

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

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DG’s Statement

Session 2: Perspectives on Advancing UN System-wide Coherence

Thank you, Deputy Secretary-General.

Nearly two years ago, in May 2006, UNIDO hosted the High-level Panel’s consultations on the Resident Coordinator system. During those consultations, I said that three important elements held the key to greater coherence at the country level. These were:

National leadership and ownership of the process;

Inclusive approach by the UN system; and

An independent and impartial Resident Coordinator system

The stocktaking exercise carried out by the pilot countries at the end of 2007 showed that, in different degrees, we are making headway in all three. We are encouraged that the pilot governments are firmly in the driver’s seat. Genuine efforts are being made to be as inclusive as possible and UNDP is beginning to put a system in place to ensure the independence and impartiality of the Resident Coordinators. But the biggest change, I believe, is in the mood and the mindset of UN agencies. We are communicating more and our conversation is more positive than ever. And we are finding new and better ways to work together. But we are not there yet if we are to measure our progress against our ultimate goals -- having a greater impact and reducing the costs of doing business with the UN.

What do I see as the next steps? Firstly, we need to build on gains already made to ensure that the momentum of change is not lost. This will require mutually reinforcing actions at three levels. At the country-level, national governments should continue to lead with the increased involvement of line ministries. UN country teams should organize themselves in a way that would facilitate delivery of their individual and collective commitments under the One Programme. And the Resident Coordinators should begin to function as the facilitator, coordinator and leader of the UN family by completely divesting themselves of any responsibility for programme implementation. At headquarters level, the management of participating organizations should take a closer look at the resources and decision-making authority they should assign to the field. And at the intergovernmental level, governing bodies of the system should set clear direction to guide the work of the UN family and provide leadership to the coherence process.

The message from our governing bodies thus far has been that the “Delivering as One” pilot initiative is fine for some but not for all countries. Circumstances and requirements vary widely from country to country and one size can never fit all. It is all the more important that we learn what works and under what circumstances when extending the lessons of the pilots to other countries.

Coherence is not just about getting our act together at the country level. It is also about how the UN family brings its collective weight to bear on the big issues of the day. Many of those issues are global in character and require a global response. The eradication of poverty and hunger, climate change and environmental protection, conflict prevention

and peace building, and indeed all the internationally agreed development goals call for a global response. It is here where system-wide coherence can make a major difference.

By effectively combining our capacities for awareness raising and advocacy, analysis and advice and convening, consensus building and norm-setting, we can play a pivotal role in addressing the big issues of the day. I believe this is what many of us are already doing in our areas of work. In the case of UNIDO, our approach has been to work closely with UN and non-UN partners to multiply the impact of our activities. This is especially the case in the field of energy where UNIDO is leading UN-Energy. We are also collaborating closely with UNCTAD, WTO, ITC, UNDP and FAO on trade and productive capacity building. Similarly, our partnership with UNEP on cleaner production has been long standing and we are currently working closely with FAO and IFAD on rural development and agro-business. I should also mention our collaboration with ILO, UNDP and the UN on youth employment in the Mano River Union countries.

Much has already been done to bring greater coherence to our work. But there is a great deal more work ahead of us if we are to continue delivering as one, whether at the country level or on global issues. If we stay on track, I have no doubt we'll eventually get to our common destination.