

“United Nations System-wide Coherence: The Next Steps”

4-5 March 2008
Vienna International Centre
Vienna, Austria

Provisional Annotated Agenda and Programme

Tuesday, 4 March

9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Welcome remarks – Mr. Kandeh Yumkella, UNIDO
Director-General

Keynote Speech – Deputy Secretary-General
(confirmed)

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. **Session 1 – Intergovernmental process on system-
wide coherence: Progress and next steps**

Following the General Assembly debate on the report of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence (16-17 April 2007), the UNGA President established an intergovernmental process to consider the recommendations of the Panel. A series of informal debates and briefings (June - August 2007) led by the Permanent Representatives of Barbados and Luxembourg as Co-Chairs culminated in a report recommending, inter alia, the continuation of consultations. The Permanent Representatives of Ireland and Tanzania to the United Nations were requested to take the consultations forward during the 63rd session of the Assembly. They will provide an overview of where the process stands, what the challenges are and what they see as the next steps in the intergovernmental consultative process.

Chair: High-level official from UNIDO Member State
(to be confirmed)

Statements by:

Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United
Nations, New York (to be confirmed)

Permanent Representative of Tanzania to the United
Nations, New York (to be confirmed)

The presentations will be followed by comments and observations from the floor.

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 pm. **Session 2: Perspectives on Advancing UN System-wide Coherence**

Since the launching of the “Delivering as One” pilot initiative in December 2006 – January 2007, the specialized agencies, funds and programmes have been actively involved in shaping a collective approach to country-level coherence. This proved to be particularly challenging with the multiplicity and diversity of mandates, governance structures, financing modalities, management structures, programming methodologies, and work cultures of the different organizations involved. The session will provide an opportunity for heads of organizations of the system to share their experiences and perspectives on how they worked to meet this challenge while maintaining their organizational identity and autonomy and how they see the process unfolding in the future.

Chairperson: Deputy Secretary-General (proposed)

Statements by:

Director-General, UNIDO (confirmed)

Administrator, UNDP (invited)

Director-General, WHO (to be confirmed)

Director-General, FAO (to be confirmed)

Director-General, ILO (to be confirmed)

Director-General, UNESCO (confirmed)

President, IFAD (invited)

Executive Director, UNFPA (invited)

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Lunch hosted by the Director-General of UNIDO

2:30 – 4:00 p.m.

Session 3 – Ensuring a comprehensive and strategically focused UN system response to national development priorities

A key goal of the “Delivering as One” pilot initiative is to achieve greater strategic focus and coherence in the United Nations system programmatic response to country-level needs while making the full range of capacities and expertise available in the system to the governments concerned. The session will examine the experience of the pilot countries in achieving an appropriate balance between strategic focus and inclusiveness. It will also assess the extent to which the “One Programmes”, as currently formulated, constitute a strategic, integrated and well-prioritized response by the United Nations system to national priorities.

Chair and lead discussant: Representative from pilot country (proposed)

Discussants:

Representatives from pilot countries

Director, UNDGO

Representatives from UN system organizations

General discussion (45 minutes)

4:00 – 4:20 p.m. Coffee break

4:20 – 6:00 p.m. **Session 4 – Funding the pilots for coherence**

Funding is a critical part of the “Delivering as One” initiative. The “One Budgetary Framework” lists the core and non-core resources, i.e., regular budget and extra-budgetary resources, of the participating United Nations organizations in the country. Local coherence funds – the “One Fund” – are intended to finance the unfunded requirements of the “One Programme”. The session will address the following questions: (i) How and to what extent has the “Delivering as One” pilot initiative influenced the policies and priorities of the donor countries? (ii) To what extent are the donors pooling their voluntary contributions and making unearmarked contributions to fund the unfunded portion of the “One Programmes”? (iii) How are the funds under the “One Fund” to be allocated and administered? (iv) What should be done to avoid adding interventions to the “One Programmes” for the sake of accessing the coherence funds and diluting the strategic focus of the “One Programmes”?

Chair and lead discussant: Representative from donor country

Discussants:

Representatives from pilot countries

Aid agency representative/s

UNIDO member state representative

Representative from UN system organizations

General discussion (45 minutes)

6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Reception hosted by the Director-General of UNIDO

Wednesday, 5 March

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 p.m. **Session 5 – Empowering the Resident Coordinator**

The United Nations system is often criticized for speaking with many voices at the country level. Not only is this seen as a sign of fragmentation but also as a burden to host governments who find themselves having to deal with multiple organizations. The prescribed solution is to empower the Resident Coordinator to speak on behalf of the United Nations system, lead the country teams (composed of the representatives of United Nations organizations present in the country) in shaping and allocating resources to the “One Programme” and hold members of the country team accountable for achieving the results/outcomes agreed upon in the “One Programme”. However, the ability of the Resident Coordinator to lead the country teams effectively hinges on his/her independence and impartiality. Most Resident Coordinators are also Resident Representatives of UNDP and since UNDP is the manager of the Resident Coordinator system, there is a perception of conflict of

interest in the roles that the Resident Coordinators are asked to perform. UNDP has however started to put an “institutional firewall” in place by, among other steps, appointing UNDP Country Directors in a number of countries to assume responsibility for UNDP programmes, leaving the Resident Coordinator free to focus on his/her coordination responsibilities.

The session will examine the nature of this “institutional firewall”, how it is expected to operate and what further steps UNDP is taking to separate its programme implementation functions from its role as manager of the Resident Coordinator system. The session will also address the following questions: (i) What authority are the participating United Nations system organizations expected to delegate to the Resident Coordinator? (ii) What would be the role and responsibilities of the representatives of the participating United Nations organizations vis-à-vis the Resident Coordinator? (iii) To whom will the Resident Coordinator be accountable? What would be his/her accountability to the Government, to the donors, UNDP and to United Nations organizations represented in the country?

Chair and lead discussant: UNDP

Discussants:

Representatives from pilot countries

UNIDO member state representative

Representatives from UN system

General discussion (45 minutes)

11:00 – 12:30 p.m.

Session 6 – Harmonizing business models and practices

A major challenge that has emerged from the experience of the pilot countries is the difficulty of harmonizing the business practices and procedures of the participating United Nations organizations. The funds and programmes have increasingly harmonized their programme and project management guidelines and their administrative policies and procedures. The specialized agencies, on the other hand, continue to apply a different “business model”, i.e., operating modality, based primarily on policies and implementing rules adopted by their governing bodies. In addition, they are required to conform to donor-mandated guidelines and conditions in implementing donor-funded programmes and projects. The plethora of business practices resulting from this welter of policies and requirements has made it particularly difficult to harmonize business models and practices at the country level. But there is a widely held view that this difficulty should not be allowed to block progress towards the “Delivering as One” in the pilot countries. There is also the issue of sharing administrative services and operating from common premises, i.e., One UN House, to minimize operating costs and provide an environment more conducive to inter-agency cooperation. Against this background, the session will take stock of the work being done by the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) of CEB and by UNDG to harmonize business practices across the United Nations system. It will also address the key question: What decisions on business practices are required of the governing bodies of the system, system-wide inter-agency bodies,

i.e., CEB/HLCM, and from headquarters of United Nations system organizations to support continued progress towards the “Delivering as One” in the pilot countries?

Chair and lead discussant: HLCM Chair or Vice-Chair
(proposed)

Discussants:

Representatives from pilot countries

UNIDO member state representative

Representatives from the UN system

General discussion (45 minutes)

12:30 – 12:45 p.m.

Closing remarks – UNIDO Director-General

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