**Chief Executives Board
for Coordination**

8 June 2007

Report of the High-level Committee on Programmes at its thirteenth session

(Castel Gandolfo, Italy, 20 and 21 March 2007)

I. Introduction

1.   The High-level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) held its thirteenth session in Castel Gandolfo, Italy, on 21 and 22 March 2007. The agenda of the meeting and the list of participants are contained, respectively, in annexes I and II to the present report.

II. Introductory remarks on the status of the Chief Executives Board review

2.   The Chairman of the High-level Committee on Programmes briefed the Committee on progress in the ongoing review of the role and functioning of CEB, recalling that the Board had decided to initiate such a review at its fall 2006 session, in the context of its discussions on the recommendations of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Environment. On 8 December, the Directors-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Trade Organization, who had been asked by CEB to lead the review, addressed a letter to executive heads, placing the review of CEB in the broader perspective of the effort to enhance multilateralism and asking for their "personal ideas, views and suggestions" on ways to strengthen, in that perspective, the role and functioning of CEB.

3.   The responses received to date from executive heads had been shared with the membership of CEB. During February and March, consultations with different groups of executive heads had been held by the co-chairmen and the process would continue in the coming weeks. Thereafter, the co-chairmen would seek an opportunity for a consultation with the Secretary-General of the United Nations prior to the CEB session in April.

4.   The Chairman sensed a "strong mood" among CEB members to find ways to deepen system-wide collaboration under the leadership of the Secretary-General, and for CEB to be fully equipped to serve as the apex forum for the system's joint

response to major global challenges. He expected an initial paper to be submitted by the co-chairmen to CEB in April, which could then be further elaborated in light of the CEB discussions.

III. System-wide coherence

A. Current developments

5.   In introducing the item, the Chairman noted that that was the first meeting of the High-level Committee on Programmes since the report of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence had been formally issued. A joint letter from the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement, commenting on the Panel's report, had just been sent to the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General's own report to the General Assembly on the Panel's recommendations was expected soon. Meanwhile, "pilots" were being launched in eight countries towards "One United Nations" at the country level. The Rome-based agencies, for their part, were engaged in a systematic effort to harness and capture synergies among their complementary missions and activities, demonstrating continuing movement towards greater system-wide coherence.

6.   The Chairman recalled the evolution of the Panel's thinking from an initial very critical view of the United Nations role in development to the recognition of the system's crucial role in dealing with global development issues at both the normative and operational levels. Many of those global issues, from the system's response to the Millennium Development Goals and the internationally agreed development goals, and to international organized crime, migration and HIV/AIDS were under active consideration by the High-level Committee.

7.   Current global figures for official development assistance were above $100 billion. United Nations core, non-core and trust funds accounted for only $12 billion. Donor countries were increasingly raising issues of efficiency and effectiveness in the functioning of United Nations organizations as a condition for channelling greater amounts of resources through the United Nations system. That presented a challenge, but also a strong opportunity for the system.

8.   A growing trend was also evident to focus political capital and financial resources on regional integration and regional institutions. The United Nations needed to demonstrate its value in backstopping regional efforts and bringing issues from the regional into the global arena.

9.   Approaches to system-wide coherence had witnessed a sea change in the past several years. Most agencies now realized that, in the face of the complex challenges that the international community was facing, going it alone was no longer an option. There was a need for a coherent system to deliver on mandates. The CEB report to the 2005 World Summit conceived by the High-level Committee was the first to put forward the notion of "One United Nations", further developed by the High-level Panel. The approach of the Committee to the employment and decent work agenda was one example of how organizations could collaborate to advance a key system-wide objective.

10.   The Director of the CEB secretariat then briefed the Committee on developments and the next steps with respect to the report and recommendations of

the High-level Panel. He noted that much effort had been invested in an informal but extensive process of consultations both leading up to and following the issuance of the Panel's report. That vigorous and inclusive process of discussions at all levels had led to a better understanding of the Panel's recommendations and a growing appreciation of its important contribution to the effort towards greater system-wide coherence. Currently, Governments were keen for the formal process to begin.

11.   One of the critical constituencies in that process was the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement. As noted in the letter of the Chairmen of the Group of 77 and the Non-Aligned Movement to the Secretary-General, developing countries were prepared to engage constructively in a discussion of the Panel's report and the "One United Nations" agenda. While endorsing the pilots, they called for different perspectives to be respected and for intergovernmental agreement to guide the further development of the initiative. He expected that one issue the Group of 77 would bring forcefully to the fore would be that of the quality and quantity of funding. They were also keen to see what future engagement the United Nations would have with the Bretton Woods institutions. As for governance, the view was that the Economic and Social Council had been through an extensive reform process and that priority should be given to the effective implementation of the reforms already agreed upon.

12.   The report of the Secretary-General, once issued, would serve to start formal consultations within the General Assembly. He anticipated that the report would support the Panel's call for overcoming fragmentation and bringing the assets of the United Nations together more effectively for delivery. It was likely that the Secretary-General would suggest using existing processes as much as possible both to spread and to legitimize the coherence approach. For example, the follow-up to the "One United Nations" pilots could most effectively be discussed in the context of the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review. He also expected the CEB review and the implementation of the business practices agenda to be a major driver for the coherence of the system as a whole. The Secretary-General was also likely to support the recommendations of the Panel on gender and propose a way forward. The role of the Deputy-Secretary-General in guiding the process within the United Nations would be strongly highlighted in the Secretary-General's report.

B.   Operational activities for development

1.   Introductions

(a)   Pilot countries and "One United Nations" at the country level

13.   A representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), on behalf of the United Nations Development Group Office, briefed the Committee on the joint retreat of the United Nations Development Group Management and Programme Groups on "One United Nations", which had been held in New York on 29 and 30 January 2007. The retreat brought together over 100 representatives of the system together with the resident coordinators from the pilot countries and representatives of the Governments of Cape Verde and Viet Nam. The objectives were to facilitate a common understanding among United Nations organizations of the concept of "One United Nations", share information and experiences in order to enhance the coherence and effectiveness of the United Nations presence in the field,

explore options for realizing "One United Nations" in the pilot countries and propose and discuss ideas for further action.

14. Participants agreed to a number of key principles to guide the implementation of the pilots: inclusiveness; country leadership; flexibility in terms of the design of approaches to greater coherence; and truly empowered resident coordinators and country teams, with strengthened authority and accountability. In addition, "One Programme" should balance all core priorities, with focused and simplified programme documents. Programming around thematic clusters should be encouraged, and participating agencies could still support, wherever required, activities outside "One Programme". In addition, an appropriate link, where relevant, should be ensured with humanitarian operations. Special attention should be given to the identification of programmatic baselines and benchmarks for measuring progress and the impact of pilots.

15. As for next steps, there was agreement at the retreat to set up effective governance mechanisms for the implementation of the pilots. A "key" working group should be created in each country, led by the Government and the resident coordinator. The United Nations Development Group Programme and Management Groups would maintain an overview through a central "reference group" and would undertake a review of the composition of existing inter-agency working groups to ensure that all organizations could participate in the "One United Nations" initiative. There was, in particular, a need to further crystallize the concepts of "One Programme", "One Leader", "One Budgetary Framework" and "One Office", and for a senior-level committee to support the overall implementation of the pilots. It had been suggested at the retreat that the committee could comprise eight members: four from the funds and programmes; three from specialized agencies; and one from a non-resident agency. Finally, there was a need for a communications strategy to be developed to share experiences, good practices and lessons learned.

16. On 12 February, the United Nations Development Group Programme and Management Groups met jointly and discussed the establishment of such a "One United Nations" support committee, agreeing that the committee would focus on policy issues related to the design and implementation of the "One United Nations" pilots, fully consulting with the Programme and Management Groups. Subsequently, the Chairman of the United Nations Development Group proposed that 10 specialized agencies and funds and programmes form the senior-level support/steering committee for the "One United Nations" pilots. The inter-agency management structure for the "One United Nations" would be further addressed in the context of the CEB review.

17. On 4 March, senior officials from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Food Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and ILO held a first meeting of the committee, with the aim of discussing the principles of the "One United Nations" pilots implementation and agreeing on priorities for action. They agreed to postpone a formal decision of the "One United Nations" governance structure, pending the conclusions to be reached by CEB on inter-agency

coordination mechanisms, as part of the review of the functioning of the Board. The committee also identified a number of "red line" issues for further discussion, including ways to ensure the neutrality of the resident coordinator, respect for the sectoral/thematic competences of specialized agencies, the lead-agency concept in emergency situations, the role of regional structures, in particular for those organizations whose regional structures differed from those of Executive Committee agencies, and the integration of non-resident agencies. Several participants also emphasized the need to offer a more broad-based briefing and training to resident coordinators and United Nations country team staff about the range of competences and services offered by United Nations system entities outside the programmes that made up the United Nations Development Group Executive Committee.

(b) Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review

18. Opening the discussion on the item, the Director of the CEB secretariat thanked the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat for its proactive approach in engaging with organizations of the system at an early stage in the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review process. He referred, in that context, to the inter-agency videoconference that the Department had organized with the CEB secretariat on 15 January to ensure that the system's perspective would be fully integrated in the exercise from its inception.

19. A representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in his introductory statement, recalled that the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Reviews of operational activities for development had, over time, come to carry considerable authority among all constituencies. He gave a comprehensive briefing on the preparations under way for the 2007 review in the General Assembly. He also introduced a draft outline of the report that the Secretary-General would submit to the Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, to support the review, requesting that further comments by organizations be submitted to the Department by 30 March. He recalled that many organizations were being consulted also through the United Nations Development Group and the United Nations Evaluation Group, and that the Department had benefited from the active participation of agency experts at the recently concluded workshop, held in Turin, Italy.

20. An analytical, evidence-based report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 59/250 would be submitted in July to the Economic and Social Council. In the light of the Council's discussions, policy recommendations would be prepared for consideration by the Assembly in the fall. He expected that the Assembly's review would focus on the extent to which and the ways in which the United Nations development system provided efficient and effective support to developing countries in realizing their national development strategies and in achieving the internationally agreed development goals. The Secretary-General's report would analyse the different factors that affected such an impact, highlighting the unique contribution that the United Nations system was making in an increasingly complex and competitive environment at the country level.

21. The Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review traditionally looked first at funding, a central dimension of coherence. Although funding trends were on the increase, that growth related mainly to voluntary and non-core funding, while assessed contributions to specialized agencies continued to witness zero growth. That had had negative consequences not only on the normative and standard-setting

work of the United Nations, but also on the predictability and reliability of operational activities at the country level. Even United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, negotiated with partner Governments, might be funded only up to 40 per cent and thus only very partially implemented. In the circumstances, United Nations organizations found themselves obliged to use core funds to administer non-core activities. There were a number of helpful initiatives — such as the use of thematic trust funds — which, though still making use of supplementary funds, were an improvement on project-based funding.

22. Cost recovery was very uneven; different practices existed not only among organizations but also even within organizations. While the maximum allowed cost recovery rate was 7 per cent, data showed that the actual cost of administering supplementary funding was at 9 to 15 per cent. There was considerable competition with non-governmental organizations, which had different administrative systems. That was a serious issue warranting further in-depth consideration within the CEB system. He trusted that the CEB discussions would, at the same time, provide support for promoting, through the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review process, the policy of "good multilateral donorship".

23. Turning to capacity development, he observed that the goal of strengthening national capacities to meet the internationally agreed development goals through nationally owned development strategies, rather than funding, should drive development support. Capacity development, in both "hard and technical" and "soft and social" forms, would be mapped out in the report, on the basis of information collected in a wide-ranging study currently under way.

24. Fragmentation at the country level remained one of the most critical stumbling blocks for effective support to capacity-building; true coherence implied a common strategic vision for supporting capacity-building and should allow the United Nations to serve as a "one stop shop" for specialized development knowledge. That function should be exercised so as to facilitate, rather than to constrain, countries' access to the whole range of diverse specialized knowledge available throughout the system, such diversity being a major strength of the United Nations system in supporting capacity development. United Nations effectiveness in supporting capacity development also depended on clear messages and consistent guidance and decisions by Member States in the various governing bodies.

25. The report of the Secretary-General would also contain information on country-level evaluations, measures to enhance the independence and impartiality of the evaluation function in the United Nations, country-owned and led evaluations and evaluation of capacity development.

2. Discussion

26. A number of Committee members recalled that they had attended the initial meeting of the "One United Nations" support committee. They agreed on the usefulness of an informal gathering where views could be freely exchanged about various "red-line" issues and how to move forward. Such a spirit of openness and collegiality should be retained under whatever governance arrangements were ultimately agreed upon. In that connection, there was general agreement among the members on the need for inclusiveness, transparency and flexibility in pursuing the "One United Nations" pilots at the policy and operational levels.

27. In exchanging views on the Viet Nam pilot, for example, it appeared that the initial "biases" that specialized agencies had perceived in the launch of the exercise by programmes and funds that made up the United Nations Development Group Executive Committee were now being progressively addressed. The model for the Pakistan pilot had been more inclusive from the very beginning, using the "cluster" approach, although some features that had not originally been discussed broadly were subsequently introduced (e.g. donor-provided transformation funds).

28. A number of questions were raised regarding the concept of the "firewall": the need to clarify the nature and level of "separation" between the resident coordinator and UNDP operation, and the role of the regional directors. Several members underlined that concerned specialized agencies and regional commissions must be enabled on an equal basis to contribute to the governance of the "One United Nations" pilots and particularly the development of the crucial "One Programme", whether they were resident or non-resident. Specifically, questions were raised about how the different contributions would be harmonized, how normative and analytical capacities would be harnessed and linked to operational activities in support of national development priorities through the "One United Nations" approach. Specialized agencies also underscored the need to ensure clarity in the reporting and accountability lines of the resident coordinator and in reporting and accountability in relation to agency headquarters.

29. There was a widespread sense within the Committee that a major effort was still required to sensitize and inform resident coordinators and country teams about the full range of services and tools that could be provided by the United Nations system as a whole at the country level. In the same context, it was recognized that it was incumbent upon the non-resident agencies to approach the inputs they could provide at the country level not in a spirit of "competition" for resources, but, first and foremost, as the distinctive contribution they could make to advance the collective capacity of the system to respond effectively to country development goals.

30. Another set of issues raised pertained to financial support for the pilots. Members noted a proliferation of ad hoc funding by some countries and at the level of the United Nations Development Group, with little information being shared among all members on how such resources were managed and distributed. There was a need not only for greater transparency, but also for an overall approach that would not undermine the coherence effort. For instance, it was not clear how the "transformation funds" being made available to support the resident coordinator in Pakistan fitted with the spirit of the "One United Nations" pilots. It was suggested that donors should consider setting such funding aside for the "coherence fund" envisaged for the budgetary framework and then let the country team as a whole decide on its utilization. More generally, it was felt that a great deal of further work remained to be carried out so as to clarify the common budgetary framework within the "One United Nations". In the same context, the United Nations system should also give further attention to the extent to which core funding could or should be utilized for funding the preparation of "One United Nations" pilots.

31. A number of participants stressed the need for each pilot country to work out the set of arrangements best suited to it and for not unduly hindering the flexibility of the country teams. At the same time, there was an urgent need to establish baseline criteria for assessing the eight pilots.

32. **The Committee shared the importance of making urgent arrangements for an independent, system-wide evaluation of the eight pilots, with the full participation of the national Government, covering both the first phase of organizing the United Nations system to deliver as one and subsequent implementation phases, with a strong focus on assessing impact in relation to country priorities**. A timely and professional evaluation process should be set in motion to assess the different approaches and modalities used, lessons learned and substantive results obtained. The outcome should inform both the implementation of the current pilots and their eventual expansion. Bearing in mind the role assigned to the United Nations Development Group by the former Secretary-General of the United Nations for the roll out and support of the pilots, but also taking into account the major policy relevance of that experiment and the central role of CEB in advancing system-wide coherence, **it was recommended that the evaluation exercise be carried out at the request of CEB and under its aegis, with the results eventually being reported to, and considered by, both the United Nations Development Group and CEB**.

33. **The Committee further recommended that the United Nations Evaluation Group**, which gathered the heads of evaluation units across the system, **be made responsible for providing substantive guidance to the evaluation of the pilots**, for which independence should be ensured and dedicated resources provided.

34. Against the background of the request addressed by the Joint Meeting of the High-level Committee on Management and the High-level Committee on Programmes to their respective Chairmen to expedite action in that regard, **the High-level Committee on Programmes recommends that CEB call upon the United Nations Evaluation Group to urgently launch the evaluation of the pilots, including early formative evaluation, baseline and evaluability assessment, and requests to be kept fully and regularly informed of progress**.

35. The Committee concurred that all reform measures being undertaken should add value to the system's efforts in supporting country ownership. The "Four Ones" should not be the only means by which coherence would be advanced. The risk of "one size fits all" should be avoided; country teams should be allowed to experiment in order to achieve genuine reform. Three of the four "ones" are management processes. As such, they should not eclipse the centrality of the development outcomes to which formulation of the "One Programme" should be geared. Moreover, the programme cluster approach should be further developed and tested, including in terms of its effectiveness in engaging non-resident agencies.

36. The work of the system should fit within the larger context of the national Government's own development strategies. For example, in Ghana, the World Bank is moving into overall results and resource frameworks with comprehensive result matrices for national development strategies encompassing all partners. Those would be important documents with which to align business practices. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness had been an important driver of that process.

37. Problems were still being encountered in ensuring the effective inclusion of the productive sector activities of the United Nations system in the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks. For instance, in Rwanda, although 90 per cent of the workforce was engaged in agricultural work, accounting for 41 per cent of gross national product, agriculture did not at first feature in the frameworks.

Eventually, it was included under "social protection". That spoke powerfully for gearing management processes to fit actual needs in the country, not the reverse.

38. At present, a number of organizations had difficulty linking their country programmes with the "One United Nations" approach. For example, in the area of energy, there was an important network of national officials who could contribute a great deal of expertise but were not part of the country teams. How could the country teams tap such expertise? A note of caution was also voiced about the potential danger of the "One United Nations" at the country level focusing so much on internal United Nations coherence to the point of ending up discouraging other actors (in particular civil society) to engage with the Organization.

39. A number of organizations recalled that there were important areas of the United Nations system's support to countries that were still largely neglected in current discussions to advance coherence at the country level. For instance, under the aegis of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), a treaty was concluded a year ago aimed at extending digital broadcasting to more than 100 countries for the next 50 years. That carried major implications for countries' development prospects and should thus be integrated in designing the system's development support plans.

40. **The Committee recognized the importance of the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review, not only for inter-agency processes, but also for the system's intergovernmental processes**. The organizations of the system had an important stake in getting the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review process, and its outcome, right. Initially, the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review had tended to be donor-led, with a focus on "process" issues. Increasingly, the Group of 77 and programme countries had acquired a stronger voice in the process, leading to more substantive and balanced resolutions, with due emphasis on funding and actual development outcomes.

41. The importance of predictable and reliable funding as a key ingredient in the drive towards greater coherence was strongly emphasized. Existing shortcomings in funding mechanisms greatly constrained specialized agencies in the effort to translate their normative mandates and intergovernmental decisions into effective operational activities. The Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of 2007 could become a new opportunity to promote "good multilateral donorship" that would stabilize regular and core funding, enhance predictability and dependability of supplementary resources and allow for full cost recovery.

42. Regarding capacity development, participants emphasized the need for more sustainability of results and better alignment at the macrolevel of projects and programmes supported by the United Nations system with national development strategies. The new position statement of the United Nations Development Group on capacity development was a first step to better conceptualize that important component of the United Nations system's operational activities. Reference was made, in the same context, to the responsibility of the High-level Committee on Programmes to support CEB in complying with the request addressed to it by the General Assembly to analyse the capacity development efforts of the system and to make recommendations on measures to enhance their effectiveness (resolution 59/250, para. 29).

43. Participants also noted the paradigm shift concerning the evaluation function, which was increasingly becoming part of accountability and learning processes in developing countries with implications for the evaluation of operational activities of the United Nations at the country level.

44. Differing views were expressed on the extent to which issues of transition from relief to development should be featured in the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review. Specific points were made on the treatment of such issues as health and education in dealing with capacity development. It was agreed that further specific comments on the draft outline of the Secretary-General's report would be submitted in the coming days directly to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which would be in further contact, as necessary, with Committee members in finalizing the report to the Economic and Social Council.

IV. Preparations for the Chief Executives Board meeting

A. Employment and decent work

45. In introducing the item, the representative of ILO recalled that world leaders, in the 2005 World Summit Outcome document, had resolved to make the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all a central objective of national and international policies as well as national development strategies in the effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The idea of developing a "toolkit for mainstreaming employment and decent work" had evolved from the Committee's deliberations at its tenth and eleventh sessions as well as the ministerial declaration adopted by the Economic and Social Council in 2006. The toolkit drew on four pillars of ILO work, namely, rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue, and had been developed, in consultation with organizations in the United Nations system, in order to: (a) enable the system to better assist countries in achieving their objectives in terms of full and productive employment and decent work for all; (b) facilitate the mainstreaming of employment and decent work in the policies, programmes and activities of international organizations for better impact; (c) be used as a lens through which to assess the potential and opportunities for maximizing employment and decent work outcomes; (d) identify areas of common interest, linkages and synergies conducive to further coherence around employment and decent work objectives; (e) deepen, share and expand knowledge and tools in areas of common interest; and (f) improve and pool together capacity and responsiveness to country priorities.

46. The Senior Adviser in the Office of the Director-General of ILO gave a demonstration of how the toolkit was expected to work by providing a tour of the "Decent Work Tool" section of the CEB website, which had been launched on 15 March 2007. In his presentation, he illustrated how employment and decent work objectives were relevant to the entire United Nations system and the extent to which the missions and activities of United Nations system organizations were linked on that issue.

47. Members of the Committee expressed appreciation to ILO for the inclusive process employed in developing the toolkit, which was seen as an important contribution to advancing in substance the "One United Nations" concept. It was suggested that the toolkit would benefit from being subjected to field tests. Its

potential usefulness as a diagnostic tool as well as a mapping/priority setting tool was especially emphasized. The relevance of the toolkit to efforts to improve the life of slum dwellers and promote rural employment was also stressed. In that connection, members were informed that FAO and ILO were working on a joint website on rural employment that was expected to be launched in June 2007.

48. In thanking the Committee for its very positive and forthcoming response to the initiative, the representative of ILO invited members to review the annexes to the toolkit carefully, with a view to suggesting ways of further improving and refining their presentation. **The Committee welcomed the intention of the Director-General of ILO to present the toolkit to CEB at its forthcoming session for its endorsement, leading to an exchange of views in the Board on how the system could best concert its actions to advance the policy objectives underlying that initiative.** The Committee viewed the initiative as an integral part of the effort to enhance system-wide policy coherence and to ensure that the quality of the system's support to countries in their development efforts could derive practical benefit from such enhanced coherence, and looked forward to CEB guidance as to other areas in which similar initiatives might be pursued.

B. Aid-for-trade

49. The representative of the World Trade Organization introduced a background note on the organization's work programme on aid-for-trade (CEB/2007/HLCP-XIII/CRP.3). In her briefing, she recalled that the Doha Development Round negotiations had set out to reduce trade-restricting and distorting barriers. Recognizing that improvements in market access alone might not be sufficient to lift developing countries onto the path of sustained growth, the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration had created a new World Trade Organization aid-for-trade work programme to complement the conclusion of the Doha Development Round. She informed the Committee that in early 2006 the Director-General of the World Trade Organization had established an aid-for-trade task force consisting of 13 States members of the organization. The task force, which had been supported in its work by an advisory committee of international organizations (including the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UNDP, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the International Trade Centre, the Asian Development Bank, the African Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development), had issued a report that was endorsed by the General Council of the World Trade Organization on 12 October 2006. The report articulated a rationale for aid-for-trade, placed aid-for-trade in a wider development framework, provided a broad definition of its scope and coverage, and set out a series of proposals for further work and eventual operationalization of the programme. It was in the context of that background, and the recognition that trade would only be efficient in conjunction with other policies, that the Director-General of the World Trade Organization had come to the view, endorsed by CEB at the past session, that the aid-for-trade issue warranted CEB consideration.

50. During the ensuing discussion, it was recalled that aid-for-trade was indeed a system-wide concern that had initially been brought to the fore at the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico, and had been

pursued at the 2005 World Summit. Committee members expressed strong interest and support for the work being undertaken by WTO in that area. It was noted that the initiative was very timely and involved an important policy shift that served to bridge the gap between long-drawn negotiations and the need for early action.

51.   **The Committee welcomed the intention to highlight aid-for-trade in the agenda of the upcoming CEB meeting. It decided to revert to modalities for inter-agency cooperation in that area in the light of the briefing that the Director-General of WTO would provide to CEB and the outcome of the Board's discussions on the subject.**

V.   Participation by United Nations agencies in the Economic and Social Council (particularly the annual ministerial review and the Development Cooperation Forum)

52.   The Director of the Office of ECOSOC Support and Coordination in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs briefed the Committee on the new functions mandated to the Economic and Social Council by the 2005 World Summit and the General Assembly in its resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (see also CEB/2007/HLCP-XIII/CRP.4). He recalled that the Council would convene the first annual ministerial review and launch the biennial Development Cooperation Forum at its forthcoming substantive session in July 2007.

53.   The first annual ministerial review would focus on strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger (Millennium Development Goal 1), including through the global partnership for development, and would consist of three key elements: (a) a global review; (b) a thematic review; and (c) voluntary national presentations by Bangladesh, Barbados, Cambodia, Ethiopia and Ghana. As part of the preparatory process, Bangladesh, Brazil and Morocco were planning to host consultative meetings to highlight key issues from different regional perspectives.

54.   The Development Cooperation Forum, which would be launched in July and officially convene for the first time as part of the Economic and Social Council session of 2008, would provide an interactive platform for dialogue on key policy issues affecting development cooperation, under arrangements that would provide for the full engagement not only of Governments and international organizations, but also of civil society and the private sector. It was hoped that the preparatory processes already under way and the Council discussion next July leading up to the first Forum in 2008 would help bridge some of the North-South differences that still remained on the role of the Forum and lead to consensus on an approach to its functions that would focus on aid, but also encompass special purpose funds and philanthropy, and linkages with debt and trade, in a way that would establish the Council as a key platform to steer development cooperation in all its dimensions without duplicating intergovernmental work in other forums.

55.   He also called attention to the Global Compact Leaders Forum, which would be held in conjunction with the high-level segment of the Council in July and was expected to gather 1,000 top executives from business, heads of international labour, civil society and United Nations organizations, and high ranking government officials.

56. **Members of the Committee expressed the interest and commitment of their organizations to support the Economic and Social Council in the effective discharge of its important new functions. Across the segments of the Council, there was a need to find better ways of engaging United Nations agencies in a real dialogue with Council members.** That was particularly important in relation to the annual ministerial review and the Development Cooperation Forum during the high-level segment — which should be organized so as to enable executive heads to contribute effectively and substantively to the debate — but also applied, in different ways, to the coordination, operational activities and humanitarian segments. **The coordination segment, in particular, should be the occasion for a meaningful interaction between the Council and CEB member organizations. That could be aided by a revamped annual report of CEB, which could become a main focus of the segment** (rather than simply being one of the many reports taken up at the general segment).

57. Other specific suggestions made included selecting some of the "One United Nations" pilot countries to make national presentations at future annual ministerial reviews, and for the country presentations at the annual ministerial reviews to include an assessment of the effectiveness of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework preparation and implementation processes. As a means of keeping the Committee better informed of recent developments, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs was requested to add the e-mail addresses of Committee members to its circulation list of the Economic and Social Council summaries/reports.

58. In responding to the comments from members of the Committee, the representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs urged the Committee to view changes in the Economic and Social Council as a new opportunity to add value to the efforts of the United Nations system to promote economic and social progress. He hoped that agency representatives would participate not only in plenary sessions but also in the smaller parallel processes where they could interact directly with other stakeholders.

59. He welcomed the idea of revamping the CEB annual reports and the interest expressed in the proposal, put forward in the note before the Committee, that responsibility for considering those reports be shifted from the general to the coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council and be supplemented by presentations by panels of executive heads covering different aspects of the work of the system that were contributing to development and the implementation of the outcome of the 2005 World Summit. Such presentations could be organized around clusters of agencies (e.g. the food agencies, the infrastructure agencies) so as to cover, over a period of four to five years, all aspects of the social, economic and environmental work of the United Nations system.

60. In concluding the discussion, the Chairman expressed the hope that the implementation of the new mandates of the Economic and Social Council would be a significant step towards enabling the Council to play the central role in policy review, high-level dialogue and coordination envisaged for it in the Charter and to act as a valuable platform for engagement of all entities of the United Nations system.

VI. Follow-up to decisions of the High-level Committee on Programmes

A. Anti-corruption

61. To facilitate the Committee's consideration of the item, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime submitted two notes entitled "Towards an effective United Nations system-wide response to corruption" (CEB/2007/HLCP-XIII/CRP.5) and "Joint action to curb transnational crime" (CEB/2007/HLCP-XIII/CRP.5/Add.1) for consideration by the Committee. In presenting the notes, the representative of the Office reviewed the progress being made in fostering international and inter-agency coordination and cooperation in addressing transnational crime, following the CEB endorsement of a common programme of action at its spring 2005 session. While advances in that direction at the field level had been significant, more limited progress had been made in institutionalizing joint programming at Headquarters. The Office, which provided the secretariat of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, had been requested to further consult international organizations and financial institutions so as to gather information and promote technical assistance related to the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols. Recalling that the Office would need to produce a progress report in that regard by October 2007, he sought the Committee's support in collecting the necessary data and information from the Committee's member organizations.

62. He also recalled that, during the negotiations that had led up to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention against Corruption, the issue had been raised of the criminalization of bribery of officials of public international organizations. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime trusted that the upcoming CEB session would provide an opportunity for the United Nations system to move the debate forward on that issue as well.

63. The Committee was invited to: (a) recognize that the United Nations Convention against Corruption presented a comprehensive framework that should be at the core of a system-wide strategic response to corruption; (b) agree on the desirability of the United Nations system to enter into an "institutional integrity agreement" based on the principles of the Convention; and (c) task the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to initiate collaborative work in order to further promote the strengthening of the United Nations system's institutional integrity, and monitor and report on progress being achieved.

64. **Members of the Committee were in agreement on the importance of a strong policy against corruption in international organizations. They pointed to the need to proceed systematically on that issue, benefiting from further consultations with the relevant networks of the High-level Committee on Management, including the meeting of legal advisers, and taking fully into account the many relevant initiatives already under way,** such as the establishment of an Ethics Office in the United Nations Secretariat and the development of ethics training modules.

65. **The Committee noted that the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime would refer to that matter at the forthcoming CEB**

session and expressed the hope that he would outline the consultative process that the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime would follow to effectively move the proposal forward within the CEB structures.

B. Migration

66. The Committee took note with appreciation of a note prepared by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (CEB/2007/HLCP-XIII/CRP.6) providing a status report on the implementation of the Committee and CEB decisions in the area of migration and an update on preparations for the Global Forum on Migration and Development. Members of the Committee sought, in particular, information on the response of the Global Migration Group to the requests of UNESCO, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the regional commissions to be included in the membership of the Group.

67. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which is scheduled to take over in July the six-month rotational chairmanship of the Global Migration Group, was asked to report to the Committee on the matter and other relevant developments, including, in particular, the outcome of the first Global Forum, to be held in Brussels in July 2007.

C. Task Force on Economic Development

68. The Committee had before it a report summarizing the discussion at an inter-agency meeting on urbanization held on 6 March 2007 (CEB/2007/HLCP-XIII/CRP.7) in the context of the Task Force on Economic Development. In introducing the report, the representative of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme reported that participants at the meeting (FAO, ILO, the High-level Committee on Programmes secretariat, UNCTAD, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNIDO, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, WHO and WIPO) had recognized that 2007 would mark a turning point in urban trends, with more than half of the world's population living in cities for the first time, as 72 per cent of the African, 46 per cent of the Asian and 33 per cent of the Latin American urban-dwellers were living in slum areas. Slums were a physical and spatial manifestation of urban poverty and intra-city inequality. The consequences of rapid urbanization combined with poor urban governance, lack of security of tenure and access to basic services, as well as high unemployment and underemployment rates. Contributing to well-managed cities should therefore be regarded as a priority concern of the entire United Nations system. The meeting recognized the important role of local authorities for participatory planning and management of the cities and mobilizing investments in housing, urban infrastructure and basic services.

69. The meeting thus recommended that a thematic discussion on "urban poverty or urbanization: challenges and opportunities" be tabled at a future CEB session in order to ensure a coherent strategic response by the United Nations system to the multifaceted challenges posed by rapid urbanization. The meeting also agreed on arrangements for United Nations organizations to collaborate on analytical policy work and to identify opportunities for strengthening joint programmes of work on

capacity-building for the reduction of urban poverty, including on "localizing the Millennium Development Goals" and to promote sustainable urbanization.

70.   The Committee noted the discussions at the inter-agency meeting as well as its conclusions and recommendations.

VII.   Africa

71.   Opening the Committee's discussions on Africa, the Director of the CEB secretariat recalled that although CEB had accorded high priority to African development, and had identified system-wide support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as a priority issue at its Greentree Retreat in July 2005, the issue had not been discussed since by the Committee or CEB.

72.   In presenting the note by the CEB secretariat on United Nations system support to Africa (CEB/2007/HLCP-XIII/CRP.8), the senior adviser in the CEB secretariat recalled that it was highly unlikely, given current development trends, that the African continent and particularly sub-Saharan Africa could achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. While gross domestic product growth rates had reached an encouraging 5 per cent in many African countries, much of that growth was due to higher demand arising from emerging economies in the extractive sector and had been fuelled by higher energy and mineral prices, which historically were not sustainable in the medium- and longer-term horizon. As annual growth rates of 7 to 8 per cent were necessary for Africa to reach the Millennium Development Goals and as the growth experienced had not had significant effects on job creation owing to the capital intensive nature of the extractive sector and its weak linkages with the rest of the economy, macro-economic policies in Africa would need to be substantially reviewed. Complementing the system-wide coordination and cooperation arrangements conducted through the annual regional consultations meetings of United Nations organizations working in Africa, the Committee and CEB should take a broader perspective in their support for NEPAD and Africa's efforts in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It was recommended in the note that Africa's development be maintained as a standing item on the agenda of the Committee, and that the Committee be tasked to prepare periodic thematic discussions in CEB itself on the subject. Possible themes put forth for an initial round of discussion by CEB at its fall 2007 session included: "Aid effectiveness in meeting Millennium Development Goals targets"; "Effectiveness of United Nations support for Africa's development", or alternatively, "Implementation of the United Nations-African Union Declaration on Cooperation between the two institutions".

73.   Members of the Committee expressed strong support for the approaches outlined in the note by the CEB secretariat. **They endorsed the proposal in the note that the Committee should recommend to CEB to place the question of African peace, security and development and of action to support African countries in meeting the Millennium Development Goals on its agenda for periodic discussions. The Committee also endorsed the recommendations in the note on its role in preparing for the CEB thematic discussions** and on the need for: (a) an effort to be made to coordinate the timing of relevant discussions in the regional consultations meetings and the Committee; (b) ensuring that implications for Africa's development were explicitly highlighted in all relevant thematic papers

prepared for CEB discussion; and (c) the findings of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination to be highlighted by organizations in their reports to their respective intergovernmental bodies. The view was also expressed that CEB would benefit from being briefed by the Coordinator of the annual regional consultations meetings of United Nations organizations working in Africa. The note's concise nature and concrete recommendations were considered as models to be followed in preparing documentation for future Committee meetings.

74. **Subject to the endorsement by CEB of the foregoing recommendations, the Committee requested the Chair, with the help of the CEB secretariat, to solicit views from CEB members on the specific theme to be selected for the proposed first round of CEB discussions on the subject at its 2007 fall session.**

VIII. Other matters

75. The Committee was informed that the United Nations Development Group would hold three meetings in conjunction with the 2007 spring session of CEB. The meetings were all scheduled to take place on 19 April 2007 in order to take advantage of the gathering of participants for the CEB session. The Development Group support group would meet from 10 a.m. to 12 noon to discuss the "One United Nations" country-level pilot projects. As has been past practice, the Group principals would also meet in connection with the CEB session and hold a meeting from 4 to 6 p.m. That meeting would be followed by a smaller group of 10 principals of the agencies included in the Group's "One United Nations" pilot support committee meeting for the first time at the heads of agency level.

76. Consultations on the timing of the next meeting of the Committee would be held following the CEB session. The Chairman informed the Committee that he had been approached by the Director of the United Nations System Staff College, Staffan de Mistura, with an offer from the College to host the next session of the Committee.

77. The Secretary of CEB outlined arrangements for the 2007 spring session of CEB, which would be held at ILO headquarters in Geneva on 20 April. In the programme area, emphasis would be placed on employment and decent work, developments in respect of "One United Nations" at the country level and aid-for-trade. In the management area, CEB would focus on the harmonization of business practices, issues related to the confidentiality of internal audit reports and questions relating to the United Nations security management system. The regular session would be followed by a retreat at which recent economic and political trends and developments would be discussed. The retreat would continue in the morning of 21 April, focusing on the review of the functioning of CEB being led by the Directors-General of ILO and the World Trade Organization.

78. The Committee also received a note about the recommendations emanating from the recent tenth Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development. The Round Table had developed a set of recommendations for the attention of CEB, underlining the importance of prioritizing communication for development principles and methodologies in all programmatic areas and the need to allocate resources for that effort. It also suggested that an inter-agency working group be established on the subject. For want of time, the Committee was unable to discuss the note.

Annex I

Agenda

Thirteenth session of the High-level Committee on Programmes

1. Adoption of the agenda.

2. Introductory remarks of the Chairman on current developments and the status of the CEB review.

3. System-wide coherence:

    (a) Current developments and further process — briefing;

    (b) Pilot countries and "One United Nations" at the country level;

    (c) Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review.

4. Preparations for the Chief Executives Board for Coordination meeting:

    (a) Employment and decent work;

    (b) Aid-for-trade.

5. Participation by United Nations agencies in the Economic and Social Council (particularly the annual ministerial review and the Development Cooperation Forum).

6. Follow-up to the decisions of the High-level Committee on Programmes:

    (a) Anti-corruption;

    (b) Migration;

    (c) Task Force on Economic Development.

7. Africa.

8. Other matters.

Annex II

Provisional list of participants

Chairman: Lennart Båge (International Fund for Agricultural Development)

Vice-Chairman: Mats Karlsson (World Bank)

Secretary: Phyllis Lee (CEB secretariat)

United Nations

Department of Economic and Social Affairs	Patrizio Civili
	Rachel Mayanja
	Nikhil Seth
	Lucien Back
Regional commissions	Amr Nour
International Labour Organization	Maria Ducci
	Christophe Perrin
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Annika Söder
	Wendy Mann
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Hans d'Orville
	Jean-Yves Le Saux
World Health Organization	Peter Mertens
World Bank	Oscar Avalle
International Monetary Fund	Reinhard Munzberg
Universal Postal Union	Olivier Boussard
International Telecommunication Union	Arthur Levin
World Meteorological Organization	Elena Manaenkova
International Maritime Organization	David Edwards
World Intellectual Property Organization	Orobola Fasehun
International Fund for Agricultural Development	Uday Abhyankar
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	Agerico Lacanlale
	Richard Kennedy
	Qazi Shaukat Fareed
International Atomic Energy Agency	Donatella Magliani
	Syed Akbaruddin
World Trade Organization	Gabrielle Marceau
World Tourism Organization	Peter Shackleford

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Oluseyemr Oduyemi Kris Mac Farquahr Harmon Thomas
United Nations Development Programme	Bruce Jenks Alison Drayton
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Arnauld Akodjenou Christine Linner
United Nations Children's Fund	Toshiyuki Niwa Ado Vaher Bernt Aasen
United Nations Population Fund	Safiye Cagar Ronny Lindström
World Food Programme	Allan Jury
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	Ugi Zvekic
United Nations Human Settlements Programme	Inga Björk-Klevby Axumite Gebre-Egziabher
United Nations University	Janos Bogardi
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization	Alexander Kmentt
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	Helen Frary
International Trade Centre	Stephen Brown
CEB secretariat	Adnan Amin Kamran Kousari Mikael Rosengren