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Annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2010/11

Summary

The present report provides an overview of major developments in inter-agency cooperation within the framework of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) during the period leading to and covering its fall 2010 session and its spring 2011 session. The report highlights the activities of CEB in equally pursuing policy, operational and management matters to support a coherent approach that enhances system-wide coordination. The report provides information on efforts to enhance coherence and coordination in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and internationally agreed development goals and on efforts to further cooperation in advancing accountability and transparency in the activities of CEB.

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I. Introduction

1. During 2010/11, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) intensified its efforts to align the strengths and expertise of its member organizations to respond to the mandates of Member States in a coordinated and effective manner. The adoption by the General Assembly of its resolution 64/289 has been an important directive for the United Nations system in further strengthening the coherence of its system-wide efforts, as detailed in the present report. The CEB secretariat and the Development Operations Coordination Office, which provide secretariat support for the work of CEB and its three pillars — the High-level Committee on Programmes, the High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group — have worked jointly to enhance the quality and quantity of information in the official reports of the CEB bodies and on the corporate websites (www.unsceb.org and www.undg.org). The Secretary of CEB has also sought opportunities following each biannual session of CEB to brief and engage in regular dialogue with Member States. The present report responds to the request of the General Assembly in its resolution 64/289 to “include appropriate information on the work of CEB in its annual overview report to the Economic and Social Council, which is also studied by the Committee for Programme and Coordination, in order to promote more effective dialogue”.

2. In addition to its efforts to enhance transparency and accountability, CEB has sought to deepen the understanding of global issues, including their interlinkages, and to further knowledge-sharing among its members. In response to intergovernmental mandates, it has also strived to achieve an inclusive, purposeful mobilization of resources and capacities available to the United Nations system at the global, regional and national levels. CEB remains committed to continuing such efforts.

3. CEB sets its priorities in accordance with intergovernmental decisions requiring a coordinated system-wide response. During the reporting period, the Secretary-General and CEB members welcomed the Outcome of the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals. CEB has taken measures, through an integration implementation framework and through the Millennium Development Goals acceleration framework, to enhance accountability and support country efforts in meeting the targets of the Millennium Development Goals. Those measures, and efforts to address some of the bottlenecks in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the internationally agreed development goals are described in section II of the present report. CEB has also issued a statement of support (see annex) to the fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, underlining the priority that the organizations of the United Nations system assign to a strong outcome. CEB has indicated its commitment to an effective system-wide response in contributing to ensuring the full implementation, monitoring and follow-up of the outcome of the Conference at the national, regional and global levels.

4. A number of issues before CEB, such as meeting the challenge of climate change, preparing for the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women, call for integrated efforts by the three CEB pillars. CEB has sought to strengthen such approaches among the High-level Committee on Management, the United Nations Development Group and the High-level Committee on Programmes. The high-level

committees have focused attention on promoting and facilitating greater synergy in the policies and programmes of the organizations of the United Nations system in order to enhance the overall impact of support to countries to meet the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and international agreements. In addition, they have continued to promote coherent and effective oversight and guidance with regard to country-level operations, drawing as necessary on inter-agency networks and task forces to strengthen linkages between the normative and operational work of the system.

5. During the reporting period, CEB activities included giving paramount consideration to the safety and security of United Nations system personnel while ensuring that security risk management enables programme delivery, as well as harmonized business practices in information and communications technology, procurement, human resources and financial management. CEB also continued to strengthen its support for the implementation of the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and to focus system efforts towards initiatives for developing countries. In support of operational activities for development, the findings emerging from country-led evaluations of the “Delivering as One” pilot countries recognized that effective coordination was often more advanced among funds, programmes and specialized agencies. The work of the United Nations system under that agenda has been and will continue to be undertaken under the guidance of Member States. To that end, a report of the independent evaluation of the “Delivering as One” concept is expected to be presented during the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

6. The establishment by the General Assembly of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) prompted renewed awareness of the critical contribution made by women and girls to peace and security, human rights and sustainable development. CEB welcomed UN-Women as its newest member during the reporting period and extended its full support to Michelle Bachelet, its first Executive Director. It also welcomed Anthony Lake, Executive Director of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF); Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; and Joan Clos, Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

II. Programme issues

A. Follow-up to the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals

7. CEB strongly welcomed the Outcome of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals at its sixty-fifth session, held in New York in September 2010. CEB agreed to examine how best to bring together the different policy strands in an integrated approach to contribute to the urgent action required over the coming years in supporting individual country efforts to reach the Goals.

8. The work of the United Nations system in that regard focused on efforts to support Member States in the implementation of the Outcome. Under the leadership of the Secretary-General, CEB has come together in support of greater accountability and coherence in tracking the commitments of the Millennium Development Goals. At its spring 2011 session, CEB agreed on an integrated implementation framework to ensure that the delivery of official commitments on the Millennium Development Goals will be monitored publicly on an electronic platform. The framework will also assist in enhancing the matrix of official commitments made by Member States, encouraging donor countries to update their commitments and provide details of their implementation, and recipient countries to identify how they are pursuing the Millennium Development Goals in their national development strategies.

9. The framework will be based on a concept of shared accountability and responsibility and will ensure that there is no duplication or overlap in existing mechanisms for monitoring specific Goals. In addition, existing efforts and mechanisms will be assessed to borrow lessons learned before proceeding further. Work already undertaken on specific goals will feed into the framework, thus bringing more clarity into the system to ensure less fragmentation of implementation mechanisms. The framework will focus on both policy and monetary commitments made by stakeholders and will undergo further consultations within the United Nations system and with other stakeholders. The integrated implementation framework will be a fully transparent, web-based tool, which will be undertaken by the Millennium Development Goals Gap Task Force.¹ The Task Force will enhance its present framework for monitoring progress towards Goal 8 and expand its coverage to the international commitments made in support of Goals 1 to 7, based on information provided by the “gatekeeper” agencies for each Goal.

10. In response to calls from Member States on the need for the United Nations system to support the design and implementation of national strategies aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals, CEB, through the United Nations Development Group, is assisting in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goal acceleration framework, to support country-specific acceleration plans. The framework feeds into the development of country action plans. It helps Governments systematically to identify the bottlenecks preventing progress in achieving the Goals, as well as tested and reliable solutions that can help to overcome such impediments. The analysis and needed actions feed into the United Nations Development Assistance Framework process at the country level, further leveraging the United Nations system value added behind country efforts to accelerate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Ten countries started to pilot the approach during the reporting period, first choosing specific off-track targets as their main focus area and then identifying the constraints, the practical solutions to address them and the partners to help implement those solutions. The pilot countries included Belize, Colombia, Ghana, Jordan, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Papua New Guinea, Tajikistan, Togo, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

¹ The Millennium Development Goals Gap Task Force was created by the Secretary-General in May 2007 to improve monitoring of the global commitments contained in Goal 8, on a global partnership for development.

11. Under the aegis of the High-level Committee on Programmes, CEB has been engaged in a reflection on the linkages between the Outcome and the broader development agenda, including the need for fairer, greener and more sustainable globalization. It has considered that a significant challenge would be how to balance the specificity and measurability of each of the Goals with the broader policy framework that was needed to address the inequalities that the Outcome delineated and to reinforce a sustainable development approach.

12. In continuation of previous work on globalization carried out by CEB and to address interrelated challenges of the twenty-first century, including strengthening the United Nations system role in promoting the advantages and addressing the disadvantages engendered by globalization, the system has reflected on how it is using its expertise, universality and advocacy function to support Member States in creating a stronger bridge between global agreements and national policy implementation. To contribute to that process of reflection, the outgoing Chair of the High-level Committee on Programmes, Juan Somavia, Director-General of the International Labour Organization, convened a technical brainstorming meeting in Santiago in January 2011 with the participation of the executive secretaries of the regional commissions.

13. The work of the High-level Committee on Programmes on that front highlights the role of the United Nations system in providing an intellectual reflection that cuts across and beyond sectoral approaches to address the obstacles that have prevented and may continue to stymie further progress in achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. CEB has highlighted that it has an integrative role to play in bringing together the various major inter-agency mechanisms to build on the strengths of the United Nations system in the normative and analytical work that it might pursue as a contribution to the intergovernmental processes ahead, both at the level of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and within the governing bodies of system organizations. To that end, an important objective is to support Member States in forging a development paradigm that is fair, green and sustainable.

B. Climate change

14. The annual report of CEB for 2009/10 (E/2010/69) detailed the measures that had been taken by the United Nations system since 2007 to Deliver as One on climate change. While welcoming those efforts, Member States encouraged CEB to go beyond preparations of the United Nations system to the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In carrying forward joint work on that issue, CEB has taken into consideration the Outcome of the High-level Plenary Meeting, which recognized the synergies between the Millennium Development Goals and climate change and acknowledged that addressing climate change would be of key importance in safeguarding and advancing progress towards achieving the Goals.

15. The High-level Committee on Programmes, through its Working Group on Climate Change, has embarked on a process to explore how the United Nations system can best support developing countries in integrating climate action into national development planning. The dual role for the system to respond to the pressing need to enhance implementation at the country level and to inform and

support global negotiations necessitates solid linkages among efforts at the global, regional and national levels. The High-level Committee on Programmes has been working jointly with the United Nations Development Group to strengthen linkages between programmatic work at the global level and the work of country teams, an effort which is also in direct response to the Cancun Agreements (FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.16). During the reporting period, CEB and its pillars focused on delivering on the ground and considered how the United Nations system could best support Member States in implementing the Agreements.

16. Furthermore, coherence and coordination of the United Nations system's programmatic work is fostered by information and knowledge-sharing, integrated and coordinated preparation and follow-up to the United Nations Climate Change Conferences, and activities and programmatic approaches to promote a coherent delivery of services at the country level. During the reporting period, CEB also supported efforts of the United Nations system to deepen its work on adaptation action.

17. At the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Cancun in December 2010, the United Nations system highlighted its readiness to support Member States in implementing their commitments through side events and information material that presented the system's ongoing work and practical tools. The Secretary-General hosted a high-level CEB event during which he and several executive heads had an open exchange with ministers and high-level representatives of the parties to deepen dialogue on how the United Nations system could better support countries in reaching their development goals by addressing climate change. The new approach of holding open and real-time discussions between Member States and senior United Nations officials generated unprecedented media interest and was broadcast over the Internet to a large audience.²

18. To support the further integration of climate change in country-level activities, the United Nations Development Group took measures to strengthen the capacity of United Nations country teams. To that end, it prepared a guidance note on mainstreaming environmental sustainability into common country assessments and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework together with a guidance note on including climate change considerations. In addition, the United Nations Development Group, in collaboration with the United Nations System Staff College, organized training for United Nations system staff members that focused on the implementation of climate-change action based on the guidance notes. For 2011, a training programme is being developed in response to an increasing demand from the United Nations country teams for a more integrated, coordinated and systematic approach to support on the interrelated areas of environmental sustainability, climate change and disaster risk reduction. The regional training will target United Nations country teams preparing the Frameworks in 2011 and 2012.

C. United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

19. At its spring 2011 session, CEB acknowledged the interlocking set of economic, social and environmental crises facing the world and the need for decisive action to accelerate sustainable development efforts. It recognized that the

² Webcast available from: http://webcast.cc2010.mx/webmedia_en.html?id=234.

United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) was a major opportunity for the United Nations system to lend its unified and coherent support to Member States in both organizing and delivering on the sustainable development agenda. The United Nations system is supporting the preparations for the Conference through various complementary inter-agency mechanisms to ensure maximum support to the mandates given by Member States.

20. The Secretary-General has set up and will chair a dedicated Principals Group to advise him on the contribution of the system on the two themes of Rio+20: the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the institutional framework for sustainable development. The Group, which will focus on the interlinkages among the three pillars of sustainable development, will include the participation of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and the Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization in their respective capacities as chairs of the Environment Management Group, the United Nations Development Group, the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs and UN-Energy.

D. Sustainable energy and biodiversity

21. CEB has highlighted the centrality of sustainable energy to the global debate on climate change and sustainable development. UN-Energy, which was established by the High-level Committee on Programmes in 2003, along with the Secretary-General's Advisory Group on Energy and Climate Change, had identified two key goals for 2030: to ensure access to modern energy services for all and to reduce energy intensity by 40 per cent.

22. During the reporting period, the work of CEB on energy was guided by General Assembly resolution 65/151, in which the Assembly designated 2012 as the International Year for Sustainable Energy for All. The resolution encourages Member States "to take advantage of the Year to increase awareness of the importance of addressing energy issues, including modern energy services for all, access to affordable energy, energy efficiency and the sustainability of energy sources and use, for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, sustainable development and the protection of the global climate, and to promote action at the local, national, regional and international levels". The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to organize and coordinate the activities to be undertaken during the Year in consultation with relevant agencies within the United Nations system as well as UN-Energy. CEB has committed its full support to the implementation of the resolution.

23. CEB has also considered the salient issues related to the system-wide response in support of conserving biodiversity. Examples of the work of CEB in that regard include supporting the mainstreaming of biodiversity in the activities of the United Nations system, as well as the coordinated and synergistic approaches to the implementation of the outcomes of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya.

E. Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

24. The United Nations system attaches highest importance to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, on 9-13 May 2011. It is deeply engaged in supporting Member States to achieve an ambitious and strong outcome with concrete global partnership deliverables and commitments that will positively affect the lives of 880 million people in 48 countries. As part of its efforts to focus its initiatives on developing countries, including the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing States, CEB has issued a statement of support to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (see annex).

25. The statement highlights the resolve of executive heads to deepen the effectiveness of and synergies among their organization's activities, as they continue to give priority to the special needs of the least developed countries. It also stresses the continued support of CEB to the development priorities of the least developed countries through targeted programmes and dedicated resources, particularly stepping up system-wide efforts to further enhance productive capacities in the least developed countries. Following the conference, CEB will forge an effective system-wide response in support of the Outcome of the Conference, including how the United Nations system can most effectively contribute to ensuring its full implementation, monitoring and follow-up at the national, regional and global levels.

26. To that end, the High-level Committee on Programmes has collected information from the United Nations system organizations on their existing work in supporting productive capacities in the least developed countries, with a view to taking into account the outcome of the Conference and tailoring and sharpening ongoing work. The information collected has established linkages between other priority policy areas identified by the least developed countries, such as food and agriculture, and the specific comparative advantages, specializations, capacities and programmes of United Nations system organizations. The compilation provided a good basis for CEB to support the priorities identified in the Outcome of the 2010 High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals and the Global Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries 2000-2010. CEB will continue to look at ways to enhance the considerable work that is already being done by the United Nations system to support productive capacity-building in the least developed countries and it will seek to further enhance, prioritize and tailor that work, taking into account the outcome of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and further guidance from Member States.

F. Disaster risk reduction

27. Deeply concerned about the earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan on 11 March 2011 and the situation at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station, CEB considered the issue of disaster risk reduction at its spring 2011 session. The situation in Japan has given rise to calls to reassess the international emergency response framework and the nuclear safety regime as well as ways to ensure the highest possible standards to safeguard health, food supply and the environment. In support of the coordination efforts of the secretariat of the International Strategy for

Disaster Risk Reduction, the discussion was aimed at fully mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development programmes.

28. CEB discussed how to provide leadership on a coherent effort for a global action plan and accelerated efforts for disaster risk reduction, building on the important work already being done on the issue by many of its members and taking stock of the midterm review of the Hyogo Framework of Action, the outcomes of and follow-up to the 2010 high-level meetings on the Millennium Development Goals and on small island developing States. The Secretary-General and members of CEB reaffirmed their strong commitment to continue contributing to the overall United Nations effort in disaster risk reduction as a cross-cutting issue, and to ensure that actions to strengthen disaster risk management and climate change adaptation are mutually supportive.

III. United Nations development system working together

A. Roll-out of the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and development of common country programme documents

29. On behalf of CEB, the United Nations Development Group is providing dedicated support to roll-out United Nations Development Frameworks in response to General Assembly resolution 62/208, which encourages the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations development system to intensify collaboration to achieve more effective use of their expertise, resources and actions towards strengthening national capacities, in accordance with national priorities and development plans.

30. The United Nations Development Group prepared a comprehensive support package for the United Nations Development Assistance Framework roll-out countries. In 2010, 44 United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and 3 integrated strategic frameworks were prepared. In addition, the Group and its regional teams supported in-country retreats on the Framework, during which the United Nations country teams gained a clear overview of the programming process, initiated dialogue with national partners regarding the options for country analytical work on major national development challenges and focused on the comparative advantages of the United Nations country team in meeting some of those challenges. Furthermore, some 30 in-country workshops received on-demand technical support on a variety of Framework-related topics.

31. United Nations country teams are making tangible progress in using the United Nations Development Framework as their main strategic instrument for joint programming at the country level. Some 75 teams have reported that their framework cycles are fully aligned with national cycles and about 100 others have reported that their frameworks are aligned with national priorities as called for by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/208. The simplified framework guidance released in 2009 has proved to offer much greater flexibility for United Nations country teams and empowers them to better align their programming processes to the national development planning cycle and realities and expectations while enhancing coherence and accountability for results. The Framework roll-out countries of 2011 have launched an integrated approach to programme and

operations, which is aimed at improving coherence and coordination across business operations and programming opportunities.

32. In its resolution 64/289, on system-wide coherence, the General Assembly supported the initiative of some countries to use common country programme documents on a voluntary basis. The United Republic of Tanzania became the first country to do so. It presented its common country programme document to the executive boards of UNDP, UNFPA, the United Nations Office for Project Services, UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP) in February 2011. The approval of the common country programme document for the United Republic of Tanzania followed the existing practice of the respective boards.

33. In response to General Assembly resolution 62/208, the United Nations Development Group analysed the experiences and lessons learned from the use of common budgetary frameworks, which help United Nations country teams to (a) cost the United Nations Development Assistance Framework on the basis of results to be delivered; (b) project the availability of resources from various sources; and (c) reflect the resulting funding gap, in order to enhance the predictability and transparency of United Nations assistance and support better, more coherent planning, prioritization, monitoring and management of United Nations development assistance resources.

B. Update on the implementation of the management and accountability system, including on the comprehensive review

34. As agreed in the road map for the implementation of the management and accountability system of the United Nations Development Group and resident coordinator system, the Group commissioned a review in 2010 to assess progress made and identify gaps in its implementation. The review, which is expected to be completed in mid-2011, will result in a set of recommendations for the way forward to ensure full implementation of the system.

C. Working together in crisis, post-crisis and transition countries

35. In response to General Assembly resolution 62/208, the United Nations Development Group continued to provide direct technical assistance to the implementation of post-disaster and post-conflict needs assessments, strengthening the effectiveness of its methodology as a common platform for joint planning and response to crisis and post-crisis situations. During the reporting period, the assessments were held in Yemen, through which a recovery plan, “joint initiative for Saada”, was prepared.

36. To strengthen knowledge and capacity with respect to the post-disaster and post-conflict needs assessment processes and methodology, a series of training events were developed and implemented by the United Nations, the World Bank and the European Union, targeting the staff not only of those institutions but also of other regional institutions, thus broadening the partnership. The initiatives resulted in the training of 75 staff members from the United Nations system, the World Bank, the European Union and the African Development Bank.

37. In response to the request of Member States to strengthen interdepartmental and inter-agency coordination in order to ensure an integrated, coherent and coordinated approach to assistance at country level, the United Nations Development Group continued to support country-specific integrated planning processes. Support included participation in Secretariat-led country-specific integrated mission task forces (for countries with peacekeeping missions) and integrated task forces for each of the 19 countries where there are integrated United Nations presences and other ad hoc working mechanisms convened for countries facing sudden political crises. The Group provided support and participated in country-specific missions to support the resident coordinators and the United Nations country teams, for example, in Haiti following the earthquake and in Guinea, Lebanon and Somalia.

IV. Management issues

A. Harmonization of business practices

38. The General Assembly, in its resolution 64/289, on system-wide coherence, encouraged the United Nations system to continue its efforts to harmonize business practices. CEB supported system-wide efforts to achieve significant progress in that area during the reporting period, both at the country and headquarters levels. Many harmonization activities across the United Nations system fall within the joint United Nations Development Group/High-level Committee on Management implementation plan, which addresses country-level bottlenecks in business practices and was developed following the joint high-level mission in 2010, and the High-level Committee on Management Plan of Action for the Harmonization of Business Practices. The Plan of Action is a package of harmonization initiatives that has received voluntary funding from the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. As of March 2011, the Plan of Action had received \$10.5 million, with commitments at the end of 2010 of approximately \$3.7 million.

39. Business practice harmonization projects, both those funded by the Plan of Action and those initiated by CEB as part of the regular agenda of its subsidiary mechanisms, namely, the High-level Committee on Management and its functional networks, have proceeded at both the country and global levels and in every administrative area: procurement, human resources, finance and budget and information and communications technology.

Country-level business practice harmonization

40. To more fully identify bottlenecks in business practices at the country level, the Chairs of the United Nations Development Group and the High-level Committee on Management commissioned a high-level joint mission during the second quarter of 2010. The mission revealed considerable progress in the country offices visited (the Delivering as One pilot countries of Albania, Mozambique and Viet Nam as well as the “Self-Starter” country of Malawi), both on the basis of headquarters guidance and country-level innovation, with the most successful initiatives involving close working relationships between country-level and headquarters staff.

41. The mission resulted in a joint implementation plan to address obstacles to harmonization and simplification of business practices, focusing on the following key areas: (a) ensuring strong leadership and consistent levels of commitment across agencies; (b) creating incentives for change in agencies' staff through their performance appraisal mechanisms and promotion of staff involvement and contribution to joint initiatives; (c) adopting an integrated approach to programmes and operations, including by preparing an operations plan concurrently with the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks; (d) promoting a culture of sound analysis, through cost-benefit analysis or other mechanisms and effective monitoring for business practices; (e) strengthening management focus on people management at the country level; (f) ensuring implementation of the existing information and communications technology and harmonized procurement guidance at the country level; (g) promoting harmonization in financial management, focusing particularly on issues raised by countries on the application of various policies and procedures; (h) exploring options for financing common premises; and (i) speeding up the review and clearance of legal agreements.

42. The High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group have also collaborated with the United Nations System Staff College to ensure that an integrated approach to programmes and operations is implemented at the country level. To that end, the United Nations development assistance framework roll-out support structure was augmented by a separate focus on business practices and country-level leadership in the area of operations. Those interventions, funded by the High-level Committee on Management Plan of Action and the Development Operations Coordination Office, are ongoing and are linked to regional support given to the United Nations development assistance framework roll-out countries.

Procurement

43. The inter-agency Procurement Network completed the first project funded under the Plan of Action, led by UNDP, which resulted in a Model Policy Framework for Vendor Eligibility for system-wide use. The procedure, which has been reviewed and approved by the inter-agency legal advisers, allows for the introduction of a common decision mechanism for the handling of suspect vendors. The Model Framework, which responds to the need for improved transparency, accountability and effectiveness in procurement, was approved by CEB at its spring 2011 session.

44. Furthermore, partially as a follow-up to the high-level mission, the Procurement Network, with funding from the Plan of Action and under the leadership of UNICEF, is also looking at supporting the expansion of joint procurement activities at the field level through a harmonization project in support of field operations. The aim is to invest in the procurement and supply-chain management function of the United Nations by creating a common framework for doing business through harmonization of regulations and rules, streamlining of processes, improving business practices and fostering a division of labour that meets the needs of beneficiaries and builds upon existing expertise among the various United Nations entities. That will also support country-level operations by delivering uniform best-practice tools to United Nations procurement practitioners based on insights gained from Delivering as One United Nations pilots, and documenting outcomes and best practices in support of Delivering as One.

45. Additionally, at the request of the High-level Committee on Management, the inter-agency procurement specialists have scaled up their focus on collaborative procurement across agencies of the United Nations system. The Procurement Network has reported that collaboration at headquarters locations, particularly in Geneva and Rome, has already led to significant savings. For example, Geneva reports approximately CHF 37 million in cost avoidance in 2010 owing to collaboration in the areas of travel, energy consumption, mail and courier services, supplies and information and communications technology services. Similarly, the Rome-based agencies have experienced cost avoidance owing to collaboration in procurement. Globally, the Network is exploring collaborative procurement in the areas of warehouse and shipping insurance, transportation contracts and vehicles.

Human resources

46. The Human Resources Network completed two projects focusing on harmonization that are funded by the High-level Committee on Management Plan of Action. The first, a comparative analysis and review of the human resource management policies and practices of the organizations of the United Nations system, contains recommendations on recruitment and selection processes, performance management and job grading and classification. Follow-up to the study, which will occur within the next year, will initially focus on implementing the job classification standards of the International Civil Service Commission along with a pilot project focused on treating staff as internal candidates for posts in some pilot duty stations. Another follow-up study, a review of personnel working for United Nations common system organizations on non-staff contracts, is also currently under way.

47. In addition, an inter-agency working group led by WFP completed a review of the benefits and entitlements in the event of death, injury and disability due to malicious acts and service-incurred incidents. The goal of the study was to produce, for the first time, a comprehensive United Nations system map of all current benefits, entitlements and insurance related to service-incurred injury, illness, death and disability, and to examine the current gaps in coverage.

48. Further activities include finalizing a policy statement on employment of persons with disabilities in the United Nations workplace and, under the Dual Career and Staff Mobility Programme, the launching of a pilot programme on negotiating work permits for United Nations staff members' spouses and partners with host Governments in Italy and Malaysia. In addition, the Network conducted its biannual review of the level of the education grant and submitted its recommendations to the International Civil Service Commission. Finally, CEB issued the annual report on personnel statistics in May 2010 (CEB/2010/HLCM/HR/24).

Financial management

49. The Finance and Budget Network has completed the first stage of a project, due to be completed, on common treasury services. The project, which is funded by the High-level Committee on Management Plan of Action and led by the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Health Organization (WHO), will provide detailed estimates of savings and specific proposals for harmonization in the area of treasury operations, with a focus on banking services,

payments, currency management, investment management, external costs and fees and risk management.

50. In response to General Assembly resolution 64/289, the CEB secretariat, in collaboration with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, has worked on the further development of a United Nations system-wide financial statistics database and reporting system. That project, also funded by the High-level Committee on Management Plan of Action, is intended to allow for system-wide reporting and comparison of revenues and expenditures. The first version of the new reporting system is expected to go live in early 2012.

51. During 2010, the United Nations system reached an important milestone on the reporting of financial data for inter-agency expenditures. That work, completed by the Finance and Budget Network under the leadership of WHO, has led to agreement by agencies on uniformed expense coding categories for inter-agency reporting, which are expected to go into full effect in 2012. The next phase of that work will target consensus on uniformed reporting standards to United Nations system donors.

52. In addition, an inter-agency working group on safety and security costs has successfully streamlined the budget review process of the jointly financed activities of the United Nations Security Management System, providing for a due review process to be held at the levels of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network and the Finance and Budget Network. The working group will continue to address the security cost-sharing arrangements by looking at various cost-sharing options.

53. Driven by the need to achieve more predictability and transparency in setting exchange rates, the Finance and Budget Network approved updated working guidelines for the United Nations operational rate of exchange. Revisions to the guidelines defined precise terms and a procedure for setting rates while more closely trailing the market spot rate as required for compliance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS).

Information and communications technology

54. The Information and Communications Technology Network commenced a project, funded by the High-level Committee on Management Plan of Action and led by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, to establish common standards and benchmarks for information and communications technology services and investments. That project will allow organizations to calculate their total cost of information and communications technology services, and in a manner that will provide for benchmarking of those services. In response to the recommendations from the joint mission, the Network is also exploring mechanisms to scale-up support to a number of selected country offices for harmonized information and communications technology solutions, based on past and successful collaboration with the United Nations Development Group in Mozambique and the United Republic of Tanzania.

55. In addition, the Information and Communications Technology Network has taken steps to address the growing cyber-security threat to agencies and is currently developing projects in the areas of information security awareness, coherent incident response and standard policies and standards. It is also currently developing

a project for submission to the High-level Committee on Management Plan of Action to implement the recommendations from a data communications study completed in 2010, which indicated that opportunities for efficiencies existed through sharing of data communications services at the country and headquarters levels.

B. Security and safety of staff

56. During the reporting period, there was a major achievement with regard to the security and safety of staff. As of 1 January 2011 the Security Phase System was replaced by an improved Security Level System. The launch of the Security Level System resulted from the effort led by the High-level Committee on Management, in close coordination with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security, to redesign the United Nations Security Management System.

57. The new Security Level System is a process that allows for the identification and categorization of the threats that the United Nations faces, facilitates a comparative analysis of threats across the board, and provides for greater granularity and transparency. The System is only one part of the security risk management process. The development of a framework for determining programme criticality within the guidelines for acceptable risk is an additional effort currently undertaken under the aegis of the High-level Committee on Management through a high-level working group led by UNICEF with the contribution of all United Nations entities with large field operations.

58. The programme criticality framework represents the last element of the guidelines for acceptable risk, one of the improvements meant to respond to the complex and shifting security challenges faced by United Nations staff by reorienting security thinking from “when to leave” to “how to stay”. The new framework would help to ensure that the programmes and personnel that remain in high-risk situations work on the highest priority functions and programmes, in accordance with the strategic objectives of the United Nations system as defined by Member States. The draft programme criticality framework was completed in March 2011 and will be subject to field testing beginning May 2011.

59. The High-level Committee on Management also endorsed new or revised policies and/or guidance developed by the Inter-agency Security Management Network as necessary complements to the changes in the system-wide approach to security. They include: new sections of the Field Security Handbook on the United Nations policy regarding security management system applicability; new certification standards for close protection officers; the policy on use of force for United Nations security officials in the security management system; and the new policy on security clearance procedures and the travel request information processes for implementation on 1 January 2012.

C. International Public Sector Accounting Standards

60. Eight organizations (International Civil Aviation Organization, International Maritime Organization, International Telecommunication Union, Pan American Health Organization, UNESCO, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, World Intellectual Property Organization, and World Meteorological

Organization) in addition to WFP, which has been IPSAS-compliant since 2008, were targeting IPSAS implementation as of 2010. Those organizations had reached the key implementation milestones, such as establishing IPSAS-compliant opening balances and ensuring that all requirements to meet IPSAS compliance at year end have been addressed. The IPSAS compliance of each organization will be tested by external auditors.

61. An external review was carried out in response to the request by the High-level Committee on Management on modalities for continuation of the IPSAS project beyond 2011. The review established strategic orientation for the project for the following several years. The strategic orientation for the IPSAS project will continue to be facilitation and communication on IPSAS implementation among involved entities, monitoring and reacting on IPSAS Board outputs, coordination of accounting diversity, considering that fully consistent interpretation and application of IPSAS among United Nations system organizations will not be achievable, and guidance and support related to revisions of IPSAS standards and their interpretation.

V. Conclusion

62. Effective and coordinated action across a wide range of issue areas is essential if the United Nations system is to deliver results that address the global challenges that confront the international community. The Chief Executives Board, the apex coordination mechanism of the United Nations system under the leadership of the Secretary-General, strives to ensure that the system aligns its collective strengths to meet the mandates established by Member States. The outcomes and decisions of the governing bodies of the organizations of the United Nations system continue to guide and shape the work of CEB and its pillars. Executive heads and members of CEB are committed to working together in a coherent and coordinated manner to ensure integrated and synchronized follow-up to the directives of Member States. Such actions are designed to ensure maximum impact of the efforts of the United Nations system in support of intergovernmental decisions.

63. At the same time, the analytical work of the United Nations system is designed to support the efforts of Member States to find comprehensive solutions to interconnected challenges. It is in that spirit that collaboration within the United Nations system has continued to deepen and evolve. The United Nations system has benefited from increased and interactive dialogue with representatives of Member States, such as during the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Cancun in 2010. CEB welcomes all efforts to increase the understanding of its work and to ensure full transparency through its reports, briefings and material posted on the Internet.

64. CEB will continue to keep its inter-agency structures and collaborative working practices under review with an aim of greater overall effectiveness and impact. To that end, the CEB secretariat, which supports the High-level Committee on Management and the High-level Committee on Programmes, and the Development Operations Coordination Office, which supports the United Nations Development Group, will work jointly to facilitate the sequencing of issues among the pillars, the sharing of information and the identification and removal of obstacles to maximum collaboration.

65. In the coming year, CEB will work closely with the Deputy Secretary-General on leadership efforts concerning change management, towards improving efficiency and determining how organizations can do more with less. It is also expected to focus efforts on preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Exploring the full range of implications for the period beyond the Conference requires further work and, in the year ahead, CEB will be giving priority to assessing the challenges and opportunities for the United Nations system related to the outcome of the Conference. With the aim of fostering an integrated approach, CEB will also promote an integrated system-wide approach to preparations for the parallel processes of preparations for the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to be held in Durban, South Africa, the International Year on Energy Access for All, and follow-up to the outcome of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

66. On operational issues, CEB will place strong emphasis on the independent evaluation of Delivering as One, which will be presented to the President of the General Assembly at the sixty-sixth session of the Assembly. Future developments will continue to place focus on topical content coverage and the timely delivery of information relating to the priorities and activities of its member organizations. The outcome of those and other emerging activities of CEB and its three pillars will be reflected in its next annual overview report.

Annex**Draft statement of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries**

We, the Chief Executives of organizations of the United Nations system, attach the highest importance to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 9 to 13 May 2011. It is essential that the international community achieves a strong outcome, which will positively affect the lives of 880 million people in the 48 poorest and most vulnerable countries of the world.

Many least developed countries have made remarkable progress in accelerating their economic growth rates, achieving universal primary education and improving the political representation of women, with the support of the international community. The implementation of the three programmes of action over the past three decades has contributed to those achievements. However, the least developed countries are still confronted with the most daunting development challenges, including persistent structural vulnerabilities and handicaps due to continued reliance on a few primary products, commodities and activities, as well as rapid population growth rates combined with high unemployment, particularly among youth; vulnerability to extreme events; relatively slow progress in human development, reflected in persistent extreme poverty, hunger and malnutrition, and limited access to basic services, particularly among the most excluded and marginalized groups; and continued weaknesses in governance capacities. The least developed countries are also most adversely affected by the negative impact of the economic, financial, food and energy crises and other exogenous shocks.

A concerted intensification and scaling-up of efforts on the part of the least developed countries and their development partners is needed if these countries are to enter a path of sustained, inclusive and equitable growth and sustainable development that would help them to graduate from least developed country status. In addressing jointly the varied needs and specific vulnerabilities of that group of countries, special emphasis must be given to reducing disparities and promoting equity within and among countries. An ambitious, focused, actionable and result-oriented programme of action supported by the entire international community, and building on the commendable efforts to address the long-standing challenges faced by the least developed countries, is essential. The United Nations System will draw on that experience to deepen the effectiveness of and synergies among our organizations' activities, as we continue to give priority to the special needs of the least developed countries and to supporting their development priorities through targeted programmes and dedicated resources and facilities.

The least developed countries have identified building infrastructure and a critical mass of competitive, diversified and jobs- and enterprise-creating productive capacity as a defining challenge and opportunity for sustainable development in the coming decade. They have also expressed their growing needs in a broad range of areas, including: ensuring universal access to essential services; enhancing social protection systems; advancing human rights and the rule of law; prioritizing human and social development, particularly through the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; strengthening education and vocational training; empowering

women and achieving gender equality; transforming the agricultural sector; ensuring food and nutrition security; reducing disparities and promoting equity; enhancing energy security; mitigating the impact of crises and building resilience; and dealing with the consequences of climate change.

United Nations system organizations will step up efforts to support building productive capacity in the least developed countries through more intensive and better targeted programmes and resources. We also encourage donors and other development partners to increase the least developed countries' access to facilities and funds dedicated to productive capacity-building, such as the global initiative on Aid for Trade.

We shall consider, at our fall 2011 session, an effective system-wide response to the outcome of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, including how the United Nations system can most effectively contribute to ensuring its full implementation, monitoring and follow-up at the national, regional and global levels.
