

# Rwanda at High Level Panel on "UN System-wide Coherence: The Next Steps"

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This note summarizes Rwanda's intervention in Session 3 Panel by Dr. Jean-Francois Ruhashyankiko, Senior Economic Advisor to the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, chair of "One UN" Steering Committee in Rwanda.

## **Part 1: Why "One UN" makes sense for Rwanda?**

At the risk of stating the obvious, few numbers are worth keeping in mind to motivate One UN. Before the initiative, 85% UN resources were devoted to stand-alone projects, according to Rwanda's Aid Policy Baseline Study; resources amounted to about US\$30 million per annum with a total of 400 staff, less than 10% senior; UN agencies ran up to 30 parallel implementation units (PIU) in Rwanda, 2/3 of all PIUs existing in Rwanda; transaction costs were substantial with UN system comprising 10 resident agencies, 4 agencies represented by the UNDP, and 8 non-resident agencies.

## **Part 2: Accomplishments as a pilot country**

**One Program:** Among all eight pilots, Rwanda had the unique advantage of having the elaboration of the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) for 2008-12 coinciding with the elaboration of the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), also for 2008-12. EDPRS is designed to make significant progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the objectives of the national long-term vision, called "Rwanda Vision 2020". Hence, UNDAF was made fully aligned with national priorities. In addition, the Common Operational Document (COD) covers 100% of normal activities of UN agencies. The COD agreed by all UN Country Team has been approved by the Government of Rwanda (GoR). The COD led to specific/detailed Annual Work Plans developed by specialized agencies with relevant expertise in line ministries and focusing on (a) research & assessment; (b) capacity development; (c) policy formulation & advocacy; (d) equipment & infrastructure; (e) supply. Overall, the UNDAF and COD will cover the following thematic areas: (i) governance; (ii) health, including HIV, nutrition and population control; (iii) education; (iv) environment; and (v) productive social protection.

**One Budgetary Framework:** UNCT in Rwanda has established a transparent budget of US\$488 million for 5 years, split between core funds (US\$155 million), vertical funds (US\$178 million) and new/additional “One Fund” (US\$ 155 million). Such addition funds, while not the purpose of the exercise, are essential to ensure the UNCT can effectively support Rwanda’s EDPRS.

**One Leader:** In Rwanda, the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) is recognized by all Heads of agencies as the team leader; the UN speaks with “One Voice” through the RC or through a Head of agency, on behalf of the whole UNCT. A code of conduct (part of COD) between the UNCT and the RC lay out the respective roles and responsibilities. An institutional firewall between RC and UNDP has been created, and a UNDP Country Director post has been created.

**One Office:** The GoR has allocated of plot as location for a future UN House. In the interim, the UNCT started closer work through action plan for common services, covering administration, human resources, procurement, finance and ICT. In addition, communication receives high importance and coordination between agencies and with donors is improving.

### **Part 3: Some challenges ahead**

1. Mobilize enough resources for the One Fund; if not fully funded it might affect activities and create the risk of reversal to vertical funding.
2. Different ways of working can create inertia and reluctance to change; agencies tend to keep their identity and independence; also some GoR staff seem to like the status-quo.
3. Management of One Fund will be complex; an analysis of capacity of UNDP as its administrative entity is required. In addition, precautions to ensure strict application of the criteria for allocation of resources are necessary.
4. Although UNDAF and COD provide for monitoring and evaluation (M&E), further work is needed on refining M&E tools and ensuring results-oriented feedback loops as well as improved balance between focus and inclusiveness.
5. Interaction with headquarters and reflection on reform at UN headquarter level requires improvements. In particular, consideration needs to be given to reforms that will clarify accountability and decision-making channels between agency headquarters, country agencies and the RC.