of development cooperation, the precision and relevance of the objectives stated and the suitability and degree of effectiveness of the means proposed, pointing out any shortcomings.

The assessment of coordination involves scrutinizing the provisions of Council texts on specific coordination objectives and procedures, notably between the Community and its Member States. The question posed concerns the means provided by existing texts for defining common principles of action (policy coordination) and for implementing them by concerted or joint operations (operational coordination).

The extent to which existing texts are still up to date is assessed on the basis of the completeness and pertinence of the cover given to the main development cooperation objectives referred to above and set out in detail in the Commission communication of May 1992.

The conclusions and recommendations summarized in the general conclusions of this communication are intended to meet the Council request to identify priority areas in which there is most need for reinforced policy coordination in order to improve the effectiveness of the development cooperation policies pursued by the Community and the Member States in the years ahead.

Before beginning to examine the Council texts area by area, it would be as well to establish the limits of this communication.

There are other basic texts on coordination, even policy coordination, besides Council (development) resolutions and recommendations. This is particularly true of the ACP countries with the Lomé Convention and its implementing texts and the basic sectoral principles derived from evaluations (approved by the ACP-EEC Council of Ministers). Fairly clear-cut guidelines on developing countries in Asia and Latin America were also adopted by the Council (foreign affairs) in 1991. These and other similar texts are not discussed here because this communication focuses more on development cooperation policies than its instruments.

With regard to coordination as such, no proposals will be found here on the procedures and mechanisms for each case. These will be contained in a parallel communication.

Since the purpose of this communication is to identify the priority areas for policy coordination, it does not contain specific proposals on the content of each of these areas. This should be the subject of subsequent specific documents.

In the light of past experience it seems clear that it is not enough just to identify the priority areas and adopt resolutions accordingly. It is probably not even the most important aspect in terms of policy coordination. If resolutions are not to remain a dead letter, and if they are not to be forgotten no sooner adopted, as has sometimes been the case in the past, mechanisms will have to be set up to monitor, follow up and evaluate the implementation of Council resolutions, which henceforth concern both the Commission and the Member States.

The usefulness of this review exercise must be pointed up: development cooperation practices are changing significantly and it is becoming increasingly difficult to conduct a large-scale operation without the donor first ensuring that the operation dovetails with the recipient country's sectoral or general policies. At present, even though a good number of general policy principles seem to be widely accepted, much still remains to be done before these principles really form a common basis for operations harmonized at operational level. The decisions to be taken by the Council when each of the policies is examined in detailed, conceptual terms will help the Community and its Member States to take this vital step.

1. Food security

Agriculture and food are the subject most frequently encountered in Council (development) texts of the period 1981-92, accounting for six of the 24 resolutions, and seven sets of conclusions, in other words 22% of the 58 texts adopted. Attention has, however, waned in recent years: while there were ten texts in the first six years of the period, there have been only three since 1987, the most recent dating back to May 1990. Moreover, several texts concern a single instrument: food aid.

1.1 Main principles and guidelines

Most of the Council texts on food aid and food security deal specifically with a single development region, sub-Saharan Africa, and sometimes with a few specific countries of this region. This clearly reflects two factors: the region's particularly serious food problems and the relative concentration there of Community aid (the Commission's and that of most Member States). Both tendencies were reinforced during the eighties.

Three main themes are discernible in the texts on food issues: medium- and long-term food security problems and their relationship with agricultural and rural development policies; food aid in exceptional circumstances (which may, however, prove recurrent); the relationship of agriculture and food to other areas of development cooperation.

Although the three themes sometimes overlap, the emphasis has shifted appreciably during the period in question: the earlier texts centred on the first theme, gradually giving way to food aid and the handling of emergencies, while the relationship with other policies is a more recent theme, particularly in the context of structural adjustment programmes.

Thus, in its resolution of November 1981 underlining the priority accorded by the Community to the agriculture and food sectors, the Council declares that "a thread which runs through all these conclusions is the importance of helping developing countries to adopt policies which promote agricultural development", and even goes so far as to recommend that aid be made subject to a degree of conditionality relating to the adoption of appropriate sectoral policies. This priority objective of consistent medium- and long-term agriculture and food strategies leading ultimately to self-sufficiency is reaffirmed in several other Council texts, notably the resolutions of November 1983 and November 1988, although the latter already stresses the general economic environment and consistency with structural adjustment programmes. Both texts at least mention the main lines of this policy, and sometimes go into greater detail: policies on agricultural production (and in particular food) and pricing, distribution problems, multiannual agricultural and rural development programmes, the choice and impact of products supplied from abroad, the respective roles of local organizations, NGOs and women, environmental impact, etc.

Most of the Council texts do, of course, recognize the need for food aid, particularly in emergencies, and some deal specifically with it. In the resolution of November 1989 top priority is given to emergencies, with medium- and long-term food security taking second place and no mention whatsoever being made of agricultural development policies.

The conclusions of April 1986 regarding four African countries explicitly set out certain conditions relating to food aid's general economic environment, whereas, for example, the re-establishment of the balance of payments was only a secondary objective in the resolution of November 1983. Consistency with structural adjustment programmes is a concept introduced by the resolution of November 1988, which becomes a key component of the last two resolutions, adopted in November 1989 and May 1990 respectively, notably in the shape of the rules for the use of counterpart funds, which are no longer necessarily reserved for supporting agricultural policies (see also the resolution of May 1991 on the subject).

1.2 Remarks on content

As has been pointed out, most significant food aid and food security issues, and their relationship to other sectors of development cooperation, have been tackled in one Council text or another, and often in some detail (with numerous and inevitable repetitions), not only in terms of objectives but of resources and procedures too. When viewed as forming a coherent whole, these texts emerge as being relatively comprehensive and precise. The question is not so much one of form or content but of how effectively they have actually been applied in practice.

In, however, tracing the evolution of the Council's texts, it is necessary to underline the fact that the crucial subject of agricultural and rural development policies, the only "sustainable" solution to the food problems of many developing countries, is not given the attention it deserves in the earlier texts of the period under study, and seems somewhat neglected, not to say forgotten later on, to the advantage of emergency food aid objectives and macroeconomic objectives connected with the structural adjustment process. Furthermore, some of the essential issues of cooperation in this field, such as the criteria for choosing between food and export crops (and the way some aid instruments influence this choice), or agricultural pricing policies, are given only a fleeting mention without operational consequences for the many large-scale food aid operations conducted by the Commission and the Member States.

1.3 Remarks on coordination

The need for closer coordination between the Community and its Member States (and with other donors too, such as the international organizations) is asserted by several of the Council's texts, particularly the more recent ones (e.g. the resolution of November 1988, which alludes to the structural adjustment programmes), but in a general, perhaps even superficial, way, without going into the operational practicalities. The most specific overall text in this respect remains the resolution of November 1981, which identifies several levels of coordination: political (Council), administrative (departments of the Commission and the Member States), local (on-the-spot representatives). But there is no reference to the specific objectives of coordination, reciprocal obligations or procedures.

This is undoubtedly a major failing in a field where close and continuous coordination both at policy level and in the field is particularly necessary, given the scale of the problems, the potential synergies and the perverse effects of piecemeal action.

There is nevertheless one text almost entirely devoted to the problems of coordination between the Community and its Member States: the conclusions of November 1984 on the campaign against the impact of an exceptional drought in the Sahel set out the operational aspects of coordination in great detail. Identifying inadequately concerted action as the main obstacle to effective aid, this text takes the shape of a detailed annual plan for the coordination of emergency food aid operations in the region, setting out the timetable, specific objectives and decision-making levels of the meetings scheduled. It should not be seen as a one-off: the text mentions the possibility of adapting and extending the method to regions other than the Sahel and to "normal" situations, something which has, however, never been done.

The conclusions of November 1984 are the only Council text (together with the resolution of May 1989 on coordination in structural adjustment) containing relatively precise and binding provisions on coordination between the Community and its Member States, dealing with both Community cooperation in the strict sense and bilateral cooperation.

1.4 Relevance for the present and priority

Though it cannot be said to analyse food security and agricultural and rural development policies in depth, the Commission communication on development cooperation policy in the run-up to 2000 does state, in point 3.2.2.B.2 of the Annex, that "the rural world must remain a priority" in countries where the rural population and agricultural production predominate, countries which are also very often among the poorest. While this is true mainly of sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, many countries in other regions are also affected. The Council guidelines of February 1991 on cooperation with the ALA developing countries also present support for the rural world as the Community's leading priority.

For many countries, the priority accorded to food security and agricultural and rural development may therefore be considered obvious in view of the four major objectives of development cooperation, and in particular the campaign against poverty. It is equally obvious that a sustainable solution can come only from agricultural and rural development aimed at food security (which does not, of course, mean no imports). Outside emergencies, cooperation in this sector should therefore be focused on support for coherent national and regional food strategies.

Lastly, it should be emphasized that such strategies are increasingly having to take account of problems associated with rapid urbanization, food problems included, which seem to be growing in many developing countries.

It has to be conceded that the texts adopted by the Council a decade ago remain the most comprehensive, precise and relevant, and are therefore, strange though it may seem, more up-to-date than more recent ones (November 1989 and May 1990), which tend to neglect these essential aspects.

1.5 Conclusions and recommendations

Having been the object of, on average, more than one Council text each year, food security may still be regarded as one of the chief priorities for the years ahead in terms of the expected benefits of a resolution setting out clear and precise rules for coordination between the Community and its Member States at decision-making and operational level alike. This priority is justified both by the sheer volume of operations by the Community and the Member States in this field and their interaction with many other fields of cooperation, and by the gravity of the problems themselves in terms of development cooperation's major objectives, namely overcoming poverty and promoting sustainable economic and social development. These problems often constitute one of the main aspects of regional integration, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

It is also without a doubt one of the fields in which there is the greatest need for donors, and in particular those based in the Community, to ensure that their operations are complementary, or at least consistent. The fact that there is already a body of experience of coordination in the field can only speed progress towards concerted or joint operations using existing instruments wherever possible.

It has to be said that food security is yesterday's news; this happens from time to time to development cooperation policies which, after being all the rage for several years, are more or less forgotten or neglected by the donors, at least in terms of the public debate. Yet food security remains sadly, in some parts of the world at least, an unresolved problem that cries out for further reflection and clearer priorities and objectives.

There is a vital need, in this sector like many others, for relatively binding evaluation mechanisms to be introduced in order to ensure that all concerned actually apply the Council resolutions.

2. Health

Only the Council's conclusions of May 1987 and November 1989 discuss cooperation in health, and in both cases combating AIDS is the sole issue.

2.1 Main principles and guidelines

In its conclusions of May 1987 the Council approved a Commission proposal for a Community programme to combat AIDS in the developing countries, a programme that is mainly preventive in its thrust (reducing transmission in all forms) and geared to strengthening health systems in the recipient countries, notably by means of cooperation between Community NGOs, hospitals and research centres and their counterparts in the developing world. The conclusions of November 1989 cover the same issues with the addition of a reference to the regional dimension of the problem.

2.2 Remarks on content

The Council's conclusions on the Community programme to combat AIDS seem to describe the objectives of, and criteria for, action in sufficient detail for a policy text, especially in view of the flexibility required by the programme owing to the varied and variable nature of the circumstances.

But it is evident that these texts deal with just one of the many public health problems affecting developing countries, the relative seriousness of which differs moreover from one region to another. Apart from a fleeting reference to health systems, the Council's conclusions remain therefore quite inadequate when viewed in the context of the overall policy needs and the diversity of the corresponding cooperation projects.

2.3 Remarks on coordination

The need for close policy and operational coordination between all donors is particularly obvious in this field, especially where the recipient countries have yet to establish a coherent and well-established health policy and a well-structured health system. The Council's conclusions clearly recognize this need with regard to the campaign against AIDS, referring both to coordination between the Commission and the Member States and to the role of NGOs.

Of course, there is already a well-oiled mechanism at both international (WHO, international and regional congress) and Community level for policy and operational coordination in the campaign against AIDS, with frequent meetings of experts, but such coordination must be extended to many areas of health policy other than AIDS, grave though that pandemic may be.

2.4 Relevance to the present and priority

Reinforcing and developing basic social services such as health and education is a priority, in terms of human development and the campaign against poverty, which is expressly affirmed by the Commission

communication on development cooperation policy in the run-up to 2000. The campaign against AIDS is also mentioned in the document, but in the slightly different context of "new forms of interdependence".

Note that the priority accorded to this area of cooperation has been buttressed by the provisions recently adopted by the Council regarding the preferential use of counterpart funds for social spending, be they generated by import programmes associated with structural adjustment or other aid instruments.

The existing Council texts clearly fail to match the development cooperation priorities in this area. While the need to continue fighting AIDS in the developing countries is undeniable, the campaign against this pandemic is no substitute for health policy or health cooperation with countries facing many other, often equally serious problems, to which, however, the solutions are more obvious and which call for technical, financial and organizational resources that are seldom available.

2.5 Conclusions and recommendations

A review of the scope of the Council's texts on health shows a paradoxical situation: there are texts on one specific issue, but there is no resolution clearly setting out the overall objectives of health cooperation or the opportunities and procedures for coordination either within the Community or with third parties, such as the WHO or other international organizations.

In this context it should be noted that Article 129 of the Treaty on European Union provides that the Community and the Member States shall foster co-operation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the sphere of public health. The Commission will examine the procedures under which this co-operation with third countries should be pursued.

Since, moreover, health is not only a stated priority of Community cooperation policy in the context of sustainable development and the campaign against poverty but also a field in which a consistent framework, laying down priorities and explicit and clear common objectives for action by the Community and its Member States, would undoubtedly increase effectiveness: it should be seen as one of the chief priorities for the years ahead.

3. Environment

In terms of the number of texts adopted by the Council (development) since 1981, environment takes second place with six resolutions (as many as on food issues) and three other texts, i.e. 16% of the 58 texts. Most of these texts are quite recent (seven out of nine coming in the latter half of the period, making it the Council's main centre of interest since 1987).

3.1 Main principles and guidelines

The texts adopted by the Council on the subject of the environment and development deal both with the objectives of, and overall criteria for, environment cooperation policy and environmental problems which affect the developing countries more directly. To the three general resolutions (November 1984, November 1987 and May 1990) may be added a declaration on the UNCED (November 1991), two resolutions on tropical forests (November 1989 and May 1990), conclusions on energy (November 1992) and two texts on desertification in Africa (April 1986 and November 1989)

In terms of their implications for development cooperation, the main thing these texts have in common is that they place the emphasis on integrating environmental considerations into all areas of cooperation rather than on creating specific instruments that positively and directly affect environmental problems. Most texts do, however, recognize the need to increase funding for the sector (without cutting spending elsewhere); one resolution on tropical forests even calls for aid to be doubled, though there is generally no mention of target figures.

Seeing environmental issues as a priority, the Council stresses the value of sustained action based on long-term plans adopted in a consistent manner by the recipient countries and all donors, the Community and its Member States among them. The participation of local people, organizations and authorities is seen as a precondition for success, and reference is made to the regional dimension of the problems and of any action to be taken (though this is not given any particular emphasis, which may seem somewhat surprising since environmental problems are no respecters of national frontiers).

3.2 Remarks on the content

Environmental issues are generally covered quite well by the (development) Council's texts: the scale of the problems is adequately underlined, the main objectives are clearly set out, criteria and procedures for action are described in reasonable detail, the respective roles of those concerned are explained and certain interactions with other fields (e.g. social issues) are at least mentioned. The resolution of May 1990 is particularly important in that it establishes a general framework for integrating environmental considerations into all types of development cooperation projects and calls for the introduction of a monitoring and evaluation system. It has nevertheless become necessary to add to this body of texts in order to take account of the outcome of the UNCED in June 1992.

As with other areas covered by numerous Council texts, the relative effectiveness of its provisions depends more on the practical procedures

for their implementation than on the wording of the resolutions. The texts regarding specific areas of activity (e.g. tropical forests or desertification) may be counted among the Council's most effective.

The justification for the efforts required by the Council's resolutions regarding environment policy lies primarily in the importance of environmental issues to the long-term objectives of development cooperation, i.e. in connection with the concept of "sustainable" development. Council resolutions hardly ever refer expressly to mutual interest or the interdependence of North and South (the resolution of May 1990 nonetheless refers to the danger to the planet), even though it is reasonable to suppose that such considerations account for at least some of the interest in the environment displayed in the development cooperation context.

3.3 Remarks on coordination

Most of the resolutions mention coordination between the Community and the Member States (as well as with the recipient countries and other donors, notably regional and international organizations), though the earlier texts may be considered by some to be more explicit on this point, with more recent texts tending to do little more than reiterate the need for periodic meetings of experts from the Commission and the Member States. As long as they have precise objectives, these meetings are undoubtedly a vital coordination instrument in terms of exchanging information and analyses, of establishing common approaches in specific sectors, and of monitoring and evaluating the application of policies; they are, however, a most inadequate instrument in operational terms.

In a field of such broad interest, where Member States are involved in organizations or action plans, coordination may often go through extra-Community channels. In addition to coordination on the spot, it is particularly important that Community positions in other organizations be coordinated, an issue raised, though too vaguely, by some Council texts. Lastly, the implementation of the UNCED of June 1992 calls for the Community and its Member States to coordinate their action.

3.4 Relevance to the present and priority

Today the importance of environmental issues in development cooperation is largely recognized by the Community, as it is by the other national or international organizations concerned, such as the United Nations or the World Bank (which, moreover, devoted its last World Development Report (1992) to compatibility between development and environment policies).

In its communication on development cooperation in the run-up to 2000, this topic emerges clearly as one of the preconditions for sustainable economic and social development in the long term, and it is also mentioned several times in the context of the "new forms of interdependence" and the defence of the mutual interests that bind the Community and the developing countries. Careful reading of the text shows, however, that environment

policies per se are seen less as a priority or even a main objective of development cooperation than as a factor that must always be taken into account. There is no section or paragraph expressly describing or analysing environmental cooperation.

The relatively low profile of environmental considerations in the Commission communication can be put down to the fact that it was drafted before the June 1992 UNCED, and to a certain reluctance to give pride of place in development cooperation policies to an issue more closely bound up with world problems than issues or objectives specific to development.

Sometimes, however, the Council's resolutions on the subject do go beyond this rather moderate stance to make the environment a priority area for development aid (see in particular the third paragraph of the resolution of May 1990). This is also reflected by the frequency of Council resolutions on the subject compared with the more scanty treatment of other world issues that are no less important in terms of their consequences for development (e.g. trade relations or financial relations and debt problems).

3.5 Conclusions and recommendations

The main advantages of making this field a priority for Council attention in the future would arise from the scope for coordination between the Community and its Member States, and with other entities. The comparative advantages of coordination are particularly obvious in the environmental field: to the usual arguments of consistency and effectiveness of development cooperation measures can be added the inherently universal or at least regional nature of the problems, the need to implement the results of the June 1992 UNCED, and the existence of an environment policy in the European Community. Another, not inconsiderable advantage is that it would be relatively easy for the Member States to agree on areas of common ground.

On the other hand, the issue has already been covered to a great extent by existing Council (development) resolutions, which are sufficiently numerous, recent, comprehensive and precise for there to be no urgent need for an overall update.

However, the above analysis highlights three failings in the texts:

- They obviously cannot take account of the results of the June 1992 UNCED, the implementation of which calls for stronger coordination between the Community and its Member States.
- The requisite coordination between the Community and its Member States (and with other organizations) is given only a summary mention; the objectives and procedures for each problem or sector concerned could usefully be specified.

- Above all, there should be special procedures for monitoring and evaluating the operational application of Council resolutions on an issue on which there seems to be a relatively broad consensus at policy-making level.

In conclusion, although there would seem to be no need for a new overall resolution, or for new texts on the subjects already tackled (desertification and tropical forests), this field may nevertheless be deemed a priority for the Council's work in the years ahead, provided it focuses on the three points raised, namely implementation of the UNCED results, reinforcement of coordination and operational application of policy decisions.

4. Population

The subject of population has featured in only two Council (development) texts since 1981: a very general resolution of November 1986 and another on family planning of November 1992.

4.1. Main principles and guidelines

The two resolutions were triggered by awareness of the problems posed by the social economic and environmental impact of uncontrolled population growth, which in many countries and regions is becoming a major obstacle to sustainable development. The resolutions set out basic principles underpinning any population policy, with special emphasis on avoidance of any coercive or discriminatory action, the right of individuals to choose the number and spacing of their children, the tailoring of efforts to local ethical and cultural practices, and the necessary balance between population and other resources.

Against this backcloth the 1986 resolution affirms the need to make population policy an integral part of general economic and social development policy and describes a number of measures that the Community and the Member States would be ready to support, including the gathering and analysis of data, training and information, implementation of family planning and mother and child care programmes, and improvements in the status of women.

The 1992 resolution sets out objectives and criteria for measures to support family planning policies, family planning seen as both a social service for human development and as one of the instruments of a population policy compatible with sustainable development. The resolution lists forms of action in this field, with stress on the need to make use of existing health and education structures, but recognizes that not only do existing resources have to be used more effectively but that the human and financial resources devoted to the sector have to be increased; the Council noted the Commission's proposals on financing.

4.2. Remarks on content

The 1986 resolution, which is a kind of declaration of principles and intent, is not specific enough to serve as a guide for practical action. It is more of a springboard for more detailed texts on more specific themes, one such being the 1992 resolution on family planning, which deals with the main instrument of population policy in much greater detail and explicitly provides for more resources.

The question now is whether other aspects of population policy - problems arising in connection with rural exodus to the towns, employment, pressure on social services and migration from developing countries to industrialized countries - should be covered in the same way. Like family planning, they are often considered to be sectors where the Community and its Member States could act, and are merely referred to in passing in the 1986 resolution.

4.3. Remarks on coordination

The 1986 resolution makes fairly vague allusion to "adequate coordination with Member States and other donors" and meetings of experts that "could be useful". The 1992 resolution goes much further, not only emphasizing "the importance of both policy and operational coordination" - a clear distinction drawn between the two - "between the Commission and the Member States" but also fleshing out common priorities and objectives and the corresponding means - doubtless in response to the undertaking to increase both the amount and effectiveness of the resources allocated to this area of policy. Note that the paragraphs on coordination refer explicitly to population policies as a whole, not merely family planning.

4.4. Relevance to the present and priority

The Commission communication of May 1992 on development cooperation policy in the run-up to 2000 cites demographic problems as one of the main obstacles to development and accords them a central place in the development of "new (?) forms of interdependence"; population policy is described as a key to "sustainable economic and social development". The importance of demographic problems has long been known and rarely disputed, and so the scarce attention paid to population issues in Council texts may seem surprising, though it doubtless mirrors the small number of Commission or Member State cooperation schemes in this area.

The 1992 resolution on family planning goes some way to rectifying this "oversight". The emphasis is placed on the main area of intervention, the need for additional resources and procedures for policy and operational coordination between the Community and the Member States.

4.5. Conclusions and recommendations

The 1986 resolution is certainly a good resolution in terms of a conceptual framework and it does not seem worthwhile repeating the exercise. But the resolution is fairly general with little to say about the operational side: the specific case of family planning shows illustrates that moving from the general to the particular in policy-making is a complex business.

While this step-by-step exercise could certainly be reproduced for other specific areas of population policy (employment policy, for instance), it might be premature at this point. First, population problems should be studied in further detail, certainly region by region, in order to establish strategies for action. On this basis work on specific themes could be pursued in accordance with the real order of priorities.

5. Role and status of women

Between 1992 and 1990 the Council (development) adopted six sets of conclusions (but no resolution) on "women in development", putting this subject in third place (after environment) in terms of number of texts adopted since 1981.

5.1. Main principles and guidelines

The conclusions of November 1982 give some explanation of the need to take account of the situation of women in development cooperation. Despite their key economic role in developing countries, women are all too often disadvantaged and enjoy few of the fruits of development or aid, which may sometimes even have adverse effects on them. Their involvement and integration in the development process and all development projects and programmes should be encouraged with the aim of improving the selection and planning of projects or offsetting any negative effects on women.

These objectives entail participation of the local population, including women, in all phases of projects, support for local women's organizations, and establishment of appropriate procedures, especially for project preparation and evaluation. The Council's conclusions cite a number of suitable areas for action in favour of women: job creation and income-generating activities, health and education, i.e. "social" action, particularly as a component of rural development projects.

The other five sets of conclusions, adopted between 1985 and 1990, add little to what was said in 1982: some details of administrative aspects and a certain emphasis on agricultural and food projects in the April 1986 conclusions and reiteration of the importance of non-rural sectors as well in May 1989. In response to the Council's request in November 1987 for an operational plan of action, the Commission drew up an action programme for the ACP countries, which, at the Council's request was extended to other developing countries in May 1990.

5.2. Remarks on content

The 1982 conclusions are by far the most comprehensive and detailed text on the subject, the others merely looking at one or another aspect or developing some detail or other. This first text thus appears to cover the subject reasonably well, since nothing of great importance has since been added to what the Council had to say ten years ago.

These texts have provided a basis for Community action and policy-making in the form of the fourth Lomé Convention and the Council's guidelines for cooperation with Asian and Latin American countries. Although they have barely touch the operational aspects, and even though the variety of contexts - regional, socio-cultural, type of project, etc. - make it difficult to lay down detailed objectives and criteria applicable in all cases, the Council's policy guidelines have been translated into operational terms in the form of Commission manuals on the integration of women in EDF projects (rural development projects above all) and on the Asian and Latin American countries.

Let us conclude by remarking that in recent years discrimination against women has worsened in many countries as a result of factors such as the recession, growing urbanization, the spread of AIDS and the migration of men. Since awareness of some of the political, legal, social and cultural aspects of these developments has grown only recently, they do not figure largely in the Council texts, which focus on economic aspects.

5.3. Remarks on coordination

The Council's conclusions remain rather vague on the subject of coordination between the Community and its Member States, merely referring on each occasion to the usefulness of regular meetings of experts to exchange information on the Member States' activities and the implementation of the Council's conclusions. Only the 1987 text tries to make the scope of these meetings more ambitious by extending them to evaluation, but this was not followed up.

While the diversity of situations, constraints and areas of policy call for procedures with a degree of flexibility, closer operational coordination between the Commission and the Member States would make for more efficient implementation of the Council's guidelines.

5.4. Relevance to the present and priority

This is one of the few priority areas that is barely mentioned in the Commission communication on development policy in the run-up to 2000. Obviously this does not mean that it is not an important subject.

"Women in development" is important today for the implications it has for many areas of development cooperation and as a result of developments in thinking on the subject. To the long recognized social and economic dimension has been added a "women's rights" dimension, to which it would be wise to make specific mention in the annual review of the implementation of the 1991 resolution on democracy and human rights. On a more general note, women in development issues are similar to environmental ones in that they mainly involve application of a number of criteria and considerations to the whole gamut of development operations in other areas with their own objectives.

5.5. Conclusions and recommendations

The role of women in development, rather than being given special priority, is something that should be taken into account across the board when laying down objectives and means to achieve them in other areas singled out as development cooperation priorities, such as food security, health and human rights. In each of these areas specific objectives regarding impact on women should be fixed.

Furthermore, as in other areas, there is a need for regular reviews of the progress made by the Commission and the Member States in implementing the conclusions on women in development adopted by the Council, and more coordination on operations and their evaluation will be required to do this.

6. Education and training

The Council has not yet adopted any text on education and training in developing countries or what the Community and its Member States could do in this field.

The section on the objectives of development cooperation in the Commission communication of May 1992 explicitly highlights the priority that should be given to education in connection with the objective of combating poverty (section 38) and implicitly recognizes it as one of the conditions of sustainable economic and social development (development of human resources, section 36). These are two complementary aspects, which, however, do not exhaust the subject:

- promotion of access for all (and especially the poor where they are excluded) to a social service which is also and above all a fundamental human right;
- sustainable provision of the most important factor of production (especially in development), namely the human factor, something that is true in all fields and at all appropriate levels of skills;
- education and training undoubtedly have a role to play, more indirect perhaps but still important, in areas that are not strictly economic or social and are related to the process of democratization: this more "political" aspect of education is emphasized in the annex to the May 1992 Commission communication (1.5.2).

Comprehensive, consistent and long-term education and training policies that further these complex objectives need to be established and/or supported in the developing countries, and this is perhaps the most important medium- to long-term development priority. Even if the actual content of these policies and the means to be deployed may vary widely from one country to another, and must be decided by each individual country, the general principles and criteria for setting objectives and priorities would benefit from being clearly set out in a Council resolution setting the guidelines for Community and Member State cooperation in this field.

On the more specific question of intra-Community coordination of cooperation policies in this area, there does not appear to be at present any common framework for the efforts of the Community and the Member States, even as regards priorities and general objectives. It may, however, be hoped that a stepping-up of coordination here might go far towards rendering the efforts of all the parties more compatible and complementary, so bringing significant benefits in terms of effectiveness.

The possibility of dealing with research, another key condition for sustainable development and another area prone to one-off projects, under the same umbrella should also be considered.

In conclusion, education and training (and research) policies should constitute one of the priorities for the Council's future efforts to coordinate the policies of the Community and its Member States.

7. Employment

There is not yet any Council (development) text dealing with employment in the developing countries or what the Community and its Member States could do in this field.

Although there is no specific analysis of employment issues as such in the May 1992 Commission communication, there is no doubt about their importance for the overall objectives of development policy, something which is particularly evident in the context of efforts to combat poverty and reduce inequalities, mainly through income-generating activities. Note that employment has been recognized as one of the four main components of the "social dimension to structural adjustment" along with food security, health and education and training).

The link with the objective of sustainable economic and social development is certainly just as important, particularly in the context of the unavoidable restructuring of the economic fabric to create productive jobs, for instance through the development of labour-intensive sectors and technologies, support for small businesses and microenterprises (especially in the informal sector) and easier conditions on access to credit.

Unemployment has considerable implications for the objective of consolidating democracy.

Despite the importance of employment for development, it would be worth adopting a Council text on the subject only if there were "comparative advantages" in the form of greater effectiveness as a result of stepped-up coordination. Such advantages are not easy to demonstrate, since employment is a "horizontal" theme to which most Member States have not paid specific attention, apart from some programmes to promote small and medium-sized enterprises.

Although the situation might be rather different from that of "women in development," the conclusions at present are of the same nature: it does not appear to be a matter of priority to adopt a resolution aimed at stepping up coordination of employment policies, but, initially at least, there should be explicit reference to employment issues in texts dealing with other areas. Of those singled out as priorities in this communication, these merit a special mention:

- food security and agricultural and rural development policies: while there is potential, and often need, for jobs, they are not the object of agricultural production as such but a related objective;
- education and training: as mentioned in the previous section, this priority is justified not only on social grounds but also by its importance for economic development;
- combating poverty: an area where the creation of jobs and income-generating activities is crucial if aid efforts are to go beyond mere charity.

8. Structural adjustment and counterpart funds

With four resolutions and a "common position" on the subject, structural adjustment is one of the subjects most discussed by the Council (development) since 1987. This section is not, however, as detailed as previous sections nor does it provide a critical analysis of the content of the relevant texts, since it would be superfluous in a document drawn up to identify priority areas for future policy coordination. What distinguishes structural adjustment from other areas examined in this document is that it is an area where coordination is already well advanced, at least as regards Council texts, which are the main instrument for coordinating policy-making.

The first two texts adopted by the Council (in November 1987 and May 1988) set out the main objectives and means for Community involvement in the structural adjustment process in sub-Saharan Africa, and the essential features of the Community approach. The May 1991 resolution laid down general principles and arrangements for using the counterpart funds generated by various development aid instruments so as to complement structural adjustment programmes. The May 1992 resolution basically condenses the conclusions and principles of previous texts, adding a few further details about the flexibility of the Community approach.

The May 1989 resolution on strengthening coordination on structural adjustment support is still the most comprehensive and detailed text adopted by the Council (development) on coordination between the Community and its Members and, particularly important in the field, with other countries and organizations. The objectives and operational procedures are set out in some detail (though there is little that is binding) and so a fresh Council resolution on the subject is unlikely to add much of substance, other than flesh out aspects of monitoring, evaluation and checks on the implementation of the texts.

Structural adjustment is undoubtedly a priority of development policy. This emerges clearly from the May 1992 Commission communication, where adjustment is directly connected to two of the three prongs of sustainable economic and social development (macroeconomic balances and overhaul of the economic fabric) and has a more or less direct connection with all the other objectives, especially those pertaining to integration into the world economy. Thus, there is no pressing need for new Council decisions in this sphere simply because the basis for action is essentially in place.

This does not mean that there might not be a need for Council texts on more specific points that are linked to, or components of, the structural adjustment process - commercial policy springs to mind (see Section 11), as do debt-related problems and the question of external financing in general (see Section 13), the respective roles of the public and private sectors, and the forms and pace of economic liberalization (see Section 10).

9. Democracy and human rights

As in the case of structural adjustment, there is no real need for a detailed analysis of Council resolutions on democracy and human rights in this communication. The Council declaration of November 1992 notes (section 21) that the Community and its Member States "have already endorsed such an approach" (i.e. policy coordination) to this issue.

The Council adopted resolutions on democracy and human rights in November 1991 and November 1992, although the latter simply dealt with implementation of the former (to be reviewed annually by the Council). The main principles, objectives and procedures for action in this area are thus to be found in the 1991 resolution.

There are doubtless shortcomings or lack of detail in the 1991 text, which does not venture far into the operational aspects or the practicalities of coordination between the Community and the Member States, especially considering the responsibilities of certain Member States in the politics of developing countries, especially those in Africa. This remark also applies to military issues, since there is ample reference to reduced military expenditure but nothing about the supply of arms.

But overall, the November 1991 resolution doubtless goes as far as possible in developing the Community's approach to these issues, and adoption of a more binding or more explicit text seems highly unlikely. The 1991 text also offers the possibility of sufficient flexibility on issues such as the different ways and means of moving towards democracy (although such differences are not explicitly recognized) or forms of Community action (although the stress is clearly on "positive" measures). We may therefore conclude that, despite some shortcomings, the resolution is quite adequate for the objectives set out, inter alia, in the Commission communication on development cooperation policy in the run-up to 2000.

10. Role of the private sector

There is only one Council text on this key issue for development policy and cooperation, the fairly general conclusions of May 1987. For the record, however, we should mention the texts concerning the ACP States, above all the common position adopted in November 1992 on investment protection, which paved the way for a more active, concerted policy on the part of the Member States and the Commission to encourage the ACP States to take practical steps to promote European investment in their countries. Discussions are under way that may make it possible to extend this approach to other developing countries. Efforts are also being made to coordinate projects for small and medium-sized businesses and support for privatisation.

Development of the private sector and a market economy, together with a rethinking of the role of the state, are explicitly mentioned among the priority objectives of the Commission's May 1992 communication on development policy in the run-up to 2000, especially in connection with sustainable development (and also competitiveness, see annex). The May 1987 resolution "requests the Commission to submit at a later date both the outcome of this examination (of the contribution of the private sector) and any more specific proposals."

The need for a clear, detailed text (though not a dogmatic one - see the oblique reference to "developments in current thinking" in Section 2 of the existing text) on this rather controversial subject, which has considerable economic, social and political implications, is as obvious as the difficulty of drafting one. It is needed because without one the Community could end up merely following the far more clear-cut line on this subject adopted by some other donors (such as the World Bank and IMF). It is difficult because of the controversial, highly political nature of the issues, the wide range of situations to deal with, and the preferences of the developing countries themselves, all of which threatens to make the opportunity cost of such a text prohibitively high compared with the uncertain - to say the least - gains of greater coordination. All in all, the Community's approach should remain flexible to allow for adjustments to national and regional situations and the preferences of the countries concerned.

To sum up, the best compromise solution would appear to be the inclusion of a more detailed and explicit discussion of the criteria for defining the roles of the public and private sectors in a future resolution on policy towards structural adjustment (the main instrument in this area). At the same time, various forms of operational coordination between the Community and the Member States, whether at national or regional level, could be arranged for more specific issues such as investment promotion and protection, ways of supporting small businesses, the conditions for creating effective credit systems and ways of supporting privatisation experiments.

11 Trade relations

The Council adopted conclusions on the subject of trade relations in June 1984 and April 1986. Both dealt in particular with promoting developing countries' trade. It should be added that the first texts adopted by the Council (development) in 1974 were three resolutions relating respectively to export promotion, improvement of the generalized preferences scheme and commodity agreements. Their content is of course substantially out of date.

11.1 Main principles and guidelines

The general aim of trade promotion is the "development of trade in goods and services" in developing countries. The central idea of the conclusions in question is to encourage the incorporation of trade promotion for developing countries into wider strategies and programmes.

Priority should thus be given to measures which form part of overall policies, to assisting in the framing of such overall policies (notably "coherent trade policies"), to supporting regional programmes for the promotion of trade between developing countries, and to including marketing and distribution considerations systematically in production programmes (particularly those relating to agriculture, food production and rural development). A number of more specifically targeted types of operation are also of course mentioned (assistance for local trade-promotion organizations, training programmes, application of standards and participation in fairs and exhibitions).

11.2 Remarks on content

Because flexibility is needed to cope with the wide variety of situations (the 1986 conclusions deal with cooperation with the ACP States, with the southern and eastern Mediterranean and with Asia and Latin America), the two sets of Council conclusions deal with the basis of trade promotion, against the background of development cooperation projects and programmes.

As a result, despite the apparently very wide general objective of the conclusions, their explicit scope is in fact fairly limited, being confined to "trade promotion" and not extending to trade relations or policy.

11.3 Remarks on coordination

The two sets of Council conclusions on trade promotion devote considerably more attention to coordination than those on many other subjects. Provision is obviously made here, as is usual in all areas, for information meetings between experts, but the 1986 conclusions specify that exchanges of information should be reciprocal and take place "in an initial stage" of a project or programme. They recommend that "a suitable forum" should be established, and that it should meet regularly to "coordinate programmes, monitor action (...) and give general guidelines". These are aims which seem to go well beyond what is usual for information meetings and bear a greater resemblance to a policy coordination procedure.

In addition to these regular meetings, the conclusions recommend systematic on-the-spot consultation (with embassies and delegations). Outside the Community, coordination with some international organizations should be stepped up.

The main shortcoming of the conclusions' findings on coordination does not therefore lie, as in other instances, in vagueness concerning aims and procedures, but in the difficulty in applying those findings on the ground.

11.4 Relevance to the present and priority

In the Commission's communication on development policy in the run-up to 2000, trade relations in general occupy special place, which contrasts with the rather modest attention devoted to them in the texts adopted by the Council. Not only does trade constitute the only means mentioned of integrating the developing countries into the world economy (one of the four major objectives of development cooperation - Section 37), it is also emphasized in the conclusions of the communication as a measure of the credibility of the dialogue with the developing countries. The issue of trade is moreover dealt with in greater depth in the Annex to the communication (particularly Sections 1.1.3, 2.2.2, 3.2.2 C and 3.2.2 D; the last two of these being two of the "major themes of a development cooperation strategy").

Trade policy (the Community's in particular) towards developing countries and its compatibility with overall development cooperation policy is a complex question. It is a pity it has not been dealt with in specific terms by the Council so far, particularly since the beginning of the Uruguay Round in 1986. The success of the Round is after all vital for developing countries, particularly the smallest of them, which have a pressing need for foreign markets.

This matter, plus that of the developing countries' own trade policies, will be dealt with in a forthcoming Commission communication on cohesion between development cooperation policies and other Community policies and their effects on developing countries. This link with other Community policies was called for by the Council in its November 1992 declaration.

Another area deserving of a mention here is the world commodity market, which is still the main source of foreign funds for many developing countries, especially the poorest. In the light of the scale not just of Community trade but also of Community cooperation activities in the field of commodities (particularly in its relations with the ACP countries), it may seem surprising that the Council has not adopted a text on the issue in general and the future of commodities agreements in particular.

These considerations should undoubtedly be tied in with the prospects for regional cooperation and possibly even integration within certain groups of developing countries. This is a matter often mentioned in Council resolutions, but no specific document has yet been devoted to it. The Community is likely to be able to play a major role in this regard.

1.1.5 Conclusions and recommendations

The conclusions adopted by the Council since 1981 have dealt with only one aspect of trade relations with developing countries: that of trade promotion. As a result, there is no reasonably recent text which sets out a clear common position of the Community and its Member States on trade in general and its relationship to development policy.

The priority given to this matter is of course a result of the fact that it is vital to the fulfilment of one at least of the major objectives of development cooperation: a smooth integration of the developing countries into the world economy. Another justification is the obvious advantage of close policy coordination in this field, because of its strong connection with a policy within the Community's field of competence (Community trade policy) and also with activities related to structural adjustment programmes, which can themselves be effective only if backed by such coordination.

As is the case with other issues (debt, for example, which is discussed further on) it is obvious that a Council resolution on this issue must go beyond the framework of development cooperation policy proper. In more precise terms, the links between development cooperation and other Community policies, particularly where trade is concerned, must be set out clearly and explicitly.

12 Combating poverty

In its declaration of 18 November 1992, the Council pointed out that combating poverty was one of the four major objectives of development cooperation referred to in Article 130u of the Treaty on European Union, and asked the Commission to make proposals on the subject for transmission to the Council in time for its next session. Whatever Community strategy then emerges will provide a framework which ensures cohesion between the specific policies of the Community and of the Member States in the many areas connected with this issue.

The Commission consequently organized a meeting of Member State experts and prepared a working paper entitled "Towards Coordinated Action by the Community and the Member States in Fighting Poverty in the Developing Countries" in order to enable the Council to adopt a resolution on the matter during 1993. For that reason, poverty is not dealt with in this communication, although it is obviously a future priority from the point of view of policy coordination.

13 Development aid and foreign debt

The only texts so far adopted by the Council (development) on the external financing of development are three 1974 resolutions on the volume of aid, aid conditions and foreign debt, and a recommendation adopted in the same year on the subject of the geographical distribution of aid. These are obviously areas which will have changed enough in nearly twenty years to justify an in-depth examination with a view to adopting common positions.

In its May 1992 communication on development cooperation policy in the run-up to 2000, the Commission points out that "availability of foreign exchange has become the main brake on growth", particularly in Latin America and Asia. ODA is one of the most regular (and sometimes most substantial) sources of foreign exchange for many developing countries, while debt servicing costs involve equal or greater amounts in some cases.

The importance of the role of aid to many developing countries, as well as the seriousness of the foreign debt problem and its lasting effect on development prospects are now widely recognized; these matters are investigated in some detail in the Annex to the May 1992 communication (see Sections 1.1.4, 1.1.5, 1.3, 1.4.1.2, 1.4.2.2 and 2.2.3 in particular).

The issue of aid and debt is not mentioned in the section of the communication which sets out the major objectives of development cooperation, not even within the context of the aim of integrating the developing countries into the world economy. There is an easy explanation for this: it is not an issue which in itself constitutes an objective of development. This does not, however, alter the fact that the problem of aid and debt must be resolved as a precondition for fulfilling any development objective, not least a "smooth integration into the world economy". For this reason if no other, the Council should express an opinion on these vital issues - vital because all other specific, sectoral or horizontal aims are dependent on them to some degree. Matters such as the volume of development aid, the criteria for the geographical distribution of aid, the choice of channels for the choice of channels for distributing it, the use of tied aid and the link between aid and indebtedness are concerns which come lie upstream of policies on cooperation in specific areas.

14 Other matters covered by the Council texts

The areas listed below (14.1 to 14.3) have been dealt with only in a marginal manner and/or cannot be considered to play a role in determining priority areas for greater coordination.

14.1 Emergency aid

The Council (development) has adopted a number of resolutions on emergency aid (in particular that of November 1991, which updates that of March 1977). This highly specialized area is currently the subject of discussions between the Council and the appropriate departments of the Commission.

14.2 Cooperation with non-governmental organizations

The Council recently adopted two texts on cooperation with NGOs (a resolution in May 1991 and conclusions in November 1992). They emphasize the importance of the role of NGOs, both in terms of the support for development cooperation which they elicit from European public opinion, and in terms of the grassroots-level relations they form with the people of developing countries. The second of these is of particular importance in such areas of cooperation as emergency aid, environmental protection, promotion of the status of women and support for democracy and human rights.

These texts do not mention coordination between the Community and the Member States, which is not in fact a significant problem in this field.

14.3 Increasing public awareness

In its May 1987 conclusions on promoting public awareness of development issues in the Community, the Council mentions the opportunity for joint action on the part of the Community and Member States, on a non-binding but systematic basis. There would be meetings between Community and Member State experts in order to set up such action.

14.4 Programming and evaluation

Three sets of Council conclusions have dealt with programming in the context of Lomé III (April and November 1986) and Lomé IV (May 1992). They recap the main priorities of the Conventions and emphasize the need for greater coordination between the Commission and the Member States.

Three further sets of Council conclusions have dealt with evaluating development cooperation (May 1989, May 1990 and May 1992), following the November 1987 guidelines). All the texts stress the importance of regular monitoring and evaluation at every stage of a project or programme. They also draw attention to the need for procedures which allow for close coordination between the Commission and the Member States for exchanging information on methods and results, performing evaluations, discussing evaluation reports from the Commission and Member States and even performing evaluations jointly.

It is worth mentioning that project and programme evaluation in the context of the Lomé Conventions has been based in recent years on basic principles for each sector, approved at regular intervals by the ACP-EEC Council of Ministers.

In more general terms, as has been remarked in the case of most of the specific areas dealt with, it seems advisable for the Council to endow itself with the means to make regular checks on the practical implementation of its own resolutions by those involved.

14.5 Coordination of cooperation policy and activities

The Council adopted a resolution (June 1984) and conclusions (November 1985) on coordination in general cooperation matters. The texts, which cover cooperation with developing countries as a whole (ACP and other) are chiefly concerned with operational coordination (as opposed to policy coordination), as this is considered a priority, and lay emphasis on the implementation of sectoral policies.

"A la carte coordination on a voluntary basis" at various levels will first and foremost improve the flow of information between the Commission and Member State governments (the flow should be in both directions, but more emphasis is placed on the Commission providing the Member States with information) and bring about more regular contact between representatives on the ground. "Active" coordination to support sectoral policies is mentioned only incidentally in the 1984 Resolution. The Council agreed to return to the matter "once the programming laid down in the Lomé Convention (had) been concluded in 1986"...

It should be pointed out that the Council (development) adopted a Resolution on harmonization and coordination of the cooperation policies of the Member States in 1974. Attention was already being drawn at that time to the importance of coordinating and even bringing about a convergence of development cooperation policies, this in order to improve effectiveness.

General conclusions

As a result of the critical review of Council resolutions and conclusions adopted since 1981 and in the light of the analysis given in the Commission communication on development cooperation policy in the run-up to 2000, it has been possible to establish a number of overall priority areas which would benefit from future policy coordination between the Community and its Member States and several areas of partial or "horizontal" priority which could usefully be incorporated in policy decisions on other areas.

Three sectoral and two general development policy areas are proposed as priorities for policy coordination. Existing Council texts on four of them are unsatisfactory while the text on the fifth area (food security) needs to be updated:

- health policies, widely acknowledged as a social priority, for which existing texts are extremely inadequate and which would benefit greatly from policy and operational coordination;
- education and training policies, a top priority area for sustainable development which is not covered by any Council text and which requires coordination at least as regards the general objectives and basic criteria for formulating consistent and sustainable general policies and for the attendant choice of programmes and projects;
- food security policies, for which coordination objectives and arrangements need to be spelt out and specific priorities and aims established, possibly with regional nuances and certainly incorporating food aid more fully in long-term food strategies;
- the campaign against poverty, in itself one of the major objectives of development cooperation and which of course covers several more specific areas such as those mentioned above and also employment policies;
- external financing and debt issues, an area which to a degree affects operations in all other areas, even if it does not in itself constitute a development objective.

In several other areas, the resolutions or conclusions already adopted by the Council are still pertinent, but could usefully be supplemented by new texts on aspects so far not dealt with in sufficient detail. This is particularly true of environment policies, where coordination issues should be reviewed in the light of the UNCED results of June 1992 and emphasis laid on the effective implementation of political decisions. This comment also applies, but less urgently, to population policies and the status of women.

In addition, at least two "horizontal areas" which are of considerable importance for the major development objectives, namely employment policies and the role of the private sector, have so far not received the attention

they deserve in Council texts and could at least initially be incorporated in a wider context, such as employment as part of the campaign against poverty or the role of the private sector in structural adjustment.

Trade relations and policies are another priority area for development, particularly in terms of the objective of integration into the world economy, of which only a fairly minor aspect is covered by existing Council texts. It would, however, be better dealt with in a future communication on the links between the various Community instruments than in this communication on policy coordination.

In two major areas of general policy, namely structural adjustment and democracy and human rights, the political bases for greater coordination already exist so that priority should instead be given to pursuing and improving the operational implementation of these policies.

This also applies to all the areas for which Council (development) texts exist or will exist, whatever the degree of priority: it is essential to establish follow-up, monitoring and evaluation procedures to ensure that the Council's political decisions are given practical application.

This communication has attempted to identify the priority areas for development cooperation policy coordination, mainly by reviewing the resolutions and conclusions adopted in the past by the Council. The job is not yet done since it must be looked upon as a starting point for work on specific areas and because its conclusions, summarized above, depend very much on prior identification of development objectives and requirements. On this latter point, the main basis used here has been the Commission communication of May 1992 on development cooperation policy in the run-up to 2000, which is, of course, a very general document so that the specific content of many areas and the actual scale of development priorities need to be examined in greater detail.

Without overlooking the need for constant thinking on the general objectives of development cooperation policy, this communication points out the importance of swiftly establishing the political and operational basis for more coordinated and effective action by the Community and the Member State in the sectors and areas identified. This entails enhanced coordination of Community and Member States' policies, as provided for in the Treaty on European Union (Article 130 X).

ANNEX
LIST OF TEXTS ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL
(MINISTERS FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION)
BETWEEN 1 JANUARY 1981 AND 31 DECEMBER 1992

1. Food security

Resolution of April 1981 on hunger in the world

Resolution of November 1981 on aid to agricultural production and food aid

Resolution of November 1983 on food aid policy

Resolution of November 1984 on famine in Africa

Resolution of November 1984 on food strategies

Conclusions of November 1984 on a plan to combat the effects of an exceptional drought in the Sahel

Conclusions of May 1985 on famine in Africa

Conclusions of May 1985 on a comparative study of the cost/efficiency ratio of the various food aid products

Conclusions of April 1986 on evaluation of support for food strategies

Conclusions of November 1986 on the implementation of a recovery and rehabilitation plan for Africa

Resolution of November 1988 on food security policy in sub-Saharan Africa

Resolution of November 1989 on guidelines for food aid

Conclusions of May 1990 on food aid policy

2. Health

Conclusions of May 1987 on combating AIDS in the developing countries

Conclusions of November 1989 on combating AIDS in the developing countries

3. Environment

Resolution of November 1984 on the environmental dimension in Community development policy

Resolution of April 1986 on conservation of natural resources and countering desertification in Africa

Resolution of November 1987 on environment and development

Conclusions of November 1989 on development and environment - countering desertification

Resolution of November 1989 on other aspects of development and environment, including the management and conservation of tropical forests

Resolution of May 1990 on environment and development

Resolution of May 1990 on the development of tropical forests

Statement of November 1991 on development aspects of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)

Conclusions of November 1992 on the follow-up to UNCED - clean and efficient energy for development

4. Population

Resolution of November 1986 on population and development

Resolution of November 1992 on family planning in population policies in developing countries

5. The role and status of women

Conclusions of November 1982 concerning Community development aid in relation to the situation of women developing countries

Conclusions of November 1985 on development aid and the situation of women in developing countries

Conclusions of April 1986 on the role of women in development

Conclusions of November 1987 on women in development

Conclusions of May 1989 on women and development

Conclusions of May 1990 on women and development

8. Structural adjustment and counterpart funds

Common position of November 1987 on the special Community programme to aid certain highly indebted low-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa

Resolution of May 1988 on the economic situation and adjustment process in sub-Saharan Africa

Resolution of May 1989 on coordination in support of structural adjustment in the ACP states

Resolution of May 1991 on the use of counterpart funds generated by the various development assistance instruments

Resolution of May 1992 on structural adjustment

9. Human rights and democracy

Resolution of November 1991 on human rights, democracy and development

Resolution of November 1992 on human rights, democracy and development

10. Investment and the private sector

Conclusions of May 1987 on the role of the private sector in the development process

11. Trade

Conclusions of June 1984 on the promotion of developing countries' trade

Conclusions of April 1986 on the promotion of developing countries' trade

14.1 Emergency aid

Resolution of November 1991 on coordination of emergency aid

14.2 Cooperation with non-governmental organizations

Resolution of May 1991 on cooperation with non-governmental organizations

Resolution of November 1992 on cooperation with non-governmental organizations

14.3 Alerting public opinion in Europe

Conclusions of May 1987 on increasing public awareness in the Community of development questions

14.4 Programming and evaluation

Conclusions of April 1986 on the programming of Community aid in the ACP States under Lomé III

Conclusions of November 1986 on the programming of Community aid in the ACP States under Lomé III

Guidelines of November 1987 on the evaluation of development cooperation

Conclusions of May 1989 on cooperation evaluation

Conclusions of May 1990 on the evaluation of development cooperation

Conclusions of May 1992 on the programming report

Conclusions of May 1992 on the evaluation of Community development cooperation

14.5 Coordination of cooperation policies and operations

Resolution of June 1984 on coordination of cooperation policies and operations within the Community

Resolution of November 1985 on coordination of cooperation policies and operations

Cooperation with ALA developing countries

Conclusions of May 1989 on the assessment of financial and technical cooperation with Latin American and Asian developing countries

Conclusions of November 1989 on the review and evaluation of cooperation with the developing countries of Latin America and Asia

(Guidelines of December 1990 and February 1991 for cooperation with the developing countries of Latin America and Asia)

Development cooperation policy

Declaration of November 1992 on development cooperation policy in the run-up to 2000