



**Chief Executives Board
for Coordination**

CEB/2008/HLCM/ICT/17
1 February 2008

Meeting of CEB ICT Network

Ninth Session

United Nations Logistics Base, Brindisi, Italy, 6 December 2007

[Discussion Summary and Conclusions](#)

I. Opening of the Meeting

1. The 9th session of the ICT Network opened with welcoming remarks from the Chairperson, who updated the Network on recent discussions concerning the integration of the UNDG as a third pillar of inter-agency coordination alongside the HLCM and HLCP. Although discussions regarding the division of labour between the various committees have not concluded, for the ICT Network this change clearly necessitates a strengthened relationship with the UNDG ICT Working Group. The Chair invited the Network to consider ways to further develop the roles of and linkages between the policy guidance role of the ICT Network and the more operationally focused activities of the ICT Working Group. The chair noted that although this distinction may already be clear, more could be achieved to define the responsibilities of each body in light of the integration of UNDG into CEB. This change was recognized by the Chair as an opportunity to act together, harmonize investments and maximise returns.
2. The Network then welcomed new participants, notably representatives from UNICEF and IAEA, and returning participants who have not been able to attend recent meetings.

II. Adoption of the Agenda

3. The ICT Network adopted the agenda.

III. System-wide Business Practices

4. At their respective fall 2007 meetings, the HLCM and the CEB considered and endorsed the proposals for harmonization and reform of business practices across the UN system, with HLCM requesting follow-up action by the Networks including the identification of a lead agency, along with more detailed and prioritized

implementation plans for each of the proposals. The ICT Network Chair introduced this agenda item, noting that the role of lead agency includes convening the inter-agency groups working on each initiative and enhancing the existing proposals by with additional detailed costing, timelines, staff and non-staff resource requirements, benefits and outcomes. The Lead Agency also assumes the task of managing the project's funds and implementation. The chair called upon the CEB Secretariat's Senior Advisor on Information Management Policy Coordination to introduce the discussion on the six initiatives; Enterprise Resource Planning, Common Services, UN System Portal (aka One Source), Common Business Case and Costing, Data Centre Consolidation and International ICT Standards.

5. In introducing the initiatives, the CEB Secretariat recalled that the overall proposal no longer includes two of the original ICT initiatives, on common data communications services and a common UN directory, since they are being developed using other mechanisms, with the latter considered under the agenda item Country-Level ICT Coherence. The presentation noted that the common data communications initiative has reached the final stages of the procurement process (led by UNICEF) and agencies have been asked to forward their contributions for the study, estimated at \$535,000 once they receive banking instructions, due from the UN accounts section shortly. The ICT Network was also reminded that once the study commenced, each agency would be asked to provide input, which would likely consume several days of staff time.
6. During the discussion, the Network generally agreed that the common services initiative offered tremendous potential for the system, and could begin by concentrating on ICT-related services, with the suggestion that it could initially focus on developing a common desktop approach. The discussion on the common data centre initiative noted this initiative could focus on the common hosting of ERP implementations, as this was already under consideration by many organizations. The ERP initiative discussion noted that part of this initiative required business department participation, but that some of the processes, regarding ERP operation, could proceed within the ICT context. The UN in particular stressed the need to move quickly on developing common practices, as it was moving forward with its ERP selection and implementation and this could serve as the catalyst for progress in this area. Additionally, the Network noted that the One-Source/Portal project had tremendous knowledge-sharing potential, and could act as a place to collect and distribute information on a UN system-wide basis. Finally, the Network did not identify a lead agency for the Internationally Recognized Standards, which would also be pursued by the CEB Secretariat.

7. Conclusions and Action Points: The ICT Network agreed to the following prioritization of the initiatives, with the lead and participating agencies identified:

Priority	Initiative	Lead Agency	Participating Agencies
1	Common Services – Inter-Agency Shared Service Centres	WFP	UNICEF, FAO, UNDP, IFAD, ICAO
2	Common Services - Data Centres/ERP Hosting	UNHCR	FAO
3	UN System Portal	CEB Secretariat	UN, ILO, ICAO
4	ERP Systems	UN, UNDP & UNJSPF (jointly)	IMO
5	Common Business Case & Costing	UN	
6	Internationally Recognized Standards	CEB Secretariat	UNICEF

IV. Country-level ICT Coherence

8. The establishment of the “One-UN” pilot offices has presented organizations of the system with significant challenges on both the programmatic and administrative fronts. The operational requirements of these offices include the need to more closely link UN agencies in ways not previously anticipated. Several ICT initiatives originating from the UN Development Group’s (UNDG) ICT Working Group intended to address these requirements have implications beyond the pilot offices, including the development of cross-agency directories, the linking of agency intranets and proposals to create a One-UN Internet domain name. The ICT Network was invited to determine how best to support these initiatives. The topic was introduced by videoconference from New York by the chair of the UNDG ICT Working Group, who presented an update on the common directory project.
9. The presentation noted that the result of the study, conducted by an independent consulting company, pointed towards the implementation of a virtual directory as the most appropriate solution to meet the requirements. The presentation noted that a web front end would be developed to allow for easy access and in its initial stages would utilize an access model similar to the existing Extranet. The first phase of the implementation involves selecting a vendor and a small number of sites willing to act as a pilot, preferably including some of the One-UN pilot country offices. Following phases would seek to include more organizations. The presentation emphasized the need for a clear policy framework and governance model to oversee this activity, as it would require participating agencies to conform to a standard data

model for shared directory information. Next steps include the development of an implementation RFP along with the identification of funding sources.

10. Many questions arose during the discussion regarding the technical capabilities, feasibility, and requirements for a virtual directory, and the Network was reminded that the report is still in draft and would be circulated for information and comment once it was finalized. During the discussion, the CEB Secretariat underscored the need for an inter-agency body to coordinate requirements emerging from this project in order to ensure that changes (such as expanding contact directory schema) will not be performed on an ad-hoc basis. The Network was also reminded that a key requirement of any common directory solution was the voluntary participation of agencies; that is, agencies would be free to determine the amount of directory information to share. The issue of how costs for implementation would be covered also arose in the discussion, and it was agreed that this would be determined once more details were known.
11. In the context of country-level coherence, the ICT Network also discussed the issue of a common approach to Internet domain names for the pilot One-UN country offices. These domains would support cross-agency websites for a particular country, as well as the e-mail address of key cross-agency staff members, who preferred to identify themselves with the one-UN presence in a country, rather than their specific agency. The Chair of the UNDG ICT Working Group noted that unless the system agreed to a common approach, country offices were likely to implement domains without any consistency. She also reported that this issue was raised and discussed during the recent Mozambique mission, with several options presented, including using the “un.int” domain, but that this presented some administrative difficulties. The discussion concluded that this was not a technical question but an administrative one, and more appropriately discussed at the MG and HLCM level.
12. Conclusions and Action Points: Once completed, the UNDG ICT Working Group, through the CEB Secretariat, will circulate the final document to the Network and request comments from agencies on its conclusions. Adoption of the results of the study, and implementation, will come initially from the UNDG Management Group, and finally from the HLCM, with a recommendation from the ICT Network.

V. ICT Strategic Framework

13. At previous meetings, the ICT Network identified eight priority initiatives from the UN System ICT Strategic Framework, many of which have been incorporated into the HLCM business practices proposal. Due to time constraints, the Network decided to consider the future of the Framework and how best to achieve concrete inter-agency results at the next meeting.

VI. Special Interest Groups: ICT Knowledge Sharing

14. The Chair noted the importance of the ICT Network sub-groups for advancing inter-agency ICT priorities at the technical level, and introduced the Chair (UN) of the Inter-Agency Telecommunications Advisory Group (ITAG), who presented the results of their recently concluded meeting, the first in more than a year. This one-day meeting covered a range of topics, including interactions with the Working Group on Emergency Telecommunications (WGET), an update on the VSAT long term agreement negotiations, discussions regarding a UN country code for use in emergencies, and MPLS implementations. Three issues, Skype usage, Global IP addressing and Internet 2 generated some ICT Network discussion and outcomes. The presentation on Internet 2 emphasized that the UN Secretariat has joined Internet 2 on behalf of the UN system, and that the objective of Internet 2 was to support applications that require large amounts of bandwidth, making them unsuitable for use on the public Internet. The presentation urged organizations to consider utilizing Internet 2 for applications that may have this requirement, including GIS, telemedicine, and high-quality videoconferences.
15. Regarding the usage of Skype, the ITAG presentation noted the wide variance in policies across organizations for this application, and the Network agreed that sharing policies system-wide would help to build a consensus on its value. The presentation on IP addressing noted the inadequacies of the current scheme and observed that coherent system-wide action on this issue, through the adoption of a single addressing scheme, would benefit all agencies. Particularly noted was the importance of ensuring that all network equipment was compatible with IP version 6, and the Network was asked to endorse this approach. Finally, the Network was advised to consider the value of any Internet address ranges they may control during the calculation of ICT assets in conjunction with the implementation of IPSAS.
16. Conclusions and Action Points: The Network (a) agreed that the Secretariat should proceed with the collection and sharing of Skype usage policies; (b) endorsed the principle that all newly-procured network-connection equipment should be compatible with IPv6 and each agency would work with their procurement departments to implement this; and (c) called upon the ITAG to continue its discussion regarding the coherent implementation of an global IP addressing scheme.
17. As Chair of CABIO, the ICT Network special interest group for Oracle/PeopleSoft users, UNHCR explained the importance of this strategic partnership as a mechanism by which the UN system may align with and influence Oracle development, in both PeopleSoft and Oracle business suite application development cycles. The principal advantage was one of incorporating application changes on the basis of specifications put forward by CABIO into future Oracle and PeopleSoft releases. UNDP, as PeopleSoft contact for CABIO briefed the group on its meeting in October with Oracle and notes that three requirement specifications have been developed by CABIO, all relating to HR and global payroll operations. By completing and submitting these requirements to Oracle by early 2008, they may be

selected for inclusion into the newest Oracle releases. The next meeting of CABIO is scheduled for early 2008.

VII. Other Matters

18. Within this agenda item, the ICT Network Chair invited the newly appointed UN Secretariat Chief Information Technology Officer, Mr. Soon-Hong Choi, to share the ICT directions and activities of the UN. Thanking the Chair for the opportunity, Mr. Choi indicated that he plans to present to the UN governing bodies papers that describe the Secretariat's three key ICT directions; ERP, Business Continuity/disaster Recovery and overall strategic plan. He noted that the ERP implementation focuses on improved business practices (as opposed to ICT only), and places emphasis on harmonization as opposed to customization. He indicated that it was too early to estimate costs and timelines accurately, but that these were being worked on. Another paper on business continuity put forward the case for a DPKO backup service to be established in Valencia, Spain. The third key activity is the development of the overall ICT strategic plan, and that has begun by creating a small transition team, and soliciting input to develop a medium term vision (3 – 5 years), a strategic plan to realize this vision and the specific activities needed over that timeframe. Mr Choi expects this to be a 3-month process, noted the importance of aligning this plan with system-wide ICT strategic directions, and will be seeking input from many organizations as well as collaborative opportunities. The Network thanked the UN Secretariat CITO for his presentation and, noting that the ERP implementation represents a key activity for the UN, discusses the importance of resisting customization of these applications.
19. The Network accepted the invitation of UNDP to host the next meeting in New York, with a tentative date of the week of May 12, 2008. The Chair asks the Network for suggestions on the content, specifically the value of including a special guest to present on a topic of relevance to the ICT community.
20. Prior to concluding the meeting, The Network thanked the staff of the UN Logistics Base in Brindisi, Italy, for hosting the meeting, and expressed their appreciation for all their efforts to ensure the Network convened a successful meeting.

Annex I
List of Participants

Organization	Name and Title
UN	Mr. Soon Choi, CITO
	Mr. Eduardo Blinder, Director, Information Technology Services Division
	Mr. Rudy Sanchez, Chief, Communications and Information Technology Service, Logistics Support Division, Office of Mission Support
	Mr. John Campbell, Chief, Operations Service, ITSD & Chair, ITAG
	Mr. Michael Laing, Senior Officer, ITSD
ILO	Mr. Nadim R. Habra, Chief, Information Technology and Communications
FAO	Mr. John Reid, Chief
UNESCO	Mr. Paulo Serra, Director, Information Systems and Telecommunications
ICAO	Mr. Pat O'Hare, Chief, Information and Communication Technology
IMO	Mr. Vincent Job, Deputy Director / Head, Information Technology and Information Systems, Administrative Division
WIPO	Mr. Neil Wilson, Director and CIO, IT Division
IFAD	Mr. Jose Stigliano, Director, ICT Division
IAEA	Mr. Charles Havekost, Director, Division of Information Technology
WTO	Mr. Ghassan Karam, Director, Informatics Division
UNDP	Ms. Shirin Hamid, Chief Technology Officer, Bureau of Management
	Ms. Michelle Maggal, Deputy Director, Global Services Section & Chair, UNDG ICT Working Group (via videoconference)
UNHCR	Mr. John Serrato, Director, CIO, Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications & Chair, CABIO
UNRWA	Mr. Suhail Katkhuda, Chief, Information Systems Division
UNICEF	Mr. Stefan Zutt, CIO and Director, Information Technology Solutions and Services Division
UNFPA	Mr. Rafiodin Malikzay, Chief, Management Information Systems Branch

WFP	Ms. Susana Malcorra, Deputy Executive Director & Chair, ICT Network
	Mr. Ernesto Baca, CIO and Director, Information and Communications Technology Division & Chair, SAP-SIG
CTBTO	Mr. Mensah Solomons, Chief, Network and Systems Support Section
ICC	Mr. Andreas Christoforides, Director, Division unknown
ICC-CPI	Mr. Ian Blacker, Chief, ICT Section, Information and Communication Technologies
ICJ - International Court of Justice	Mr. Guillaume Auber, Head of IT Division, IT
IOM	Mr. Mariano-Joaquim Bernardo, Chief, Information Technology and Communication
ITC	Mr. Georges Niquille, Chief, DPS-ITSS
OHCHR	Mr. Najah Didi, Head of Enterprise Solutions Unit, IMT
OPCW	Mr. Marc Weidmann, Head, Information Services Branch
PAHO	Mr. Tim Brown, Chief, IT Strategic Planning
UNAIDS	Ms. Sima Newell, Manager, Information Technology and Systems
UNJSPF	Mr. Paul Dooley, Chief, Information Management Systems Section
CEB Secretariat	Ken Herman, Senior Advisor on Information Management Policy Coordination
	Richard Maciver, ICT Specialist and Webmaster