

# Survey of programme countries on UN operational activities for development – Brief (September 2011)

General Assembly resolution 64/289 on system-wide coherence mandated the Secretary-General, under the auspices of ECOSOC and in cooperation with UN Resident Coordinators, to put in place a periodic survey, directed to governments, on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the support of the UN system in order to provide feedback on the strengths and main challenges encountered in their interaction with the UN development system.

## Purpose

One of the outcomes of the recent UN system-wide coherence process was the decision of Member States to institute a periodic 'client satisfaction survey' on UN operational activities for development. The purpose of the survey, which will be launched in November 2011, will be to elicit the views of governments in programme countries on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the UN development system.

## Process and principles

Well-known experts will be consulted on the design of the survey instrument, which will be made available in four UN languages: English, French, Spanish and Russian.<sup>1</sup> The experience gained through related initiatives of UN funds, programmes and agencies as well as other organizations such as OECD/DAC will also be utilized. It is expected that the questionnaire will be pre-tested in two or three programme countries before official launch.

The survey process will be guided by several key principles, particularly the following: ensure that questions have firm basis in relevant GA resolutions; protect the confidentiality of responses; ensure the independence and objectivity of the survey; keep the process as simple as possible so as to maximize response rate; adopt a cost-effective approach that minimizes burden on programme countries.

The survey questionnaire will be sent from the Deputy Secretary-General through the respective UN Resident Coordinator to the head of the Government agency that functions as the central counterpart to the UN development system. This agency will determine the extent to which the one consolidated Government response will be based on further consultations at different levels. Responses will be sent to the Office of the Deputy Secretary-General directly. Governments

<sup>1</sup> An Arabic translation will also be made available, which officials can refer to when completing the survey. The online version of the questionnaire will use the Survey Monkey software.

will be provided with a one-page fact sheet on key UN funding data in the respective country.

UN entities will be broadly consulted on the process, principles and methodology of the survey. However, in order to preserve the impartiality of the process, UN entities will not be invited to review and comment on the details of the questionnaire, since they are the object of the survey.

## Substantive focus

The survey questions will be organized around the topics of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency in line with GA resolution 64/289 and focus on issues such as the UNDAF process, UN coordination, funding, development results, transaction cost and efficiency and emerging issues in UN operational activities for development, with additional focus on cross-cutting issues such as national ownership, capacity development and skills and expertise of UN staff. Survey questions will measure the views of programme country governments of the UN development system as a whole, while allowing respondents, to indicate differences among entities, where relevant.

## Reporting

Survey reporting will not be country or agency-specific but consolidated by global, regional and economic groupings, as well as other typologies such as volume of UN funding. The survey report is expected to be completed in March 2012 and serve as input to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) of UN operational activities for development of the GA. It is expected that such a survey be conducted every four years as part of the preparations for the QCPR.

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