

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL

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ADDRESS TO THE HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM-WIDE

COHERENCE: THE NEXT STEPS

Vienna, 4 March 2008

I would like to draw your attention first of all to the foundation for our work, the 2007 Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review, which has given the UN system a significant mandate to become more coherent, efficient and effective. The TCPR recognizes the central role of the Resident Coordinators in improving the effectiveness of the UN system's response to national development priorities. It also emphasizes that the RCs, supported by the UN Country Teams, should report to national authorities on progress made against the results agreed in the UN Development Assistance Framework. On both counts, the TCPR emphasizes that the RC should play a central role in ensuring that the UN's activities are aligned and accountable to national development strategies. This is essential if we are to create more coherent UN Country Teams.

Excellencies,

I also think it's important that the TCPR formally establishes the UNDAF as a key instrument for bringing the UN system together in a more coherent and effective way that is aligned with national development priorities. The TCPR also emphasises that in pursuing coherence and effectiveness, the system should strive for inclusiveness, drawing on the important mandates and expertise of all UN agencies in supporting national priorities.

These mandates from the TCPR, as well as others, provide us with guidance from the Member States as we endeavour together to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of our work.

I look forward to hearing more from Ambassadors Kavanagh and Mahiga on the General Assembly's continuing discussions on coherence. And I commend them for the constructive leadership they have shown in moving the process forward.

The timing of our meeting is also opportune as we can now more concretely discuss the progress made towards strengthening UN coherence, as well as the challenges that remain, with the benefit of the stocktaking process reports that have reflected on the Pilot experience thus far. From the feedback from the Governments and from the UN Country Teams, we can already look to a number of lessons learned.

Of primary importance, national ownership and leadership is an essential component of increased coherence. It's clear that we can only support national priorities by working together as one UN system, bringing together our respective capacities and expertise.

I am very pleased that by all accounts -- from UN Country Teams, UN agencies and, most importantly, from governments themselves -- the Pilot experience has indeed demonstrated a more significant alignment with national development plans.

I am particularly pleased to hear that through the Pilots, agencies were able to promote their mandates within the framework of UN agency cooperation, and that technical and advisory roles in their respective substantive mandates were reconfirmed, accepted, and strengthened. And I have also heard that the Pilots have encouraged many UN organisations to introduce internal adjustments to adapt to the changes stemming from this process.

Dear Colleagues,

At the same time, we would be remiss not to acknowledge the challenges that remain for the UN system as a whole, and certainly for the specialised agencies -- the significant time and staff requirements; the different business models that create an inherent disadvantage for funding and participation; different cycles for programme planning, and limited experience with programming tools such as the UNDAF, to mention a few.

As we move forward I would like to see even greater inclusiveness and more progress in how specialized agencies adjust their planning and budgeting systems to support robustly the Delivering as One pilots and greater UN coherence at the country level. We need to have Oneness in our own agency to support Delivering as One more effectively. All this we must do while keeping national development priorities permanently in mind.

It is my hope that over the next two days this meeting will allow us to reflect on how we can move forward, together, to concretely resolve these remaining challenges before us. The expectations on us are high, but the stakes are even higher. We must not forget that our paramount challenge is to demonstrate that true coherence and effectiveness in the UN ultimately leads to greater impact in improving the lives of the people in the countries we serve. We owe them nothing less.

Thank you for your attention and I wish you fruitful deliberations.

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