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High-level dialogue on UN system-wide coherence 4 – 5 March 2008, Vienna

Statement by Slovenia on behalf of the European Union

(as delivered, 4 March 2008)

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. [The Candidate Countries Croatia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* and Turkey, the Countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia, the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Moldova, Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine, associate themselves with this statement.]
2. The EU commends UNIDO's proactive stance as regards UN reform and thanks the Director General, Dr. Kandeh Yumkella for taking the initiative in organizing this timely meeting to consider the way forward on System-wide Coherence and welcome the fact that this debate is taking place in Vienna.
3. The EU offers its full support to the two Co-Chairs, the Ambassador of Ireland, Mr Paul Kavanagh, and the Ambassador of the United Republic of Tanzania, Dr Augustine P. Mahiga, in steering the System-wide Coherence discussion during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly.
4. The informal consultations and briefings on System-wide Coherence so far showed the complexity of the issues being addressed. Not surprisingly there were differences of

opinion on the High Level Panel report. But there was widespread agreement on the goal of better delivery at country level and a better response by UN bodies to the needs of beneficiary countries. The EU has already strongly supported the new Co-Chairs' bottom-up approach as presented at the Consultations in the UN General Assembly on 7 February. Furthermore, the EU welcomes the Co-Chairs' Programme of Work, their intention to visit some of the pilot countries and to convene open consultations in the UN General Assembly.

5. A lot of effort is being made by Governments of the eight One UN pilot countries and the UN to move forward on the "Four Ones" (One Program, One Leader, One Fund and, where appropriate One Office) so as to accord with country's specific requirements and circumstances. The EU supports these on-going efforts.
6. If we are to see any progress in overcoming the development challenge, all stakeholders have to carry out their respective roles:
 - The UN should act in a coordinated and coherent manner;
 - Pilot countries should define and enhance ownership of their national development strategies;
 - The donors should endorse the "Delivering as One" process.
7. The first assessment of the "Delivering as One" process is taking place as an informal stocktaking of key emerging issues, lessons learnt and recommendations which will indicate the progress achieved in pilot countries from the first year of implementation.
8. Pilot countries have stressed that the design of the "Delivering as One" program is in line with defined national development strategies. Government leadership has been strengthened. The reforms are changing the way in which UN agencies work with Governments, helping to increase the impact of projects, delivering them in a more cohesive manner, increasing transparency, decreasing overlap and transactions costs.

9. Challenges nevertheless remain. Pilot countries have highlighted the need for an enhanced role for the Resident coordinator. They have warned of continued fragmentation of projects, resulting from the activities of agencies and donors. Greater efforts are needed to develop more strategic and integrated joint agency programming. Specialized agencies and other UN entities are strongly encouraged to give their full support to the process, take measures that facilitate and further develop intra-UN partnerships and joint approaches. UNDP's role is vital in developing a "firewall" showing a clear divide between coordination functions of the Resident coordinator and operational activities of the UNDP. Effective funding of the delivering as One program presents further challenges. The EU believes Member States need to be fully involved in achieving the objective of ensuring adequate, predictable and timely core funding to those agencies committed to reform. At the same time, the balance between core and non-core resources needs to be improved, strengthening the efficiency and effectiveness of the UN at country level.

10. To deliver as one, UN country teams should be able to provide a coherent approach to cross-cutting issues, such as sustainable development, gender equality and human rights. As recalled at the World Summit in 2005, human rights are an integral part of UN activities, and the EU reiterates its strong commitment in this regard. No less importance has been given to the strengthening of the UN gender perspective. The EU would also like to reiterate that accountability for gender-mainstreaming and woman's empowerment should be given higher priority within UN agencies. At the same time, we must not forget that for the achievement of MDGs, promotion of gender equality is one of the agreed steps.

11. Harmonizing and simplifying business practices and governance at the centre is crucial for an improved functioning of the UN development system. UN system processes such as the Chief Executives Board, United Nations Development Group and the United Nations Evaluation Group, must be better utilized to raise the collective capacity of the UN to

work in a fully joined up manner. Issues such as duplication and effectiveness in inter-agency coordination across the system need to be properly addressed.

12. Much of the early phase of the reform process has been focused on planning and programming. The coming stage needs to move the focus to implementation. The success at country level depends on the continuing dedication of the Governments to the process and the support of the donor community. The experiences and views of the pilots and other countries currently working with the UN to improve aid effectiveness and reduce duplication will also play a crucial role in this on-going process.

13. The EU welcomes the opportunity to engage in an interactive debate with representatives of the UN member states and the UN organizations on how to move the progress forward in achieving greater coherence. Consultations, which will be held in the coming months, should build on already existing processes, including the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR). We believe that the issues identified in the program for this meeting are very pertinent to the debate on System-wide Coherence and we look forward to a fruitful discussion.

* Croatia and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilization and Association Process.