

Madam Deputy Secretary General,
Mr Director General,
Mr Chairman, Vice-Minister,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sincere thanks are due to UNIDO, and in particular to you Director General Yumkella, for organising this timely and well focused high level discussion on the UN System-wide Coherence.

I am sure that our deliberations will benefit a great deal from the pertinent key note statement of Deputy Secretary General Migiro.

My colleague as Co-Chair of the related effort underway in the United Nations General Assembly, Ambassador Mahiga of the United Republic of Tanzania, and I are very grateful for the opportunity to participate jointly in such a practical and results oriented gathering. From these exchanges among experts, practitioners and interested parties we hope to gain many insights.

I have been asked to focus our brief opening remarks on the consultations which are continuing in the General Assembly under the auspices of its President for the 62nd Session Dr Srjan Kerim. In doing so, I hope that you will allow me to recap some aspects of the recent history of this matter which are key to any proper understanding of the work underway in the follow up to the High Level Panel Report.

Following these remarks, Ambassador Mahiga will deliver a further joint statement focusing specifically on ‘UN Delivering as One’ and in

particular on the impressions which we have gathered in the course of our continuing visit to several of the pilot countries.

At the outset it is strongly to be recognised that the family of development-related organisations, Agencies and Funds and Programmes of the United Nations brings together a **unique** wealth of expertise and resources on global issues. The World Summit of 2005 expressly commended their extensive experience and expertise in diverse and complementary fields of activity as well as their important contributions to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the other development objectives established by United Nations conferences. The Summit Outcome adopted unanimously by Heads of State and Government also sought to strengthen System-wide Coherence through, inter alia the following measures;

First, with regard to **policy**, it sought to strengthen linkages between the normative work of the United Nations System and its operational activities and to coordinate the representation of Member States on the governing boards of the various development and humanitarian agencies so as to ensure that they might pursue coherent policies in assigning mandates and allocating resources throughout the system; and

Secondly, with regard to **operational activities**, the outcome document sought the implementation of “current reforms” aimed at a more effective, efficient, coherent, coordinated and better-performing United Nations country presence with a strengthened role for the senior resident official, whether Special Representative, Resident Coordinator or Humanitarian Coordinator. This would include appropriate authority,

resources and accountability, and a common management, programming and monitoring framework.

The Summit also invited the Secretary-General of the day to launch work to “further strengthen” the management and coordination of United Nations operational activities so that they could make an even more effective contribution to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and to make proposals for “more tightly managed entities” in the fields of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment.

These then were the parameters which were established by the 2005 World Summit for the work which was to be carried out by the High Level Panel on System-wide Coherence. I have, I hope, made the point sufficiently that the conclusions of the World Summit and the subsequent work of the High Level Panel did not come about in a vacuum as regards UN reform and renewal. The language used in the Summit Outcome Document was no accident. It pointed to a situation in which reform and renewal were already contemplated, or underway at various levels.

For example, the Summit coincided with but did not itself inspire the establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund, a crucial element of humanitarian assistance delivery reform which, together with the cluster approach, has made the UN the key global humanitarian assistance provider. The 2004 Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR) had already pointed the way toward significant advances in establishing a more coherent and effective UN presence at operational level.

On 9 November 2006, the High Level Panel presented its report which responded to the guidelines provided by the Summit Outcome and to the views gathered by the Panel in the course of their work. Again, I believe it is important to see the vision of the Panel as an amalgamation; of guidelines as articulated by the 2005 Summit; of tracks or directions which were already being followed under such as the TCPR and decisions on humanitarian effectiveness; and of views from groups of Member States concerning further initiatives which could bear fruit. Only by retaining in our minds the diversity of the Panel's sources, can we foresee how a response by the UN system as a whole can be planned, prioritised and given a chance of widespread acceptance.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I do not intend to rehearse the contents of the High Level Panel report itself, nor of the subsequent report of the current Secretary-General, nor indeed of the open-ended consultations on the matter conducted last year during the 61st Session of the General Assembly by our distinguished predecessors as Co-Chairs, the Permanent Representatives in New York of Barbados and Luxembourg. I trust that colleagues and delegations will be sufficiently familiar with all of these.

I would like to recall, however, that during the current 62nd Session of the General Assembly, in the period October to December 2007, negotiations resulted in consensus agreement on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR). This Review is the General Assembly's principal opportunity to discuss and offer guidelines for the operational activities of the UN's development system. For anyone not familiar with its terms I recommend a reading. Issues related to accountability, funding, gender,

the role of the CEB, are all addressed. The TCPR underscores the General Assembly's appreciation of the shift from a UN System that intervenes in a given "recipient country" to bring about a given change, and becomes much more an organisation that seeks to enhance the capacities of governments and of institutions in programme countries, whilst aligning UN System activities with the development and poverty reduction agenda of the country concerned.

With the successful adoption of the TCPR resolution, for which a great debt is owed to the Swiss facilitator, the way was clear for the General Assembly to resume its consideration of the issues highlighted by the High Level Panel Report.

On 11 January of this year, the President of the General Assembly informed the member States that he had appointed Ambassador Mahiga and myself as Co-Chairs of resumed consultations on the System-wide Coherence. The President asked us to "work towards an agreement on the modalities for implementing greater coherence across the United Nation development activities system". We were asked by the President of the Assembly to report back to him in June.

We convened the first open consultations for all member States in New York on 7 February to take stock of progress made thus far. Ambassador Mahiga outlined on that occasion our thinking with regard to how we should proceed. His statement has been distributed widely.

We indicated to member States in informal plenary format on 7 February that in our view it would be extremely difficult for the Assembly to move ahead simultaneously in a comprehensive manner in its consideration of

all aspects of the High Level Panel Report. The breadth, depth and not least the great number of recommendations contained in the Report led us to this view. At the same time, we said that we understood the reluctance of many member States to proceed on a selective basis, if the selection in question was to respond exclusively, or even preponderantly, to priorities that had been voiced in just one part of the membership.

We proposed to member States that we should take a pragmatic, empirical and transparent approach. We would concentrate in the first instance on those areas where progress has been registered over the preceding months: that is, first on ‘Delivering as One’ at country level, and secondly in the context of the Chief Executives Board (CEB) where the Secretary-General or the Deputy Secretary-General and their System-wide colleagues were addressing, inter alia the harmonisation of business practices. We would listen to the views of member States before determining which other specific issues we would recommend be taken up in further plenary consultations. We asked for the trust, as well as the support, of member States as we look towards a Report that we will need to write in June. It would be our firm intention to produce a report that will sit well or sufficiently well with all parts of the membership of the United Nations.

We undertook to come forward with an initial work programme that took account of the views expressed openly by member States and that was consistent with the approach we had outlined.

At the 7 February consultation it became clear that in addition to the question of Delivering as One and the work of the CEB, inter alia, on the Harmonisation of business practices and so forth, the issues of Funding,

Governance and Gender were predominant in the minds of many participating delegations. I am pleased to be able to say that in the 7 February informal consultations, the Membership signalled that it was willing to see the Co-Chairs proceed on the basis proposed and this we are doing. Accordingly, subsequent to the 7 February consultations, indeed within the past week, we have written to the membership proposing open consultations with respect to Delivering as One, (28 March) Funding (7 April), Governance (17 April) and, in due course, Gender. In early May we look forward to the Secretary-General or his senior colleague briefing the member States on progress underway at the CEB.

As I have said earlier, the next open consultation in the General Assembly, on 28 March will focus on Delivering as One. In preparation for that discussion and as foreseen, the Co-Chairs have been engaged in working visits to several of the pilot countries in this process. Ambassador Mahiga, on behalf of us both, would now bring you up to date in this regard.

As Co-Chairs, we are aware that the various topics which will be taken up in open consultations of the UN membership over the coming months and weeks ahead are both complex and challenging. This is why we have appealed to member States to refrain from simply, or even largely repeating the positions which they adopted last year – a period in which the Assembly was unable to pronounce on the contents of the High Level Panel Report. Instead, we have asked Member States to help their Co Chairs, Tanzania and Ireland, to project into the middle ground, where compromise is necessary and agreement is to be sought on a way forward acceptable to all.

Thank you

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