



Chief Executives Board for Coordination

26 August 2008

Report of the High-level Committee on Programmes at its intersessional meeting

(New York, 1 July 2008)

1. The High-level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) held its intersessional meeting in New York, on 1 July 2008. The agenda of the meeting and the list of participants are contained in annexes I and II, respectively.

I. Climate change

2. At the request of the Chair, the Vice Chair led the consideration of this item. He recalled the important work that had been done by the UN system for the Bali conference (December 2007) through HLCP and its working group on climate change. After Bali, further work in the HLCP Working Group, in preparation for the spring session of CEB, led to the CEB decisions of 28 April 2008. In follow-up, the UN Secretary-General addressed concrete suggestions on coordination in the five focus areas and four cross-cutting areas in his letter to CEB members dated 30 May 2008 (see Annex III). It was now critical to maintain the commitment to deliver at the UN Climate Change Conference in Poznan.
3. The Vice Chair thanked the co-conveners for their submission of brief notes/draft work plans on their respective areas, as had been requested at the informal HLCP working group meeting of 28 May 2008. He noted that time did not allow for a detailed discussion of each paper, and suggested instead that HLCP members comment on whether the submitted papers were substantively focused and in the right direction. He commented that the apparent focus on inventory establishment and repeated references to coherence might not be sufficient for Poznan. The Vice Chair went on to say that adaptation would be treated separately, given HLCP's collective responsibility for that area. Another item that would have to be discussed was the on-line inventory of UN system activities on climate change.

4. The Director of the UN Secretary-General's Climate Change Support Team stressed the Secretary-General's continuing involvement, with the overall objective of a good, ratifiable agreement in Copenhagen. The Secretary-General was working to raise the political profile of the issue and promote awareness among the general public. He was keen to see the CEB coordination exercise succeed and would continue to lead by example, through progress on a climate neutral UN, renovation of UN Headquarters, and by offsetting the carbon footprint of his own travel. For the G-8 Summit and other upcoming activities, the Secretary-General was focusing his messages on the interconnection among issues like food security, climate change and the MDGs. The UN system's work had to be concrete, focusing on implementation of existing and future agreements, proactively supporting governments. It should also result in action at the national level, with UN country offices serving as one-stop shops for national authorities. This was not an exercise to promote individual UN entities but rather joint work in support of the UNFCCC agenda. If the system succeeded in this short period, up to Poznan and Copenhagen, it could better address the longer-term coordination that was also needed. The Secretary-General's statement in Poznan would need to highlight not only what was already being done but also demands that still needed to be met. The UN system's work could also be promoted through collective agency participation in exhibitions around the world, showcasing projects under the focus and crosscutting areas.
5. The representative of the UNFCCC Secretariat agreed with the emphasis on implementation, which responded to demands made by Parties at the UNFCCC June 2008 sessions and expectations they had from the UN system. Excellent progress had been achieved at the June sessions on adaptation, ahead of schedule, with initiation of the second phase of the Nairobi Work Programme and a call to UN agencies to move ahead with implementation. Moreover, mandates considered by the Expert Group on Technology Transfer had also been agreed, including a call for the UNFCCC Secretariat to elicit contributions from other organizations. Less progress had been achieved, however, in the negotiations regarding future cooperative action, with countries putting concrete but not yet negotiated proposals on the table.
6. He added that advancing the implementation agenda was key to unblocking the negotiations, by creating fertile ground and helping countries identify what should be included in a Copenhagen deal. There were very concrete mandates for action in all five focus areas of the CEB initiative which could be fed into the respective working groups to elicit concrete responses beyond the initial inventory development. As in the end action was felt at the national level, it was imperative to establish a strong link between HLCP and UNDG. The one-stop shop suggested by the previous speaker could be achieved through the HLCP exercise, which would then be brought to the UN Country Teams through UNDG. Eventually the Country Teams could provide information to national authorities on who did what from within the system, while at the same time feeding demands from the ground into the

system. Another concrete deliverable for Poznan could be a web-based interface for access to funding, which had been requested by the Parties in June. The UNFCCC Secretariat would like to work with the CEB group covering finance in making this happen. This could also be presented by the Secretary-General in Poznan as part of the short-term outcomes on the way to longer-term action.

The discussion that followed revolved around some key themes, namely:

Work plans

7. The submission of work plans by the conveners of the focus and cross-cutting areas (excluding Adaptation and the national action part of the “Supporting Global, Regional and National Action” area), was welcomed by participants. At the same time, it was stressed that the next iteration of those work plans should focus more substantively on what was being done in each area, what the gaps were and how they could be addressed, along with the timetables already reflected in most papers.

HLCP and Adaptation

8. Concern was expressed by some participants at the apparent division of the work under Adaptation into 12 sectors, each with their own convener(s). It was suggested that the addition of 12 more areas to the five focus and four crosscutting ones would complicate the work and the reporting structures. This had been explicitly rejected at previous HLCP meetings. Moreover, it was pointed out that there were adaptation issues that did not fall neatly under any single sector but were cross-sectoral. WFP and UNHCR noted the interest of UN and non-UN humanitarian agencies to contribute inputs on the humanitarian dimension of climate change through the work of the Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) which decided in June 2008 to take a more active role on this issue.
9. The Director of the CEB Secretariat presented in more detail the draft paper on Adaptation, noting that the chart with the 12 sectors, which had been distributed as part of it, was not meant to introduce 12 additional working groups. He noted that ongoing work was focused on Poznan, as an intermediate milestone before Copenhagen. It was essential to focus on implementation of existing mandates, among them the Nairobi Work Programme on adaptation, which the Parties to UNFCCC had been asking for. At the same time, the UN system should position itself strategically to respond to the outcomes of the ongoing negotiation process, and feed into that process as appropriate, through the UNFCCC Secretariat. In this regard, areas of possible action could include risk management and risk reduction strategies, economic diversification to build resilience, and other areas identified in the Bali Action Plan. HLCP had to find a simple and compelling way to address work under the focus and crosscutting areas, within the set timetable and while cognizant of the many inter-linkages.

Similarly, work under Adaptation would need to take into account mandates and existing coordination mechanisms under various sectors, while avoiding unnecessary complexity. The CEB Secretariat would continue to support the working group under the leadership of the Vice Chair.

10. The representative of the UNFCCC Secretariat drew attention to the specific calls for action on adaptation coming from the Parties to the UNFCCC at their meetings in Bonn in June 2008, which had been circulated to HLCP members. Some of them related directly to existing sectors, such as agriculture, while others cut across sectors. HLCP coordination of the adaptation area could focus on these calls for action, in addition to what would result from the analysis of NAPAs, thus identifying a number of deliverables by the UN system for Poznan. The Vice Chair and the CEB Director agreed, noting that in the process of responding to the political imperative HLCP would draw on the important work done by the various UN system entities under the various sectors. Thereafter, there was broad agreement on treating the sectors as “feeders” into the process, as proposed by the UNHCR representative. The HLCP approach to Adaptation should be reconsidered in this light.

On-line inventory and web-sites

11. The Director of the CEB Secretariat referred to the cooperation of his office with the International Institute for Sustainable Development. This had led to the establishment of a new climate change website geared to the needs of experts and policy-makers, enhancing further the visibility of the UN system’s work (<http://www.climate-1.org>). As part of the same project, a bi-weekly electronic Bulletin was issued, with summaries and analyses of major developments and articles by invited guests. The first such Bulletin included an article by the United Nations Secretary-General (<http://www.iisd.ca/climate-1/clob1.html>).
12. The Webmaster of UNDPI explained the process for the establishment of the database, upon which the on-line inventory of UN system activities on climate change would be built. It would be a UN system Extranet application, which would be accessible by all entities. The intention was to have the prototype ready by the end of July, and then test it for a couple of weeks in August. Thereafter, agencies would be invited to input their data. Depending on the speed with which that would be done, it was expected that the inventory could be relatively complete by early October. Of course, as a living application, it would continue to be updated. It was noted that the content of the inventory would be as good as the data that the agencies would provide.

Country level work

13. The UNFCCC Secretariat offered to go through the National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPAs), prepared as of now only for Least Developed

Countries, pull out what needed to be done in terms of specific sectoral work and feed it into the relevant sectors under Adaptation. It was noted that climate change had been placed on the work programme of the UNDG Working Group on Programming Issues. As yet, work had not started, nor had a mechanism been set up for tackling it. The representative of FAO offered to help facilitate linkages between HLCP and UNDG on climate change, in her capacity as Vice Chair of UNDG. It was further suggested that a way should also be found to include the UN Country Teams. Members noted that it was important to remain aware of problems some countries had with NAPAs, and concerns that working climate change into the UNDAFs could diminish international commitment to development.

Next steps

14. **The Committee agreed to undertake the following actions, with an aim to review results at its sixteenth regular session in September.**
- **The focus and cross-cutting area working groups, with their respective conveners, will elaborate further on work plans, with emphasis on substantive delivery in line with the established timetable.**
 - **The CEB Secretariat will compile a list of focal points among the conveners of the focus and crosscutting areas, which will be circulated to HLCP members to facilitate contacts.**
 - **Efforts will continue to coordinate relevant work between HLCP and UNDG, with the latter focusing on country level delivery.**
 - **Efforts will continue under the HLCP working group led by the Vice Chair to better define work and deliverables within the Adaptation area, in light of the HLCP discussion.**
 - **Development of the online inventory will proceed as per the timetable presented to HLCP.**

It was envisaged that revised work plans in the focus and cross-cutting areas would be submitted to the HLCP Secretariat by end July, for consideration at a meeting of the HLCP working group in mid- August. These would then be finalized for review by HLCP at its sixteenth regular session, and subsequent submission to the CEB at its fall 2008 session. Coordination meetings of focus and crosscutting area groups would be held as required, including on the sidelines of the UNFCCC sessions in Accra (21-27 August 2008).

II. Global food crisis

15. The Chairman recalled the discussion held by CEB at its retreat in April, resulting in a communiqué that identified short, medium and long term measures to address the food crisis. CEB also agreed to the establishment of a High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis. He noted that the UN system stood on solid achievements that should energize its future work on food security.
16. Mr. David Nabarro, Deputy Coordinator of the Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, briefed the Committee on developments since CEB met. Mr. Nabarro noted that the compounding effects of the energy and food crises would influence food prices for some time to come, and that the underlying structural causes therefore needed to be addressed.
17. The first meeting of the Food Security Task Force, on 12 May, had focused on setting the scene for the High-Level Conference on World Food Security (Rome, 3-5 June) and on elements for a comprehensive framework for action. Other issues raised during the meeting included consideration of the evolution of the crisis, how to involve the private sector in addressing its consequences, the provision of assistance to poor farmers and the threat that the crisis posed to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger (MDG 1). A second meeting of the Task Force, on 28 May, had focused on preparations for Rome and on the *Elements of a Comprehensive Framework for Action* document. At its third meeting, on 24 June, the Task Force addressed the outcome of the Rome conference and preparations for the upcoming G-8 meeting in Hokkaido, Japan. While the Task Force had initially held meetings every two to four weeks, the frequency was expected to decrease over time. There was as yet no set timeframe for how long the Task Force would be in existence.
18. Mr. Nabarro noted that the CFA consisted of three sections providing: (a) contextual analysis; (b) a plan of action for addressing immediate and long-term policy issues; and (c) elements for implementation of the framework at local and national levels. While some outstanding issues remained to be addressed, it was envisioned that the CFA would be finalized shortly. The CFA did not imply a top-down programme to be implemented by the United Nations system, but rather described necessary actions to be taken over a number of years. A results-oriented tracking system was vital for the Task Force to be able to assist countries such as Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Haiti and Senegal. The Task Force also sought to reinvigorate existing processes, as well as to further United Nations system involvement with the private sector and NGOs, in particular working through the Resident Coordinator/UN country teams. The Task Force was accountable to CEB, as well as to Member States through the governing bodies of CEB member organizations.
19. Ms. Annika Söder, Assistant Director-General of FAO and Deputy Chair of UNDG, gave a briefing on the High-Level Conference on World Food Security. The idea of the Conference had been conceived a year earlier to

focus on food security in the context of climate change and bio-energy. As reflected in the Declaration that resulted from the conference, the discussion, apart from the CFA, had led to progress in several key policy areas including addressing the challenge that climate change posed to food production systems and establishing agriculture systems and sustainable forest management practices to moderate the effect on climate change. The conference had further nuanced the consideration of biofuels and underscored the importance of FAO's work in assisting farmers with inputs and technical assistance to increase agricultural production. Considerations of Member States had stalled, however, with regard to trade-related issues, and it was hoped that the revitalization of the WTO discussions would help address outstanding concerns.

20. The discussion in the Committee that followed centred on the support that HLCP could provide to furthering the United Nations system's response to the food crisis. It was suggested that it would be worth reviewing the CFA for specific areas where HLCP could add value at the global level, similar to what UNDG was doing at the country level. Several members, however, questioned whether HLCP had a major role to play, given the focus of the Secretary-General's Task Force and the role of UNDG. It was pointed out that overlaps between the food crisis and climate change architectures should be avoided and, in this regard, it was suggested that subsidies to food crops for biofuels could be addressed as part of the climate change adaptation agenda. Clarifications were further sought on the potential contribution of the Task Force to raising food production in the long run, as well as on possible causes of the rapid increase in global food prices. The point was made, moreover, that job creation as well as social protection and safety nets should be part of the response to the crisis.
21. In addressing these comments, Ms. Söder recalled that the *High Food Prices: Impact and Recommendations* paper that FAO, IFAD and WFP had prepared for the CEB spring 2008 retreat had provided several reasons for the food price rises including soaring energy prices, increased consumption of meat, weather conditions in food-producing countries such as Australia and Argentina, the effects of biofuels, and underinvestment in infrastructure and in the agricultural sector.
22. Mr. Nabarro welcomed the suggestion to include job creation as an element of the response to the food price challenge, and noted that the Secretary-General's Task Force was open to participation by all UN system organizations. He also outlined four components of a pragmatic approach to the crisis: (a) moulding – similar to what had been done in the coordinated response to the avian influenza, it was suggested that organizational structures be moulded to fold into the problem rather than to try to change the problem to fit existing structures; (b) blending capacities – while organizations could add much value individually, blending their capacities would go even further ; (c) bringing the private sector and NGOs aboard – collaborating with civil society would create ripple effects and raise the bar

to a higher level; and (d) keeping a watchful eye on policy – HLCP could play an important role in this regard by reviewing policy linkages between issues such as climate change and global food prices, as well as food production and physical malnutrition.

- 23. The Committee agreed to revert to a discussion of this issue in light of the revised CFA and such preparations as may be required for CEB's fall 2008 session.**

III. HLCP Working Methods and Future Work Programme

24. The Chairman introduced the paper on HLCP working methods and future work programme, which contained draft revised terms of reference for the Committee and a zero draft work plan for 2008-2010. He recalled that, at its fifteenth session, HLCP agreed to revert at the July intersessional meeting to a discussion of the Committee's role, functioning, work methods and future work programme, based on a rational division of labour among the three high-level committees under CEB.
25. Given the limited time available for a full discussion, he sought agreement from Committee members to the methods of work that had been tabled at HLCP's last session, as contained in the paper, "Review of the procedures and working methods of the High-level Committee on Programmes". He proposed that the Committee should provide the CEB Secretariat with specific comments and suggestions on the draft terms of reference and zero draft work plan, with the aim of finalizing the discussion at HLCP's next session in September.
26. During the ensuing discussion, it was pointed out that the draft revised terms of reference could be recast along the lines of the two key functions of HLCP: (a) system-wide follow up of intergovernmental decisions; and (b) scanning and identification of emerging issues requiring a system-wide response (such as the global food crisis). It followed that the HLCP work plan should be articulated in the context of a results approach. HLCP should address programme dimensions of a strategic issue for the UN system to act upon in a coherent and coordinated manner. It was important for the three high-level committees to work together and properly sequence issues. The CEB Secretariat had begun a process of internal consultations to ensure an alignment of the agendas of the three Committees, and the first meeting of the Chairs and Co-chairs was to take place just at the conclusion of the current intersessional.
- 27. The Committee agreed to endorse the working methods for HLCP, as set out in the above-cited paper, and to send comments to the CEB Secretariat on the draft revised terms of reference and work plan, with an aim to endorse both in September.**

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Annex I

- 1. Adoption of the agenda**
- 2. Climate change**
- 3. Global food crisis**
- 4. HLCP working methods and future work programme**

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Annex II

List of Participants

Chairman: Lennart Båge (IFAD)
Vice-Chairman: Mats Karlsson (World Bank)
Secretary: Phyllis Lee (CEB Secretariat)

Organization	Representatives
United Nations	
Executive Office of the Secretary-General	Janos Pasztor Mohammad Reza Salamat
Department for Economic and Social Affairs	Thomas Stelzer Sergei Kambalov Ralph Wahnschafft
Regional Commissions	Amr Nour
Department of Public Information	Daniel Shepard Mahbub Ahmad
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	Jenty Kirsch-Wood Christina Bennett
ISDR	Elina Palm
International Labour Organization	Maria Ducci
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Annika Söder
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Hans d'Orville
World Health Organization	Werner Obermeyer
World Bank	Ferid Belhaj
International Monetary Fund	Barry Potter
International Telecommunication Union	Richard Barr
World Meteorological Organization	Zamba Batjargal
World Intellectual Property Organization	Rama Rao
International Fund for Agricultural Development	Uday Abhyankar Xenia von Lilien

Organization	Representatives
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	Agerico Lacanlale Qazi Shaukat Fareed
International Atomic and Energy Agency	Tracy Brown
World Trade Organization	Patrick Rata
World Tourism Organization	Kazi Rahman
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United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Santiago Fernandez de Cordoba
United Nations Development Programme	Alison Drayton Maria Netto Bo Lim
DOCO	Sandra Pellegrom
United Nations Environment Programme	Juanita Castaño Maaike Jansen
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Gesche KarrenBrock Brian Gorlick
United Nations Children’s Fund	Cecilia Lotse
United Nations Population Fund	Jose Miguel Guzman Ronnie Lindstrom
World Food Programme	Allan Jury
United Nations International Drug Control Programme	Ugi Zvekic
UN-HABITAT/United Nations Human Settlements Programme	Axumite Gebre-Egziabher
* * * * *	
Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	Emilia Timpo
UNFCCC	Henning Wuester
United Nations University	Jean-Marc Coicaud
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High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis	David Nabarro

Organization

Representatives

CEB Secretariat

Adnan Z. Amin
Georgios Kostakos
Mikael Rosengren

Annex III

Focus and crosscutting areas of UN system coordinated work on climate change, with convening agencies*

A. Focus areas:

- **Adaptation**

Convener: HLCP Working Group on Climate Change

- **Capacity Building**

Conveners: UNDP, UNEP

- **Finance (Mitigation, Adaptation)**

Conveners: World Bank, UNDP

- **Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD)**

Conveners: FAO, UNDP, UNEP

- **Technology Transfer**

Conveners: UNIDO, UNDESA

B. Crosscutting areas

- **Science, Assessment, Monitoring and Early Warning**

Conveners: WMO, UNESCO

- **Supporting Global, Regional and National Action**

Conveners: UNDESA, UN Regional Commissions, UNDP

- **Public Awareness**

Conveners: UNCG, UNEP

- **Climate Neutral UN**

Convener: UNEP

* As per CEB decision of 28 April 2008 and the UN Secretary-General's follow-up letter of 30 May 2008.