

**Talking Points for ASG Thomas Stelzer's briefing
to ECOSOC on the CEB Spring session 2011
19 April, 2011**

- Thank you. Good morning distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. It is good to meet with you again, following my last briefing to you on 18 February. You have asked for regular and transparent information on the work of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and I am pleased to share such information with you. CEB held its spring session on 1-2 April in Nairobi, at the invitation of Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP. It was a very rich meeting, and the Secretary-General was very pleased. On his behalf, I wish to stress the importance of dialogue with Member States in order to further greater coherence in our joint efforts, and look forward to further discussions on the work of CEB at the 51st session of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and at the Coordination Segment of ECOSOC.
- This year's CEB spring session took place in the context of important developments around the world, including the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami in Japan, quickly-changing developments in Côte d'Ivoire and Libya, and the attacks against UN and associated personnel in Afghanistan and DR Congo. We also had an opportunity to look ahead towards two very important conferences – the 4th UN Conference on the LDCs and Rio+20. In addition, an important consideration for the CEB at this session was to examine how best to achieve greater efficiencies at a time of serious resource constraints. Finally, CEB also had a discussion on the socio-economic development of countries in the MENA region.
- Given the serious events in Japan, the Board devoted a large segment of its agenda to the consideration of disaster risk reduction. This timely discussion was aimed at fully mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in development programmes and providing leadership for a coherent and coordinated global action plan - building on the important work already being done by many CEB members and taking stock of the mid-term review of the Hyogo Framework of Action, the outcome and follow-up of the 2010 High Level Meetings on the Millennium Development Goals and on Small Island States. The Secretary-General and members of the Board re-affirmed their highest level of support to this agenda in the work of their institutions.
- Let me now turn to issues related to **intergovernmental meetings**. CEB endorsed the proposal of its High-level Committee on Programmes for it to issue a statement of support to **LDCs**, which will be released at the 4th UN Conference next month. In doing so, executive heads are attaching the highest importance to giving priority to the special needs of LDCs and to supporting efforts to build productive capacity in LDCs. We expect that, following the Conference, the UN system will come together to look at an effective system-wide response in support of the Outcome.
- Following up on the outcome of the **MDG Summit**, CEB endorsed the concept for an **Integrated Implementation Framework (IIF)**, which was expected to go far in ensuring greater accountability and coherence in tracking MDG commitments. The Framework will assist in enhancing the matrix of official commitments made by Member States, encouraging donor countries to update their commitments and provide details of their implementation, and

recipient countries to identify how they are pursuing MDGs in their national development strategies. The IIF will be a fully transparent, web-based tool, which will be led by the MDG Gap Task Force.

- In a dedicated session on preparations for **Rio+20**, CEB recognized the interlocking set of economic, social and environmental crises facing the world today, and the need for decisive action to accelerate sustainable development efforts. Rio+20 is a major opportunity for the United Nations (UN) system to lend its unified and coherent support to Member States in both organizing and delivering on the sustainable development agenda.
- The Secretary-General has decided to establish a dedicated Principals Group to advise him on the contribution of the UN system to the two themes of Rio+20: the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and the institutional framework for sustainable development.¹ As such, the entire UN system will work together using all the coordination platforms at its disposal to ensure maximum support to the mandates given by Member States.
- On management issues, CEB assigned particular priority to the important discussion of a robust reform process and a more efficient use of UN resources to best fulfill the UN system's vital missions and meet the enhanced expectations of all of its stakeholders. The Secretary-General's leadership was appreciated in driving an Agenda for Change that would enable the UN to deliver more and better, while containing costs. CEB's High Level Committee on Management will support the work being led by the Deputy Secretary-General on change management.²
- As you are aware, CEB also takes the opportunity of its biannual sessions to review and adopt the reports of its three pillars: the High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP), the High Level Committee on Management (UNDG) and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG). These reports were introduced by their respective Chairs: Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP (HLCP); Ms. Josette Sheeran, Executive Director of WFP (HLCM) and Miss Helen Clark, Administrator of UNDP (UNDG).
- I have already mentioned some of the work of the pillars. Let me now just add a few additional points.

¹ The Group will be led by the Deputy Secretary-General, with the participation of Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); Miss Helen Clark, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA), and Mr. Kandeh Yumkella, Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), in their respective capacities as chairs of the Environment Management Group (EMG), the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs (EC-ESA) and UN-Energy. The Principals Group will focus on the inter-linkages among the three pillars of sustainable development and will deliver its report to the CEB at its fall 2011 session.

² By fall HLCM is expected to deliver: (a) a list of joint actions by all UN entities to do more for less; (b) a list of issues in the organizations' regulatory frameworks that should be addressed for effective cost-cutting and reform; (c) a prioritized list of best-practice cost-cutting reforms by UN entities; and (d) a special review on human resources practices that need to be addressed for effective management.

- **HLCP** serves two key functions, namely: (i) System-wide follow up of intergovernmental decisions; and (ii) scanning and identification of emerging programme issues requiring a system-wide response. In addition to its work on the MDG summit outcome, LDC-IV and Rio+20, HLCP has also been responsible for the dedicated work of the CEB with regard to climate change. The Committee agreed to continue its Working Group on Climate Change for another year, which it saw as a valuable coordination platform. A key goal is to forge a unified approach to Durban and develop programmatic approaches to supporting implementation of climate change action, working closely with UNDG. HLCP also supported a coordinated UN system response to the implementation of the Nagoya outcomes on biodiversity.
- HLCP also deepened its work on moving towards a fairer, greener, more sustainable globalization, under the leadership of its previous chair, Mr. Juan Somavia, Director-General of ILO. This work addresses the need identified in the Millennium Declaration for globalization to become a positive force for all. The Committee is expected to prepare a report that will address the challenge of how to balance the specificity of each of the MDGs with the broader policy framework needed to address the inequalities that the outcome delineated, and to reinforce a sustainable development approach.
- **On the work of HLCM**, in addition to what I have outlined on the reform process in response to budget constraints, staff safety and security continued to be a central focus. HLCM is continuing work on a framework for determining Programme Criticality within the Guidelines for Acceptable Risk in the new UN Security Management System. CEB member organizations with large field operations are heavily contributing to this framework.
- The Committee is also continuing its work on the harmonization of business practices. It has developed a series of initiatives that represent “reform in action” – simple but powerful measures that would help improve the UN’s impact while at the same time increasing efficiency. One example of the Committee’s work on this front is the recently completed Model Policy Framework for Vendor Eligibility which consists of a common mechanism for dealing with vendors suspected, accused of or proven guilty after due process of misconduct in line with the UN Supplier Code of Conduct.³ There are also a number of other initiatives to harmonize business practices already underway and more will be coming on line over the next few months. The Committee will continue its work to harmonize business practices, with input from the UN system and under the guidance of member states.
- On human resource management, the Committee has concluded its country-level review of human resource practices, including contractual arrangements, policies and procedures, and is piloting measures to address some challenging issues at the field level, such as consistent classification and grading of posts across organizations, and obstacles to mobility of field staff, such as different staff assessment tools and restrictions to selecting and recruiting staff from sister organizations.

³ This common approach, which mirrors in many aspects the pace-setting one successfully applied by the World Bank across all its offices around the world, would allow agencies to have access to information on vendors who are under investigation, restricted, suspended or removed by UN organizations. In addition, there were now commonly agreed criteria for judging the eligibility of vendors.

- **On operational matters**, the Board was informed of activities of the United Nations Development Group. On the System-wide Coherence agenda, the findings emerging from the country-led evaluations of the Delivering as One Pilots recognized that effective co-ordination is often more advanced among funds, programmes and specialized agencies in the Delivering as One countries. . Lessons learned from the Pilots are therefore being made available to other countries interested in pursuing the coherence agenda, including those where Integrated Strategic Frameworks were being developed in accordance with the Secretary-General's initiative on integration. The country-led evaluations conducted in seven of the eight pilot countries last year will be an invaluable source of information to this independent evaluation of the pilots. An Evaluation Management Group composed of highly qualified evaluation experts with complementary areas of expertise has been established under the auspices of UNEG. A report of the Independent Evaluation is expected to be presented during the 66th Session of the General Assembly and the final report would be ready in March or April 2012. The UN system's work under this agenda has taken and will continue under the guidance from member states.
- UNDG also continues to look at ways to streamline its work. In this regard, the Group developed its strategic priorities and implementation plan last year, which aims to maximize the UN's collective impact on the ground, especially in achievement of the MDGs, support the high number of UNDAF rollout countries, provide support for fragile and transition countries, as well as the Delivering as One countries, and harmonize business practices for efficiency gains at the country-level.
- [On the MDGs, the Group continues its efforts to support countries to identify and close MDG achievement gaps and to implement the nine-point action plan which was agreed in follow up to last year's MDG summit, to support the implementation of the MDG Acceleration Framework, and to provide increased support to the Millennium Campaign. The Group was also continuing to support the high number of UNDAF rollout countries through the collection of evidence and the development of guidance for high-quality and strategic UNDAFs. Regional UNDG Teams are playing a critical role in this endeavor, placing a much greater focus on providing strategic advice to the UN Country Teams and engaging at an earlier stage of the process.]
- [An integrated approach to programme and operations will be implemented in the 31 UNDAF rollout countries in 2011. The Group also continued its efforts to support countries either in or coming out of crises by focusing on issues of transition financing, information management in transitions, and development of transition architectures.]
- [Finally, the Group has completed amendments to the design of the next generation of competencies for the Resident Coordinator position, as well as the Resident Coordinator Assessment Centre, in order to ensure that the UN system continues to provide the necessary leadership to strengthen coordination and impact of UN's activities on the ground.]
- Let me end by noting that the proposed theme for next year's Annual Ministerial Review will be "promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work to eradicate poverty in the context of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth at all levels for achieving the MDGs." This theme in fact highlights the work already going on within the context of

CEB's work as I've outlined just now. The system will continue to prioritize the issues identified by Member States and work under its guidance.

- Thank you for the opportunity to brief you on the outcome of CEB's spring 2011 session.