



Chief Executives Board for Coordination

27 April 2011

English only

Report of the High-level Committee on Programmes on its twenty-first session

(New York, 3 and 4 March 2011)

I. Introduction

1. The High-level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) held its twenty-first session at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 3 and 4 March 2011. The agenda of the session and the list of participants are contained in annexes I and II, respectively, to the present report.

2. Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), opened the twenty-first session of the Committee as its new Chair. In his introductory remarks, he said that he was honoured and pleased to assume the leadership of the Committee and that he intended to guide its work along the lines established by his predecessor, Mr. Juan Somavia, Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO). On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked Mr. Somavia for the leadership and vision that he had brought to the Committee. Mr. Steiner noted that the Committee was a unique mechanism housing an impressive array of knowledge and expertise for thinking through the important programmatic challenges facing the United Nations as a system. In this regard, he saw three categories of work for the Committee, which required the proper degree of balance in establishing its priorities: (a) a “notice board” function that facilitated cooperation and collaboration across the system in preparing for intergovernmental conferences and summits; (b) an advisory and synergistic function in acting as a catalyst for coherence in the United Nations system; and (c) a think-tank role, requiring deep system-wide analysis and lateral thinking. He saw great value in strengthening the role of the Committee in assisting CEB in identifying, considering and responding to the large emerging programmatic issues of concern to the entire United Nations system. He invited Committee members to express their views as to the areas of work in which the Committee had added the most value and achieved results, to indicate where improvements needed to be made, and to identify priorities for the period ahead.

3. Committee members warmly welcomed the new Chair. Participants identified a number of areas in which, in their view, the Committee had made a significant difference in recent years. These included, inter alia, developing the concept of



“One United Nations” in a report produced by the Committee as a contribution to the 2005 World Summit, launching the joint crisis initiatives in 2009 in response to the global financial and economic crisis, and forging a joint approach to the issue of climate change. Most broadly, the Committee had provided an opportunity to bring together the full membership of the United Nations system in a dialogue that had led to greater cooperation and collaboration across a wide range of issues. It was also noted that the Committee was poised to make a substantial impact in relation to cross-cutting matters with respect to which no one organization had a direct mandate, by developing frameworks for tackling such issues in a coherent manner. The Committee’s ongoing work on moving towards a fairer, greener, sustainable globalization was highlighted in this regard.

4. Several members stressed the importance of strengthening the interface between the Committee and CEB, with the Committee to play a stronger advisory role and CEB to provide direct feedback in terms of priorities that it wished the Committee to pursue on its behalf. They also expressed the need for greater collaboration among the three pillars of CEB, in particular in ensuring connectivity between policy debate and implementation on the ground. Participants stressed the importance of ensuring that issues taken up by the Committee correlated with those high on the international agenda, such as the forthcoming Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the outcome of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals and the road map to 2015, and matters to be taken up by the Economic and Social Council. It was also observed that the Committee should endeavour to be more diligent in linking different and separate issues together, without diminishing any of them. Such cross-sectoral coordination enhanced the ability of individual agencies in their own spheres of endeavour.

5. A number of issues were raised for deeper reflection by the Committee. These included fragile States, global governance and the interaction of the United Nations system with the Group of Twenty, migration and the impact of bilateral decisions on multilateralism. Members stressed the need to be ahead of the curve, to stand behind the various reports of organizations of the system, and to take risks in being forward-looking. The advocacy role of CEB and the support of the Committee to that end were stressed.

6. The Committee concurred that it needed to be selective in moving forward by focusing on those issues that were not adequately addressed in other forums. It also identified the need for a stronger link to be established, through the Chair of the Committee, with the priorities set by the Secretary-General as Chair of CEB. Following advice from CEB, it would pursue key priority issues in depth over the next two years.

II. Moving towards a fairer, greener, sustainable globalization

7. The Vice-Chair introduced the summary of the technical meeting held in Santiago from 12 to 14 January 2011 under the leadership of the Committee’s outgoing Chair, Mr. Somavia (CEB/2010/HLCP-XXI/CRP.1). The meeting, which had been mandated by the Committee at its previous session to deepen and broaden its ongoing work on moving towards a fairer, greener, sustainable globalization, benefited greatly from the participation of the Executive Secretaries of the Regional

Commissions. It explored various policy options and approaches, with a focus on globalization and policy coherence as viewed from the regions, the interlinkages among the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development, and institutional and governance issues.

8. The Vice-Chair noted that the participants concurred that the United Nations system possessed the expertise and experience to address the shortcomings of the current development paradigm and to craft a better globalization for all. They acknowledged, however, that a significant part of the normative authority that it had held in past decades had eroded, as over time the system had become too closely associated with development, narrowly defined as the convergence of developing countries towards the higher living standards enjoyed by the developed countries, and with managing the downsides of globalization. If the system was to regain its relevance to the concerns of various groups of countries and play its normative role to full effect, it was essential that the notion of development be recast as structural transformation, which was central to all Member States. Such a notion of structural transformation would not be limited to the “traditional” development paradigm, but rather would draw upon all aspects of inclusive growth, equity, social justice and human security.

9. The technical meeting also provided a rich discussion on regionalism with the Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions. The Regional Commissions were regarded as highly relevant, effective and trustworthy by their member Governments and other stakeholders. This enabled them to advise and act on issues as broad-ranging as achieving financial integration, developing regional trade and addressing income inequality. The Commissions, and by extension other regional organizations, could thus be an effective instrument in articulating national and regional concerns at the global level. They could also play an important role in operationalizing global commitments at the country level, and in building the sense of accountability and responsibility that would lead to effective country-level implementation. In addition, members of the Committee referred to the regional teams of the United Nations Development Group, noting that the United Nations operated through country teams and the Development Group at the national level. The Millennium Development Goals were cited as global commitments that had succeeded in creating a sense of accountability and responsibility, in part because they set out targeted, precise and measurable objectives against which progress could be measured, and because Member States could see their national self-interest in successful implementation. The challenge would be to achieve this with all global commitments resulting from major conferences and summits.

10. The Vice-Chair added that discussions on the interlinkages among the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development highlighted several key points that the Committee would need to consider in order to return the notion of a fairer, greener and sustainable globalization to the centre of global discourse. There was an erroneous perception of a negative trade-off between economic growth and prosperity and social and environmental protection. The global discourse on economic issues must be expanded to include the issues of equity, social protection and expanded policy space. Investments in structural transformation (e.g., the green economy) needed to be supported by enabling frameworks, appropriate regulations, and legislation and progress on intellectual-property rights. The global monetary system needed fundamental reform to minimize volatilities and crises, regulate financial markets, and shape the financial

system to be more conducive to sustainable development. Progress towards a more sustainable globalization also required the creation of more fiscal space at the national level through greater mobilization of domestic resources, financial sector taxation, more accommodative macroeconomic frameworks and greater expenditure efficiency.

11. With regard to social sustainability, the continued widening of income and wealth disparities meant that reducing inequity needed to be at the core of the new paradigm. In order to move beyond the social-safety-net approach to an approach of social protection that built prosperity from the bottom up, employment and social protection needed to be linked to the functioning of markets, by stressing their fundamental contribution to more positive market outcomes. There needed to be greater policy space and a strengthening of the “capable State”, which the United Nations system could help create through its analytical, normative and advisory roles.

12. The Vice-Chair added that, with respect to environmental sustainability issues, the problem of ensuring adequate and timely funding for climate response and environmental rehabilitation was the same as that faced in dealing with any global public good. There was a need for innovative approaches in addressing externalities.

13. The discussion of institutional and governance issues centred on the need for the United Nations to play to its strengths. The universality, legitimacy and convening power of the United Nations and the skills and expertise of its agencies, funds and programmes, as well as their capacity to identify and articulate issues and operate at the national, regional and global levels while integrating all three, was crucial. Participants underscored the need to find better ways to integrate global aspirations and commitments into implementation at the national level, including through the work of the Regional Commissions. Most participants also highlighted the need for a constructive debate on the reform of the structures of the United Nations to render them fit for purpose in the twenty-first century.

14. Throughout the technical meeting, a number of themes emerged that served to tie together the issues that had been raised. The importance of education as an element necessary for, inter alia, environmental sustainability, decent jobs, economic transformation and women’s empowerment was highlighted. Agriculture and food security were seen as essential parts of the challenge of environmental and social sustainability. Equity was another overarching concern, as was security. It was stressed that the policy responses to specific challenges in one area could help in the others. For example, reducing perverse energy subsidies would create a more even playing field for sustainable energy alternatives, as well as open fiscal space for funding jobs training programmes for those who had lost jobs in the brown sectors.

15. In taking the process forward, the Vice-Chair requested the Committee to reflect on what types of policy recommendations it could begin to formulate in order to address the imbalances that underpinned the current global challenges, and on the kinds of solutions that would not only address a specific problem, but also have positive implications for the social, economic and environmental interlinkages of sustainable development.

16. Members of the Committee thanked the Vice-Chair for his leadership of this work, which offered an opportunity for the United Nations system to be proactive

and “ahead of the curve” in helping to usher in a new pattern of globalization. It also offered the system the opportunity to align itself with its core values, by framing the discussion in terms of equity, freedom and human security, and to focus on transformational areas in which it could have the greatest impact, in particular those in which it was already engaged. They concurred that this work would be an important contribution to the formulation of the United Nations agenda up to and beyond 2015.

17. There was agreement that expanding the traditional notion of development to include structural transformation would increase the relevance of the United Nations to middle- and high-income countries. Some noted that the challenges now being faced by developed countries (in terms of, inter alia, the global economy, and adherence to environmental standards) might demand a reassessment of the notion of “the North”. Concern was expressed, however, regarding sensitivities related to these issues, and it was suggested that it would be more appropriate for Member States to initiate the debate on “the North/South divide”. It was also noted that shifting the development paradigm had implications for United Nations agencies operating in crisis-prone areas and that redefining “the North” should not be at the expense of the United Nations agenda in “the South”.

18. It was emphasized that, in the light of growing regionalism and the increasing role of regional institutions, including the Regional Commissions, as critical building blocks in enhanced global governance arrangements and global-regional nexus, it was important that the United Nations system reflect on its repositioning and its interaction with the new regional dynamics. In this context, the Committee was informed of an independent study initiated and sponsored by the Regional Commissions as a contribution to such efforts and to the Committee’s broader ongoing reflection on globalization. Members of the Committee were invited to lend their cooperation and inputs in due course during the preparation of the study. Several members remarked on the growing role of regional institutions vis-à-vis global challenges and in making critical links to the country level, thus incorporating country concerns into the global agenda and operationalizing that agenda. In that connection, it was noted that CEB had highlighted the need for the Committee to bring together all the various major inter-agency mechanisms, including vertical and horizontal coordination, from the global level to the regional and country levels, and across the wide spectrum of the mandates and expertise of CEB members.

19. The Committee agreed that, by and large, cross-cutting issues were not limited to any one category of countries or set of circumstances, and that they offered the United Nations system the opportunity to identify vital themes as the bedrock of efforts to address the interlinkages among the three pillars of sustainable development. There were suggestions aimed at greater emphasis on peace, equity and education in the work ahead. Members also referred to the importance of such issues as human rights, population and urbanization, as well as of work to support fragile States. Other issues mentioned included women’s economic empowerment, information and communications technology, cybersecurity, social media and the knowledge society, disaster risk reduction, food security, global health, climate change and the green economy. However, some cautioned that in moving forward, the Committee should be selective and avoid including too many cross-cutting issues, at the risk of losing focus and relevance.

20. The Committee agreed that its continued work on a fairer, greener, sustainable globalization would proceed in two stages: the elaboration of a first report for discussion within the United Nations system, which would possibly also serve as an input to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20); and a more comprehensive, policy-oriented report to be completed in the course of 2012. The Vice-Chair of the Committee would lead in the development of the annotated outline of the first report, working with a small group of individuals designated by the current and past Chairs. Following further consultations with Committee members, the draft of the first report was expected to be presented to CEB at its fall 2011 session for guidance. A small “reflections group” led by the Committee’s previous Chair, Mr. Juan Somavia, would be constituted to continue to support the work of preparing both reports, within the Committee’s mandated process.

III. Towards Rio+20

21. The Chair introduced the discussion by underscoring that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development represented a once-in-two-decades opportunity to bring the world together to address sustainable development. The High-level Committee, meeting just prior to the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee, had agreed to review and have an exchange of views on the work on the themes of the Conference with a view to providing strategic advice to CEB. The Chair warmly welcomed Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in his capacity as Secretary-General of the Conference, to brief the High-level Committee on the preparatory process.

22. Mr. Sha briefed the Committee and thanked the organizations for their substantive contributions to the various reports and intergovernmental discussions. Several existing coordination mechanisms were being tapped to ensure coordinated United Nations system support: the United Nations Development Group; the Environment Management Group; and the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs and its broader coordinating mechanism, in which Rio+20 had been included as a standing agenda item. He added that the United Nations system had played an important role in making visible the win-win aspects of the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. A significant outcome could be achieved in Rio if Member States, the United Nations system and other major groups worked together in partnership.

23. Taking stock of the intergovernmental process, Mr. Sha briefed the Committee on discussions at the first intersessional meeting, held on 10 and 11 January 2011, at which Member States had agreed that the green economy represented a means to achieve sustainable development. Deliberations on the institutional framework had focused on international environmental governance and the strengthening of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The two main themes would be discussed further at the forthcoming second session of the Preparatory Committee. He referred to the high expectations regarding the Rio+20 Conference, along with the rising enthusiasm and energy among participants. With respect to the outcome, he noted that some Member States hoped for an agreement on guidelines for a green economy, while others saw a need for new funding or initiatives in the area of technology cooperation, as well as the establishment of monitoring and accountability

mechanisms. Concerning the institutional framework, there was hope that Rio+20 could deliver a reform package on the governance of sustainable development.

24. Mr. Janos Pasztor, Executive Secretary of the High-level Panel on Global Sustainability, updated the Committee on the ongoing work of the Panel. He recalled that the Panel had been established by the Secretary-General to provide input to him so that it could be used in a number of intergovernmental processes, including Rio+20. Since its first meeting, held in September 2010, a range of activities had been carried out, including the establishment of three working groups, engagement with experts, the commission of papers, outreach activities, and interaction with the United Nations system. He thanked organizations of the system for having seconded some staff, as well as for their substantive contributions thus far to the discussions of the Panel. He mentioned a number of milestones at which the system could provide further input, including a meeting with United Nations system leaders at the margins of a high-level dialogue with the General Assembly to be held later in March, a Sherpa meeting in Madrid to be held on 13 and 14 April, and outreach events with the Regional Commissions.

25. The Panel had held its second meeting in Cape Town, South Africa, on 24 and 25 February 2011 to discuss challenges related to sustainable development, in particular the implementation gap. At the meeting, it defined goals and a vision for global sustainability: to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality, and to make growth inclusive and production and consumption more sustainable, while combating climate change and respecting the range of other planetary boundaries. The Panel also identified a number of priority strategies to help achieve these goals. A fundamental aim was to work across sectors, connecting the various issues and treating them as global concerns. The Panel expected to articulate a series of concrete policies and measures to achieve its goals and vision, including public policies to provide incentives to Governments, consumers and markets, and to promote capital market reform, investments and new frameworks for public-private partnerships. The Panel would hold three additional meetings before submitting its report to the Secretary-General in January 2012.

26. The Vice-Chair briefed the Committee on the work of the Issue Management Group on the green economy, which had been established by the Environment Management Group in September 2009 to prepare a forward-looking inter-agency assessment report on how the United Nations system could more coherently support and assist countries in making the transition to a green economy. He presented the outline of the report, which would document agencies' experiences and convey joint and consistent messaging on appropriate measures needed to support the transition. The report was expected to identify key policy issues from a multisectoral perspective and to discuss the concrete measures needed to ensure a socially inclusive transition. It was scheduled to be launched by November 2011, in time for the second intersessional meeting of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change/seventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, to be held in Durban, South Africa. The Vice-Chair also gave an overview of the UNEP green economy report and synthesis report for policymakers, which had been launched at the meeting of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum held in Nairobi on 21 February 2011. He saw great opportunities for the United Nations system in enhancing work on the green

economy, noting rising awareness of the issues related to sustainable development, Member States' ongoing efforts to integrate aspects of the green economy, and the approaching Rio Conference.

27. The representative of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) briefed the Committee on inter-agency work on sustainable energy for all (CEB/2011/HLCP-XXI/CRP.2). He recalled that, at its previous session, the Committee had been briefed on the final report of the Advisory Group on Energy and Climate Change and the on work of UN-Energy. By its resolution 65/151, the General Assembly had declared 2012 the International Year for Sustainable Energy for All. In the resolution, the Assembly had requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with relevant agencies within the United Nations system and UN-Energy, to organize and coordinate activities to be undertaken during the Year. The note verbale issued by the Secretary-General on 1 March 2011 had requested Member States to keep UNIDO, as lead agency for the implementation of the resolution, informed of all relevant activities in connection with the Year. Follow-up to these developments had been discussed at a UN-Energy retreat held in Vienna in February. Given the centrality of energy to the global debate on climate change and sustainable development, the parallel processes of the International Year, the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties and Rio+20 needed to be mutually supportive. Preparatory work supporting the three tracks included: (a) the establishment of a multi-stakeholder platform to underpin dialogue on energy and ensure its full integration into the Rio+20 processes, known as the Group of Friends of Sustainable Energy for All; (b) the launch of the UN-Energy Knowledge Network to serve as, *inter alia*, a platform for knowledge-sharing and the development of common strategies, and an entry point for external actors; (c) the Vienna Energy Forum (21-23 June 2011), which would bring together high-level policymakers and experts on energy and sustainable development, and would include a Rio+20 ministerial conference as well as a meeting of Fundación Círculo de Montevideo, comprising former heads of State and Government and other leaders from Latin America, as well as launch the global energy assessment report; (d) high-level and side events on energy and greening industrialization at the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties and at the Rio summit; and (e) an initiative by the Secretary-General that would move the energy agenda from policy to action, setting out the measures to be taken by all stakeholders and partners, Member States, the United Nations system, and civil society as well as the public and private sectors. He added that the Secretary-General was expected to share this initiative with CEB at its forthcoming session. He also informed the Committee that in recent discussions, it had been proposed that a possible third goal be added to the sustainable energy agenda — that of attaining, as a global target, a 30 per cent mix of renewables in overall energy production by 2030. Finally, on behalf of the Director-General of UNIDO, he invited all interested organizations to participate in the Vienna Energy Forum.

28. The Chair thanked colleagues for their substantive briefings. Committee members pledged their full support to the Conference Secretary-General in the lead-up to Rio+20. They also expressed appreciation to Mr. Kandeh Yumkella for his leadership in promoting the energy agenda.

29. Committee members noted the progress made thus far towards Rio+20, including action already being taken at the national level in the transition to the green economy. They referred to the immediate-, short- and long-term benefits of

pursuing this path, including in relation to, inter alia, health, housing, transport, employment and sustainable urban development. The green economy was also seen as representing an important approach to moving forward with the climate change agenda. In this regard, Committee members were encouraged by the central place that sustainable energy had been given in discussions, as the energy sector constituted a vital aspect of policies on climate change and sustainable development.

30. The Committee recognized that Member States were looking to the United Nations system for solutions and guidance on the transition to the green economy, but also had a number of concerns related to trade and development, and the risk of green protectionism. Members concurred that the United Nations system had a great responsibility in addressing those concerns and coherently supporting countries, in particular least developed countries, in the transition to the green economy. The importance of public-private partnerships was also raised. It was observed that a number of reports by entities of the United Nations system, including the report of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development entitled “The road to Rio+20: for a development-led green economy”, thoroughly addressed these issues. The system could also contribute by cataloguing country experiences and addressing concerns in the specific sectors that would be affected by the transition to the green economy.

31. Furthermore, Committee members saw a need for the United Nations system to address in an integrated manner the questions arising from discussions on the institutional framework for sustainable development, regarding the three pillars of sustainable development as a “triple helix”. In this connection, concern was expressed that addressing the three pillars in silos could have negative institutional implications. It was clear that at this stage, there was a need to think through how the framework could unfold on a practical level.

32. Looking ahead, the Committee considered that it could play a substantive role in providing support for CEB in identifying the institutional implications for the United Nations system of the transition to the green economy. It was observed, in this regard, that the international system would need to redesign its institutions in order to support countries in their national transition processes, including through capacity-building, technology transfer and financing. Exploring the full range of implications for a post-Rio+20 setting in which the green economy, poverty alleviation and institutional framework changes were envisaged in the context of sustainable development required further dedicated work. The Committee was prepared to undertake a study in this regard, looking into the risks, challenges and opportunities presented to the United Nations system.

33. The Committee requested its Chair to bring these considerations to CEB for the Board’s further guidance at its forthcoming spring 2011 session.

IV. Follow-up to the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals

34. The Chair recalled that, at the CEB retreat held on 6 November 2010, the Secretary-General had proposed the establishment of a system-wide and system-owned integrated implementation framework to permit the tracking of the

commitments made to strengthen the global partnership for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Subsequently, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, under the guidance of the Deputy-Secretary-General, had been tasked with developing a concept for the framework for consideration by the Committee.

35. The representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs introduced the concept note (CEB/2011/HLCP-XXI/CRP.3) and underlined that the integrated implementation framework would serve to increase the accountability of stakeholders by ensuring that the delivery of official commitments would be monitored publicly on a web platform. A further aim would be to promote greater awareness of the broader development cooperation agenda. The concept note proposed that work to establish the framework be undertaken by the Millennium Development Goals Gap Task Force. The Task Force would enhance its existing framework for monitoring progress towards Millennium Development 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. The Task Force’s Matrix of Official Commitments would be expanded accordingly.

36. He added that the framework would 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 encouraging recipient countries to identify how they were pursuing Millennium Development Goals in the context of their national development strategies. The existing electronic database of the Millennium Development Goals Gap Task Force would need to be substantially improved in order to identify clearly and in a user-friendly way the progress made as well as gaps for which various stakeholders could be held accountable. To this end, additional resources would be required to implement the framework and cover the development of an electronic platform for collecting, formulating and analysing data. An initial budget of \$320,000 for the period 2011-2015 would be necessary, with possible additional costs for software and travel requirements.

37. In the ensuing discussion, Committee members voiced their support for the integrative proposal by the Secretary-General and for the concept of shared accountability and responsibility as the principle of the framework. At the same time, they raised a number of specific concerns regarding the modalities, which needed to be fully reflected in the concept for the framework. Several members expressed the view that there remained a risk of duplication or overlap in existing processes for monitoring the achievement of specific Goals, and that it would be important to fully assess existing work before proceeding further on the current concept. Questions were also raised regarding how the information collected would be used, as well as regarding its measurability and disaggregation. In addition, several members sought clarity as to the amount of resources required from agencies to operationalize the framework. It was suggested that the framework should cover not only financial but also human rights commitments, as well as work carried out at the regional level to implement commitments made. The work of the Commission on Information and Accountability for Women’s and Children’s Health was cited as a model for the work of the framework in ensuring a platform for accountability and tracking with respect to commitments made on the Millennium Development Goals.

38. The Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, thanked Committee members for their comments, which reflected the very problems that had made such a

framework necessary. He noted that existing efforts, including the work of the Commission on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health, would feed into the framework. He stressed that the Secretary-General's intent was to bring more clarity to the system and ensure less fragmentation of implementation mechanisms. Therefore, the framework would focus on both policy and monetary commitments made by stakeholders. He emphasized that the contours of the framework would need to be developed as soon as possible.

39. The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, noted that no objection in principle had been raised to the concept of the integrated implementation framework. The paper before the Committee would be revised to address the various issues raised during the discussion. The Committee agreed to provide written comments on the current concept note for appropriate reflection prior to the forthcoming spring 2011 session of CEB.

V. Working Group on Climate Change

40. The Committee recalled that in 2010, it had agreed that the Working Group on Climate Change should continue its work with a short-term focus on preparations for the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change/sixth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, and with a long-term focus on considering strategic issues related to the implementation agenda unfolding under the ongoing United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process. The Working Group had met on 20 January 2011 to take stock of its recent work and review possible options for the future in the light of the Committee's needs and priorities. In inviting the Chair of the Working Group, Mr. Henning Wuester, to introduce his paper (CEB/2011/HLCF-XXI/CRP.3), the Committee Chair asked him to reflect on whether the Working Group had fulfilled its purpose or whether its mandate should be extended for the development of new deliverables.

41. Mr. Wuester noted that since 2007, the Working Group had focused its work on three levels of activities: (a) information- and knowledge-sharing, which had generated a community of practice and a sense of complementarity among agencies; (b) coordinated external outreach, which had secured a joint and coherent set of messages on the United Nations system "delivering as one" at the Conference of the Parties; and (c) the coordination of specific activities and overall programmatic approaches, an area that could usefully be expanded. This would require a shift in the focus of the Group, as well as a scaled-up effort by all members, together with resources to support this work. The Working Group now found itself at a crossroads, and he called on the Committee to consider whether to finalize its work or to invest the resources necessary to take it to the next level.

42. He added that this potential shift in the focus of the Working Group should be seen in the context of the climate change negotiations. He considered the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change/sixth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, held in Cancun, Mexico, in December 2010, to have been successful in the sense that it had put the negotiation process back on track, reaffirming the centrality of the United Nations process and

mapping out the implementation architecture through the Cancun Agreements. This set of agreed decisions had outlined an institutional infrastructure at the global level to permit climate action in the areas of adaptation, finance and technology, and had initiated work on the cornerstones of a new mitigation framework. He noted, however, that major issues such as the legal framework, the future of the Kyoto Protocol and joint mitigation ambitions remained unresolved. Those challenging issues would be central elements of the process going forward towards the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change/seventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.

43. Given these factors, Mr. Wuester saw the importance of maintaining momentum by showing progress on the implementation agenda. The United Nations system therefore needed to place great priority on demonstrating results on the ground by supporting countries in their implementation efforts. As it was increasingly being recognized that economic transformation driven by climate change action provided an opportunity for the achievement of sustainable development objectives, the United Nations system could backstop this process by conveying the message that this transformation was supportive of overall development objectives and that ignoring climate change would eventually place at risk progress on economic and human development. On the basis of these reflections, Mr. Wuester proposed that the Working Group continue efforts under its light coordination structure and strengthen its link to country-level implementation in cooperation with the United Nations Development Group Task Team on Environmental Sustainability, Climate Change and Rio+20. In addition, he suggested that the Group's programmatic work on adaptation and capacity-building be scaled up to respond to parties' needs in those two areas.

44. The Chair thanked Mr. Wuester for having led the Group on an interim basis and for having recalibrated its work towards a focus on implementation. He noted the bifurcation that characterized the current role of the United Nations system on climate change: responding to the pressing need to get things done on the ground, while continuously informing the negotiations. The Task Team and the Working Group could potentially complement each other. Given the volatile status of negotiations and the uncertain future of the Kyoto Protocol, climate change would remain high on the United Nations system policy agenda, and the Working Group would therefore also need to have a catalytic impact relevant to the work of the Committee vis-à-vis the investments of time, effort and opportunity costs.

45. Committee members thanked the Chair and the Working Group for their dedicated efforts to harmonize the United Nations system's work on climate change. Many highlighted the added value that the mechanism represented as a forum for strategic work and system-wide coherence on climate change policy, in particular in preparation for the climate change conferences.

46. Members offered a number of comments with regard to the future work of the United Nations system on climate change:

(a) Several members recognized the need to sharpen the Group's work and to shift its focus towards joint programming and collaboration. The proposal to expand the mandate of the Group to enable it to work as a "global programmatic platform" and support implementation on the ground was also endorsed. It was noted that this would require solid coordination and cooperation between the Committee and the

Development Group. In this context, it was proposed that closer cooperation be established between the Chairs and the secretariats of the Working Group and the Task Team in order to look at feasibility and the appropriate division of labour;

(b) Attention was drawn to the current window of opportunity, which the ongoing United Nations Development Assistance Framework processes represented with regard to integrating climate change into the work carried out by the United Nations system on the ground. Support was expressed for the ongoing efforts of the Task Team to conduct regional training programmes for country team regional staff on integrating climate change, environmental sustainability and disaster risk reduction into the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks. As 60 country teams would be developing Frameworks until 2014, this training represented a critical tool for ensuring the implementation of climate change action and making the policy link to the country level. While the training conducted was already showing results, some regions still needed boosting;

(c) As the negotiations leading up to Durban continued to be volatile, it was considered important to ensure a unified and coherent United Nations system approach to informing negotiations through the coordination mechanism. The Working Group was also seen as helpful in its relationship with the role of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change secretariat. It was important to keep the Group within the Committee framework to ensure that it received consistent and coherent policy guidance;

(d) While many supported the continued work under the 10 focus and cross-cutting areas, it was proposed that priority issues be identified in the lead-up to each Conference of the Parties. It was noted that the role of convening agencies needed to be revisited in order to ensure an inclusive and transparent coordination process that would maintain the overall effectiveness of the Group. With regard to the need for additional resources, it was suggested that co-convenors scale up their coordination work at their own organizations' expense. The International Maritime Organization offered to consult a group of members on the usefulness of establishing a focus group on mitigation action. In addition, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) offered to take on the role of co-convenor under the focus area on technology transfer.

47. The Committee concurred that the Working Group on Climate Change was a valuable coordination platform whose work should be supported. It agreed to extend the mandate of the Group for another year and requested Mr. Wuester to continue as Chair, with the aims of forging a unified approach to Durban and developing programmatic approaches to supporting the implementation of climate change action. The Committee agreed that the paper of the Chair of the Working Group was a good basis for the pursuit of a stronger coordination effort between the Working Group and the Task Team.

VI. Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

48. It was recalled that at its previous session, the Committee had taken up preparations for the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 9 to 13 May 2011. The representative of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries,

Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States had proposed that CEB support the Conference through a global initiative and partnership to support and build productive capacities for least developed countries. This would not be a new mechanism, but rather a tailoring and sharpening of the relevant ongoing work within the United Nations system. Necessary steps would be the mapping of existing initiatives and the identification of possible gaps. To this end, Committee members had agreed to provide to the Office information in writing about their mandates, programmes and perspectives concerning the Conference, as well as a possible global initiative and partnership for productive capacity-building.

49. Ms. Lakshmi Puri, Director of the Office, introduced a synthesis note on the Global Initiative and Partnership for Productive Capacity-Building in Least Developed Countries, based on a compendium of written contributions by Committee members, as well as a draft CEB statement in support of the forthcoming Conference. She emphasized that the Conference was expected to play a defining role in setting the development agenda through a new programme of action for the next 10 years and beyond, and that the Secretary-General was counting on the support of the United Nations system to make a strong commitment to the Conference and the outcomes envisaged by least developed countries and their development partners. She noted that the organizational and substantive preparations for the Conference were well under way and that negotiations for the outcome had commenced. Most agencies had been participating in the preparatory process through the Inter-Agency Consultative Group and thematic pre-conference events, and would be involved in 35 special/side events at the Conference.

50. She thanked members for their contributions to the compendium, which revealed that considerable work was being done by the system to support productive capacity-building in least developed countries. The information collected also established linkages between priority policy areas identified by least developed countries, such as food and agriculture, and the specific comparative advantages, specializations, capacities and programmes of Committee members. With regard to the draft statement, it was her view that CEB had a strong advocacy role to play in conveying the urgency and importance of new global partnerships against poverty in the lead-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference. The proposed text would signal the commitment of the United Nations system to enhancing, intensifying and better targeting its policy and programmatic support for least developed countries and to making a strong contribution to the implementation, monitoring and follow-up of a new programme of action.

51. The Committee thanked the representative of the Office of the High Representative for her briefing. In the discussion that ensued, a number of specific issues were raised in relation to the proposed CEB statement, including with regard to the timing, content and coverage of the document and its expected audience. Following an exchange of views, the Chair proposed that CEB consider issuing two statements, one in advance of the Conference and another following its outcome that would spell out how the United Nations system would support the implementation of the programme of action. The representative of the Office explained that the statement would be targeted at Member States and the broad international community. She also clarified, in response to a number of concerns raised, that the notion of the Global Initiative and Partnership for Productive Capacity-Building was aimed at reinforcing the synergies among organizations of the system, and certainly not at duplicating ongoing efforts.

52. **The Chair designated a small group, composed of representatives of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, UNIDO, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, the Vice-Chair of the Committee and other interested members, to work with the Office of the High Representative in redrafting the proposed CEB statement for approval by the Board at its spring 2011 session (annex III to the present report contains the final statement, issued on 2 May 2011).**

VII. Biodiversity

53. The Chair of the Committee briefed members on the significant efforts made by the Issue Management Group on Biodiversity of the Environment Management Group towards United Nations system-wide engagement in the area of biodiversity, leading up to and following the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Nagoya, Japan, as reflected in the note before the Committee (CEB/2011/HLCP-XXI/INF.3). The mandate of the Issue Management Group had been extended in September 2010 with a view to implementing the findings of the Environment Management Group report entitled “Advancing the biodiversity agenda: a United Nations system-wide contribution”, which was a solid representation of the United Nations system-wide response. He informed the Committee that, following the consideration of the issue in the Policy Committee, the Secretary-General had suggested that, drawing upon the outcomes of the Conference of the Parties, CEB could take up the need to mobilize the United Nations system in support of conserving biodiversity, and in particular to support the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The Chair would also use the opportunity provided by CEB to promote a coordinated United Nations system response to the implementation of the Nagoya outcomes. Looking ahead, it was suggested that this challenge might be similar to that encountered with respect to the climate change regime in terms of linkages to the appropriate mechanisms. In particular, it would be important to ensure that a global framework would link properly with country-level implementation.

54. **The Committee agreed that its Chair would bring to the attention of CEB salient issues related to the United Nations system-wide response in terms of how to mainstream biodiversity issues, in particular the Nagoya outcomes, into the presentation of his report on the current session of the Committee. The Committee also agreed to revert to the matter of biodiversity at its next session, in order to ascertain whether it should play a further role.**

VIII. Other matters

55. The representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime recalled the decision taken at the Committee’s previous session to request ITU to organize, in collaboration with his organization, a meeting of focal points on the issue of cybersecurity. He confirmed the comments of his colleague from ITU announcing that such a meeting would be held during the summer, with a report to be available in time for the Committee’s twenty-second session. He also briefed the Committee on relevant developments at the intergovernmental level, including within the scope

of the quinquennial United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

56. The representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs introduced the outline of a forthcoming analytical report by the Secretary-General on global economic governance and development, to be prepared for submission to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session in accordance with its resolution 65/94. He briefed the Committee on initial steps taken, including the circulation among Member States of a survey to collect their views, and consultations within the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs that had guided the development of the outline. He encouraged Committee members to submit comments by the end of April 2011 for reflection in the first draft of the report. Several members expressed concern that organizations with a critical role in global economic governance had not been consulted earlier on the outline.

57. Several participants referred to the review of international aid by a major bilateral donor and the resulting impact on the multilateral system. Committee members noted that it was important that the United Nations and other multilateral institutions take the following actions: (a) formulate arguments demonstrating the benefits provided by the multilateral system, including to donor countries themselves, such as the comparative advantages of multilateral agencies in enhancing the effectiveness of aid; and (b) modify the fundamental model of the funding of the multilateral system to reduce the dependence on financing from traditional Development Assistance Committee donors and better mobilize funding from emerging donors. The Committee identified this as an issue for further study, in collaboration with High-level Committee on Management.

58. Committee members welcomed the proposal to hold an intersessional meeting, to take place in July on the margins of the session of the Economic and Social Council, to take forward its priority work, including with respect to moving towards a fairer, greener, sustainable globalization. They also agreed to consult further on the appropriate timing and preparations for a retreat to consider topics that would have broad relevance for the Committee and the United Nations system at large.

Annex I

Agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Moving towards a fairer, greener, sustainable globalization.
3. Towards Rio+20.
4. Follow-up to the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals.
5. Working Group on Climate Change.
6. Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.
7. Biodiversity.
8. Other matters.

Annex II

List of participants

Chair: Achim Steiner (United Nations Environment Programme)

Vice-Chair: Elliot Harris (International Monetary Fund)

Secretary: Phyllis Lee (CEB secretariat)

United Nations

Executive Office of the Secretary-General	Mr. Janos Pasztor Mr. Reza Salamat
Department of Economic and Social Affairs	Mr. Sha Zukang Mr. Thomas Stelzer Mr. Rob Vos Mr. Nikhil Seth Mr. Alex Trepelkov
Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States	Ms. Lakshmi Puri
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights	Ms. Marcia V. J. Kran
Regional Commissions	Mr. Amr Nour
United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction	Ms. Elina Palm
International Labour Organization	Ms. Maria Angelica Ducci Ms. Cecilia McKenna Ms. Jane Stewart
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Mr. Masato Ito Ms. Sharon Brennen-Haylock
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Mr. Jean-Yves Le Saux
International Civil Aviation Organization	Mr. Denys Wibaux
World Health Organization	Mr. Werner Obermeyer
World Bank	Ms. Dominique Bichara
International Monetary Fund	Mr. Elliot Harris
Universal Postal Union	Mr. Olivier Boussard

International Telecommunication Union	Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin Mr. Gary Fowlie
World Meteorological Organization	Ms. Elena Manaenkova Mr. Zamba Batjargal
International Maritime Organization	Mr. Jianxin Zhu
World Intellectual Property Organization	Mr. Naresh Prasad Mr. S. Rama Rao
International Fund for Agricultural Development	Ms. Cheryl Morden Ms. Xenia Von Lilien
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	Mr. Qazi Shaukat Fareed
International Atomic Energy Agency	Ms. Tracy Brown
World Trade Organization	Mr. Bernard Kuiten
World Tourism Organization	Mr. Kazi Rahman
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Mr. Taffere Tesfachew Mr. Michael T. Clark Mr. Karma Tenzing
United Nations Development Programme	Ms. Sigrid Kaag Ms. Alison Drayton Mr. Selim Jehan Ms. Anne Marie Sloth Carlsen
United Nations Environment Programme	Ms. Juanita Castaño Ms. Maaïke Jansen Mr. Michele Candotti
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	Mr. Robert Stryk
United Nations Children's Fund	Ms. Gunilla Olsson Ms. Michele Ferenz
United Nations Population Fund	Mr. Mabingue Ngom
World Food Programme	Mr. Pedro Medrano
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	Mr. Sandeep Chawla
United Nations Human Settlements Programme	Ms. Axumite Gebre-Egziabher Mr. Christopher Williams Ms. Yamina Djacta
UN-Women	Ms. Gulden Turkoz-Cosslett Ms. Sally Fegan-Wyles

United Nations University	Mr. Jean-Marc Coicaud Ms. Luna Abu-Khadra
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization	Mr. Khaled G. Abdelhamid
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	Mr. Henning Wuester
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	Ms. Emelia Timpo
United Nations System Staff College	Mr. Jafar Javan
Development Operations Coordination Office	Mr. Pervez Hassan Ms. Liliana Ramirez
CEB secretariat	Ms. Katja Gregers Brock Mr. Yasin Samatar

Annex III

Statement of the 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 achieve 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 these achievements. However, least developed countries are still confronted with the most daunting development challenges: persistent structural vulnerabilities and handicaps owing to continued reliance on a few primary products, commodities and activities, as well as rapid population growth rates combined with high unemployment, particularly among young people; 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. 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 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 jointly addressing the varied needs and specific vulnerabilities of this group of countries, special emphasis must be given to reducing disparities and promoting equity within and among countries. An ambitious, focused, actionable and results-oriented programme of action, supported by the entire international community and building on the commendable efforts to address the long-standing challenges faced by least developed countries, is key to this. 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 least developed countries and to supporting their development priorities through targeted programmes and dedicated resources and facilities.

The least developed countries themselves 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 next 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 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 the building of productive capacity in least developed countries through more intensive and better-targeted programmes and resources. We also encourage donors and other development partners to increase the access of least developed countries 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.
