



UNDG meeting

25 February 2015, 8:30 AM - 9:45 AM (EST)

DC1 – 21st Floor, Hank Shannon Conference Room

Meeting Report

Opening remarks by the UNDG Chair

1. The UNDG Chair, Ms. Helen Clark, opened the first UNDG meeting of the year by highlighting that 2015 would be a huge opportunity to advance the global sustainable development agenda by finding synergies across the big global processes and outcomes around the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, the Third Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa, the Special Summit on Sustainable Development in New York, and the Climate Change COP21 in Paris. The 70th year of the UN system's existence would also be a historic opportunity to shape the future role of the United Nations so as to ensure that we contribute effectively to the implementation of these major global agendas.

2. The UNDG Chair noted that at the ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment, Member States had indicated that they expected a strong and nimble UN development system that was ready to help countries deliver on the SDGs by building on the leading role it had been playing in support of the MDGs. The UNDG Chair expressed her confidence that the series of joint initiatives the UNDG had embarked on together over the course of the past year had put the UN development system in a strong position to be ready for post-2015. She highlighted in particular, the global consultations on the post-2015 agenda, the roll-out of the Standard Operating Procedures for Delivering as One, which had been endorsed by the Secretary-General and all UNDG Principals, implementation of system-wide cost-sharing of the RC system, and the revamping of the UNDG architecture, working methods, and membership. Led by the ASG Advisory Group, the UNDG had also formulated a common vision and framework for action for making the UN fit for purpose for the post-2015 agenda.

3. Regarding the role of the new UNDG working mechanisms, the UNDG Chair highlighted that the UNDG Working Group on Sustainable Development would be expected to lead and co-ordinate joint-up engagement and contributions by the UNDG across the development, humanitarian, human rights and peace and security pillars of the system, in close co-operation with the Working Groups on Human Rights and (Post-crisis) Transitions as well as the other UNDG working mechanisms. The UNDG Chair emphasized that the UNDG would need to step up its common efforts with regard to South-South and triangular co-operation under the leadership of the newly-established UNDG Task Team on South-South Co-operation, which had been tasked with guiding and supporting the mainstreaming of SSC across the UNDG.

4. Regarding progress on Delivering as One, the UNDG Chair noted that the feedback from the latest QCPR Monitoring Survey of Programme Countries conducted by UNDESA had confirmed that the Delivering as One approach was on the right track. The global roll-out of the next generation of UNDAFs in 2015/2016 would be a major opportunity to bring the SOPs to scale under the leadership of the refreshed UNDG Working Group on Programming. The UNDG Chair stressed that focused attention on joint communication and advocacy in the

public domain would be increasingly important and that the newly-established Communications and Advocacy Working Group would be critical in this regard.

5. With regard to UNDG priorities for 2015, the UNDG Chair noted the 2012 QCPR would need to be implemented to the maximum extent before serious deliberations on the 2016 QCPR could commence. The UNDG Strategic Priorities for 2015/2016 had been updated to achieve just this, whereby UNDG's substantive engagement would focus on MDG achievement, Human Rights, and support for post-crisis transition. The UNDG Chair emphasized that the UNDG had yet to complete a host of important reforms at the headquarters level to support common business operations, results management and reporting. In this context, she recognized the critical leadership roles of Anne-Birgitte Albrechtsen, Jan Beagle, and Jens Wandel in ensuring accelerated and joint efforts between the UNDG and the High Level Committee on Management. The ASG Advisory Group, supported by DOCO, would be expected to drive full implementation of the Plan of Action for Headquarters to facilitate implementation of the Delivering as One Standard Operating Procedures in 2015.

6. With regard to the next cycle of the UNDG cost-sharing arrangement in support of the RC system in 2016/2017, the UNDG Chair stressed that it was essential for all UNDG member entities to contribute the expected amounts in full, as the reserves of the UN Country Co-ordination Fund had been exhausted to cover the funding gap in the 2014/2015 transition period. The UNDG Chair noted that she had asked Member States to support this effort across all governing bodies of UNDG member entities in 2015.

7. The UNDG Chair will inform UNDG Principals of the funding scenario for the 2016/2017 cost-sharing cycle, including the expected contributions from each UNDG member entity, ahead of the CEB Spring Session in April. Before then, DOCO will reach out to UNDG members individually to validate the calculated shares based on the latest-available CEB statistics on agency expenditures and staffing as well as agency participation in UNDAFs. The results and expenditure report of the RC system cost-sharing arrangement in 2014 will be released after the final financial reports become available in June 2015.

Item 1: UNDG preparations for 'Fit for Purpose' and the ECOSOC dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the UN development system

8. The first phase of the ECOSOC dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the UN development system comprises a series of workshops respectively focusing on (1) UN development system functions, (2) funding, (3) governance, (4) organizational arrangements, and (5) capacity, impact and partnership approaches. It will culminate in a retreat of Permanent Representatives of Member States at the end of May, to which UN Executive Heads will be invited. The first phase of the dialogue seeks to inform Member States how functions, funding, governance, organizational arrangements, capacity, impact and partnership approaches of the UN development system have evolved, with focus on present challenges as well as opportunities for reform.

9. The UNDG Chair re-introduced John Hendra in his capacity as Senior Co-ordinator for UN Fit for Purpose. In his role, Mr. Hendra would be working through the ASG Advisory Group and DOCO to advise the UNDG Chair and help co-ordinate effective UNDG engagement in the Fit for Purpose discussions and the ECOSOC dialogue. Mr. Hendra highlighted that the UNDG would need to focus this year on completing the current QCPR mandates as well as a set of key initiatives in preparation for the implementation of the post-2015

agenda, which had been identified in the “UNDG Vision and Framework for Action for Operational Activities” and which the UNDG Chair had outlined in her special presentation at the ECOSOC dialogue on 30 January. These included deploying cutting-edge analytics, common systems for data and evidence, and delivering integrated support through results-based, issue-focused, and networked teams, which could work with speed and flexibility and add value.

10. **With regard to the longer-term positioning of the UN development system, the UNDG agreed that the ECOSOC dialogue would provide a welcome opportunity to engage collectively with Member States at the upcoming series of ECOSOC workshops and the high-level retreat, as well as by contributing to the background papers to be prepared by DESA for these events. In addition, the UNDG agreed to formulate common perspectives on each of the topics of the ECOSOC workshops, i.e. UN development system functions, funding, governance, organizational arrangements, and capacity, impact and partnership approaches. The perspectives should be informed by evidence-based analytics of UN operational activities at the country level. The process will be led by the ASG Advisory Group, co-ordinated by the Senior Co-ordinator for UN Fit for Purpose and supported by DOCO.**

Item 2: UNDG items for decision:

a) UNDG 2015 Work Plan

11. The Director of DOCO, Ms. Kanni Wignaraja, introduced the draft UNDG work plan for 2015 by highlighting that it reflected the key deliverables the newly-constituted UNDG working groups, the Regional UNDG Teams and DOCO were committed to pursue in support of the updated UNDG Strategic Priorities. The co-chairs of the UNDG working groups had already met twice to ensure the work was fully aligned, particularly also with work undertaken by HLCM and HLCP. The co-chairs had agreed to continue to meet on a regular basis throughout the year, which would be important in light of the many joint products to be delivered. All outputs of the UNDG working groups as well as UNDG policy papers would need to be firmly grounded in fact and evidence-based analysis of current practice, trends, and innovation at the country level. It would be essential, however, to manage and co-ordinate outreach to RCs and UNCTs so as to avoid overburdening them with a plethora of guidance, products, and communications.

12. **The UNDG endorsed the UNDG work plan for 2015 in principle, with the understanding that there would be some flexibility regarding fine-tuning some of the results as not all UNDG working groups had had the opportunity to constitute themselves. The UNDG working groups, Regional UNDG Teams, and DOCO will proceed to finalize their detailed work plans accordingly with activities and indicators. A final version of the UNDG work plan will be shared electronically. DOCO will prepare an overview of all planned products, timelines, and target audiences to facilitate streamlined outreach to field colleagues and proper sequencing of UNDG guidance and products.**

b) Supplement to 2010 UNDAF Guidelines

13. The Director of DOCO, Ms. Kanni Wignaraja, presented the legal supplement to the 2010 UNDAF Guidance on behalf of the former UNDAF Programming Framework, which had drafted the document. The

supplement would effectively link the existing UNDAF Guidelines to the Standard Operating Procedures and complete the UNDAF options available to UNCTs. As called for in the UNDG Plan of Action for Headquarters, the supplement ensured that the required legal clauses that had formerly been contained in the UNDAF Action Plan were reflected in the UNDAF document itself.

14. **The UNDG endorsed the supplement on Option 1c to the 2010 UNDAF Guidelines.**

AOB: Update on implementation of UNDG Plan of Action for Headquarters

15. The Chair of the ASG Advisory Group, Ms. Anne-Birgitte Albrechtsen, presented an update on the implementation of the UNDG Plan of Action for Headquarters by highlighting that there had been significant progress. Of the 55 actions that had originally been identified, 30 had been completed with work on an additional 15 still ongoing. A range of harmonized and simplified instruments and guidance had been developed aimed at ensuring programme coherence and efficiency within the UN system. Progress highlights included policy and guidance for managing and monitoring One Funds, an updated RC job description and guidance on UNCT conduct and working arrangements, as well as agreement on a harmonized approach to cost-recovery between UN Missions and UNCTs.

16. The remaining actions would need to be addressed in close collaboration with HLCM, whereby in some instances progress would depend on external processes, such as the UN staff compensation reform led by the ICSC. The biggest challenge, however, would regard to agency alignment with the SOPs and newly-agreed UNDG guidance. It would be critical for each agency to adapt and align their programming and operational manuals in line with UNDG guidance so as to ensure coherent messaging to the country level. The upcoming retreat of the Working Group on Business Operations and two leadership seminars planned in support of the roll-out of the SOPS would be opportunities to engage senior leadership in this regard.

17. **The UNDG Plan of Action for Headquarters will be revised by DOCO in light of the results achieved, the actions that have since become redundant, and the remaining key priorities to be achieved in 2015. An updated revised version will be reviewed by the ASG Advisory Group and subsequently be shared with the full UNDG. All UNDG member entities are requested to support timely implementation of the Plan, including by aligning agency instruments.**