



Chief Executives Board for Coordination

19 November 2008

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Second regular session of 2008

New York, 24 October 2008

Summary of conclusions

I. Introduction

1. The second regular session of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) for 2008, chaired by the Secretary-General, was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York, during the morning of Friday, 24 October 2008.
2. The Board devoted its retreat session in the afternoon of 24 October to a thematic discussion of the financial crisis. It held a second retreat session, on the global energy challenge, at the Greentree Foundation on Saturday, 25 October.
3. The Board also met in a private session at the Greentree Foundation to hear a briefing by the Secretary-General on the political, economic and social issues on the United Nations agenda. The briefing was followed by a wide-ranging discussion among the executive heads on challenges faced by the United Nations system.
4. The present report covers the outcome of the second regular session of CEB for 2008.

II. Agenda

5. The Board adopted the following agenda for its second regular session:
 1. Adoption of the agenda.
 2. Reports of the committees:
 - (a) United Nations Development Group;
 - (b) High-level Committee on Programmes;
 - (c) High-level Committee on Management.
 3. Climate change.
 4. Staff security and safety.
 5. Other matters.



III. Opening of the session

6. The Secretary-General opened the session and welcomed the CEB members, noting that the Board was convening on United Nations Day. On behalf of the members, the Secretary-General extended a special welcome to those who were participating in CEB for the first time: Mr. Francis Gurry, Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization, Ms. Navanethem Pillay, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Angela Kane, Under-Secretary-General for Management, and Mr. Dominique Strauss-Khan, International Monetary Fund, who would be joining CEB at its private session.

7. The Secretary-General noted that CEB was meeting at a momentous time for the international community, amid an unprecedented crisis in international markets, escalating food insecurity, high energy prices and indications of a prolonged economic downturn. That complex of crises illustrated the importance of multilateralism and multilateral institutions and underscored the need for an effective CEB.

IV. Reports of the committees

A. United Nations Development Group

8. The Chair of the United Nations Development Group, Mr. Kemal Dervis, noted that the Group had taken a number of steps to integrate further into the CEB framework over the past six months. In particular, the Group had endorsed a management and accountability framework for the United Nations development and resident coordinator system, to cover the remaining months of 2008 and 2009. In that context, the Group had agreed that, given that different countries were at different stages of the “Delivering as one” initiative, it would not be possible to follow one specific model for all countries. The need to maintain flexibility and commitment to the country-driven approach was therefore a key element.

9. Under the management and accountability framework, all organizations within the country team would have an equal and equivalent relationship with the resident coordinator, who would manage the team in a proactive manner. To achieve this would require a major change in the way that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) worked. At present, UNDP had close to 60 country directors, who managed the day-to-day work of UNDP programmes. The aim over the next 18 months was to strive to place country directors in all countries where there were significant UNDP programmes.

10. He added that, while the broad outline for the management and accountability framework had been endorsed, the Advisory Group of the United Nations Development Group was working on a concrete action and implementation plan, with the participation of all members of the Development Group. The plan would be ready by December 2008. One matter that had been proposed for discussion was to pursue, with the agreement of the pilot countries initially, separate accreditation processes for the resident coordinator and the UNDP country director.

11. The Chairman of the Development Group noted that, over the next three years some 60 countries would be embarking on a new United Nations Development

Assistance Framework. It was expected that the Group would be in a position to work with the partner countries within the framework of the new system and, in particular, have a much more integrated programming framework where organizations jointly planned and set budgets for the country programmes led by the country counterparts. Following consultations with Member States, it had been agreed not to launch another set of pilots, but rather to mainstream the lessons learned from the eight pilots in the context of the new Development Assistance Frameworks. The Governments of Spain (\$200 million) and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (40 million pounds) had contributed additional funds to that end, in addition to providing increased core funding to some organizations.

12. He added that it was important to stress to Governments that funding should not be diverted from core funding of United Nations system organizations. This would enable organizations to maintain flexible, joint programme-oriented funding at the country level, allowing them to be more strategic and opening the possibility for non-resident agencies to have access to country funding for advisory and policy work. He underscored that a balance among the three different funding mechanisms — core funding, non-core but flexible country-based funding for the whole system, and the more traditional earmarked funding for various activities — was required and might be a good model for further development.

13. The Development Group had also agreed to undertake a functional external review of the United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office, which would examine new and existing roles, identify capacity gaps and recommend a new structure. The terms of reference for the review would be finalized shortly, upon which a bidding process would be launched. The Chairman of the Group expected the review to begin in December 2008 and to be completed in June 2009.

14. The Chairman of the Development Group also reported on his recent meetings with the executive secretaries of the regional commissions, which had focused on clarifying how regional issues and country issues could complement one another, following up on an agreement formalized in a memorandum of understanding. Accordingly, the regional commissions would take the lead on regional policy issues and on their linkages to global policy issues. Members of the Development Group would support that work as required, including by participating in meetings of the regional coordination mechanism convened by the regional commissions. The operational activities within countries would be managed by the regional director teams dealing with country programming and policy work at the country level, with the regional commissions participating as needed in the various coordination meetings.

15. The Chairman of the Development Group was particularly pleased with progress in overcoming the old and somewhat artificial distinction between the organizations that were members of the Executive Committee and the wider United Nations system. He noted that although (depending on the particular country situation) not every organization would be involved in a particular effort, in many cases specialized agencies were working with one of the funds or programmes even more closely than before. He considered that while this wider cooperation was not always easy, a flexible approach would make it possible to organize the joint work in a very dynamic way. One issue that required continuing attention was how to

ensure that the non-resident agencies were able to fully contribute their expertise at the country and regional levels.

B. High-level Committee on Management

16. The Chairperson of the High-level Committee on Management briefed CEB on the recent activities of the Committee which, together with its member organizations, had dedicated a considerable amount of time and effort to making progress on, among other issues, two main items: safety and security of staff and the High-level Committee on Management plan of action for the harmonization of business practices.

17. The discussion on the conclusions of the Steering Committee on Staff Safety and Security, established by the High-level Committee at the request of the Secretary-General, was discussed by CEB under agenda item 3 (b). The Chairperson of the High-level Committee expressed appreciation for the extremely valuable outcome of the collective effort carried out by the Steering Committee, as it had provided important suggestions for some immediate actions which would improve the ability of the United Nations system to address the challenges that it increasingly faced in ensuring the safety and security of its staff while carrying out its mandates across the world, and which set the right direction for more work to be completed in the coming months.

18. The Chairperson of the Committee then recalled the latest developments regarding the plan of action for the harmonization of business practices, following approval by CEB in April 2008 of the launch of the plan.

19. On 13 June 2008, the Chairperson of the Committee had presented the plan of action to the General Assembly during the informal consultations on system-wide coherence, under the chairmanship of Ambassadors Paul Kavanagh of Ireland and Augustine Mahiga of the United Republic of Tanzania.

20. Statements made by Member States had generally expressed support for the work of CEB and for the plan of action, underlining the importance of respecting existing mandates and the division of labour among the various United Nations organs with respect to ongoing management reforms. In presenting the plan of action, the Chairperson of the High-level Committee had quoted General Assembly resolution 32/197 of 1977, calling for measures "... to achieve maximum uniformity of administrative, financial, budgetary, personnel and planning procedures", and referred to Assembly resolution 62/208, the most recent resolution on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development. She also emphasized the fact that the plan of action had the specific objective of enhancing harmonization within the context of the delegation of authority to executive heads by their respective governing bodies, taking into account previous recommendations made by the internal and external oversight bodies of member organizations and already endorsed by their governing bodies. Ambassador Augustine Mahiga of the United Republic of Tanzania had concluded the informal consultations by expressing support for proceeding with the important initiative, as then formally recorded in Assembly resolution 62/277 of 15 September 2008 on system-wide coherence.

21. A trust fund for business practices had been formally established and, given the support that Member States had expressed towards that initiative, a positive response for the provision of extrabudgetary funding was expected.

22. The High-level Committee had encouraged member organizations and the CEB secretariat to proceed with a quick transmission of the funding proposal to potential donors, in accordance with the decision of all executive heads in CEB. The Chairperson of the Committee informed the Board that she would do so shortly.

23. Turning to other outcomes of the sixteenth session of the High-level Committee, the Chairperson indicated that the Committee had endorsed the 2010-2011 proposed workplans and corresponding financial requirements (on an extrabudgetary basis) for the “United Nations Cares” and the dual career and staff mobility programmes, in order to allow current and potential member organizations to budget for and set aside the necessary funding for the 2010-2011 biennium. She therefore encouraged CEB member organizations to plan for a generous participation in the two programmes in the next biennium.

24. The Committee had considered a proposal by the United Nations Evaluation Group for the establishment of a United Nations system-wide evaluation mechanism, elaborating on the options for implementation of that systemic mechanism. Despite the broad support for the need for a mechanism to manage and implement system-wide evaluations, an agreement on the best modalities had not been reached. The Committee would continue to work towards enhancing the capacity and strength of the evaluation function across the United Nations system, which was considered critical in order to increase the credibility and impact of the programmes of United Nations system organizations.

25. In response to General Assembly resolution 62/246, in which the Assembly encouraged the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of CEB, to enhance the dialogue of the Board with the Joint Inspection Unit on coordination issues, the High-level Committee had considered a recent exchange of correspondence with the Chairman of the Unit towards an enhanced collaboration between the two bodies, and had agreed that the Unit could be invited to participate in meetings within the High-level Committee networks for discussion of specific issues (proposals for studies, draft recommendations etc.) that were of relevance to each particular network.

26. The Committee had also endorsed a proposal by its legal network to adjust the depositary practice for the 1947 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies and prepare a common action plan on how to promote accession to the Convention and address disparities in its implementation.

27. Finally, the High-level Committee and the United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office would conduct a comprehensive exercise to take stock of and prioritize initiatives in the management area included in their programmes of work, and would develop a booklet providing a snapshot of all such initiatives, their relationships and objectives, with a view to fine-tuning information flow, communication and working relations between the different entities of the United Nations Development Group and the High-level Committee.

C. High-level Committee on Programmes

28. The Chairman of the High-level Committee on Programmes briefed CEB on the work that the Committee had undertaken since the previous CEB meeting, in April 2008, referring to the report of the Committee on its sixteenth session, held in Rome on 30 September and 1 October 2008, and a draft paper entitled “Acting on climate change: the United Nations delivering as one”.

29. He noted that concern about the international financial crisis and its current and potential repercussions had permeated the Committee’s discussions. The Committee recognized that demands were increasing for the United Nations system to play a leadership role in various ways: by maintaining focus on development needs and human security; by providing an inclusive forum for discussions; by helping countries and people cope; and by monitoring and assessing the impact of the crisis. The Committee considered its own role in strengthening the position of the United Nations system to deliver on those expectations.

30. The Chairman of the Committee recalled that the CEB reform had been aimed at enhancing unity of purpose in the United Nations system, by strengthening links at all levels in order to deliver results. The efforts on the global food security crisis and climate change were illustrative of that new approach to the United Nations system’s work. The Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the three CEB pillars — the High-level Committee on Programmes, the High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group — had also initiated regular meetings to align the agendas of those bodies, to draw out synergies and to deepen the leadership capacity of the system. The High-level Committee on Programmes had adopted new and more dynamic working methods and had agreed upon new terms of reference. Those terms of reference envisaged a strengthened role for the Committee, in support of CEB, in scanning and identifying emerging policy and programme issues requiring a system-wide response, as well as following up on intergovernmental decisions and those taken by CEB itself.

31. He added that the Committee had taken forward, through a dedicated working group on climate change led by its Vice-Chairman, the development of a system-wide approach to address climate change and to support the process for achieving a global agreement for the post-2012 period. The Secretary-General, on behalf of the United Nations system, had presented the first element of this approach to the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Bali in December 2007. Since then, much progress had been made, including in the development of a United Nations position at the Conference of the Parties to be held in Poznan, Poland, but more work remained to arrive at a unified strategic approach to be presented at the Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen in 2009.

32. He also reported on developments with regard to the evaluation of the “Delivering as one” pilot projects, recalling that CEB had endorsed a proposal of the High-level Committee, in April 2007, to establish the process for evaluating the pilot projects and to provide early access to information on them. The United Nations Evaluation Group had reported to the Committee on the results of the evaluability assessments. The next two phases were to have been a process evaluation and an evaluation of results and impacts of the “programme country pilot” experiences, to be completed by 2010. The General Assembly, in resolution

62/208 on the triennial review of operational activities for development, however, had called for an independent evaluation of the “programme country pilots”. The Committee was therefore recommending that the next two phases of the evaluation called for by CEB be suspended, pending further information concerning the independent evaluation.

33. The evaluability assessments uncovered a number of interesting findings, however, including the need to establish a baseline for the pilots and to clarify how best to measure results. In addition, referring to the proposal in the report of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence to establish a system-wide mechanism for independent evaluation, the Chairman of the Committee expressed the view that such a mechanism would provide a powerful added incentive for United Nations organizations to work together and perform as a system. He hoped that a way could be found to move forward on the issue.

34. The Chairman of the High-level Committee stressed that further progress by the United Nations system in “Delivering as one” depended in great part on sustaining the cultural shift that was under way, i.e. the understanding that all organizations had a stake in how the system delivered and that joint approaches needed to have the buy-in of all of them. He commended the work undertaken by the Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO) on the *Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work* as a best practice that was now being applied in many organizations. Similar work was being undertaken in the Committee to mainstream disaster risk reduction, as well as efforts to eliminate violence against women and girls, into the programmes and activities of organizations across the system.

35. He concluded his last briefing to CEB as the Chairman of the High-level Committee on Programmes by noting that over the six years of his tenure, he had seen the Committee transform itself from a group of people defending the interests of individual organizations to one that increasingly focused on bringing together complementarities to jointly address the daunting challenges facing the global community.

D. Conclusion

36. The Board took note of the reports on recent developments in United Nations Development Group, the High-level Committee on Management and the High-level Committee on Programmes, endorsed the decisions that those bodies had taken on behalf of CEB and thanked the three chairpersons for their briefings.

V. Climate change

37. The Secretary-General recalled that, at its session in the autumn of 2007, CEB had agreed to initiate a preparatory process, through the High-level Committee on Programmes, to develop a common United Nations system approach to the issue of climate change. On behalf of the United Nations system, he had presented a paper to the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Bali in 2007 that had been greatly appreciated by Member States.

The Committee had now submitted a draft report entitled “Acting on climate change: the United Nations delivering as one”, to CEB for guidance on its finalization. The draft document provided a midterm progress report to Member States meeting in Poznan in December 2008, as work continued towards the development of a common framework for presentation at the Conference of the Parties to the Convention meeting in Copenhagen in 2009.

38. The Secretary-General warned against moving climate change down the list of priorities because of the global financial crisis. On the contrary, he stressed, the response to climate change, as well as action on the Millennium Development Goals and the food crisis, should be insulated from the financial crisis. He was encouraged by statements made by world leaders that high priority should be given during the crisis to the poorest and most vulnerable. The Secretary-General noted that emphasis on renewable energy and low-carbon technologies would help to re-launch the global economy. He had written a letter to President Sarkozy, whose country held the European Union Presidency, the President of the European Commission and the leaders of all 27 European Union member States expressing his concern that their summit meeting the previous week in Brussels had not been conclusive on climate change. He had urged them to lead by example and to reach a final agreement on climate change by the end of the year.

39. The Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change expressed his satisfaction with the draft report of the High-level Committee, which would enable the Secretary-General to present the work of the system in Poznan. He noted, however, that this was a work in progress, still far from being a fully coordinated United Nations system approach, and stressed that the priority was to ensure implementation of intergovernmental decisions both for adaptation and mitigation. In terms of progress in the negotiations, there had been a significant positive shift at the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in Accra in August 2008. Unlike the general exchanges of ideas in previous meetings in Bangkok and Bonn, in Accra the parties had mandated the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention to turn those ideas into a preliminary draft negotiating document for Poznan and, eventually, Copenhagen. Ministers, who would be meeting in Poznan during the high-level segment, would put special emphasis on developing a shared vision on cooperative action, which would indicate how countries would work together to mobilize finance and technology for both adaptation and mitigation. That would provide the political guidance required for drafting the new international regime.

40. The Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was of the view that the Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen in 2009 might not be able to deliver everything that needed to be done on climate change, but that it could set the foundation of an agreement that could be ratified by all countries, including the United States of America. Key elements of such a “ratifiable” agreement would entail clarity with respect to: (a) the nature of commitments, i.e. targets for developed countries and mitigation actions by developing countries; (b) how to mobilize the stable and predictable funding that was required; and (c) the institutional architecture that would support post-2012 cooperation. On funding, he noted that at present there was little money flowing through the process of the Framework Convention, with the Global Environmental Facility and others having disbursed about \$1 billion, while \$6 billion had recently been pledged outside the Framework Convention process to the World Bank.

Countries, especially the majority of developing countries, did not feel that they had a say in the allocation of such resources. A proposal of the Group of 77 and China for a new architecture under the direct control of Governments might not receive support in the end, but demonstrated the need to think about governance structures. Overall, there was a sense of a significant shift in the mood for the negotiations in a positive direction, with big developing countries like Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa and others coming up with national strategies and ready to go further, provided there were adequate incentives. There were positive signs also from the United States, as both presidential candidates approached climate change action constructively and wanted an agreement to be reached in Copenhagen. The Executive Secretary of the Framework Convention concluded by expressing his strong belief that it would be difficult to reach a ratifiable agreement in Copenhagen through those present at the negotiating table alone, and pointing to the need to engage Governments at the highest level.

41. The Secretary-General spoke of the videoconference he had held the previous evening with the leaders of Indonesia, Poland and Denmark, successive holders of the presidency of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention, from Beijing, where all three were attending the Asia-Europe Meeting. They had discussed the financial crisis and climate change and had agreed on action that would include publication of a joint op-ed commentary in major newspapers in early November, reaffirming the commitment to act on climate change and urging world leaders to do more; a meeting of key countries soon after the inauguration of the new president of the United States in late February or early March 2009 in New York; an intervention at the Group of Eight Summit in Italy in July; and a high-level meeting in New York in September 2009, at the time of the General Assembly. After the September high-level meeting, there would be a sense of whether Copenhagen would be convened at the ministerial or a higher level.

42. The Vice-Chairman of the High-level Committee on Programmes presented the work under way in the working group on climate change. The latest product to come out of the group was the draft paper for the Conference of the Parties in Poznan, which was before the Board. Work was being carried out in close cooperation with the Framework Convention secretariat and the office of the Secretary-General. The working group had agreed that no new United Nations body should be created, but that work would, instead, be pursued across institutions in a coordinated way. The draft paper reflected the current state of affairs in the collective efforts of the United Nations system with regard to climate change and went beyond the document prepared for the Conference of the Parties in Bali in 2007. There was now a network of managers involved and most organizations had adopted a clear framework for action in their institutions. Importantly, there had been agreement on five focus areas (adaptation; technology transfer; reduction of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation; financing mitigation and adaptation action; and capacity-building) and four cross-cutting areas (climate knowledge: science, assessment, monitoring and early warning; supporting global, regional and national action; a climate neutral United Nations; and public awareness) identified by CEB for the United Nations system's work. The groups corresponding to those areas had started to meet, especially on the sidelines of the Conference of the Parties in Accra in August, and had presented their work thereafter. They would hopefully evolve into communities of practice, eventually achieving a coordinated preparation of activities and leading to delivering as one on programmes and joint projects.

43. The initial idea had been to prepare a short document for Poznan outlining the United Nations system's overall commitment to working together and what the system was doing in general terms. But the great interest shown by United Nations entities and the interest by countries in hearing more in depth about what the United Nations system was doing had led to the preparation of a longer document, in cooperation with the Framework Convention secretariat and the United Nations Development Group on country-level work. The document would be edited further and would be enriched with information coming from all organizations. The CEB's guidance was being sought to improve the document. A complementary online inventory of United Nations system activities was also being developed and would hopefully attract contributions by all, thus making it fully representative of what the system was doing. The United Nations system would, furthermore, coordinate its presence in Poznan more ambitiously than had been the case previously and organize a side event that would hopefully be chaired by the Secretary-General and would include interventions by many other executive heads.

44. In concluding his presentation, the Vice-Chairman of the High-level Committee on Programmes called to attention that although the United Nations system had made progress and had moved from a listing of activities in Bali to a more strategic approach with specific focus areas for Poznan, there was still a long way to go before an integrated programmatic approach to climate change could be achieved. The Committee and its working group on climate change would continue to work diligently towards that goal.

45. The Secretary-General stressed that the Member States expected the United Nations system to act as one. The system would have to demonstrate its unity in Poznan, not only through the paper that the working group on climate change was developing, but also through the joint side event and a single statement that the Secretary-General would deliver on behalf of the system. The expectation was also that, over time, the system would focus increasingly on the substance of the negotiations to support Member States and cover the implementation gap. The Secretary-General hoped that a successful handling by the system of the climate change issue could be expanded and replicated in other areas of common endeavours.

46. In the discussion that ensued, CEB members expressed their continuing commitment to collective efforts on climate change and provided views and guidance for the finalization of the draft report by the High-level Committee and on broader issues of United Nations system cooperation on climate change. Several executive heads commended the draft report, referred to relevant activities in their respective organizations that they would like to see further detailed in it and informed the Board of upcoming events related to climate change that they would convene or co-sponsor in the coming months. They also indicated their intention to share the final report with their governing bodies. Others asked for further development and refinement of the document, with a clearer strategic vision that the Secretary-General could present to the world. Some speakers further made a distinction between the Poznan report, which reflected the joint coordination efforts, and the broader vision that was needed and could only be provided by the United Nations system underpinned by its moral authority. Several speakers stressed the need for the Secretary-General to articulate a vision that would help the international community pull itself out of the current complex crisis and achieve greater prosperity and fairness in all its dimensions. Many emphasized the

importance of social justice and equity, especially for those countries, including least developed countries and small island developing States, that were the least responsible for yet the most affected by climate change. The reference in the draft paper to the human dimension was seen as positive and a request was made for the inclusion of references to human rights and climate change in the report as well as in statements by the Secretary-General.

47. Speakers also emphasized the importance of work at the regional level, which focused on the economics of climate change, natural disaster preparedness, energy efficiency, regional climate change initiatives and interaction with Governments and the private sector. The importance of the private sector and of the Secretary-General making references of appreciation for the private sector's work was also brought up, as was the local dimension, since climate change impacted on local communities and actions were taken at that level. Reference was, moreover, made to the encouraging progress by many organizations towards meeting the commitment of a "climate-neutral United Nations", something which the United Nations system chief executives had full control over and should deliver on. Attention was also drawn to the suggestion of promoting the common slogan of "UNited to combat climate change" and to the green jobs initiative, which had the potential to bring together all parts of the system through the vision it provided for the post-negotiation period, when action would focus on the productive sectors. It was stressed that the World Bank's climate investment funds, which had been approved by consensus by the Bank's Board of Directors, were complementary to other sources of funding available to United Nations system organizations involved in work on climate change. It was important, in that regard, to dispel a perception that the World Bank was operating on its own. General support was expressed for the Secretary-General as the only speaker on the United Nations system and climate change at the high-level segment of the Conference of the Parties in Poznan.

48. The Board endorsed the draft report for the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention in Poznan on the understanding that it would be revised to take into account the comments and suggestions made during the discussion.

VI. Staff security and safety

49. In introducing the discussion of this agenda item, the Secretary-General recalled that CEB, at its spring session in 2008, had conducted a detailed discussion on the rapidly evolving security environment and the increasing challenges for the safety and security of United Nations and humanitarian personnel. The situation had continued to deteriorate significantly and United Nations personnel were now targets of deliberate attacks by extremists and armed groups in an increasing number of areas where the United Nations system organizations operated. The attack against the United Nations offices in Algiers on 11 December 2007 was a tragic confirmation of this disturbing trend, which had continued throughout 2008.

50. The Secretary-General stated that, in a time where the United Nations was facing increasing threats, CEB had to address, as a matter of priority, the identified deficiencies and provide guidance for the design of a stronger, more dynamic and proactive new security architecture.

51. Following the release of the report of the Independent Panel on Safety and Security of United Nations Personnel and Premises Worldwide, the Secretary-General had requested the High-level Committee on Management to undertake a detailed process of review of the recommendations contained in the report and to prepare actionable recommendations and options for a more effective United Nations system-wide security management system. In response to that request, the Committee had set up a steering committee, chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, with the participation of the Department of Safety and Security, representatives at the highest level of CEB member organizations (the World Health Organization, UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme (WFP), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the World Bank), as well as representatives from the staff federations, from the functional networks of the High-level Committee on Management and from departments with a significant field presence (the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations). The recommendations of the steering committee were before the Board for its consideration and decision.

52. The Secretary-General also informed the Board that he had invited the executive heads of the United Nations funds and programmes to establish a working group with the specific remit to devise a plan to address the United Nations real estate issue. The plan would have two components: (a) threat mitigation for the most vulnerable locations; and (b) guidelines on future United Nations real estate policy to ensure that security concerns were mainstreamed into United Nations decisions about its buildings. The working group would make recommendations before the end of 2008 on the most vulnerable locations and would present a draft proposal on real estate policy to CEB at its spring session in 2009. The full CEB membership would then have the opportunity to comment on the proposal and associate themselves with the recommendations.

53. Confirming the rapidly deteriorating safety and security environment within which United Nations personnel were now called to operate, the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security underlined the increasing regularity of the threats and actual attacks. He noted that the present reality was that the danger was growing faster than the reaction — not only for the United Nations system, but for the broader humanitarian community — and that the widening gap had to be filled urgently.

54. The Under-Secretary-General for Field Support introduced the conclusions of the Steering Committee, taking the opportunity to thank CEB members for the importance they had attached to this critical task, committing representatives at the highest level in their organizations to work within very narrow timelines, even detaching some of their staff for a full-time engagement of three weeks in New York.

55. The Under-Secretary-General for Field Support indicated that the outcome of the steering committee comprised a number of recommendations, as endorsed by the High-level Committee on Management at its intersessional meeting on 20 October, that were for immediate consideration, decision and action by CEB, as listed in attachment 4 to the report, and that further analysis would be carried out in the next months to address key aspects of safety and security management that required more in-depth analysis, before additional recommendations could be submitted to CEB

again at its spring session in 2009, as part of a comprehensive plan for a system-wide security management system that responded adequately to the new needs. Until then, it was essential not to compromise the current arrangements, creating an operational vacuum that would be even more detrimental to the security and safety of United Nations personnel.

56. One of the key messages of the steering committee was that a common framework for risk assessment and management was essential to guide United Nations system organizations to strike an appropriate balance, within their respective mandates, between staff exposure to risks and the need to deliver critical operations under adverse conditions.

57. A risk management model would also provide a framework for mainstreaming safety and security of staff at all levels of United Nations system activities, with the strategic aim of promoting security management as an integral and enabling part of policy, planning, operational and administrative consideration for United Nations system programmes and activities.

58. The strengthening of the United Nations security management system had to be geared to a two-tier approach, aimed at better balancing responsibilities and corresponding accountability between headquarters and the field, giving the designated official, assisted by a reinforced role for the chief security adviser and supported by the Security Management Team and by agencies, funds and programmes, the necessary authority to discharge his or her functions. Likewise, the role of the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security would have to be strengthened, including his or her executive authority to take rapid decisions to address exceptional or exigent circumstances.

59. The two-tier model would be developed in all its details in the comprehensive plan to be submitted to CEB at its spring session in 2009. It would cover the functions, governance and accountability of the different components of the United Nations security management system, including the composition, criteria and functions of the new executive body (which would be nominated by CEB and would comprise representatives of the different programme activities on the ground).

60. With regard to funding issues, the steering committee supported the identification of alternative budgetary and programming mechanisms for the inclusion of security-related resources in programme costs and/or the establishment of an appropriate framework for extrabudgetary funding of security-related costs, recognizing the different level of risks associated to the different funding models. Pending identification and adoption of such alternative mechanisms, requests for funding of some of the urgent needs recognized by the Steering Committee would be submitted to the General Assembly, following established budgetary procedures, and framed within the existing funding arrangements.

61. The ensuing discussion among CEB members was intense, continuing during a breakfast session at the retreat on 25 October. There was an overwhelming acknowledgement of the urgent need to match the increased threats with a new security system which was better coordinated, more resourced and clearly accountable but also was able to make decisions with the necessary authority at the most appropriate level. The need to clarify the lines of responsibilities for the security of the large number of United Nations staff working in Geneva but living in France was also mentioned. That matter would be further reviewed between the

Designated Official for France and concerned agencies, and with relevant national authorities, so as to avoid any gaps in the security plan for the numerous United Nations agencies based in Switzerland.

62. The idea of a two-tier approach was strongly supported, with an emphasis on a possible refinement of the role, functions and responsibilities of the designated official. Similarly critical was a redesign of the criteria and procedures for the determination of security phases, towards a model which should be more sophisticated and able to reflect the varied conditions within the same country, as well as the different requirements embodied by the different mandates of the organizations that operated on the ground. The new procedure suggested by the steering committee was considered a first step in the right direction.

63. There was a broad recognition of the inevitably increased level of resources necessary to enable the safe and effective execution of the mandates of United Nations system organizations. In that respect, CEB members appreciated the need to call on Member States to acknowledge the changed security environment within which United Nations personnel had to operate and to provide adequate resources to match the new needs. The idea of integrating the existing funding arrangements with extrabudgetary modalities, such as the establishment of a trust fund, was strongly suggested.

64. A special plea was made by CEB members to the steering committee to review, within the comprehensive plan to be submitted to CEB at its spring session in 2009, the procedures and conditions applicable to entitlements in the event of death or injuries incurred while performing official duties, with a view to ensuring that staff members and their families were adequately compensated.

65. In concluding the discussion, the Board agreed with the approach proposed, that the High-level Committee on Management would continue to further develop, in light of comments and suggestions received, a comprehensive plan for a system-wide security management system, for consideration at the CEB spring session in 2009 and that, until then, any immediate needs would be funded within the existing frameworks.

VII. Other matters

A. Chairmanship of the High-level Committee on Programmes and the High-level Committee on Management

66. Under the agenda item, the Secretary-General called to attention that the terms of Mr. Båge and Ms. Obaid, as Chairpersons of the High-level Committee on Programmes and the High-level Committee on Management, respectively, would be coming to a close at the end of the year. He thanked Mr. Båge and Ms. Obaid, on behalf of the CEB membership, for their hard work in guiding the Committees during a period of structural changes in CEB. Under their leadership — and thanks to their dedication, knowledge and wisdom — the High-level Committees had become invaluable instruments for system-wide coherence.

67. Following informal consultations and with the concurrence of CEB members, the Secretary-General requested Mr. Juan Somavía (ILO) and Ms. Josette Sheeran (WFP) to take up the task of chairing the High-level

Committee on Programmes and the High-level Committee on Management, respectively, for two-year terms, starting on 1 January 2009.

B. Tribute to Lennart Båge, Francesco Frangialli and Peter Piot

68. Before closing the formal CEB session, the Secretary-General was joined by CEB members in paying tribute to Mr. Lennart Båge, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Mr. Francesco Frangialli (World Tourism Organization) and Dr. Peter Piot, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), who would be stepping down as executive heads of their respective organizations within a few months' time.

69. The Secretary-General noted that IFAD had seen an extraordinary period of growth and success during Mr. Båge's tenure and expressed special appreciation for Mr. Båge's personal dedication to the United Nations system's ongoing efforts to address the food crisis. He further noted that the World Tourism Organization had become a full-fledged United Nations specialized agency and CEB member during Mr. Frangialli's leadership, which was an outstanding achievement. The Secretary-General also underscored the extraordinary role that Dr. Piot had played, since the inception of UNAIDS, in being the face of the international effort to combat the scourge of AIDS. Dr. Piot's commitment and untiring dedication to that cause was recognized by Governments all over the world and, more importantly, by those whose suffering had been alleviated through his work.

C. Dates of the Chief Executives Board spring and fall sessions in 2009

70. The Board confirmed its decision, taken at its previous session, to accept the invitation of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to host the spring CEB session in 2009 in Paris from Monday, 6 April to Tuesday, 7 April 2009. The dates for the autumn session would be finalized by the CEB secretariat in consultation with the Board members and would, as usual, be held at United Nations Headquarters in New York.