

UNDG meeting

New York, 24 February 2010, 9:00 AM – 12:00 Noon
Labouisse Hall, UNICEF, Three UN Plaza

Final Report

Item 1 – Opening remarks by the UNDG Chair

1. The UNDG Chair, Ms. Helen Clark, opened the first meeting of 2010 by welcoming all the participants. Recognizing that this will be a critical year for the international system in its efforts to combat climate change and achieve the MDGs, she noted that the UN's work is in the epicentre of these efforts. With the global crises still lingering, she highlighted the need for the UN system to take a step back and take a strategic look at mega trends. In this regard, she had asked the UNDG Advisory Group in 2009 to provide recommendations on strategic priorities for the UNDG. The results of this work - recommendations to the UNDG Chair, and the full UNDG, on UNDG strategic priorities for 2010-2011 – are now presented for UNDG's consideration.

2. The Chair noted that the proposed strategy will set the scene for the UNDG over the next couple of years. It focuses on development impact and results; how best to capitalize on the UNDAF rollouts; how to provide a more coherent support to countries in transition and; how to ensure the type of support provided to LDCs, LICs and MICs is as relevant as possible. At the heart of the strategy is UNDG's commitment to support countries to achieve the MDGs. Looking to the upcoming High Level Summit on the MDGs, the Chair noted that it will be an important event to accelerate progress towards the MDGs, built on robust evidence on what works and securing the political commitment and necessary resources to strengthen implementation. The UNDG has a fundamental role to play, both in the lead-up to the summit and in carrying out its commitments.

3. Recognizing the importance of taking a strategic approach, the Chair emphasized the need to integrate development concerns with those on the environment and climate change and give particular attention to gender equality and women's empowerment, since where the goals are struggling at the moment is often related to the low priority accorded to women's needs. The Chair noted that by supporting a goal-by-goal analysis of country-level best practices, the UNDG-MDG Task Force can make an important contribution to our common efforts. The analysis will serve as background material to the roundtable discussions expected to take place as part of the Summit. On 25-26 February, a workshop organized by the UNDG MDG Task Force where there will be an opportunity to review its findings in more detail with colleagues from headquarters and the field.

4. Referring to the proposed strategic priorities, the Chair noted that for the UN development system to maximize its contribution to results, we need to become much more coherent and complimentary in the way we work. The UNDAFs play a critical role in positioning the UN at country level. The new UNDAF package is expected to translate into a step change in the quality and the coherence of the UNDAFs and simplify the common country-programming processes.

5. Ms. Clark further noted that another critical area of UNDG work is the continued work on driving the harmonization of business practices and for the different pillars of the CEB to work more closely together. In this regard, she mentioned the high-level HLCM-UNDG mission, initiated by the UNDG and the HLCM Chairs, to identify bottlenecks in business practices at the country level. The mission will travel to Mozambique and Malawi in March and then to Albania and Vietnam in April. The recommendations from this mission are expected to drive another round of critical business practice reform to support UN coherence at country level.

6. Speaking about the Management and Accountability System, the Chair noted that this is a central component in improving interagency co-ordination and enhancing the impact of the UN system at country level. Later this year, the

status of the implementation of the Management and Accountability System will be reviewed. In this regard, the UNDG Chair had asked in November 2009 all Regional UNDG Teams to report on its implementation at country level, in their respective regions. The responses received indicate that the Management and Accountability System is a critical tool in improving interagency co-ordination and enhancing the impact of the UN system at country level. Promising efforts are underway for its implementation and country teams are pursuing innovative approaches in a number of areas. For example, the two regional UNDG Teams in Africa report that, in some country teams, comprehensive joint programme reviews, with the participation of government and development partners, have greatly strengthened their position in delivering development results. Several country teams have found ways to share agency resources and pursue joint resources mobilization in support of common UN system goals. In Kyrgyzstan, agencies have pooled resources to strengthen the Resident Coordinator's office expertise in gender equality and early recovery. The principle of mutual accountability is also being put into practice. In Albania, lead agencies are identified to coordinate sector work and ensure accountability of programme results. They report to government counterparts on their progress. However, challenges do remain and the responses received also indicate that there continue to be gaps in the understanding of the system's requirements, as well of individual roles and responsibilities. The Chair therefore noted that it is urgent that the UNDG, both at global and regional level, take a lead in its implementation and ensure that the country teams are provided with the necessary guidance, support and empowerment.

7. Continuing to speak about key events in 2010, the Chair noted that the results of the country-led evaluations of the Delivering as One pilots will be presented at the intergovernmental meeting in Hanoi in June later this year. The Chair mentioned she will attend this meeting possibly together with a number of other Principals. During her recent visit to Papua New Guinea, Ms. Clark was impressed to learn how the country team there is increasingly collaborating and coordinating its efforts. Later this summer, the independent evaluation of the pilot countries is expected to start. The results of the evaluation will feed into the General Assembly discussions on system-wide coherence.

8. With regard to the functional review of DOCO, the Chair provided an update on her meeting with the Advisory Group Principals the day before to discuss the functional review of DOCO. The review was an extensive exercise, which included a broad stakeholder consultation at global, regional and country level. Around 520 persons, both within the UNDG and other key stakeholders in the UN, took part in the interviews and web-based surveys. In the meeting with the Principals it was agreed to ask the Vice Chair of the UNDG, the Chair of the Advisory Group and the Director of DOCO to work with the Advisory Group at ASG level to align the UNDG strategic priorities, the DOCO functional review and the UNDG Regional Teams capacity assessment and present to the April meeting of the Advisory Group at Principal level for its review.

9. With those introductory remarks, the UNDG Chair handed over to the UNDG Vice Chair, Ms. Namita Pradhan, the Advisory Group Chair, Ms. Mari Simonen, and the Director of DOCO, Ms. Debbie Landey, to give a more detailed presentation on the proposed strategic priorities for the UNDG in 2010-2011.

Item 2 – Proposed UNDG Strategic Priorities for 2010-2011

10. Ms. Namita Pradhan, UNDG Vice Chair, introduced the discussion on the UNDG strategic priorities by outlining the process of drafting the proposal. In response to the UNDG Chair's request in 2009, the Advisory Group met in a retreat to look at how the UNDG could make its work more strategic. Ms. Pradhan thanked the UNDG Chair for the opportunity to develop the proposal and invited the Advisory Group Chair to present the proposed strategy to the UNDG.

11. Ms. Mari Simonen, UNDG Advisory Group Chair, continued by giving a presentation on the main points contained in the draft strategic priorities. She noted that the exercise of preparing the strategic priorities had been undertaken with a strong commitment from all those involved, and thanked the Advisory Group members, the facilitator David Fairman and the small drafting team for taking on the challenge. She noted that the document is not an exhaustive list of what the UNDG does, but focuses on a few key strategic priorities. The UNDG Chair had requested the Advisory Group to come up with a vision for the next two years of how the UNDG will respond to the challenge of supporting

countries to make a real difference that will have transformational impact. The Advisory Group was tasked to look at results rather than process and to ensure that the strategic priorities were responsive to the guidance provided by the General Assembly through the TCPR and other resolutions, as well as emerging global priorities such as climate change.

12. Ms. Simonen gave a brief summary of the draft document and clarified that section one and two provide the rationale for the strategy, including the context in which the UN development system is operating. Externally, there is a huge demand for the UN development system to respond more effectively to global challenges. Internally, the UN system needs to face the global challenges and address them in a more strategic way. The third section outlines the key set of strategic priorities that will target the UNDG's collective efforts to maximise country level impact. These priorities are summarized as: i) engage "upstream" in policy and program dialogue and technical advice; ii) accelerate MDG achievement; iii) ensure UNCT discipline in priority setting; iv) strengthen institutional capacity building; v) build south-south partnerships; and, scale up implementation of common services and operations support. The strategy further suggests a targeted focus on groups of countries with a specific focus on UNDAF rollout countries, crisis and transition countries and Delivering as One and high coherence countries, recognizing universal coverage but differentiating the different needs of LDCs, LICs and MICs.

13. The strategy further identifies key drivers within the UN system to increase country-level development impact. These include: i) increase agency incentives and supports for country-level coherence and results; ii) deepen senior leadership engagement with Regional UNDG Teams & UNCTs; and, iii) improve system capacity to deploy knowledge and know-how. The strategic paper now has to be translated into concrete deliverables in a two year work plan to ensure time invested is in service of results. This will also clarify what support should be directed to the regional teams and what secretariat support will be provided by DOCO. She handed over to Ms. Debbie Landey to present any implications the UNDG strategic priorities may have on working methods of the UNDG.

14. Ms. Debbie Landey thanked the UNDG Chair for her high level of dedication to UNDG issues. She also thanked the Advisory Group Chair and the UNDG Vice Chair for leading the retreat. With respect to implications on working methods, she suggested the UNDG work plan presented at the meeting should be endorsed. In this context, the Working Groups should focus on ongoing work rather than any new initiatives, unless critical for countries. Once the strategy has been fully endorsed, the work plan and working methods would be amended.

Discussion

15. Strong support was expressed by UNDG members for the strategic priorities, as well as for the suggestion to review the strategic priorities together with the DOCO functional review and the Regional UNDG Teams capacity assessment. UNICEF expressed strong support for the strategic priorities and highlighted the importance of country level impact as the most important part of the strategy. They further highlighted the importance of ensuring that all levels - global, regional and country level - are aligned behind these priorities.

16. ILO also expressed strong support for the strategic priorities, noting that it is essential to move forward, clarify the roles within the UNDG and focus on how we can focus on the maximum impact at the country level. They reiterated the importance of the integration of the three elements of the CEB. On the joint UNDG-HLCM mission on business practice harmonisation, it was suggested that the inclusion of regional representatives in this mission would be useful to ensure stronger linkages. WFP fully endorsed the strategic priorities, and noted that once the strategic priorities are endorsed the Working Groups must change their focus to match the priorities.

17. UN HABITAT highlighted the importance of taking into account the expertise of the non resident agencies in the joint UNDG-HLCM mission on business practices. UNDP reiterated the need to align work plans and working methods of the Working Groups with the strategic priorities. In regard to incentives, it is important that they exist also for the regional bureaus and other at headquarters. It was further noted that Net Contributing Countries should also be added to the list of countries. IFAD recognised the strong need for a more strategic UNDG engagement and echoed the importance of ensuring that the needs of the non resident agencies are addressed.

18. The Regional Commissions noted that the strategic priorities are an important step forward for all levels of the UN system to work together. They further reiterated their commitment to work at regional level to implement the recommendations. DESA strongly supported the document and highlighted the need to strengthen the link between the normative and the operational elements. UNCTAD welcomed the focus on development impact. On upstream policy advice, the importance of full participation of non resident agencies was underlined. It was further noted that it would be useful if the document highlighted what donors can do to assist the UNDG in being more strategic, including in relation to financial incentives.

19. UNAIDS highlighted the importance of a closer link between the needs at country level and the work at HQ level. There is also a need to look further into monitoring of the impact of the products coming out of the Working Groups. FAO noted that it is important not to prioritize one typology of countries over another, but to differentiate the type of support provided. They highlighted the importance of looking at the strategic priorities of the system as a whole, as opposed to agency specific priorities. In this regard, when referring to movement from downstream to upstream it should be reflected that it is about a change from project to programmes. There is also a need for more consistency in the language with the TCPR and other intergovernmental mandates, e.g. referring to capacity development rather than capacity building. UNIDO agreed that capacity development is the better term and highlighted the need to look at the document in the context of the functional review of DOCO.

20. In response, Ms Simonen thanked for the important feedback and committed, together with the UNDG Vice Chair and the DOCO Director, to further fine tuning the document in light of the comments received. She also welcomed further comments in writing by 8 March. She reiterated that the work plans and working methods of the working groups needs to be revisited once the alignment of the UNDG strategic priorities, the Regional UNDG Teams capacity assessment and the DOCO functional review has been done and endorsed. She further noted the suggestions relating to the joint UNDG-HLCM missions. In conclusion, the Vice Chair summed up the discussion, noting the broad support for the strategic priorities.

Item 3 – UNDG Working Group items for decision

WG on Country Office Business Operations

ICT guidelines and scale up plan for common ICT at country level

21. Ms Mari Simonen gave a short presentation on the ICT guidelines and the scale up plan. She commended the excellent work of the Task Team and the different organizations. She explained how the guidance had come about as a result of requests from the pilot countries and others to collaborate more fully around common ICT infrastructures at the country level. The guidelines cover a number of areas including recommendations for the change process, technical principles and other areas covering aspects of ICT harmonization arising out of lessons learned from the country pilots. They include recommendations for establishing ICT working groups at the country level and assessing, planning and implementing common ICT projects and infrastructures at the country level. She noted that the guidance has been circulated to the HLCM ICT Network for comments and was reviewed and vetted by the UNDG's Country Office Business Operation Working Group.

22. It is accompanied by a second document which outlines the scale up plan, including a proposal on staff requirements for taking the project to scale and expanding to other countries who are implementing coherence. Ms Simonen acknowledged the difficulties surrounding resources provision and the need to look at different modalities to support this. She also suggested the possibility having a 'virtual pool' put in place, rather than a standing pool which could address some of the concerns regarding resources. Ms Zehra Aydin also highlighted the need for more financial support for bringing forward the initiatives while recognising the difficulties related to funding

Discussion

23. A number of agencies expressed concerns about the financial resources which are related to ICT development although overall welcomed the guidance as providing excellent help to UNCTs in their work to streamline ICTs. UNIDO expressed concern over the relatively high cost of the scale up plan and referred to a recent meeting of the ICT network group in Geneva which stated, inter alia, “...*is setting goals very high [and] not considering the budgetary reality*”. In addition, UNIDO marked the lack of reference to the ICC (International Computing Centre) in Geneva and proposed to consider utilizing their services, including recruitment at a moderate charge without necessarily setting up a new body. UNIDO also suggested examining the possibilities of significantly downsizing the number of staff members proposed for the Inter-Agency Support Competence Centre which would then possibly allow its housing in the ICC premises in Geneva if agreeable to ICC. The cost concern was shared by other agencies. ILO provided a number of minor clarifications in the guidance. UNDP also welcomed the guidelines and underscored that resources are required in the country teams and noted that there are options for seeking donor support as an interim solution however a more long term and sustainable solutions need to be found to address larger issues such as a common back office network. The HLCM could play a role in this regard. UNICEF fully endorsed the guidelines and welcomed the recommendations for the ICT scale up proposal. They suggested that it would be prudent to have a revised version including the comments made today and the update proposals. It was recommended that the ICT task team should make further recommendations for medium and long term and further explore different funding models including those from HLCM initiatives, pooled funds and cost sharing at country level. UNICEF agreed that funding needs to be expanded from the Delivering as One efforts, however prior to that an appropriate interagency oversight mechanism has to be put in place. WHO noted that they would welcome further discussion in the HLCM and the ICT Network when looking at putting in place more structured mechanism for scale up and oversight. At this stage they were not looking for large mechanisms to push this ahead.

24. Mr. Ashok Nigam, DOCO Associate Director emphasised that the work had been developed jointly with the HLCM ICT network and that they had explored the question of funding and the concerns raised and welcomed the additional suggestions in relation to providing funding. The need for support is expected to be demand-driven and that country teams can cost share. Where the countries have the resources, it is important to provide all the support and technical expertise possible – if the UNDG can take note of this and support this in a manner which is appropriate.

25. **Decision:** *The UNDG endorsed the guidelines and the principle of scaling up the ICT guidelines. Scaling up would be on the understanding that UNDG ICT Task Team working with the HLCM ICT network would look at demand-driven country specific support modalities with cost sharing between the UNCT, UN DOCO and where possible the HLCM ICT Network, with technical support from UNDG agencies at regional and HQs level,. The approach of a ‘virtual pool’ of support supplemented by country-level mission and consulting support, as appropriate, as opposed to setting up a dedicated unit would be followed..*

26. **Action Point:** *The next step will be to continue to look at the demands coming from countries and working with the ICT network to see that this falls within the bigger picture as well as to continue explore issues relating to funding. (WGCOBO)*

WG on Programming Issues

Guidance Note on the Application of Programming Principles to the UNDAF

27. Mr Moez Doraid gave a presentation on behalf of Mr Rio Hada of OHCHR who was unable to join the meeting but who had co-chaired the group which produced the Guidance Note on the Application of the Programming Principles to the UNDAF. He expressed his thanks to the Co-Chair and those who contributed to the note. In presenting the guidance note, he outlined the five programming principles, which include three normative principles – the human rights based approach (HRBA), gender equality and environmental sustainability, as well as two enabling principles - results based management and capacity development. The enabling principles build on the UN’s normative frameworks. These five principles constitute a key comparative advantage of the UN system. The guidance note responds to demands from UNCTs for more clarification on how the principles could be applied in a more consistent and coherent manner during the

UNDAF formulation process and the implementation process. The principles are universally recognised and should be applied in all sectors of programming. The Guidance Note offers a conceptual framework to visualize how the programming principles complement one another, and a tool to support their application during the four main steps of the UNDAF process: (1) roadmap; (2) country analysis; (3) strategic planning; and (4) monitoring and evaluation. As the next step, a training package consistent with the Guidance Note on how to apply the five programming principles when designing a new UNDAF will be developed with the support of UNSSC. It will be incorporated into the support provided to the UN country team.

28. A number of Agencies expressed their full support for the document. UNICEF noted that there is scope for further streamlining and simplification of the guidance. Some smaller UN presences have difficulties in implementing the guidance and it would be useful to look at the different UN presences and the guidance can be applied to the needs of smaller UNCTs. UNDP endorsed the guidelines and emphasised that they need to be tested in the field and to ensure consistency in the application of other programming tools. WHO supported the application of these principles and sought clarification in relation to the newly established human rights mechanism and whether that mechanism would produce new and additional guidance.

29. In response, Mr Doraid agreed with the need to optimize the further guidance to UNCTs and that 2010 should focus on the application and operationalisation of existing guidance. He fully agreed that the guidance note would have to be tried and tested and noted that the WGPI is ready to monitor their application in the coming year. Finally, in relation to the new human rights mechanism he did not expect that the mechanism would produce additional guidance on this topic. Ms Zehra Aydin noted, in relation to field testing, that in the process of developing the guidance note the Task Team worked very closely with the staff college and the guidance was incorporated in the upcoming training for UNCTs.

30. **Decision: *The Guidance Note on the Application of the Programming Principles to the UNDAF was endorsed***

WG on Joint Funding, Finance and Audit Issues

Guidance on Finance and Funding Issues

a. Deployment of Cost Savings from Operational Activities into Country Programmes

31. Mr. Ashok Nigam, DOCO Associate Director, briefly presented the proposed approach in relation to the deployment of cost savings from operational activities into country programmes. He noted that the TCPR in 2004 and 2007 called on the UN system to ensure that savings accruing from reduced transaction costs be redeployed into development programmes in programme countries. The Task Team on Financial Issues, working on this approach for more than a year, has noted that the issue raises a number of complexities and difficulties in relation to how the cost savings from operational activities can be measured and redeployed. The proposed approach is mindful of these complexities. It is recommended that on an experimental basis, where appropriate, agencies should set in place processes for the identification and measurement of 'net' operational savings from country programme and support budgets/ extra budgetary and assessed contribution. This will then be evaluated and the results will be reported back by the end of 2011 to allow agencies sufficient time to experiment with the implementation of the TCPR resolution. It was underlined that each agency would need to further assess the scope and feasibility. Reporting back in 2011 will enable UNDG to review and report on the results of this approach before the next TCPR in 2012.

32. In the subsequent discussions, a number of agencies highlighted the need to report back in a shorter time frame, given the importance placed on this matter by the member states. It was also noted that two years was a long time to consider the identified issues and urged for the work be accelerated. UNIDO noted that they have a particular problem relating to deployment of cost savings based on their status as a Specialized Agency and the fact that they need approval from their governing body for changes to their rules and procedures. UNICEF supported the concept and highlighted the need to bear in mind the complexity and the fact that in some cases the cost of measuring operational savings in their view could be higher than the savings accrued. It was also highlighted that not all agencies have fully integrated budgets

and the administrative and programme budgets have different cycles and are guided by different sets of rules. Until a greater level of integration is reached, it will be difficult to ensure the deployment of savings in operational activities into programmes. It was also felt that given the complexity of the issue and the recognition that the expectation of any significant savings should be mellowed, an eventual assessment of the experience would need to both explain to member states the complexities in what is called for and the likelihood that any savings would be 'small' in relation to the cost of putting in place a system of measurement and one year's savings may not accrue in future years. In light of these factors, it was felt that the UNDG agencies could revert back with a response on their experience and views by end 2010.

33. Decision: *The UNDG proposed to adopt the proposed approach on Deployment of Cost Savings from Operational Activities into Country Programmes on an experimental basis for agencies to explore its feasibility and report back at the end of 2010. (WGJFFAI)*

Guidance Note on Establishing Multi-Donor Trust Funds

34. Mr Joel Rehnstrom presented the Guidance Note on Establishing MDTFs. The Guidance Note is the outcome of many months of work and responds to the need to ensure greater coherence and consistency in establishing and managing MDTFs. It also recognized the fact that MDTFs have become an important funding mechanism within the UN system to channel and leverage resources in an effective and coordinated way. The increasing use of MDTFs is a direct application of the aid effectiveness agenda and UN reform initiatives in support of nationally determined and led development programmes. As MDTFs are increasingly being used to address development challenges, the need for a practical Guidance Note on Establishing MDTFs has been recognized. This note is based on existing UNDG-approved documents and instruments, reflects on the experience of establishing and managing MDTFs and is intended to provide practical guidance.

35. It was noted that the Guidance Note will need to be revisited by the Working Groups after a number of inter-agency agreements are reached, including on earmarking of donor contributions to the MDTFs and any comments received from the participants at the UNDG-Donor meeting on MDTFs where the provisional guidance was shared. The proposed Guidance note was presented to the UNDG for a decision to share it with the country teams as an interim guidance in view of the urgency to bring about standardization in the process of establishing MDTFs in view of the significant variance that has been seen in the last few months. The guidance will be further reviewed after any further comments and feedback is received from the countries; proposed revisions will be submitted to the UNDG for endorsement. In the subsequent discussions the agencies agreed with the importance of issuing the interim guidance and commended the quality of the work and the fact that it is responding to a huge urgent demand from country level.

36. Decision: *The UNDG approved the interim "UNDG Guidance Note on Establishing Multi-Donor Trust Funds" and requested the WG to present the subsequent revisions.*

Financial Reporting and Budget Code System

37. Ms Diane Kepler, UNFPA, presented the proposed approach to the Financial Reporting and Budget Code System, which aims to streamline and harmonize reporting to donors, including under MDTFs and One UN Funds. The paper on the financial reporting and budget code system will form the basis for common guidelines to be used by UN organizations in the future. It was widely felt that more progress on agreeing on a certain minimum number of expense categories should await the full implementation of IPSAS in 2012. In the interim, it may be useful to get feedback from those using the MDTF categories and establish whether this can be used as a basis for broader reporting. In particular, WFP noted that they have different categories due to their different business model.

38. In the discussion which followed there was broad agreement that any further steps on this issue should await the implementation of IPSAS in 2012.

39. **Decision:** The UNDG endorsed the paper on the Financial Reporting and Budget Code System, with the understanding that this issue will be taken up once IPSAS is rolled over.

Guidance on UN participation in SBS/Pooled funds

40. Ms Kepler, UNFPA, also made a short presentation on the Guidance on UN participation in sector budget support and pooled funds. The purpose of this guidance is to assist UN entities in framing options for supporting the principles of the changing aid and development environment, with a particular focus on UN entity engagement in SBS and participation in pooled funds. The paper provides information on the existing policies being applied by some UN organizations that can be considered applicable by other UN organizations in their country level activities. It has been designed for the benefit of other agencies to see if they wish to make any changes to their regulations. In the discussion which followed there was broad support for the guidance which was felt would be instrumental in implementing joint programmes.

41. **Decision:** *The UNDG endorsed the Guidance on the UN participation in SBS/Pooled Funds*

Basic Agreement Template for a Contribution from One UN Agency to another for the Purpose of Programmatic Activities

42. Ms Kepler, UNFPA, presented the Basic Agreement Template for a Contribution from One UN Agency to another for the Purpose of Programmatic Activities. It was noted that the purpose of this template is to facilitate the legal and financing arrangements where one UN agency would like to make small contributions to another UN agency to carry out programmatic activities on its behalf. This will potentially ease the country-level inter-agency transfer of small funds for programmatic activities. However, it was further noted that the initial objective was not met. The group did not develop a prescriptive guidance where there is a single template which is signed off by the legal officers to eliminate a protracted discussion among agencies. The template remains voluntary and serves as useful guidance. In the discussion which followed there was broad support for the template. Some agencies underlined the importance of avoiding confusion in rolling out the proposed guidance. UNICEF suggested sending the template to the legal offices of the Agencies for clearance so that UNCTs are more comfortable moving forward when using it.

43. **Decision:** *The UNDG endorsed the Basic Agreement Template*

44. **Action:** *The Template will be sent to the Legal Offices of the Agencies for clearance.*

Item 4 – Items for information

Regional UNDG Teams Capacity Assessment Report

45. Ms. Lubna Baqi presented the Regional UNDG Teams Capacity Assessment. She noted that the Management and Accountability System had asked DOCO to conduct an assessment of the Regional UNDG Teams capacity to perform its four core functions. The consultancy firm Coffey International Development had been commissioned to undertake the review. Regional UNDG Teams and Country Teams were given the opportunity to comment on the report before it was finalized. The final report had been sent to the Regional UNDG Teams for final comments last and the report will shortly be posted on the UNDG website.

46. Key recommendations in the report highlight the comparative advantage of the Regional UNDG Teams in their combined roles of leadership and strategic guidance of the UN reform process. The report makes recommendations on how to strengthen the efficiency of how the Regional Teams operate, including meetings structure and work planning. The

report suggests that the structure of the Regional UNDG Teams Secretariat is kept light. Ms. Baqi noted that the report is consistent with the UNDG strategic priorities paper in terms of focus and how to position regional teams.

Discussion

47. It was noted that Regional UNDG Teams are reviewed as a whole in the report, even though they are at different stages. A more thorough comparative analysis of the existing capacity and specific recommendations for each region would be useful. It was further noted that the issue of cost sharing in the regions need to be clarified as well as the linkages between the Regional UNDG Teams and the Regional Coordination Mechanisms. Also the role of the Regional UNDG Teams in MDTFs and their role in fund allocations should be further addressed. Regarding the name change from Regional Directors Teams to Regional UNDG Teams, a question was raised whether this only means a change in the terminology or if it will lead to a more substantive change. It was noted that the report must be read as a consultancy paper which will guide further discussions after final comments have been received by the Regional UNDG Teams. It was also highlighted that the report cannot be taken in isolation of the DOCO functional review and the strategic priorities of the UNDG. The report would be posted on the UNDG website on 2 March.

DOCO functional review

48. Ms. Debbie Landey provided an update on the DOCO functional review, which has been posted on the UNDG website. The report outlines three principle roles of DOCO: i) to support the next generation of interagency work; ii) to support regional and country level work, and iii) collect and disseminate global best practice, ensuring a functioning feedback loop for the UNDG. The consultants also proposed a structural reorganization of DOCO to best deliver these tasks and looked at some options for cost sharing.

49. She reiterated the information the UNDG Chair had provided about the Advisory Group Principals meeting on 23 February to review the DOCO functional review. She also mentioned that once a new structure for DOCO is approved, implementation of it must be according to UNDP procedures, including classification of jobs, post matching and a job fair. This process is expected to take about six month.

Discussion

50. Some concerns were raised with regard to the funding scenarios presented in the report, and it was noted that the concept of cost sharing need to be further discussed. It was also noted that the role of UNDG agencies and of DOCO needs to be clearly distinguished.

Update from the UNDG-MDG Task Force

51. Mr. Richard Morgan, Chair of the MDG Task Force, provided an update on the UNDG Task Force which has representatives from all UNDG agencies and has been in place since July 2009. The Task Force has so far provided inputs to the drafting of the Secretary-General's MDG reports and drafted six analytical papers, covering all goals, which focus on field experience in achieving the MDGs identifying underlying factors to success stories. The preparation of the papers has now reached its final stage, and will be discussed in a peer review workshop on 25-26 February by members of the Task Force and external experts. Following this workshop, the papers will be finalized and synthesized for endorsement and wider distribution. These papers will inform the round table discussion at the MDG Summit later this year. All UNDG members and DOCO were thanked for their involvement in the process.

Update on the climate change guidance note

52. Ms. Zehra Aydin, Co-Chair of the Task Team on Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change, briefly introduced the Guidance Note on Integrating Climate Change Considerations in the Country Analysis and the UNDAF.

The final draft is expected to be ready in mid-March and will then be circulated for electronic endorsement to enable the staff college to include the guidance in their trainings by late April.

Update on joint communication in the Delivering as One pilots

53. Mr. Michael Kovrig gave an update on joint communication in the Delivering as One countries. He noted that the Delivering as One pilots and other likeminded country teams are transforming the way the UN communicates in programme countries. By planning, coordinating and sequencing their communications through common strategies, they are going beyond providing basic public information and are using communication to drive reform, improve the overall reputation and positioning of the UN system and UN agencies, support resource mobilization, and advocate more effectively for common development objectives, particularly the MDGs.

54. Mr. Kovrig highlighted some of the progress, challenges and lessons learned reported by the pilot countries. Joint communication got its start in 2006 when the global UN Communications Group, which includes all UNDG members, agreed on a basic operating model for how staff at the country level could work together more effectively through UNCGs. The pilots have taken that model and made it work, so much so that most of them have made "One Voice" as they often call it, a fifth "one" of Delivering as One. For example, the pilots have conducted surveys of staff and partners, organized briefings, discussions, training sessions and teambuilding activities, nominated "change champions", and produced fact sheets, newsletters, intranets and information packages. To do this type of joint work, the pilots had to strengthen their UN Communications Groups and develop systems of management, reporting, and accountability to help communications staff plan together and work on joint projects. Some of the lessons learned from the pilots joint communications experience were highlighted.

55. It was noted that also beyond the pilots, many other country teams are also applying aspects of joint communication. In summary, Mr. Kovrig noted that while joint communication is not applicable in all circumstances, and certainly doesn't replace individual agency communications, it does seem to offer benefits for the UNDG, particularly as a tool to support coherence, advocacy, and resource mobilization.

Discussion

56. UNICEF thanked Mr. Kovrig and DOCO for their work on supporting joint communication and noted that it is an important issue. They highlighted that there is an organizational issue since the UN Communications Group does not have linkages with any high level group and that the UNCG should be streamlined with, for example, the UNDG to be able to monitor how the group operates. The initiative to develop branding and visibility guidelines was welcomed, with the notion that it is crucial not to limit agency specific branding since this would affect advocacy and communications efforts. It was suggested that the Principals meet to discuss joint communication and the branding issue and UNICEF volunteered to provide background information for this meeting.

Item 5 – Update and closing remarks from the UNDG Vice-Chair

57. The UNDG Vice Chair thanked the UNDG Chair and the UNDG members for participating in the meeting and announced that the next meeting will be held in mid-May.