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**THE FIGHT AGAINST ANTI PERSONNEL LANDMINES (APL):
PROPOSALS FOR AN INTEGRATED AND COORDINATED APPROACH**

I. CONTEXT

The May 1996 Development Council, under the Italian Presidency, adopted conclusions on the linkage between emergency aid, rehabilitation and long term development. These conclusions highlighted, inter-alia, the APL problem and emphasised the need to adopt a coordinated and integrated approach, in particular in countries where relief, rehabilitation and development programmes co-exist. Such an approach, which would cover all actions in developing countries to combat mines and their effects, should contribute to developing local capacity and guarantee a long-term commitment by donors.

Such an approach is consistent with the overall EU policy concerning APL. The EU is one of the world's leading actors in this area both in its resolution to combat and end the indiscriminate use and spread of APL and in its major contribution to international mine clearance efforts.

II. INTRODUCTION

The problem of APL is a global one which imposes enormous impediments to emergency aid and to rehabilitation and resumption of development in countries trying to recover from armed conflicts of various types. Between 65 - 110 million active mines have been laid in over 60 countries, and more than 12,000 people are killed every year by mines.

In addition to the consequences of the actual presence of mines, the fear and insecurity which they generate multiply their impact on the social and economic fabric of the affected communities. From a humanitarian and development perspective the health related impact of the mines problem can be severe in countries whose health services are already under immense strain. Addressing this reality requires a strategic approach to meet the priority needs of survivors and victim communities which will include their long term economic and social needs (especially health).

Mines also create critical logistical impediments to rehabilitation and normalisation for societies in transition from war to peace. Strategic infrastructure has traditionally been a prime target for landmines. Until they are cleared, these facilities cannot function to their full potential and economic activity is severely hindered, particularly in the agricultural sector.

Apart from the widespread extent of the APL problem and its severe socio-economic impact, there is an enormous imbalance between the costs of producing mines and the cost of clearing them (clearance costs can be more than 500 times greater than the production cost of a cheap anti-personnel mine). The scale of the problem is

aggravated by the fact that, even if sufficient funding were available, it would take decades to detect and destroy all mines. The combination of these facts thus calls for technological innovation as well as social action.

The Commission has been funding mine-related operations in a pragmatic way since 1992, using different Community resources (including EDF funds) and often replying on an ad hoc basis to requests for assistance from the states concerned or from specialised U.N. Agencies and NGOs. In 1995-96 alone, some 50 MECU in demining operations were funded in this way. More recently, as a follow-up to its joint Action of May 1995 the Council has adopted a new Joint-Action on APL which represents a further step forward at the political level.

Against this background, it is of critical importance to develop a strategy to fight APL encompassing both the mine clearance aspects as well as the relief and development aspects in a more integrated manner. Such a strategy would take into consideration the multifaceted nature of the APL problem from a humanitarian, social, economic and technological perspective.

III. OBJECTIVES

The overall objective is to achieve the total elimination of APL including the social and economic damage caused by this affliction; this involves, inter alia, working actively towards the achievement at the earliest possible date of an effective international agreement to ban these weapons worldwide.

On the development side, the APL issue can be viewed as having an acute phase as well as a long term phase. Many of the current policy approaches by donors seem to stress the acute phase more than the long term. The long term fight against APLs in the context of development is a vital task; it implies treating mine actions as a mainstream development issue and recognises the consequences of the problem for resettlement, agricultural use, economic growth and social rehabilitation in the reconstruction and development plans for mine-affected countries.

In this context, the longer-term goal is to provide the most cost effective assistance for the total elimination of APLs, including their production and stockpiling. In the shorter term, whilst seeking to ban or restrict the continued use of APL and cut off their supply to afflicted areas, ways must be found to reduce the economic and social consequences of their previous use. This may include measures:

- to assist in the establishment of well trained and equipped local mine clearance capacities;
- to foster and accelerate APL awareness campaigns;
- to sponsor mine-clearance operations, with priority for action in humanitarian emergency situations or actions which are essential for

- the implementation of vital rehabilitation, reconstruction and development programmes;
- to provide assistance towards victims of APL;
 - to reinforce capacities for identifying and marking mine fields;
 - to support intensified research and development into mine detection and clearing technology;
 - to encourage the development of a regional approach whenever this can yield economies of scale and make maximum use of skills, expertise and capacities available in the region.
 - to focus attention on those third countries which continue the irresponsible supply of APL in order to bring about an early ban on all exports or transfers

IV. MODES OF INTERVENTION

In implementing the above objectives the Commission will concentrate its efforts on the following modes of intervention :

- a) Participation in the development of a Geographical Information System (GIS) database on APL. This would allow a full exchange of information concerning the position of mine fields and the types of mine laid.
- b) Minefield survey work to precisely locate the position of minefields. This information should be installed into the database and provide the basis for mine awareness training and for planning mine clearance operations.
- c) APL awareness campaigns (such as information and warning of affected populations). The benefit of awareness and education strategies may be more immediate than that of mine clearance itself and allow an involvement of the population in their own safety long before mine clearance can take place.
- d) Training and equipment of mine clearance operators (specialists and instructors). Managing mine-clearing operations requires professional personnel well-aware of project objectives and having the professional standards and appropriate equipment required to execute them.
- e) Assistance towards the APL victims. The aim is to facilitate the full re-integration of APL victims (including refugees, displaced persons, disabled persons etc.) into society.

- f) Detection, clearance and destruction of APL. The particular aim is to prioritize funding to those actions which reinforce a Community-supported humanitarian aid, reconstruction, relief, rehabilitation and/or development programme.
- g) Research and development in technological innovation and exchange of technology. Existing manual techniques of mine clearance are painstakingly slow and prohibitively expensive. New techniques are under development, for example in the field of mechanical mine clearance and in the area of improving detection, and many of these need to be assessed and tested in a field context. In addition, further resources need to be devoted to research and development¹.

V. CONDITIONS FOR ACTION

The Commission proposes to consider interventions (other than for research projects) in the APL field, if

1. an acute humanitarian emergency situation is to be faced, or
2. in any other situation if the following conditions are fulfilled:
 - a) The authorities of the beneficiary countries must:
 - immediately cease further use of, and trade in, APL
 - take steps to cease the manufacture and stockpiling of APL.
 - undertake to support the proposed action.
 - b) There exists a minimal level of security and a commitment to the achievement of social and political stability.

The above conditions will apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to operations at a regional level, or if appropriate, to operations in parts of a country which are considered safe.

¹ In this respect, it should be noted that the Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) has been engaged in studies and research related to mine detection and has made proposals for the development of a multi-sensor mine detection system. DGIA is funding feasibility studies as the possible initial stage of such a project.

VI GUIDELINES FOR ACTION

Placing APL action in the mainstream humanitarian aid, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development agenda, will require devising proper appraisal techniques which can be applied to mine clearance, similar to the way, for example, that other development activities are appraised.

In considering specific proposals, other than emergency or research projects, the Commission will bear in mind the following factors :

1. The project should be properly prioritised and integrated in the global development framework of the country or region in question.
2. The project should be clearly integrated within a national APL programme coordinated either by the beneficiary government or by an international institution mandated for that purpose.
3. The aim should be for the project to be taken over, in due course, by the beneficiary country itself, in order to enhance local capacity building and the sustainability of the project.
4. In the specific area of mine clearance operations, the objective should be to provide quantified benefits in :
 - reducing casualties;
 - increasing economic activity;
 - allowing the sustainable reintegration of refugees and the return of displaced people (through, for example, the opening of communications and availability of accommodation and agricultural land)

VII TOWARDS A COORDINATED AND INTEGRATED APPROACH

Within the context of the overall policies of the EU, wherever possible the operations supported by the Commission will take account of action undertaken under the auspices of the UN, by EU Member States and by other donors, and will be co-ordinated through appropriate mechanisms in the following way:

1) GLOBAL PLANNING :

- The aim will be to identify areas of priority need and, recognising the important role of UN-DHA (United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs), create a broadly agreed international planning strategy. Periodic meetings will take place between the Commission, EU Member States, major donors and the UN, as appropriate.

2) COORDINATION :

- The CODUN Working Group (Global Disarmament Group Arms Control) is recognised as the mechanism for on-going coordination of horizontal policy aspects of the APL question between the Commission and Member States.
- In the context of this wider EU policy on APL, a mechanism for coordination of developmental aspects of the APL question is required.
- The development of the central GIS database, as foreseen in para IVa above, will provide a mechanism for collating and exchanging mine information on a global basis, and will enhance planning and coordination between the Commission, Member States, and the international community.
- In-country coordination between Commission Delegations, Member States Representations, host nation authorities and all relevant agencies should be assured.

3) SUPERVISION :

- all projects should be properly monitored to ensure continuing relevance and observance of the contract terms. Where Member States and the Commission are working in the same area, the possibility of joint evaluation should be explored.
- quality standards should be devised and adopted in line with the conclusions reached at the Copenhagen Conference on Mine Clearance Standards and Technology (July 1996).

VIII. GEOGRAPHICAL DIMENSION AND FINANCIAL ASPECTS

Africa is a region seriously affected by APLs, particularly the SADC (Southern African Development Community) region. Angola faces a problem of gigantic proportions with probably more than 12 million mines scattered across the country. Mozambique has a similar problem with estimates of over 2 million mines. Zimbabwe has an area on its eastern border of more than one million acres where cultivation and development has been prevented for more than 20 years due to minefields laid during the time of conflict. On a lesser scale the APL problem is present in other African countries, notably Chad, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Liberia, Namibia, Rwanda, Somalia and Sudan.

In Asia, Afghanistan, Cambodia, and Laos are some of the most extensively mined countries in the world. In Afghanistan, the total mined area is estimated at 500 km², mostly minefields laid during Soviet occupation. Amidst continuing inter-factional hostilities, there are reports of new minefields being laid, which are an additional

burden for the uprooted population. In Laos unexploded ordnance (UXO) contamination still affects up to 50% of the country's territory. Cambodia has the highest ratio of mines (10 million) to population (8 million).

In Latin America, Central America is the region most affected by APLs, as a consequence of the civil wars in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua.

In Europe, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia are areas in urgent need of assistance, where the suspected presence of some 6 million mines is a constant threat, particularly to the civilian population in its efforts to return to normality, and a major hindrance to reconstruction.

In the period 1995/1996 some 50 MECU from the European Community budget, as well as the European Development Fund (EDF), is being devoted to APL actions through-out the world. In the SADC region alone, 17 MECU have been allocated to mine-clearance activities, mainly in Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. From budget line B7-615 "EU actions concerning anti-personnel mines" the Commission is committing up to 10 MECU for specific APL actions in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Laos, Angola and Mozambique. As far as humanitarian aid is concerned, apart from the supply of orthopaedic equipment or other medical actions in favour of mine-victims humanitarian demining actions are being financed in 1995/96 for a total of 4.800.000 ECU. These actions relate primarily to Cambodia and Iraq, but also to a less extent concern Angola and Afghanistan.

For 1997 there will be continuing financial support from CFSP funds to support the UN Voluntary Trust Fund (3.5 MECU) and an additional 3.5 MECU to support other initiatives of the Union. In addition, in order to implement the proposed coordinated and integrated APL policy, it will also be necessary to ensure continuing large-scale Commission support to APL initiatives. This implies that adequate funding can be made available both through budgetary means, and in respect of ACP countries, via the EDF.

IX. CONCLUSION :

The policy guidelines and criteria for intervention referred to above should be endorsed as a contribution to the goal of achieving a coordinated and integrated approach to APL policy at EU level, and in accordance with the conclusions of the Development Council of 28 May 1996. As far as their application on a geographical basis is concerned, the following conclusions can be drawn :

ACP : In Africa the area which appears best suited to apply these policy guidelines is the SADC region. It combines wide-spread mine pollution with a general problem of refugees, returnees and displaced persons. All this takes place against a regional background of slowly emerging political and economic stability. Furthermore, this is an area where mine action can be very clearly positioned in the continuum between emergency aid, rehabilitation and long term development. SADC leaders have recently demonstrated their desire to deal with this common problem on a regional basis. In this respect the Ministerial Conference of SADC and the EU, held in Windhoek on

14 - 15 October 1996 agreed to combat and end the indiscriminate use and spread throughout the world of APLs as well as to contribute to solving the problems already caused by these weapons. As a concrete measure the Conference explored ways of improving the effectiveness of landmine clearance operations. This initiative could be carried forward through the preparation of a SADC programme of action and the pooling of expertise from the SADC and the EU. It is therefore suggested that within the ACP context, APL action should be concentrated in first instance in this region, without excluding the possibility of interventions in other ACP regions.

ASIA: The European Commission will continue its policy of active involvement in mine clearance activities in Afghanistan, Cambodia and Laos. Mine clearance in Afghanistan remains an important pre-condition for refugee return and resettlement in their home towns and villages. Moreover, emergency clearance of recent APL fields near shifting front-lines in and around Kabul, remains a humanitarian priority, considering the high daily casualty rate. With the continuing widespread use of APL, steps need to be taken by the EU and the International Community to prevent further dissemination.

The socio-economic recovery of Cambodia is highly dependent on demining of extensively cultivated areas and access roads. Recent progress towards national reconciliation and the foreseeable end of the conflict with the Khmer Rouge should allow the acceleration of expansion of mine clearance activities.

In Laos UXO clearance goes in parallel with the Government's firm determination to adopt a comprehensive strategy for the elimination of UXO and the reduction of UXO-related accidents.

In Latin America, as in the past, the European Commission will examine the case for intervening in mine clearance activities, if this is necessary in the framework of EU support for the rehabilitation of refugees or displaced persons.

In Europe, specifically in Bosnia and in Croatia, besides the need to establish a well-trained and equipped cadre of mine clearance personnel, there will be a continuing need to provide mine awareness education, to assist victims, and to support mine clearance actions, particularly those which are related to Community-sponsored reconstruction programmes.

