

**General Assembly
Informal Consultations on
United Nations System-wide Coherence
Governance
New York, Thursday 17 April 2008**

Statement by

Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden

Mr Co-chairs,

I have the pleasure to take the floor on behalf of the five Nordic countries Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

The High Level Panel on System-Wide coherence drew our attention to a number of concerns in the area of governance. The Panel made a number of proposals for the way ahead. These proposals will continue to serve as helpful input to the continued efforts to improve the United Nation's capacity to deliver and be relevant in the area of development.

Effective governance goes to the core of a coherent and well functioning United Nations. Along with the goal to ensure coherence at the country level, we also need to consider how to maintain coherence at the central level. When unnecessary duplication and lack of clarity as concerns roles and mandates is present at the country level, it tends to reflect similar shortcomings at the central level. However, reaching true coherence at the centre is a very complex issue which requires further analysis and deliberations.

Another important governance issue is the need to establish a clear firewall and accountability framework between the UNDP's support to the Resident Coordinators and its operations role. This will allow for the UN system to exercise full ownership of the Resident Coordinator system and as such is of crucial importance in our reform efforts. In this context, Mr Co-chairs, we welcomed the briefing this morning on the Resident Coordinator system and the insights provided to us on this subject.

Mr Co-chairs,

I would like to take this opportunity to briefly address another issue of central importance, namely the work of the UN in the area of gender equality and the empowerment of women. On behalf of the Nordic countries, I would like to welcome the stated intention of the co-chairs to focus on the issue of gender in the month of May.

There is a strong link between improving gender equality and empowerment of women and the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. I would like to add that gender equality is not only important for development. It is also a security and human rights issue. The UN has a central role in assisting Member States in their effort to strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women.

There appears to be wide-spread agreement that, at present, the work of the UN in the area of gender is fragmented and underfunded. Our joint objective must be to strengthen the capacity, accountability and effectiveness of the UN's work on gender equality and the empowerment of women. Change in this regard is urgent in order to improve the lives of women worldwide, and to strengthen development for all.

As member States, we should signal our readiness to consider, as soon as possible, concrete proposals from the Secretary-General for action in this regard. For this purpose, the Secretary-General should be asked to elaborate on the shortcomings of the capacity of the UN in the area of gender, and to include a proposal on how to strengthen the work of the Organisation in this regard.

Thank you Mr Co-chairs