



UNDG meeting

Video/audio conference

12 October 2009, 9:00 - 11:00 AM (New York time)

Final Report

Item 1 – Opening remarks from the UNDG Chair, Ms. Helen Clark

1. Ms. Helen Clark, UNDG Chair, declared the meeting open and welcomed participants in New York and those joining by video link from Geneva, Rome and Vienna. In her opening remarks, the UNDG Chair stressed the importance of joined up efforts in accelerating the progress on the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals. She noted the target date is just six years away and that political momentum is needed. She recognized that delivery of the Gleneagles commitments in the resource constrained environment of today is a challenge. She indicated that meeting the MDGs is not only about resources but about solid policies, their prioritization and capacity within countries to implement them. This is precisely where the work of the UNDG fits in.

2. The Chair highlighted the need to work country by country to collectively identify gaps in achieving the MDGs and support countries in addressing those gaps. 21% of total ODA passes through the UN and we need to scale up for maximum impact through joint programmes. The different mandates of the UNDG agencies all relate to the MDGs in one way or another, and progress towards each MDG is linked to progress on others. This makes it even more important that all parts of the UN development system work together to support each other's mandates. In this resource constrained environment, Ms. Clark emphasized that agencies must embrace joint programming in areas where they bring relevant skills and expertise to make the most of existing or additional financing.

3. Recognizing that the challenges in meeting the MDGs often relate to the low status of women, Ms. Clark underlined the importance of women's empowerment and the need to include gender analysis in the 2010 MDG review. On the same note, the Chair mentioned the decision by the General Assembly to create a composite entity on gender, which provides an opportunity for the UN to improve its effectiveness in supporting developing countries to achieve the MDGs. Ms. Clark also recognized the work of the UNDG senior-level MDG Task Force, which is expected to advance the UNDG's work in support of the MDGs.

4. Speaking about the continued impact of the economic crisis, the Chair recalled the letter she sent to all Resident Coordinators in early September. The letter asked them to adjust current programmes, to draw on the support from the nine UN system Joint Crisis Initiatives and to apply them with a strategic long-term approach. She stressed the need to work with the IFIs to ensure countries are supported through the crisis.

5. The UNDG Chair further noted that the UN development system must advance its efforts in linking poverty and climate change in a new development paradigm. The poorest need to be supported with adaptation and resilience strategies. She noted 40% of development assistance is sensitive to climate risk and therefore it is important to mainstream climate issues. Recognizing that the UNDG needs to scale up its work on climate and environmental issues, the UNDG Chair noted several important steps being taken are in the right direction. Besides the meeting's agenda item on guidance for mainstreaming environmental sustainability into the programming process, the Chair mentioned the guidance on disaster risk reduction, approved earlier this year, and the new guidance on mainstreaming climate change which will be finalized by the end of the year. UNDG agencies were also asked to step up efforts to raise awareness of climate change, including the threat which climate change poses to development. Agencies were encouraged to assist with the

development of low carbon growth and adaptation strategies, placing them at the centre of national development strategies and support the building and development of capacity to implement these strategies.

6. The Chair spoke about the fact that the 21st century will be characterized by unforeseen global shocks and that it is critical to build resilience. Business as usual will not do. We need to ensure the UN is a relevant and effective partner. The Chair stressed the need to capitalize on the opportunity that some 90 countries will establish new UNDAFs over the next three years. Ms. Clark recognized that it is essential to improve the quality of the next generation of UNDAFs, keep ongoing UNDAFs under review and reposition programmes as necessary to meet new and emerging challenges.

7. While noting that three of the key instruments for countries preparing new UNDAFs next year will be presented for approval at the next undg meeting - the simplified UNDAF guidelines, the One Results Report and the enhanced UNDAF roll-out support package - the undg Chair underlined that even the most strategic UNDAF imaginable will still be a lost effort if the right capacities does not exist to deliver on its goals.

8. Referring to the 2008 Synthesis Report of the Resident Coordinators' Annual Reports and the findings from the Capacity Assessments in Delivering as One Pilot Countries, Ms. Clark underlined the need identified in these reports to step up the quality of UN capacity. Partner countries request world-class advice. The findings from these reports show that the UN system is too heavy on programme and operational management and too light on policy advice. Country Teams must review their current capacity mix, match it with their UNDAF and make changes where needed to be able to provide better support to countries.

9. Continuing to speak about the 2008 Synthesis Report of the Resident Coordinators' Annual Reports, the undg Chair commented on the extensive efforts of many Country Teams to coordinate their activities. Many useful lessons are emerging from the countries, such as how Country Teams are continuing to effectively use the UNDAF as their main strategic instrument; that there are many examples of joint programming and programmes; strengthening their communications and outreach; responding as one to new and emerging global challenges; and harmonizing business practices. Country Teams indicate through the report that real development gains can be made if the UN development system is better coordinated in its partnership with programme countries and other development partners. The Delivering as One countries report on persistent challenges, including business practices and funding.

10. Emphasizing the importance of ensuring predictable and flexible resources to support countries that are working in a more coherent manner, the undg Chair was pleased to note that a discussion on the Expanded Delivering as One Funding Window would take place during the meeting.

11. Regarding the implementation of the recent General Assembly resolution on System-wide Coherence, the undg Chair noted that the undg will have an important role to play in several critical areas. She further noted that the independent evaluation of the Delivering as One initiative will be critical.

12. Concluding her remarks, the undg Chair encouraged the group to brainstorm on how to optimize the undg meetings to make them as strategic and impactful as possible, with a good balance between approving products and discussing strategic issues. She stressed that the UN development system can no longer afford to apply old development paradigms to meeting new development challenges. The undg Chair then opened the floor for comments and questions from the meeting participants.

13. UN-HABITAT raised a concern regarding the call for increasing technical assistance since some agencies are normative and others are operational. While the normative agencies need to strengthen their normative role, it is equally important that the operational agencies strengthen their operations on the ground. The undg Chair was asked to share her view on the future of strengthening the operational arm of specialized agencies. Ms. Clark reiterated the findings in Synthesis Report of the Resident Coordinators' Annual Reports and Summary of the Capacity Assessments in the Delivering as One Pilot Countries, which indicate increasing demand for policy advice and technical assistance. The UN development system must therefore move from the traditional project approach to enhancing their advisory role.

14. ILO underlined that the value of specialized agencies must be recognized and the comparative advantage of each UN agency well understood. WHO emphasized the need for a development paradigm shift where the UN moves from projects to a more programmatic and strategic level. The work of the UN system needs to be further harmonized to maximise its resources and provide the type of support countries demand. WHO also pointed out that the agenda items which had been postponed should be presented for approval at the next UNDG meeting to move the work of the UNDG forward. FAO noted that the UNDG has an important leadership role to play in strategically guiding the system forward and ensure the system delivers. The UNDG Chair emphasized that much had been achieved and that she was encouraged by the amount of coordination that exists at country level, as shown in the synthesis report. The UNDG Chair then handed over to the Vice-Chair, Ms. Annika Söder, to chair the meeting.

Item 2 – [For information] Update from the UNDG Vice Chair, Ms. Annika Söder

15. The update from the UNDG Vice-Chair was postponed to AOB in the interest of time.

Item 3 – [For decision] UNDG Working Group items for decision

16. The UNDG was requested to approve the following documents from the different UNDG Working Groups.

WG on Programming Issues

Guidance Note on Mainstreaming Environmental Sustainability

17. Zehra Aydin, co-chair of the task team on environmental sustainability and climate change, introduced the Guidance Note on Mainstreaming Environmental Sustainability into CCAs and UNDAFs. Ms. Aydin explained that this guidance note is the second of three products the task team is to produce. A paper on UN country team activities in climate change was the first product; the second is the guidance on environmental sustainability and the third, which is currently in progress, is a guidance note for mainstreaming climate change in CCAs and UNDAFs.

18. A technical correction was made on page one of the guidance note, paragraph two, second sentence, which should read: "Opportunities for mainstreaming environmental sustainability and for turning it into a driver for development through a green economy and the creation of green jobs are often overlooked when environment is not considered during development planning."

19. Ms. Aydin explained that the guidance note was a response to a demand from the field. Country Teams have increasingly been asking for tools and support for application of environmental sustainability as a key principle of the UNDAF process. The note follows the outline of the UNDAF Guidelines and identifies 17 specific entry points for mainstreaming environmental sustainability. She noted that the final product is user-friendly and relatively short. It is accompanied by several annexes that provide technical tools such as checklists, indicator lists, and hyperlinks to important normative and legal documents. Ms. Aydin noted that the guidance note has been approved by the WG on Programming Issues and that UNDG endorsement of the note would allow DOCO and the UN System Staff College to incorporate its contents into existing and new training programs and tools. It would also ensure that the 2010 UNDAF roll out countries can start using this guidance in their analysis and planning efforts.

20. The Vice –Chair opened the floor for discussion. DESA expressed strong support for integrating environmental issues into the UNDAF process, and highlighted the importance of strategic positioning of environmental programming in countries. DESA further proposed that a separate guidance note on mainstreaming sustainable development into UNDAFs be developed to complement the guidance note on environmental sustainability. It was decided that the WG on Programming Issues will discuss this and propose options. UNEP confirmed its commitment and preparedness to support the roll-out of the guidance note on environmental sustainability and informed the UNDG that they had earmarked some

funds for this purpose.

21. **Decision:** *The UNDG endorsed the Guidance note on Mainstreaming Environmental Sustainability into CCA and UNDAF.*
22. **Action Point:** *The UNDG requested the WGPI to discuss and propose options for a guidance note on mainstreaming sustainable development into UNDAF.*

WG on Country Office Business Operations and Funding Issues (COBO)

Guidelines for Harmonized UN Procurement at the Country Level

23. Ms. Zehra Aydin, co-convenor of the WG on Country Office Business Operations and Funding Issues (COBO), introduced the Guidelines for Harmonized UN Procurement at the Country Level. The guidelines were developed building on the experimentation undertaken by the Delivering as One pilot country, Tanzania, with a one procurement team, use of long-term agreements and supportive inter-agency missions to this country and feedback from other pilots such as Rwanda, Albania and Mozambique, as well as other non-pilot countries.

24. Ms. Aydin explained that the product is an example of close collaboration between two of the pillars of the CEB: the UNDG, through the Common Services and Procurement Task Team, and the HLCM Procurement Network. The guidelines were approved by the COBO in July and at the recent HLCM-PN meeting held in September. She further explained that the UNDG endorsement would allow the task team to disseminate the guidelines for use of Country Teams.

25. The floor was opened for comments. UNICEF expressed support for the guidelines and noted that the product is a step forward in promoting country level collaboration. The establishment of a Local Advisory Committee on Procurement would still need to be agreed to by UNICEF Comptroller, but UNICEF accepted the latest draft. ILO also supported the guidelines, emphasizing that time must be allowed for further discussions in HLCM to match individual agencies requirements and rules with the common guidelines. WFP supported the guidelines and mentioned that discussions on further harmonizing procurement would also be taken forward in HLCM.

26. **Decision:** *The UNDG endorsed the Guidelines for Harmonized UN Procurement at Country level with the understanding that discussions on rules and regulations will be ongoing and that this is work in progress.*

Item 4 – [For information] Items for information

Report on the implementation of the Expanded Delivering as One Funding Window

27. Annika Söder, Chair of the Steering Committee for the Expanded Delivering as One (DaO) Funding Window, informed the UNDG about the recent meeting of the Steering Committee on allocation of funds for 2009, which was held in Madrid on 21 July. The meeting of the Steering Committee was preceded by a meeting of the Expanded Funding Window Consultative Group, which is composed of three representatives of programme countries and three donor representatives currently contributing to the funding window. The Steering Committee prioritized low-income countries consistent with the operational guidance for the funds. 12 countries were approved as eligible for funding from the Expanded DAO Funding Window in 2009 and the first allocations were made. In order to allow time for an in-depth discussion on outstanding issues, the next meeting of the Consultative Group and the Steering Committee will take place in early December to decide on allocations for 2010. Ms. Söder then handed over to Ms. Deborah Landey, Director DOCO, to provide some more details.

28. Ms. Landey informed the meeting that the total allocation for 2009 was about USD 81,400,000. She further highlighted some of the discussions in the Consultative Group, namely the need to broaden the donor base and enhance the role of the Regional Directors Teams in validating country submissions. Ms. Landey confirmed that the Regional

Directors Teams have already been asked to nominate countries for the next round of allocations.

Update from the Chair of the UNDG MDG Task Force

29. Mr. Richard Morgan, Chair of the UNDG MDG Task Force, briefed the UNDG about its work. The Task Force has 14 members, including the HLCP Secretariat, DESA, the Office of the Deputy Secretary-General and the Millennium Campaign. The Task Force is currently finalizing its Terms of Reference, and a draft Action Plan will be discussed in the next meeting of the Task Force in the upcoming week. The Task Force will focus on identifying best practices and lessons learned in development strategies for achieving the MDGs and promoting positive experiences and practices in countries which are lagging behind as an input to the 2010 review of the MDGs and the Review Summit.

30. WFP noted the need for the Task Force to avoid duplication of work of other groups working on the MDGs. The Vice-Chair of the UNDG MDG Task Force, Ms. Annika Söder, emphasized that while overlaps must be avoided, synergies have to be explored. She also indicated the need for UNDP to play an active role in the Task Force. DESA confirmed its commitment to actively participate in the Task Force, and stressed the need to coordinate UNDG's input with the 2010 MDG review.

Update on the Standard Operational Format for UNDAF reporting

31. Mr. Moez Doraid, convener of WGPI, provided an update on the Standard Operational Format for UNDAF reporting. Mr. Doraid clarified that the prototype, previously known as the One UN Results Report prototype, had changed name to adhere to the TCPR language, the ECOSOC resolution on operational activities and SWC resolution. Based on the recommendations of the UNDG Advisory Group, the Standard Operational Procedures will be finalized and presented for approval at the next UNDG meeting. The WGPI recommended continuing annual reviews of UNDAF, but leaving the periodicity of the Standard Operational Format report up to the UNCT. The WGPI will hold further consultations for a second phase of the work that will further explore common indicators for results reporting and simplify, reduce and harmonize agency reporting requirements. WGPI was commended by the UNDG Vice-Chair for its excellent work on the Standard Operational Format.

Update on accountability and institutionalization of Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

32. Ms. Marie-Anne Martin, Chief of Conduct and Discipline, Department of Field Support, provided an update on accountability and institutionalization of PSEA on behalf of Ms. Susanne Malcorra. Since the last update by Ms. Malcorra in the 2 June UNDG meeting, the Inter-agency Steering Committee (IASC) has approved a global review on sexual exploitation which will be conducted within the next 4-6 months, managed by OCHA. The issue of institutionalizing PSEA will be on the agenda for the next IASC in 2010. Ms. Martin reiterated Ms. Malcorra's message of 2 June that recommendations on how to mainstream PSEA will be developed. Ms. Malcorra will continuously update HLCEM and UNDG on the issue to ensure countries are seized with the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Update on Capacity Assessment in the DaO Pilot Countries

33. Ms. Zehra Aydin, co-convener of COBO, updated UNDG on the main findings in the summary of the individual capacity assessments carried out in five of the Delivering as One pilot countries. Similar findings were made across the five countries. The results show that UN Country Teams, governments and donors in most countries would like to see a shift in the UN development system's work to more "upstream" activities, including policy advice, technical assistance and advocacy. The assessments further indicate that operations capacity could be reduced through sharing services across agencies. Ms. Aydin explained that the work focused on the DaO pilots but it is available for other countries as a reference.

34. The UNDG commended the task team for its work. ILO highlighted that one of the key issues emerging from the summarised capacity assessments is how to link normative work with operational. The three pillars of the CEB need to

work closely together to further explore the issue to avoid creating parallel structures at the policy level. The UNDG Vice-Chair stressed the need for all agencies to have a mix of policy advice, capacity development support and operational work at the country level. It is crucial to continue operations in the field to be able to develop guidance and policy advice. Agencies, both at headquarters and in the field, need a change in the skills mix to ensure enhanced national ownership in line with the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda.

Item 5 – [For information] AOB - Closing remarks and way forward, UNDG Vice-Chair

35. The UNDG Vice-Chair suggested that the next UNDG meeting is organized in late November or early December, either on 30 November or 3 December. In the future, she recommended that the UNDG schedule meeting dates and decision items in advance at the beginning of the year. Ms Söder emphasized the need to improve communications within the UNDG, and recommended the UNDG website be the main tool for updating the group on relevant meetings and ongoing activities. She further informed about the CEB meeting to take place 30-31 October and that UNDG will report on progress achieved since the last CEB meeting. She noted that great progress achieved during the year and the need for UNDG members to communicate these achievements.

36. Regarding the recent General Assembly resolution on System-wide Coherence, Ms Söder recognized that the resolution is in line with the TCPR and that the UNDG members should ensure that they report on its implementation to the Boards. Ms Söder suggested that the UNDG should further analyze this resolution as it contains important elements for the UNDG, including support for the RC offices. The Vice-Chair concluded the meeting by thanking all participants for their contributions.