



**THE JOINT
COORDINATING
COMMITTEE**

United Nations

New York



March 19, 2007

Excellency,

We have the honour, on behalf of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement and the G-77 & China, to draw your attention to the High Level Panel Report on UN system-wide coherence issued last November in fulfilment of the mandate provided by the member states in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document to further strengthen the management and coordination of United Nations operational activities so that they can make an even more effective contribution to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs.

We wish to convey the willingness of both Groups to engage constructively in a process to be set up by the President of the General Assembly to facilitate an intergovernmental consideration of the recommendations emanating from the Report and to ensure sufficient 'buy in' and support from all stakeholders in order to make the process fully owned and successful.

There are a number of useful recommendations in the report that we can build on. Importantly, the Panel has acknowledged national ownership as the bedrock of effective development and has advocated a demand driven approach. At this stage we would like to provide in a very preliminary way some important elements for your consideration on the recommendations of the report. In this connection, we would like to recall and reaffirm that economic and social development should remain the centerpiece of deliberations at the UN, and that the achievement of the Internationally Agreed Development Goals, including the MDG's, should continue to be the over-arching framework of the UN activities. We further emphasize the need for a strengthened global partnership for development, based on the recognition of national leadership and ownership of development strategies. We believe that the primary thrust of any related process should be driven by a vision of a stronger role for the United Nations on development issues, and by the need to fully implement all agreed commitments from all the major United Nations Summits and Conferences in the economic, social and related fields:

Preliminary Elements for Consideration:

1. While addressing the UN operational activities for development, the GA Resolution A/59/250 remains the intergovernmentally agreed guiding policy framework.
2. The fundamental characteristics of the UN operational activities for development must remain, inter alia, the universal, voluntary and grant nature, the neutrality and the multilateralism, as well as their ability to respond to the development needs of program countries in a flexible manner.
3. While there are a number of useful recommendations in the report, in few areas the Panel's Report may have touched upon some issues, such as human rights, gender and sustainable development, as cross-cutting issues in the context of UN operational activities for development. While those issues are not confined only to developing countries the Group has concern that those issues as well as humanitarian assistance might be misused to introduce new conditionalities on international development assistance which is not acceptable to developing countries.
4. Developing countries have a great interest in a fair, rules-based international system. The enhanced UN system-wide coherence envisaged as a result of this collective exercise should strengthen the standard-setting role of our Organization in order to reinforce its normative capacities.

The One UN Approach:

5. The "Pilots" for the one-country approach in several developing countries should be, as recognised in the Panel's Report, entirely voluntary, decided and led by the national governments taking into account national particularities and conditions. These should neither create any systemic changes in the methods of formulating, approving and financing country programmes, nor lead to any systematic expansion of the number of pilots, without further open and inclusive intergovernmental consideration.
6. There is no "one size fits all", as also recognized by the Panel. There should be no restrictions on the ability and sovereignty of national governments to determine their own development priorities or select their development partners, as well as the type of relation with the UN development entities they wish to establish at the country level. The UN development system should continue to support development efforts of developing countries principally by assisting in the implementation of nationally determined development plans, strategies and priorities.

Funding:

7. The central issue of the quantity, quality and predictability of development assistance from the UN system based on the demand-driven approach needs to be addressed more concretely. It is essential to ensure that there is an expanding and adequate base of development assistance from the UN system and other sources, responsive to the national development plans of program countries.
8. The continuing imbalance between “core” and “non-core” resources, highlighted in the report as a problem, remains a major reason for the incoherence of UN development programs, including at the country level, resulting in the distortion in the support provided by the UN development system for implementing national priorities of program countries.
9. The guiding principle of the coherence process should be to provide more efficiency in delivery. It should not be a cost cutting exercise. Hence, any savings acquired as a result of the streamlining process should be re-channelled into the development expenditures of the UN and not to be directed into other activities. Further, to the largest extent, savings generated from efficiencies at the country level must be ploughed back into the programme and activities in that country.
10. Funding modalities proposed in the recommendations of the Report, in specially the concept of “results-based funding” raise serious questions. They may imply new conditionalities in development cooperation. Moreover, these recommendations on financing do not address the central issue of the quantity and quality of development assistance from the UN system.

Engagement with BWI's:

11. Coherence at the national and international level also involves the Bretton Woods Institutions, where they exist. They should be a part of any integrated approach to development cooperation. Bilateral development partners should also be part and parcel of this approach.
12. The Secretary General, the President of the World Bank, and the Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund should set up a process to review and update their respective roles and relations at the global as well as at the country levels, where those institutions operate, with a view to concluding, after consultation with member states, formal agreements to promote coordinated and coherent contributions to the implementation of national development plans and strategies.

Governance:

13. The various development-related organizations, agencies, funds and programmes of the UN system, with their diverse and complimentary fields of activities, bring a unique wealth of expertise and resources in assisting in the achievement of the MDGs and the other internationally agreed development goals established by UN Conferences and Summits. However, the concept of “comparative advantage”, as contained in the report, may undermine the contribution which individual funds and agencies can make to development cooperation.
14. The proposed creation of the Sustainable Development Board needs careful consideration. The establishment of a Sustainable Development Board may duplicate the work of ECOSOC in view of the adoption by the General Assembly of the resolution on the strengthening of the ECOSOC (A/61/16). There is an urgent need to restore balance to the UN’s intergovernmental processes in particular to reflect the agreed principles of national ownership of the development strategies. In this context, it is essential to review the membership, rules and procedures, budgets and the decision making processes of the Executive Boards of individual UN funds and programmes to ensure greater transparency, representation and participation.
15. Exhortations at the Secretariat-level for closer coordination and cooperation within the CEB or the UNDG need to be explored more to produce desired results in themselves unless there is some mechanism for intergovernmental oversight and monitoring of such cooperation and coordination. Moreover, a central question is whether the Bretton Woods Institutions are willing to participate in the envisaged cooperation and coordination.

Business Practices

16. Any process aiming at achieving coherence of the UN system should be inclusive and take into account previous recommendations made by the internal and external oversight bodies, such as the JIU, BOA, OIOS and other relevant internal entities, and already endorsed by the General Assembly.
17. Confidence building among the membership of the organization regarding reform should be a top priority in the forthcoming period. Hence proposals already rejected by the General Assembly on management reform and the institutionalization of business practices (A/60/260) should not be resubmitted. Proposals which continue to be under consideration of the GA on these issues also should not be brought for consideration in this process.
18. Harmonization of various practices and procedures, e.g., procurement among the various UN Funds and Programmes and the Specialized Agencies should continue

to be undertaken by the Secretariat through the CEB, in accordance with high level intergovernmental decisions.

Regional Dimension:

19. The importance of the regional dimension of development is manifested in the mandates given to the regional commissions in the outcomes of the major UN Conferences and Summits. Improved coherence at the regional level will require strengthening existing UN regional mechanisms for horizontal coordination, and ensuring a vertical link-up and alignment in the UN development and coordination architecture at the global, regional, and country levels.

South/South Cooperation:

20. In seeking coherence in the UN development activities, adequate efforts should be made to provide for the enhancement of South/South and triangular cooperation within the system, among others to take concrete measures to further strengthen the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation as a separate entity and a focal point for South-South Cooperation within the United Nations System.

In conclusion, we would like to state that implementation of recommendations contained in the report should follow intergovernmental consideration and agreement by the General Assembly. Since the Panel's Report was commissioned by and submitted to your predecessor, we will greatly appreciate receiving your views on the report and its recommendations as well as your proposals with regard to its future consideration. In doing so, it is our expectation that you would take into account views and concerns outlined above, which are preliminary in nature.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Ambassador Rodrigo Diaz



Permanent Representative of Cuba
Chairman of the COB
of the Non-Aligned Movement

Ambassador Munir Akram



Permanent Representative of Pakistan
Chairman of the
Group of 77 & China

H.E Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary General of the United Nations
UN Headquarters

CC: H. E. Dr. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa
President of the General Assembly of the United Nations