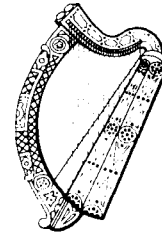




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**United Nations System-wide Coherence: “Delivering as One”**

**Joint Statement by the UN General Assembly Co-Chairs  
on System-wide Coherence**

**Delivered by**

**H.E. Ambassador Dr. Augustine Mahiga**

**Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania  
to the United Nations, New York**

**at Informal Consultations in the General Assembly**

**Friday, 28 March 2008**

Madam Deputy Secretary-General,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of my colleague as Co-Chair, Ambassador Kavanagh of Ireland, and on my own behalf I would like to welcome you to this Open Consultation on System-wide Coherence at country level. Your participation sends an important signal that there is a deep and widespread commitment to making progress on System-wide Coherence in the Assembly during the current, 62<sup>nd</sup> session. Delegations will have paid close attention just now to the important introductory comments of Her Excellency Deputy Secretary-General Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro.

As delegations are aware, it is the shared view of your Co-Chairs that significant ongoing developments have been taking place for some time at country level. We believe that it is important for the General Assembly to know what is happening, to focus its attention on these developments, to take account of them, and to let the System and the world know what it thinks of them.

The UN 'Delivering as One' approach has been voluntarily embraced by a number of so-called 'Pilot countries' and in addition by a growing number of other developing countries. In a few moments, we will invite the representatives of such countries to share with us their experience to date. After that, we will be eager to hear views from the broad membership. At the conclusion of our consultation today, the Co-Chairs may try to draw some threads from the day's exchanges.

The actual experience of these countries, we trust, will help substantially to illuminate and demystify the issue of 'Delivering as One'. We believe that the governments concerned, not surprisingly, are taking a very practical approach to the question of 'Delivering as One'. Our sense is that for them, the essential question is: whether 'Delivering as One' is in fact providing development assistance to their peoples through the UN System, with greater effectiveness and in line with the national development programmes and priorities of the countries themselves.

We must not lose sight of the fact that our objective here is not to bring about a more coherent performance by the UN System for its own sake. The objective is to have a greatly more effective UN System, in particular in the area of economic and social development, for the benefit of those peoples especially in developing countries, which still look to this Assembly for real support.

Please allow me to recapitulate some background as well as the general approach which, with your concurrence and support, Ambassador Kavanagh and I have been taking in the discharge of this important mandate, since it was conferred on us in January by the President of the General Assembly, Dr. Srjan Kerim.

Excellencies,

Delegations may be familiar already with the detailed statements which your Co-Chairs delivered on 4 March in Vienna at a very useful conference on System-wide Coherence which was open to all UN Agencies, Funds and

Programmes as well as UN member States and which was organised and hosted by the Executive Director of UNIDO.

We recalled on that occasion that while the more coherent delivery of development assistance through the UN System was highlighted in the 2006 High Level Panel Report, in fact the General Assembly had already been giving clear guidelines on this subject for some years before that, thus, the issue of coherence was not a creation of the High Level Panel. The Assembly, the System and several individual developing countries have been advancing coherence since well before the Panel Report appeared. This process is continuing.

Excellencies,

I should recognise that the family of development-related organisations, Agencies, Funds and Programmes of the United Nations brings together a unique wealth of expertise and resources on global issues. The World Summit of 2005 expressly commended their extensive experience and expertise in diverse and complementary fields of activity, as well as their important contributions to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the other development objectives established by United Nations conferences. The Summit Outcome, adopted unanimously by Heads of State and Government, also sought to strengthen System-wide Coherence through both policy and operational measures.

With regard to operational activities, the outcome document sought the implementation of "current reforms" aimed at a more effective, efficient,

coherent, coordinated and better-performing United Nations country presence, with a strengthened role for the senior resident official, whether Special Representative, Resident Coordinator or Humanitarian Coordinator. This would include appropriate authority, resources and accountability, and a common management, programming and monitoring framework.

The Summit also invited the Secretary-General of the day to launch work to "further strengthen" the management and coordination of United Nations operational activities, so that they could make an even more effective contribution to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and to make proposals for "more tightly managed entities" in the fields of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment.

These then were the parameters which were established by the 2005 World Summit, for the work which was to be carried out by the High Level Panel on System-wide Coherence. I quote this antecedent to make the point sufficiently that the conclusions of the World Summit, and the subsequent work of the High Level Panel, did not come about in a vacuum as regards UN reform and renewal. The language used in the Summit Outcome Document was no coincidence. It pointed to a situation in which reform and renewal were already contemplated or indeed underway at various levels.

An example of this reform continuum lies in the TCPR, or the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review process, in existence since 2001. Even before the World Summit, the 2004 Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review

(TCPR) had already pointed the way toward significant advances in establishing a more coherent and effective UN presence at operational level. On 9 November 2006, the High Level Panel presented its report which responded to the guidelines provided by the Summit Outcome, and to the views gathered by the Panel in the course of their work.

In the view of the Co-Chairs, it is essential to see the vision of the Panel as an amalgamation of current and potential directions for better performance. It brought together guidelines as articulated by the 2005 Summit; tracks or directions which were already being followed under resolutions such as the TCPR and decisions on humanitarian effectiveness; and views from groups of Member States concerning further initiatives which could bear fruit. Only by retaining in our minds this diversity of the Panel's sources, can we foresee how a response by the UN system as a whole can be planned, prioritised and given a chance of widespread acceptance.

In that context, I would also like to recall that during the current 62nd Session of the General Assembly, in the period October to December 2007, negotiations resulted in consensus agreement on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR). This Review remains the General Assembly's principal opportunity to discuss and offer guidelines for the operational activities of the UN's development system.

Issues related to accountability, funding, gender, and the role of the Chief Executives•Board or CEB are all addressed. The TCPR underscores the General Assembly's appreciation of the shift in paradigm, which is also reflected in the "Delivering as One" initiative at country level, from a UN

System that intervenes in a given "developing country" to execute a project, to a System that seeks much more to enhance the capacities and ownership of governments and of institutions in programme countries, whilst aligning UN System activities with the development and poverty reduction agenda of the countries concerned.

Excellencies,

You will be aware that in prior open consultations of the whole, held on 7 February, the broad Membership gave the Co-Chairs a green light to proceed with our work in the manner we had proposed.

Accordingly, we will be focussing in the first instance (today) on 'Delivering as One' at country level. In view of the priorities highlighted by various groupings and national delegations on 7 February, we have scheduled also full consultations for 7 and 17 April on the overarching issues of Funding and Governance, respectively. Early in May, there will be an opportunity for the entire membership to engage with the Secretary-General's senior colleagues regarding the important package of measures which the Chief Executives Board (CEB) will have adopted within its own competence at the end of April for the Harmonisation of Business Practices within the System. After that we will fix a date for consultations on the Gender issue which we anticipate will take up much of our time in the second part of our mandate. This list is of course not necessarily exhaustive. We shall remain open minded.

I wish to assure delegations that your Co-Chairs will continue to conduct their work in an open, transparent and inclusive manner. In this regard, we are grateful for the trust that delegations have placed in us. Our firm intention is to bring forward a report to the President of the Assembly in June that will be balanced and representative. Our aim is that all parts of the membership would recognise substantially in the report priorities which they have put forward. With continued confidence from the membership, we will endeavour to give leadership in this matter. We will seek a ‘win win’ outcome. The hope is that in response to our report, the Assembly will find its voice and, in a united manner, make its position clear. To this end, quite apart from set-piece open consultations such as today’s, the Co-Chairs will continue to engage with the membership in bilateral, group and various other formats. We have always been available to delegations and we will remain so through to the end of our mandate.

Excellencies,

Let me revert momentarily to the issue at hand today, ‘Delivering as One’ at country level.

Delegations are aware from our Vienna statements that we have been visiting a number of the pilot countries. Specifically we have been received with great thoughtfulness in Tanzania, Mozambique, Cape Verde and Viet Nam. In each capital we were received either by the Head of State or the Head of Government as well as by the central coordinating Ministers and line Ministers. We also met with a semi-autonomous regional Government, with Parliamentarians, UN Country Teams, Development Partners, Civil



Society and the Media. Naturally, we attached particular importance to what we were told by the Governments concerned at the highest levels.

We heard that ‘Delivering as One’ was reinforcing significantly national ownership and leadership in the programming and delivery of development assistance through the United Nations Country Teams on the ground. By the same token, we were told that ‘Delivering as One’ had brought no new conditionalities to national partnerships with the UN System. Consequently, it was made clear to us by the governments concerned that the principle of ‘No One Size Fits All’ was being observed. Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Middle Income Countries (MICs) for example are faced with their own particular challenges. We can assure the Assembly that there is no so-called straightjacket being imposed on these countries.

We were told that ‘Delivering as One’, through a One Country Programme, was reducing significantly the traditional burden and time on national administrations in these developing countries caused by having to engage in a fragmented manner with a proliferation of UN entities. In other words, it was a great relief for these Governments to deal with the United Nations Country Team principally through One accepted Leader for a One Programme with One Funding Arrangements. With national ownership as the starting point, we heard that developing countries themselves felt more empowered when dealing with a coherent UN Country Team than was the case with a fragmented System of powerful individual agencies which sometimes in the past have had the cumulative effect of overwhelming the State administrations concerned.

At the same time, we have heard of a number of challenges which remain to be fully addressed in the ‘Delivering as One’ process at country level – in terms of One Funding arrangements, One Leader of an empowered UN Country Team and One UN Office. We will no doubt hear about these in the course of the day from the countries concerned.

In Vienna, we highlighted a number of other challenges which need to be addressed. We have been repeatedly told at government level in particular that various Headquarters in the UN System need to replicate more fully the degree to which their talented and hard-working representatives in the field have embraced the process. Further progress at country level can only bring ‘Delivering as One’, and greater effectiveness on the part of the UN System, so far. For really decisive change to take place, we were told, it will be necessary for the various Headquarters to energise the process further and effectively to ‘catch up with the field’ by bringing greater synergy between the field and Headquarters levels.

Let me mention some concrete examples.

First, there is a quasi-consensus in the Assembly that savings realised on the administrative side through rationalisation of common services and so forth should be ploughed back into the development account, so that ‘Delivering as One’ delivers more to peoples in need. Unfortunately, many Agencies, Funds and Programmes are prevented from doing so by legislation and/or regulations in force. The result is that the current legal and administrative framework within the UN System often militates against the ploughing of administrative savings

back into programmatic development work. In Mozambique we found an example of what can be achieved nonetheless, the constraints imposed by the overall regulatory framework notwithstanding. The UN Country Team in Maputo realised significant savings by rationalising their travel services. These savings were used to fund the electrification of a so-called Millennium village in the country-side. The Co-Chairs would urge all UN Headquarters levels to take the necessary action to allow this kind of transfer to occur in many more situations and on a much larger scale. Where required, the necessary authority should be requested from inter-governmental bodies. Otherwise the quasi-consensus desire in the Assembly for ‘ploughing back’ will continue to be frustrated. ‘Delivering as One’ must not be simply a cost-cutting exercise!

Second, we heard from developing countries that they have a strong interest in being designated the implementing, or executing partners for many more UN System activities than is the case at present. With appropriate international accompaniment and auditing, this would increase the experience and capacity levels of national agencies. Unfortunately, including for reasons having to do with support costs, it is not always in the interest of the UN entities to forego the implementing, or executing function for themselves. It would be a great injustice to developing countries if the building of their national capacities was not to enjoy every appropriate support because of vested interests within the UN System.

Third, we encountered a situation where governmental authorities responsible for a population profiled by extremely challenging economic and social indicators had placed modern air-conditioned offices at the disposal of the local UN Team – only for the latter to be unable to agree among themselves on the allocation of these offices, ostensibly as a result of ‘inter-agency’ considerations directed from various Headquarters. As a result, the governmental authorities concerned, after eight months of unresolved discussion were contemplating withdrawing this offer of the premises in question.

A few days after your Co-Chairs highlighted this situation in their statements at the recent Vienna Conference, fortunately we heard that the matter had finally been resolved. Headquarters levels should instruct the UN Country Teams that such situations are in fact unacceptable to the member States. On the other hand, in the first year of its existence, the One UN office in Cape Verde cost 25% less than the total aggregate cost of the offices of the participating UN entities in the preceding year. The savings were applied to training of UN System personnel and of Cape Verdeans. Headquarter levels need to empower and encourage UN Country Teams along this path.

In the period ahead we intend to visit other countries which have embraced ‘Delivering as One’ approach as well as a number of UN Agencies and the Bretton Woods Institutions.

Before concluding, let me quickly make some further points:

Your Co-Chairs recall that the General Assembly has already decided by consensus that it will review the implementation of the 'Delivering as One' approach in light of an independent evaluation channelled to the Assembly by the Secretary-General. The evaluation is currently scheduled for 2009. Several member States quite rightly underlined this perspective at our last open consultation on 7 February. Consequently, any assessment that we or the Assembly may make in the course of this year will by definition be interim in nature. We are looking at work in progress, from the current design phase to the subsequent implementation phases. Besides, it is evident that eighteen months is too short a period after which a new paradigm in the delivery of development assistance might register fully sustainable results. At the same time, it would in our view be a mistake for the Assembly to let a second year (that is 2008) to pass without stating a view on the rapidly accumulating facts in the 'Delivering as One' process.

We would suggest at the same time that it will not be sufficient for the family of UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes alone to act in a more coherent manner. Coherence is also called for on the part of individual governments across all Ministries and also on the part of donor countries, that is the development partners. In fairness, we have observed improved coherence among the donor community in Pilot countries which we have visited. A good number of donors have put forward new and additional funds in order that One UN programmes might be fully resourced. This is to be warmly welcomed. We should also recognise the coherence in the existing partnership between the donor groups and the host countries.

Let me emphasise that my colleague as Co-Chair, Ambassador Kavanagh, and I of course recognise fully the individual mandates and vitally important capacities of individual entities within the System. It would be a travesty to promote coherence at the cost of seriously weakening these bodies. That is not and cannot be the intention. In our view, 'Delivering as One' will have to strike a judicious balance between the 'oneness' of UN delivery and the strength and roles of individual agencies as they are brought to bear on the 'Delivering as One' synergy. These represent an enormous asset for the international community and for developing countries in particular.

At the same time, reform and renewal of the UN System cannot plausibly co-exist with a 'business as usual' approach. It should be emphasised that one cannot envisage having a One UN Programme simply as a supplement, whilst all individual agencies continue to deliver all they would have delivered in the absence of a One Programme. The full implications of this may not arise immediately in all Pilots. However, such implications may need to be worked through, sooner rather than later, in individual Boards as well as in the Chief Executives Board (CEB). Once again if, in the partnership between individual developing countries and the UN family, we keep national ownership as our initial guiding principle, we will not go far wrong.

Excellencies,

Ambassador Kavanagh and I apologise for having kept our guests waiting for too long. I am sure we are all eager to hear the experience of those

countries which have been implementing the 'Delivering as One' approach. Delegations will also have seen the letter which the Co-Chairs addressed to them on 20 March in preparation for today's consultation.

Thank you for your attention.