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**Informal meeting of the plenary on the United Nations  
System-wide Coherence**

Statement by

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on behalf of the European Union

New York, 7 February 2008

Excellencies,

I have the honour today to speak on behalf of the European Union. "The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia\* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

At the beginning, I would like to congratulate the two Co-Chairs, the Ambassador of Ireland, Mr. Paul Kavanagh, and the Ambassador of the United Republic of Tanzania, Dr. Augustine P. Mahiga, on their appointment to steer the System-wide Coherence discussion during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly. The EU will without any doubt offer its full support to you on this challenging task. On this occasion, we would like to express our gratitude to the previous Co-Chairs, Ambassador Christopher Hackett of Barbados and Ambassador Jean Marc Hoscheit of Luxemburg. Their work has set a good foundation for the continuation of the process.

The nine informal consultations and briefings on System-wide Coherence that took place during the sixty-first General Assembly Session showed the complexity of issues being addressed. It was therefore not surprising to find differences over the further consideration of the High-Level Panel's report. However, there were as well several converging issues. One of these is the widespread agreement on the goal of better delivery of country-level services and better performance by the relevant UN bodies to answer better to the needs of the beneficiary countries. It is thus that the EU strongly welcomes the new Co-Chairs suggestion to promote a bottom-up approach in exploring ways for the UN to work more coherently and effectively.

After the launch of the High Level Panel's report, the Governments of eight countries have volunteered to become "Delivering as One" pilots. By doing so, they have agreed to work towards a unified UN presence in the country while preserving the strengths and comparative advantages of different UN bodies. In practice, a lot of effort is being undertaken in the eight pilot countries by their respective Governments and the UN to elaborate and reach an agreement about the Four Ones, in accordance with the countries' specific requirements and circumstances. We have to show our support to these ongoing efforts.

If we are to see any progress in overcoming the development challenges, all stakeholders have to carry out their respective roles:

- The UN should act in a coordinated and coherent way. To achieve this, the focus must be on results, achieved in carrying out the countries' national strategies, rather than on the roles of respective UN agencies.
- In line with the principle of country ownership, pilot countries should define and own their development strategies. At all times, strong leadership, full support and clear guidance must be ensured on the reform of the UN at country level.
- Donors should endorse the Delivering as One process. EU Member States have in different countries decided to support financially the efforts, aimed at realising the objectives of the Delivering as One programme.

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\* Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

The first assessment of results of the Delivering as One is taking place as an informal stocktaking of key emerging issues, lessons learnt and recommendations, which will indicate the achieved progress in the pilot countries after the first implementation year.

Pilot countries stressed that the design of the Delivering as One programme is in line with the priorities, defined by the national development strategies, and that Government leadership is evident. The reform is changing the way, in which UN agencies are working with Governments, increasing the impact of projects and delivering in a more cohesive manner, increasing transparency and decreasing duplication, overlapping and transactional costs.

Challenges nevertheless remain. Pilot countries for example highlighted that the role of the Resident Coordinator must be adequately enhanced. They warned of a continued fragmentation of projects, resulting both from activities of agencies and donors. In this sense, greater efforts are needed to develop more strategic and integrated joint agency programmes. Vital to this is the role of UNDP and a clear divide of "firewall" between managing the system and UNDP operations that will satisfy all agencies. Another challenge is the remaining gap in funding for the Delivering as One programme, while maintaining the relationship between improved effectiveness and better funding.

The Delivering as One programme is an opportunity to focus and prioritise the UN's support to national development goals and should not be seen as a way to increase the UN's activities and funding, expending to allow every agency to fulfil its mandate. The EU considers the issue of funding for the UN's operational activities as a key question, to which Member States must devote an important role, with the objective of ensuring adequate, predictable and timely core funding to those agencies committed to reform. At the same time, the balance between core and non-core resources needs to be improved, strengthening the efficiency and effectiveness of the UN at a country level.

At the central level, harmonised and simplified business practices and governance are among the other issues, crucial for an improved functioning of the UN development system.

To deliver as one, UN country teams should be able to provide a coherent approach to cross-cutting issues, such as sustainable development, gender equality and human rights. As recalled at the World Summit in 2005, human rights are an integral part of UN activities, and the EU reiterates its strong commitment in this regard. No less importance has been given to the strengthening of the UN gender perspective. The EU would also like to reiterate that accountability for gender-mainstreaming and woman's empowerment should be given higher priority within UN agencies. At the same time, we must not forget that for the achievement of MDGs, promotion of gender equality is one of the agreed steps.

It is in this light that the bottom-up approach of the new Co-Chairs has the full support of the European Union. It focuses at the innovations from the field, demonstrating a better functioning of the UN system, and then feeding the findings into the reform process taking place at the central level.

There are other on-going processes, which aim to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations development system's support to national efforts of developing countries to pursue their priorities and meet their needs in the context of the UN development agenda. The Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR) is one of those processes. Consultations, which will be held in the coming months, should build on this already existing mandate and with it the reforms that have been in progress since 2004, the conclusions of the 2007 TCPR and other relevant processes at country level.

Due to the increasing global challenges, requiring cross-sectoral approaches, the role of UN System processes, including within the Chief Executives Board, United Nations Development Group and United Nations Evaluation Group, must not be forgotten. They have the potential to assist the various components of the UN system in raising their collective capacity to deal with new challenges in a coherent manner. Issues such as duplication and effectiveness in inter-agency coordination across the system need to be further addressed.

Excellencies,

Much of the early phase of the reform has been focused on planning and programming. The coming stage needs to move the focus to implementation. The success at the country level depends on the continued dedication of its Governments to the process and the general support of the donor community. Needless to say, all UN activities must be joined under one umbrella, adapted to the local context, development partners and civil society organisations. Progress can greatly benefit from the experience and views of the pilot countries and of those several other countries, which are currently exploring, with local UN offices, mechanisms to promote efficiency, and reduce duplications.

The European Union's commitment to support the "Delivering as One" process is based on our firm support for the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The Paris Declaration captures the consensus of the donor community and partner countries on how development assistance can become more effectively supportive of partner countries' development plans and strategies.

The United Nations played a crucial role in articulating the Millennium Development Goals. The time has come now to take action to achieve those and other internationally agreed development goals, and support Governments in the implementation of their national development plans

Thank you.