

## **System-wide Coherence**

### **Remarks by the Co-Chairs In Open Informal Consultations Friday, 16 May, 2008**

#### **Recent Mission to Agency Heads in Paris, Rome and Geneva and Visit to Albania**

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**As we flagged to delegations in advance, your Co-chairs recently undertook visits to the Headquarters of various United Nations Agencies, Funds and Programmes in Paris, Rome and Geneva.**

**We have been able to confer directly with:**

**The Director General of UNESCO;**

**The Executive Director and her Deputy at the World Food Programme (WFP);  
The President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD);  
The Deputy Director General of the Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO);**

**The Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO);  
The Assistant Director General at the International Labour Organization (ILO);  
The UN High Commissioner for Refugees;  
The Secretary General of UNCTAD;  
The Executive Director of UNAIDS;  
The Deputy UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; and  
The Director General of the UN Office in Geneva (UNOG).**

**We also met with the Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO).**

**During the same period, we visited Albania, the sole European “Pilot country” in the context of Delivering as One. We were received by Prime Minister Berisha, Foreign Minister Basha and a number of their cabinet colleagues and we were able to confer with the UN Country Team and representatives of civil society. The government of Albania is strongly committed to the Coherence approach on the part of the UN Country Team in that country. In this context, they have a strong partnership with the Country Team. The government sees a more coherent and effective UN effort as a major contribution to advancing Albania’s journey towards integration with the European Union by way of the Albania/ EU Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA). This perspective demonstrated once again to your Co-chairs the fact that the Delivering as One approach may be calibrated and adapted to meet the individual priorities and requirements of a very diverse range of States. Once more, we observed that the principle of “No One Size Fits All” is being upheld in practice.**

Delegations will recall that, in line with the priorities which have been flagged to us since the very beginning of the year, your Co-chairs have placed significant focus on the Development aspect of Coherence.

With this in mind, from our conversations with agency Heads, we were able to draw some quite clear impressions. Among these were the following:

- there is a palpable sense of closer collaboration and cooperation among Agencies, Funds and Programmes in advancing the Delivering as One approach. Many of the agencies feel that there is now an improved mutual understanding of respective mandates, comparative advantages and identities. The benefits of Joint Programming at country level are becoming clearer. Agency Heads were keen in this context to underline their commitment to the reform effort;
- mechanisms have been put in place within the framework of the Chief Executives Board (CEB) to carry forward existing collaborative exchanges on these matters among agencies, including at the highest levels within the competency of their executive managements;
- our discussions with agency Heads took place around the time of the semi-annual meeting of the CEB which took place in Berne at which the Secretary-General and his System-wide colleagues adopted, again within their own competencies, an extensive package of steps to harmonize Business Practices. Your Co-chairs, as you will also be aware, will arrange for a fuller briefing of delegations on these steps in the first half of June;
- Agency Heads acknowledged the need for a consistent, positive message to be imparted by the various Headquarters at all levels to country and regional representatives concerning the advancement of Delivering as One and a One Programme effort that is aligned to the priorities of programme developing countries themselves in observance of the principle of national ownership. Some agencies already include among the personal performance indicators of their country and regional representatives a requirement to enhance demonstrably a united UN country Team effort. Others were very prepared to develop and incorporate such an indicator;
- Agency Heads were amenable, in light of the strong consensus in the General Assembly on this topic and to the maximum extent feasible, to develop the System's capacity together to achieve administrative savings on transaction costs at country level and to plough back these savings into development work in the countries where the savings are realised;

- **There remain at the same time a number of issues concerning which agency Heads see a need for further clarification as the Delivering as One process evolves. These relate inter alia to the role and authority of the empowered Resident Co-Ordinator, the question of representation in this regard, the selection of Resident Co-Ordinators from across the broad System, etc. They are concerned that the role of “line” ministries should be reflected by programme country Governments in the context of developing One Country Programmes. On the matter of Resident Co-ordinators, agency Heads nonetheless pointed out that the degree of collaboration and mutual accommodation across the System had improved significantly and that it was now a question of building further on significant advances already made;**
  
- **The question of Funding continues to occupy several Heads of Agencies, including in regard to striking a balance between Core and non-Core funding as well as predictability of funding into the future. There is great interest not least in the disposition of development partners in this connection;and**
  
- **Agency Heads observe that there is no evident intention to enlarge the number of “Pilot” countries, even as there is a growing number of Governments in developing countries which are seeking voluntarily to apply the Delivering as One approach. Some Agency Heads point in this regard to those programme countries which will commence a new UNDAF cycle this year or next.**

**These then are among the points which were made to your Co-chairs by agency Heads from Paris, Rome and Geneva in the past fortnight. We would like to place on record our deep appreciation for the receptiveness shown by the agency Heads concerned to the work that we, as Co-chairs, are undertaking on your behalf.**

**Thank you.**