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Delivering as one: strengthening the country-level response to gender-based violence

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Introduction

1. The ‘delivering as one’ approach provides a model for the United Nations to better respond to multisectoral challenges. The issue of gender-based violence is a good example of how delivering as one can be used to enhance the ability of the United Nations to assist those most in need, in line with national development priorities. The eradication of gender-based violence is an important issue for United Nations organizations and agencies. It requires a unified and coordinated response, which is vital to furthering gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment. This background document illustrates how the United Nations system can ‘deliver as one’, using gender-based violence as an example. The funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations are addressing gender-based violence through various modalities, including: (a) joint programming; (b) joint programmes; (c) global, regional and country-led initiatives; and (d) the delivering as one pilot programmes.

2. While the United Nations system awaits the evaluation of the delivering as one pilot countries and pilot initiatives on gender-based violence, the delivering as one stocktaking reports and the recent 2009 outcome statement of the intergovernmental meeting of the programme country pilots on delivering as one, held in Kigali, Rwanda, recognize that a unified approach has provided opportunities to achieve better developmental results through increased national leadership, partnerships and ownership, in alliance with the United Nations system.

3. The outcome statement of the Kigali intergovernmental meeting confirmed that “this approach is better than the fragmented United Nations development system that existed at the country level prior to the adoption of this approach”.¹ Many United Nations country teams are contributing to the development of national action plans and priorities, following the guidance provided by Member States in the 2004 and 2007 triennial comprehensive policy reviews for development of the United Nations system², using the delivering as one approach. National partners and United Nations country teams have confirmed the importance and followed the principle of ‘one size does not fit all’. Cooperation in the spirit of delivering as one is also taking place at regional and global levels, as indicated below.

Delivering as one: strengthening the response to gender-based violence

4. Adherence to the principles of delivering as one has improved the ability of the United Nations to address and combat gender-based violence. There are a number of system-wide initiatives on gender-based violence and interventions at global, regional and local levels. At the global level, these include: (a) the Secretary-General’s campaign to end violence against

¹ Statement of outcomes and way forward, Intergovernmental meeting of the programme country pilots on delivering as one, 19-21 October 2009, Kigali, Rwanda, page 2.

² The triennial comprehensive policy reviews for development of the United Nations system are General Assembly resolutions that establish key system-wide policy orientation for development cooperation and country-level modalities of the United Nations system. They are important for monitoring and assessing United Nations operational activities. The resolutions address the funds and programmes of the United Nations directly and the specialized agencies of the United Nations indirectly. The two most recent resolutions are 59/250 of December 2004 and 62/208 of December 2007.

women, UNiTE, which calls on governments, civil society, the private sector, the media and the United Nations system to address the global pandemic of violence against women and girls; (b) the UNFPA-UNICEF joint programme on female genital mutilation/cutting; (c) the United Nations trust fund in support of actions to eliminate violence against women, managed by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM); and (d) United Nations action against sexual violence in conflict, which brings together 12 United Nations organizations to address rape as a tactic of war. Regional initiatives include the Asia-Pacific joint initiative to work with men and boys to prevent gender-based violence. UNDP, UNFPA, UNIFEM and United Nations Volunteers are partners in that initiative.

5. Most of the joint initiatives are at the country level. In addition to the eight United Nations delivering as one pilot countries³, these initiatives include: (a) the joint programming initiative co-chaired by UNFPA and the Division for the Advancement of Women, under the auspices of the inter-agency task force in support of actions to eliminate violence against women, initiated in 10 pilot countries (Burkina Faso, Chile, Fiji, Jamaica, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Paraguay, the Philippines, Rwanda and Yemen); (b) Sixteen days of activism against gender-based violence; (c) joint responses in humanitarian settings; (d) United Nations country-led initiatives in Afghanistan, Argentina, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Colombia, Ecuador, the Great Lakes region of Africa, Haiti, Liberia, Morocco, Nepal, Panama, Papua New Guinea, south Sudan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Venezuela; and (e) pilot work initiated by UNFPA, UNIFEM and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women in selected countries to strengthen the capacity to refine and develop indicators on Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820.

6. The modalities used to deliver as one in the context of gender-based violence include joint programming and joint programmes⁴. In nine of the 10 pilots, the task force on violence against women used one of these approaches to draft multiple stakeholder joint programming proposals, with participation from the government, the United Nations and civil society, and formed joint programme committees. An example of this modality is the Asia-Pacific joint initiative to work with men and boys to prevent gender-based violence. The delivering as one approach has helped to foster ownership and has increased the accountability and transparency of joint programming initiatives, such as the joint programme on female genital mutilation/cutting.

³ Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay and Viet Nam.

⁴ Joint programming is the collective effort through which United Nations organizations and national partners work together to prepare, implement, monitor and evaluate activities to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and other international commitments arising from United Nations conferences, summits, conventions and human rights instruments. Through joint programming, partners identify common results and the modalities to support programme implementation. A joint programme is a set of activities contained in a common workplan and related budget, involving two or more United Nations organizations and (sub) national partners. The workplan and budget will form part of a joint programme document, which will also define the roles and responsibilities of partners in coordinating and managing the joint activities. The joint programme document is signed by all participating organizations and (sub) national partners (UNDG guidance note on joint programming, 19 December 2003).

7. Another modality is direct support, either budgetary or technical, to programmes to combat gender-based violence, such as national and regional initiatives supported by the United Nations trust fund in support of actions to eliminate violence against women, and the Secretary-General's campaign to end violence against women.

Opportunities and lessons learned in delivering as one on gender-based violence

8. Some of the opportunities within the United Nations system include joint initiatives, harmonized approaches and the pooling of expertise. Short-term opportunities include the development of multiple stakeholder joint programming documents to implement activities to combat gender-based violence under national action plans and/or gender plans. Other examples of harmonized approaches are the protocols developed by United Nations action against sexual violence in conflict that provide guidance to United Nations country teams to address gender-based violence issues in humanitarian settings.

9. Many of these initiatives have received funding from United Nations organizations and donor agencies. These include the joint programme on female genital mutilation/cutting, United Nations action against sexual violence in conflict, the task force on violence against women, the Secretary-General's campaign to end violence against women, and the United Nations trust fund in support of actions to eliminate violence against women. The countries implementing joint programming under the task force on violence against women benefit from the technical expertise of stakeholders, United Nations country teams, the government and civil society. Similarly, initiatives on gender-based violence that are selected to receive funding from the trust fund in support of actions to eliminate violence against women receive technical support from gender-based violence experts from United Nations organizations and civil society partners at global and regional levels.

10. As a result of these initiatives, there has been a more precise division of roles and responsibilities than in the past, based on organizational mandates and corresponding strengths and competencies at global, regional and country levels. The division of labour, the coordination of each programme by lead organizations and agencies, and support from senior management have resulted in enhanced collaboration and efficiency. Joint programming initiatives developed by the inter-agency task force on violence against women and activities taking place in Africa and Latin America under the aegis of the Secretary-General's campaign to end violence against women are examples of global, unified responses to gender-based violence that have enhanced and supported joint action at regional and country levels. Initiatives to combat gender-based violence conducted under the umbrella of the United Nations country teams also provide examples of this approach.

11. The capacity development of national counterparts has been another dividend that has resulted from harmonizing efforts to combat gender-based violence. This has enhanced national capacity and fostered national ownership and leadership. Joint programmes and joint programming activities identified in the programme documents of the task force on violence against women, the projects supported by the trust fund in support of actions to eliminate violence against women, and the joint programme on female genital mutilation/cutting have sought to improve human resource capacity, knowledge and skills, while contributing to

improved systems and processes at regional, national and subnational levels. By focusing on capacity development while delivering as one, programming is more efficient, and fragmentation and duplication are reduced. Simultaneously, awareness of and access to groups vulnerable to gender-based violence have improved, along with improved capacity and joint ownership related to the design, implementation and monitoring of programmes.

12. The Kigali outcome statement emphasized the need to be flexible and that ‘one size does not fit all’.⁵ Forms of gender-based violence differ vastly between and within regions and countries, and not all United Nations organizations focus on gender-based violence in a given country. Delivering as one has facilitated the participation of multiple stakeholders in a coordinated programme within the context of the common country assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

13. Working collectively has made it possible for non-resident organizations and agencies, and those that are not formal members of a programme, to contribute to its outcome. The joint female genital mutilation/cutting programme with the World Health Organization is a result of increased coordination among United Nations organizations and agencies. In Chile and Paraguay, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has developed a joint partnership and plans to implement activities under the joint programme of the task force on violence against women. The participation of non-resident organizations and agencies in joint programmes to combat gender-based violence is an achievement for the United Nations system, and the possibility of such organizations and agencies to enhance their field presence by engaging in such partnerships is a welcome development.

14. In two delivering as one pilot countries, Albania and the United Republic of Tanzania, the United Nations has addressed gender-based violence through joint programmes drawn from the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks or from the ‘one programmes’. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework gender-based violence cluster in India has facilitated a coordinated response to the issue, as have the joint programmes developed in some pilot countries under the task force on violence against women. Delivering as one can leverage the comparative advantages of the United Nations organizations and illustrate the added value of the United Nations system in the changing aid environment.

15. The first stocktaking report of the delivering as one pilot countries noted that civil society’s role in delivering as one was vital to ensuring viable development outcomes. The report recommended that civil society organizations be included in the design of programmes. With regard to gender-based violence, civil society plays a dual role in coordinated multiple stakeholder approaches by: (a) undertaking service delivery and strengthening the capacity of communities to respond to gender-based violence; and (b) playing an advocacy role to ensure that laws and policies on gender-based violence are implemented. Nearly all the gender-based violence delivering as one programmes highlighted in this document have fostered partnerships with national women’s movements and strengthened the capacity of civil society stakeholders.

⁵ Statement of outcomes and way forward, Intergovernmental meeting of the programme country pilots on delivering as one, 19-21 October 2009, Kigali, Rwanda, page 2.

16. Joint responses in humanitarian settings and the cluster approach have ensured the comprehensive delivery of services to survivors of gender-based violence. These responses include: (a) aligning responses with national efforts; (b) supporting multisectoral prevention and response programmes; (c) supporting efforts by those involved in the rule of law to protect women from sexual violence and to address impunity; (d) deploying gender and sexual violence advisers; (e) developing operational and technical capacity; and (f) deepening partnerships with civil society.

17. In addition to working within the United Nations action network, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP work collaboratively under the protection cluster to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. UNFPA and UNICEF coordinate multiple stakeholders, field-based working groups to ensure that multisectoral programmes reach survivors and offer health care, legal protection and psychosocial care, including livelihood development and economic empowerment. UNDP is the lead organization on rule of law programming with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Department for Peacekeeping Operations, and supports women's access to justice. UNICEF brings a focus on child protection.

18. Working groups address gender-based violence in countries such as Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission, the United Nations country team and the Government have developed a comprehensive strategy to combat sexual violence. Gender-based violence was also addressed jointly in the response to natural disasters in Myanmar. Coordinated approaches such as these are aligned with the principles and objectives of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

19. Bringing together a number of organizations and agencies at different stages of their programmes to combat gender-based violence has provided opportunities to share lessons learned as well as good practices. This has been the case with the joint programme on female genital mutilation/cutting, the United Nations action against sexual violence in conflict, and the Asia-Pacific joint initiative for working with men and boys. Through United Nations action, UNIFEM and the Department for Peacekeeping Operations developed an inventory of good practices by peacekeeping personnel to protect civilians from sexual violence. The inventory is the first compilation of good practices by uniformed peacekeeping personnel to prevent sexual violence against women and to ensure the protection of vulnerable women and children, such as those in camps for internally displaced persons and refugees.

Challenges and the way forward

20. Conducting joint programming to combat gender-based violence under the delivering as one approach has achieved positive results, but it has been a challenge. Delivering as one entails working with many partners, such as United Nations country teams, governments and civil society. Initially, it involves higher transaction costs due to high-level interactions, complex negotiations and consensus-building to agree on multiple stakeholder joint programming and the joint programming agenda.

21. In several countries, the development of documents and the planning and review processes for delivering as one have been time consuming for all stakeholders. Furthermore, the stakeholders, especially United Nations staff, must participate in a large number of programme coordination groups, steering committees and thematic task forces that may affect their participation and contributions. However, through harmonized approaches and better coordination, the United Nations system can avoid process-heavy engagements.

22. Using delivering as one in thematic areas, such as in the area of gender-based violence, may be hampered by resource constraints and by the limited technical capacity of national stakeholders. The United Nations must urgently assess country-level capacity needs and provide adequate staffing to address these challenges.

23. Additional constraints relate to harmonizing reporting guidelines, including fiscal reports, and streamlining monitoring and evaluation tools and the timelines of stakeholders, which were identified in the 2008 stocktaking synthesis report on delivering as one. In the eight United Nations delivering as one pilot countries, “United Nations reform yielded additional work for most United Nations organizations as internal monitoring and evaluation processes and procedures have not been changed, nor have exemptions been granted. There is an urgent need for simplification and harmonization of reporting obligations”⁶.

24. To ensure that the delivering as one approach is implemented effectively, the United Nations must make known the value of the approach in national processes in addressing problems such as gender-based violence. It is also necessary to identify the delivering as one approach for specific situations and design the approach accordingly. Responses in middle-income countries, for example, may differ from those in the least developed countries. Gender-based violence programming in a number of middle-income countries, particularly programming related to service-delivery initiatives, may not require funding support from the United Nations but rather a change in the manner in which the United Nations operates, by moving towards more effective delivery of capacity development support (both technical and policy/advisory) instead of direct service provision.

25. In conclusion, the stocktaking reports from the delivering as one pilot countries and the Kigali outcome statement provide positive assessments of delivering as one as an approach to United Nations development support. In the case of programmes to combat gender-based violence, the increased cooperation and coordination that have resulted through the use of the delivering as one approach are helping the United Nations system to better support national partners. While recognizing that the design phase of such programmes is time consuming and labour intensive, the initial reports suggest that the delivering as one approach is yielding more efficient delivery. It is important, however, to receive the evaluations of the eight delivering as one pilot countries before reaching a conclusion. Nevertheless, the initial assessments indicate that the delivering as one approach has strengthened the ability of the United Nations system to coordinate and respond to problems that require multisectoral responses.

⁶ Delivering as one 2008 stocktaking synthesis report - joint reports by governments and United Nations country teams, United Nations Development Group.