



# CENTER FOR UN REFORM EDUCATION

## UN REFORM UPDATE

### First Round of Consultations on System-wide Coherence in Progress

*During the last two weeks of June Member States began consultations, based on a thematic approach, on the recommendations contained in the [Report of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence on development, humanitarian assistance and the environment](#). The consultations are headed by the two Co-Chairs appointed by the President of the GA, Ambassador Hackett of Barbados and Ambassador Hoscheit of Luxembourg. The areas discussed to date include: **Humanitarian Issues and Recovery, Governance and Institutional Reform, Business Practices, Gender and Delivering as One at Country Level**.*

Consultations were suspended because delegations will be participating in the ECOSOC substantive session in Geneva during the first three weeks of July. The Panel's recommendations on the areas of the **environment, human rights and funding** will be taken up when consultations resume at the end of July.

#### HUMANITARIAN ISSUES AND RECOVERY

On 19 June 2007, Member States discussed the recommendations of the panel on humanitarian issues and recovery. Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Humanitarian Affairs, Sir John Holmes, briefed Member States on the progress made to date in improving system-wide delivery of humanitarian assistance. An evaluation of the work of OCHA is in process and will be issued in 2008.

Issues raised by Sir Holmes during his briefing included:

##### **SYSTEM-WIDE COORDINATION:**

The humanitarian field is very fragmented and there is an urgent need for coordination and coherence in the humanitarian relief effort, including coordination with organizations outside the UN system. There should be stronger partnerships between the UN, Governments and NGOs (e.g. International Red Cross/Crescent - IRC). In 2005, OCHA managed to achieve better coherence and predictability, and thus greater effectiveness. Currently there is a proliferation of actions at a global and local level directed to achieve better coherence. The aim is to make the system more accountable to populations in need. The department of humanitarian affairs is also working towards better regional cooperation for logistical support. An example of such cooperation is the Asia Pacific humanitarian partnership.

The "[cluster approach](#)," which aims to improve the predictability, timeliness, and effectiveness of humanitarian response, and pave the way for recovery through better coordination of all actors in nine main areas ([nine global cluster leads](#)) has proven very effective. He suggested that more clusters be added, such as a cluster on food under the coordination of WFP.

Partnerships and collaboration with local authorities are critical. At country level, the UN is still the leading organization for the coordination of all actors on the ground. When not enough funding is available for agencies to provide aid, their lead is still essential in acting as advocates to mobilize resources and helping local authorities coordinate with potential donors.

As to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), its 2008 target is of \$ 500 million. About \$300 million have already been pledged by 75 donors and he is confident that the target will be reached. An Advisory Group was established by the SG to provide policy recommendations and report to CERF's stakeholders. An evaluation will be conducted in 2008, after 2 full years of operation.

##### **INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS:**

On the issue of internally displaced persons (IDPs), clarification of the agencies mandate is needed. At present, there are about twenty-five million IDPs but no dedicated specialized agency to assist governments in dealing with them. The role of [UNHCR on IDPs](#) needs to be identified (with its original mandate on refugees remaining untouched).

##### **TRANSITION FROM RELIEF TO DEVELOPMENT:**

There is a gap between the humanitarian efforts and the recovery and rebuilding efforts

UNDP has become the world relief coordinator for early recovery. The Crisis Prevention and Recovery (CPR) Unit within

UNDP has been dedicating itself to early recovery activities and we are now waiting to see how donors will respond to it.

**PEACEBUILDING FUND:**

A more sustained investment is expected in the Peacebuilding Fund. The Fund now reserved to Burundi and Sierra Leone, but the SG can assign funds to other countries may the necessity arise.

**LONG TERM FOOD SECURITY:**

WFP, FAO and IFAD are doing considerable work on food security in the horn of Africa. The work is being conducted in coordination with team-groups at country level. An example is the work being done in Mozambique in the context of the [“One UN-Pilot-Initiative”](#).

**DISASTER RISK REDUCTION:**

This is a cross-cutting issue that should be discussed in the context of the recommendations on the environment. The [Hyogo Framework](#) for action for disaster reduction still serves as a basis for the coordination of UN country teams by the UN Resident Coordinator system. But as far as international strategies for disaster risk reduction are concerned there is still a long way to go.

During the debate, Members States expressed diverging views on some of the key issues raised by Sir Holmes and by the Panel’s recommendations.

The **EU** and the **US** agree that at the heart of the on-going reform lies a stronger partnership between the UN system, NGOs, such as and the International Red Cross and Crescent, and national governments. The EU spoke in support of the actions of humanitarian coordinators on the ground to strengthen, *inter alia*, the Resident Coordinator system. The US confirmed its support for the role of the interagency standing committee on humanitarian affairs in the reform effort, and for the global platform initiatives in reducing the impact of national disaster hazard. In fostering better coordinated humanitarian efforts, the US sees leadership roles for UNDP, the World Bank and WFP. The EU, the US and Japan also spoke in favor of expansion of the CERF.

With regards to the issue of **Internally Displaced People (IDPs)**, the EU, the US and Japan recognize that UNHCR should take an inclusive approach as a coordinator of shared responsibilities amongst all UN and non-UN key partners.

The EU, the US and Japan also welcomed the role envisaged for UNDP and its Crisis Prevention and Recovery (CPR) unit as a coordinator for **early recovery efforts**. The efforts of FAO, IFAD and WFP in guaranteeing **long-term food security** were also encouraged.

The **G77 and the NAM**, speaking under the chapeau of the **Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC)**, [stated](#) that they are open to discuss all recommendations but would prefer to focus on the subjects of development, environment and humanitarian assistance, as these are the mandates set by the [World Summit Outcome Document \(WSOD\)](#). Also, the groups underlined that they do not consider these consultations as a premise to take any decisions, but as a simple discussion to exchange views.

G77 and NAM concerns with regards to the recommendations on humanitarian assistance and recovery include:

- the recommendations do not take into account the outcomes and divergent views emerged during the negotiations in the humanitarian segment of ECOSOC;
- certain recommendations lack clarity and specificity;
- recommendations on human rights, gender and sustainable development may be misused to impose conditions on international development assistance;

With regards to the issue of **IDPs**, several Members of the G77/NAM expressed strong concerns about a stronger mandate of UNHCR. **IDPs**, differently from refugees, are and should remain under the sole purview, responsibility and sovereignty of the affected State. It was also observed, with reference to the recommendation that agencies clarify their mandate on IDPs, that it is for Member States to decide on agencies’ mandates and not for the agencies to expand their mandates out of their own initiative.

As to the issue of **early recovery** and the involvement of UNDP, together with a suggested increased role of UN agencies, funds and programmes in humanitarian assistance, the JCC expressed concerns that it may influence negatively their performance in delivering development assistance, which remains their primary goal. It was noted that early recovery is beyond the UNDP’s mandate, thus its work in this cluster should be discussed further. A delegation suggested that the work on early recovery and transition to development may be taken up by a new entity.

The [JCC statement](#) stressed the importance of maintaining regional and national authorities engaged at all times. Assistance must be provided only when requested by the government of the affected State.

Increased partnership between governments and NGOs was also considered a contentious issue as ownership and leadership of humanitarian assistance and recovery programs should remain with governments.

While recognizing the need to establish predictable funding for neglected emergencies, the JCC suggested that the expansion of the use of the **Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)** needs to be considered further. Some G77/NAM Members suggested caution to expand the CERF beyond its original mandate as this could undermine funding for other activities.

Finally, the **Russian Federation**, also concerned about the suggested approach on IDPs and early recovery, raised the issue of the overlap of the present discussions with the discussions on the recommendations already on the agenda of the GA and ECOSOC. The RF suggested it would be appropriate to define the added value of the present discussion, what its outcome would be and how duplication can be avoided.

#### **Statements made available by Member States:**

- [Joint Coordinating Committee of the G77 and NAM on Humanitarian Issues and Recovery](#), 20 June 2007
- [EU Statement on Humanitarian Issues and Recovery](#), 20 June 2007
- [Mexico Statement on Humanitarian Issues and Recovery](#), 20 June 2007 (Spanish)

#### **GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN**

For a summary of the discussions on Gender please see:

- “System-wide Coherence Discussions underway in the General Assembly” at [ReformtheUN.org](#), 26 June 2007

#### **Statements made available by Member States:**

- [Statement of Sweden on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women](#), 21 June 2007

#### **DELIVERING AS ONE AT COUNTRY LEVEL**

On Thursday 21 June 2007, Member States met in a closed session at the United Nations to conduct consultations on the development of the [“One UN-Pilot-Initiative”](#). The deliberations took place under the headline: “Delivering as one at Country level”, and as a part of a series of consultations focusing on various clusters within the overall framework of System-wide coherence.

During 2007, the United Nations will test in eight countries (Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uruguay and Viet Nam) how the many agencies of the UN can deliver in a more coherent and streamlined way at country level. The reform is based on four core pillars: "One Programme", "One Budgetary Framework", "One Leader" and "One Office."

Briefings on current developments were given by representatives from the participating pilot-states as well as from the representative of the UN in Rwanda, with general deliberations following.

While stressing the importance of national ownership, the participating states all voiced satisfaction with the process and a continued commitment to the project. Not only had the UN avoided duplication and fragmentation, the agencies involved had also experienced a greater overall impact on national development since the start of the process.

In **Tanzania** alone, 17 different UN agencies had previously been occupied within various aspects of the development process, and their coming together under one leadership had not only reduced unnecessary costs; it had also helped streamline the contact between the government and the UN as a whole, as well as maximize the UN's normative and analytic expertise, operational capabilities and advocacy role.

In **Rwanda** the programme had also played a part in strengthening government leadership in the overall development process. Having one partner and one common set of priorities had enabled the government to assume ownership of the process, and there seemed to be a better understanding of the goals of the individual projects. As an added bonus, the project also seemed to have fostered a spirit of commonality across the different UN agencies.

In spite of all these positive developments, a few challenges remained. In **Tanzania**, the future of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) was of serious concern, while the representative of the United Nations in **Rwanda** wondered how best to capture the normative aspect as well as how to create a suitable framework for accountability.

In general, all pilot-states appeared equally concerned with the overall problem of evaluating the “One UN-Pilot-Initiative,” and although several states stressed the danger of a “one size fits all” approach, several also emphasized the need for well-established criteria for success.

In the ensuing comments from the floor, the membership at large seemed overall content with the progress of the project, while stressing the need for national ownership of any process. Canada, speaking on behalf on **CANZ**, noted the need to expand the pilot-project to all interested countries, as well as to all interested UN agencies. Germany, on behalf of the **European Union**, observed that the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of UN operational activities (TCPR) should continue as a UN focal point for development, while finally, Pakistan, on behalf of the **G77** in a general comment, warned that great care is needed when introducing human rights as well as gender rights on country level.

## GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL REFORM

On Friday 22 June 2007, Member States met in a closed session at the United Nations to discuss “**Governance and institutional reform.**” The deliberations took place as a part of a series of consultations focusing on various clusters within the overall framework of System-wide coherence, and were based on the recommendations of the [High-Level Panel Report “Delivering as One.”](#)

During the meeting, the different statements of the membership reflected a largely negative attitude towards the recommendations, and especially towards the suggested establishment of two new bodies under the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC); the Sustainable Development Board and the Global Leaders Forum.

Although a few countries maintained that the latter could be useful as a focal point for countries participating in the “[One UN-Pilot-Initiative](#)”, the majority of the membership seemed for the most part critical towards the establishment of such bodies, which in their view would weaken ECOSOC even further. Furthermore, several states stressed that there appeared to be a general uncertainty of where and how these new bodies would fit in the current ECOSOC structure.

## BUSINESS PRACTICES

On 28 June 2007, Member States discussed the recommendations of the High-level Panel on how to improve the **Business Practices** of the UN. Mr. Jayantilal Karia, Director of Accounts Division, briefed Member States on the status of the work of the Chief Executives Board of Coordinators (CEB).

During the debate, Member States expressed fundamentally divergent views on the recommendations offered by the Panel. While the **EU**, the **US**, **Japan**, and **CANZ** fully support the recommendations contained in the Report, the **G77/NAM** and the Russian Federation expressed strong concerns that the only forum for discussions and decisions on the issues included in the business practices cluster is and should remain the Fifth Committee.

The **EU** recalled that harmonization of business practices has been taken up in the resolution approved in 2004 on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of UN operational activities (TCPR), [A/RES/59/250](#). It asked to be regularly updated on the progress made by the UN Development Group (UNDG) and the CEB on the TCPR harmonization process. The EU also encouraged the SG to include Procurement Reform in the list of issues under examination by the CEB.

**Japan** noted that the issue of harmonization of business practices spans through a wide range of UN activities and should be pursued system-wide. It was suggested that a comprehensive progress report from the CEB on the simplification of business practices may be helpful.

**CANZ** noted that simplification of business practices is essential for better functioning of the organization and insisted that it should be pursued at all levels. It was also stressed that merit must remain the bedrock principle in UN’s hiring practices.

The **Joint Coordinating Committee of the G77 and the NAM (JCC)** expressed the view that this cluster of issues, due to their budgetary and administrative nature, can only be discussed by the Fifth Committee of the

General Assembly. The Fifth has already taken many decisions within this cluster, and more negotiations are on the agenda pending the reports from the Secretary General on various issues. Discussions within the System-wide Coherence context should not interfere with negotiations and decisions taken by the Fifth Committee. In regards to human resources management, a substantial reform is being discussed and several measures have already been agreed upon. The groups stressed that geographical representation must remain an important criterion for appointment, especially at senior management level.

Members of the G77 and NAM are also in disagreement with the recommendations on the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) as they feel these are not appropriate to the mandate of the ICSC, which is not to decide on human resources management policies. These decisions can only be taken by the Fifth Committee.

As to results based management, the G77 and NAM support its implementation but feel staff needs to be better trained to be able to comply effectively. This is also an issue on the Fifth Committee's agenda for the 62nd session of the GA.

Finally, Members of the G77 and NAM do not see the necessity for the transformation of the CEB into a policy making body. Instead, they stressed the importance of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) in matters of monitoring and evaluation.

The **Russian Federation** noted that management and business practices must be considered by the relevant governing bodies of the UN and must remain within the purview of those organs. Most of the issues discussed within this cluster are on the Fifth Committee's agenda, which already adopted decisions on some of them. The activities of the CEB should remain limited to their present mandate. As to the ICSC, the Russian Federation considers the matter closed as decisions to strengthen the ICSC were taken by the GA most recently and will not be reconsidered in the near future.

**Statements made available by Member States:**

- [Statement of the Joint Coordinating Committee of the G77 and the NAM on Business Practices](#), 28 June 2007
- [EU Statement on Business Practices](#), 28 June 2007

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