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REPORT OF THE JOINT FIELD VISIT OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARDS OF UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-WOMEN AND WFP TO PANAMA AND EL SALVADOR

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Secretary to the Executive Board, Ms E. Joergensen tel.: 066513-2603
PGB*:

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Executive Board of WFP
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3 - 6 June 2014, Rome

Report of the joint field visit of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN Women and WFP to Panama and El Salvador

1. Introduction and background

1. A delegation comprising 25 Members of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, WFP, and UN Women conducted a joint field visit to Panama and El Salvador from 23 March to 1 April 2014 with the purpose of enhancing Executive Board members' understanding of the role of the United Nations Development System in general and especially that of the specific organizations concerned in the region. The delegation learned about the role and functions of the Panama-based United Nations Regional Team in supporting and coordinating United Nations Country Teams (UNCT) and national governments in the region and also interacted with the Resident Coordinator and the UNCT in Panama. In Panama, the delegation and the United Nations Regional Team started to consider the development of a

"Delivering as Region (DaR)" modality for Latin America and the Caribbean, an approach that should be further explored in the future. The delegation closely observed the role played by UNCT in El Salvador in its efforts to achieve sustainable development, especially the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in the light of the challenges it faces.

2. As a lower middle-income country, El Salvador has made tremendous progress in development in recent years but is still faced with various challenges. The visit provided a unique opportunity to see how El Salvador achieved progress in the past and how it is preparing to meet the challenges ahead, especially in the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, and the nature of support it requests from the United Nations Development System (UNDS). Despite being classified as a lower middle-income country, some aspects of El Salvador suggest that it might be regarded as non-typical of this category (quality of house construction, access to drinking water and sanitation, access to education, etc.)

3. The visit was the first joint field visit to Latin America in over 10 years. With El Salvador being the second country to implement Delivering as One (DaO) in the region, the visit provided an opportunity to observe closely the role of the United Nations Development System. As last year's visit was to Myanmar, which provided an insight into the Asia Pacific Region from the perspective of a least developed country (LDC), this year's visit focused on the Latin America and Caribbean Region, and especially the situation of middle-income countries (MIC).

4. The delegation visited the UNICEF regional office in Panama City, held meetings with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama and the regional UNDG team and UNCT. In El Salvador the delegation was received by the President, H.E. Mauricio Funes and held meetings with the Vice-President elect and his transition team, the First Lady and Secretary for Social Inclusion, H.E. Ms Vanda Pignato, the President of the Supreme Court, the President of the National Assembly, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the El Salvador UNCT, members of the diplomatic corps, representatives of multilateral and bilateral agencies, the private sector, civil society, academia, the media, children, adolescents and youth. During the visit, round table discussions were conducted on various themes with the focus on the UN role in El Salvador. The delegation also undertook site visits of various agency-specific and joint projects in San Salvador and other cities and areas. The head of the delegation participated in a national TV interview with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and a press conference was held by the heads of the delegation at the end of the visit.

5. Latin America and the Caribbean, a region with around 8 per cent of the world's area and home to more than 600 million people, faces several challenges including poverty, persistent inequality¹, and climate change. El Salvador, geographically one of the smallest countries in the region, is making efforts to achieve socioeconomic development primarily through its own efforts, but with support from bilateral and multilateral agencies. The United Nations has been playing an important role in this regard. In the 22 years since the signing of the peace agreement between the conflicting parties facilitated by the UN, El Salvador has been on a democratic

¹ El Salvador has a Gini coefficient of 0.44.

path with significant progress in the socioeconomic sphere. The current government, which took office in 2009 under President Funes, has built upon the achievements of previous administrations in the social sphere as well as introducing various policy measures to address the prevailing rampant inequality, exclusion and poverty. As a result there has been remarkable progress in health, education and poverty reduction. With the election of a new president from the incumbent ruling party, it is expected that these policies will continue, and this will help to achieve further progress in addressing inequality. This visit focused on the role of UNDS with regard to El Salvador's progress towards achieving the MDGs and the challenges ahead in the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

6. The delegation expresses its gratitude to UN Women, as the coordinating agency of the 2014 joint field visit, the UNCTs of El Salvador and Panama, and the UNICEF and UNDG regional teams for organizing the visit in a very professional manner, their warm welcome and the valuable insights into their work that they provided. The delegation would also like to thank the governments of El Salvador and Panama for their hospitality and the time taken to receive the delegation and to discuss the role of the UN in their country. The delegation also thanks the numerous stakeholders who participated in events and the staff and stakeholders of the projects visited who invested great effort and time to host the delegation.

2. Coordination between UN agencies, the national government and other stakeholders

2.1 UNCT and government cooperation based on the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

The formulation of national development priorities for El Salvador

7. El Salvador is faced with a number of development issues, notably the fragile rule of law, weak institutions, widespread income poverty, limited provision of quality basic social services, huge income inequality, underemployment and unemployment, corruption, violence and crime, including a high rate of gender-based violence and violence against children and adolescents, unplanned urbanization accompanied by environmental degradation and high vulnerability to natural disasters.

8. While steady economic growth followed the conclusion of the peace accords in 1992, the global economic and financial crisis in 2008 impacted severely on the Salvadorian economy. In 2013, GDP growth rate was 1.9%, with a similar forecast for the near future, which puts El Salvador below the average of Central America (for an overview of the economic and social situation see Country Brief, annexed).

9. The delegation learned that four MDGs have already been met²; and the country is on track to achieve two others³. However, six MDGs will need a serious push if they are to be achieved, and of these, three are considered particularly difficult: hunger, completion of primary school by boys and girls, and gender equality.

10. Consequently, the Government that came into power under President Mauricio Funes in 2009 prioritized social investment and the development of social policies, together with public revenue generation. In a meeting with the Vice-president elect and the transition team, the delegation learned that the new government, which will take office in June 2014, has outlined similar priorities.

11. Development aid played a relevant role in the Government's policy planning, even though El Salvador, as a lower middle-income country, is working mainly with government funding. In order to increase the effectiveness of its development policies and to provide spaces for dialogue with donors and non-governmental actors, El Salvador signed the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2009. It also drew up a National Development Plan 2009 – 2014, which set priorities, created a framework for donors to align their aid to government priorities, and laid the basis for the creation of a vice-ministry for cooperation and development. The vice-ministry helped to enhance the political level of decision making in development issues and helped to extend it beyond the mere management of aid. These decisions led to increased transparency in existing projects and provided a platform for exchange with partners. The participation in the elaboration of the UNDAF 2012–2015 is one concrete outcome of El Salvador's improved outreach to stakeholders.

Why Delivering as One?

12. The starting point for El Salvador's interest in the Delivering as One (DaO) approach was a situation of fragmented aid channelled through parallel structures, resulting in high transaction costs and low efficiency. Moreover, although foreign aid represents only 1.6% of GDP, it makes up 17% of social investment. El Salvador, as a lower MIC, needs to utilize shrinking aid resources to leverage social development. DaO was chosen as the approach to achieve this.

13. After participating in the Delivering as One Conference in Montevideo in 2011, the Government of El Salvador announced its interest in the approach to the UNDG LAC and subsequently, in an example of practical South-South Coordination, studied the case of Uruguay, one of the DaO pilot countries. The process of adopting DaO took two years, from the Government's decision to request DaO, the approval of the model through the National Steering Committee to the joint communication by the Government and the UNCT in January 2014. El Salvador is, as a self-starter, the 36th country choosing DaO.

² Extreme poverty, gender equity in elementary and middle school, impact of malaria and tuberculosis halted and reversed, access to drinking water and basic sanitation.

³ Child and infant mortality, access to reproductive health.

14. El Salvador hopes to achieve more national ownership and leadership, strengthened transparency, cost reductions and an improvement in government capacities to coordinate through DaO. In addition to the five pillars known in other DaO countries (One Leader, One Fund, One Programme, Operating as One, Communicating as One), a new pillar was added, One Government. With it, the Government is aiming at stronger coherence in its own definition of priorities, as well as providing the coordinating link to the UN.

15. The DaO National Steering Committee comprises the UNCT, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Technical Secretariat of the Presidency. It oversees the work of the technical committee that brings together the Programme Management Team on the UN side, and the vice-ministry for development cooperation as well as the technical sub-secretariat of the Presidency on the government side.

16. Delivering as One in El Salvador only began in January 2014; its set-up looks promising, but it has not yet stood the test of time. There is more work to be done for DaO to come to full fruition, and the Resident Coordinator System will be of crucial importance in shaping the mechanics of joint work under DaO. The delegation was pleased to see that members of the UNCT underlined their willingness to work in a result-oriented manner rather than focusing on processes. A further step for the UNCT will be the implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for DaO countries, which will be critical to reaping the rewards of the DaO approach. Another area to explore is a modality for the common funding of DaO beyond pooling of agency resources.

17. While the functional firewall between the Resident Coordinator and the UNDP Resident Representative function appeared to performing well, the delegation notes that the inherent tension between the two functions can only be addressed at global level.

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)

18. The UNDAF 2012 – 2015 presents a clear analysis of the development challenges in El Salvador and defines five strategic areas and seven outcomes, in line with national priorities: equity, inclusion and poverty reduction, inclusive economic development, democratic governance, reform and modernization, citizens' security and protection from violence, environmental sustainability, and disaster risk reduction. The strategic areas of the UNDAF cover key challenges for the achievement of the MDGs. Less clear is the division of responsibilities among the UNCT members and the comparative advantage that the UNCT offers in addressing the identified policy issues.

19. The delegation noted a strong UNDAF policy orientation, which is in line with the needs of middle-income countries and offers opportunities for the UN development system to engage meaningfully, as it was discussed both at regional and at country level. A monitoring and evaluation system is in place consisting of five strategic areas and seven outcomes, populated with fifty-one indicators. It is self-evaluated quarterly and annually, and will be independently reviewed at the end of the UNDAF term. The delegation did not discuss in detail the functioning of the monitoring framework nor its results or the status of the final independent review. Also,

it was not clear to what extent the UNDAF is used as a basis of a substantive policy dialogue with the Government in the identified areas.

2.2 Partnership among UN agencies

20. The UNCT is operating in line with a number of requirements characteristic for the UN in a middle-income country, such as a focus on proposing and advancing policy solutions and providing upstream advice, mobilizing and leveraging development financing, facilitating South-South exchanges, developing national capacities, fostering dialogue and reconciliation, and promoting a universal presence.

21. Inter-agency collaboration takes place in the framework of inter-agency working groups covering eight programmatic issues linked to the UNDAF and coordinated by a lead agency, and five working groups addressing management support questions. Successful collaboration in joint projects paved the way for more intensive collaboration under DaO.

22. A good example of interagency collaboration at regional level noted by the delegation is the work done by REDLAC (Risk, Emergency and Disaster task force for the LAC region), the aim of which is to improve disaster response in the region, emphasizing better coordination and exchange of information. REDLAC proved its effectiveness in the early coordinated response in the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake in 2010.

2.3 Partnership with other development partners

Bilateral and multilateral aid organizations

23. The Delegation had the opportunity to meet several bilateral and multilateral aid organizations based in El Salvador in the course of the field visit. The three biggest donors present in El Salvador are the EU, the US (USAID) and Spain (AECID).

24. There is regular political dialogue between the EU and the Government. The EU Member States most active in El Salvador are Spain and Italy. The UK has recently renewed its involvement and has a small cooperation programme, Germany concentrates solely on regional cooperation with SICA (*Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana*) and France, like the UK, manages a small cooperation arrangement. Luxembourg is also present. There is regular coordination between the Member States; however, no joint programming between the UN and the EU has been put into practice so far.

25. The EU meets at least three times a year with the other large donors present, among others the US, Taiwan, South Korea (KOICA) and Japan (JICA). Other important donors active in the country are the World Bank (WB) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

26. Emphasis was placed during the meetings on the importance of South-South and triangular cooperation, sharing of information and best practices across the region (spill over effect). However, it was noted that putting such collaboration into practice faces many challenges, as there is no “one size fits all” solution that can be applied to the entire region of Latin America and the Caribbean. The UNDG-LAC is sponsoring South-South cooperation solutions, with ministries of foreign affairs and development cooperation, but more can be done in this regard across the region.

27. A good example of coordination between the different actors in the region is the triangular cooperation between the Governments of Spain, El Salvador and the UN through the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F). In this regard, the role of the UN as a facilitator for technical cooperation in the field was underlined.

Civil society

28. It was recognized that non-governmental actors such as NGOs, unions, academia and think-tanks have an important role to play in stimulating forces for democracy, social inclusion and human rights. A number of representatives of civil society organizations (CSO), however, voiced their concern over the insufficient empowerment of citizens and their interest groups in political and economic debate in the country.

29. It was appreciated by the delegation that through the UNDAF, the UN system has supported the active involvement of CSO actors in the formulation of proposed laws for food and nutritional safety, social development comprehensive risk management and other initiatives. It was positively noted that CSOs have already been actively involved in the consultations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

30. However, there is room for improvement: the CSO representatives underlined the need for UNCT assistance regarding data collection and statistics in order to facilitate evidence-based discussions with the Government. They emphasized the role of the UNCT as an unbiased moderator in facilitating dialogue with other stakeholders on sensitive issues, such as the SRH-Agenda or fiscal issues. Moreover, the UN-System can ensure the inclusiveness of the process. The CSO representatives see the need for an active UN role in facilitating cross-border cooperation and regional integration.

Private sector

31. The challenges in El Salvador are considerable, and neither the Government nor the private sector can handle them alone. Both the outgoing and the newly elected Government emphasized the need for alliances between the private and social sector and the Government, to improve the country’s economic situation, through public-private cooperation.

32. The delegation noted that there is a strong need to strengthen productivity, investment, income generation and competitiveness for small and medium enterprises (SME). Stimulus for SME should be provided to open up new local and international markets through technical innovation. Rural entrepreneurship and cooperatives should be supported, as a means to enhance inclusive sustainable growth, promote job creation and facilitate the transition to a green economy and low-carbon development, founded on sustainable climate-friendly production and consumption.

33. The main challenges that were pointed out by the private sector are the slow economic growth and the low rate of foreign investment in the country. The private sector underlined the need for a stable political environment to be able to guarantee sustainable investment on a long-term basis. During the encounters with several private sector organization based in El Salvador, the main focus was on the role of corporate social responsibility, as business goals are inseparable from the societies and environments within which they operate.

34. The UNCT acts as a broker and coordinator in enabling public-private alliances. The organization of joint meetings between the several stakeholders at regular intervals, as spaces for dialogue among the different stakeholders, is crucial.

3. Observations

35. It was brought up in meetings with the UNCT and regional team, government and civil society that the current method used to classify MIC's does not reflect the depth of development challenges in the region and the need to review the current classification system in global discussions on development was mentioned.

36. The UNCT has nevertheless identified a number of challenges that are characteristic for a lower MIC and some specific to El Salvador, such as poverty and extreme poverty, inequality, gender-based exclusion, insecurity and violence. The need for institutional strengthening, fiscal reform and better access to justice was also noted in many interventions. Despite the positive influence of remittances on the economy, emigration from El Salvador is a social, economic and demographic challenge.

37. The delegation observed that the country is highly vulnerable to external shocks such as volatile food prices, as it has a very low productivity in food crops which make it a net importer of food. The delegation saw the negative impact of the coffee rust epidemic in El Salvador, which further increased the vulnerability of seasonal labourers in coffee farms and their families.

38. Regarding the engagement of the UN system, the delegation deemed it positive that the UNDAF addresses the most pertinent policy gaps, aligns the UNCT response to national priorities and establishes thematic working groups with lead agencies. The delegation noted that the UNCT is also conscientious in the choice of its instruments to address the needs through upstream policy support that builds on the experience of the different agencies. However, the

UNCT could have presented more clearly what its exact comparative advantages are to fill the identified policy gaps and on which occasions it is using opportunities for policy dialogue with the Government. Also, while the UNCT delivered a document which evidenced upstream policy support, the typology (capacity building for policy making, policy recommendations, advocacy, and technical advice) was not specifically addressed.

39. Development challenges in El Salvador are multifaceted and require holistic answers and approaches. As seen from the project visits, the UN agencies understood at an early stage that they can add value by pooling resources and expertise to give cohesive advice on multisectoral issues. By way of example, the “Programme on nutritional food security and resilience with an inter-sectoral approach at the local level” brought together four agencies (PAHO/WHO, WFP, UNICEF, and UNDP) with government partners at national, regional and municipal level and combined national policy development and health care aspects with nutritional security and sanitary improvements.

40. The delegation also visited a project supported by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) in the area of human security, in which a multifaceted approach was chosen. It combined the competencies of the UN to broker exchange between national and municipal level and developed a locally managed model of citizens’ human security that combined interventions for the prevention of crime, rebuilding the social fabric and violence prevention training, the introduction of community policing, and the rehabilitation of schools.

41. In the meeting with the Vice President-elect and the Transition Team, he confirmed that the new Government will continue and intensify the current Government’s investment in social policies. He also underlined the importance of dialogue between different actors in the country. It was noted in this and many other meetings that the UN is seen to have an important role in creating space for dialogue and building bridges between different groups in society. The UN is considered a reliable and trustworthy partner largely based on the trust built up through its mediation efforts in El Salvador’s internal conflict and, since then, through numerous other examples of mediation and brokering efforts. With regard to Delivering as One, many stakeholders underlined that DaO is seen as a means to making the best use of scarce resources. The El Salvador DaO model adds a sixth pillar to the existing five, namely acting as one Government. The delegation noted that this innovation addresses an important linkage between a coordinated government and the UNCT. As the DaO approach is still at an early stage, the definition of the One Government pillar seems to be not yet fully explored.

42. Establishing gender equality is a major challenge for El Salvador. Persistent problems are violence against girls and women, a marked gender gap in the economic sector, the low participation of women in decision making, and lack of access to education on sexual and reproductive health. The Government attaches high priority to the subject, with interventions at legal, institutional and programmatic level. The UN can and does bring a wide range of instruments, expertise and its normative mandates to the table to address these challenges. The delegates visited a number of projects with different approaches. *Ciudad Mujer* (Women’s City) is a flagship project of the El Salvador Government, implemented through the Secretariat for

Social Inclusion. The project is collaboration between various government institutions with support from several UN Agencies⁴, working in a new approach that includes three kinds of services in the areas of sexual and reproductive health, response to violence, education and vocational training, processes to strengthen economic autonomy, and integral childcare during mothers' visits to the facilities.

43. It was noted that *Ciudad Mujer* is in many ways different from public institutions, both in the way it functions and also in its organizational structure. *Ciudad Mujer* offers its users many important services and is well received but its structure and its relation to other public instances such as hospitals could be more clearly defined with a view to the sustainability of the overall system of social services.

44. *Ciudad Mujer* is currently being rolled out at national level. The delegation noted that the approach is well suited to the specific situation of El Salvador, where a safe space is the first step to fight rampant inequality and violence. The model could also serve as an example for other countries if it is suitably adapted to the local context.

45. Due to the fact that *Ciudad Mujer* is open only to women and has only women working as staff, male members of the family cannot be included in the projects. On other visits, it was noted that in addressing violence against girls and adolescents it is important to work with the whole family including the fathers. In 70 per cent of cases of violence against girls and adolescents, the perpetrator is a family member or another person close to the victim.

46. In the area of violence reduction, gender equality and empowerment of women, various projects were visited. During visits to schools, strong ownership by the whole community was observed by the delegates, for instance students teaching their fellow students on these issues, as well as teachers and parents actively engaged in the initiatives. The projects provided evidence of added value that the UN agencies can bring to many activities: gender mainstreaming and a rights-based, people-centred approach in policy development, advocacy and technical advice.

47. Central America, and specifically El Salvador, is directly affected by climate change and environmental degradation, which add to its vulnerability to geographic risk factors such as volcanic, seismic and extreme rain events. In the last 25 years, El Salvador has been hit with increasing frequency by droughts, floods, and erosion, leading to agricultural and livestock losses and depopulation of the countryside. The Government has invested in systematic observation of weather phenomena and early warning systems. To address the need for a more structured response, a set of strategies was created that contain adaptation, mitigation, social protection programmes and financing. The delegation noted that the need for policy coherence in environmental, agricultural and climate finance is recognized and that the Government is trying to address it with an integrated strategic approach. With regard to the UN system, the delegation noted that work is still strongly focused on disaster management through the work

⁴ UN Women, FAO, WFP, IFAD, UNOPS, UNDP, UNFPA, WHO and UNICEF

of the United Nations Emergency Technical Team (UNETT), to deliver support to the Government and to affected people before, during and after a disaster.

48. In the area of food security, the delegation had the opportunity to see the good practice of the WFP Purchase for Progress (P4P) programme which facilitates access to markets and credits for smallholder farmers.

49. Two technical observations should be mentioned; first that the reliability of data for persons with disabilities is uncertain and the exact number of persons with disabilities are often underestimated. Secondly, it was noted that safety on project premises was in some cases inadequate.

4. Recommendations

1. Regarding DaO: The UNCT should make best use of the upcoming review of the UNDAF with a view to the “One Programme” to be designed. The UNCT should examine whether the instruments chosen for policy dialogue had the desired catalytic, results-oriented effects, if the division of roles and responsibilities was clear enough to promote effective collaboration and if the comparative advantage of the UNDS was adequately presented and utilized.

In order to maximize delivering of combined results, the UNCT should implement fully the SOPs, in particular with regard to a joint annual work plan, a common budgetary framework, and a common results reporting system. The UNDG LAC should support the UNCT from an early stage in the application of the SOPs.

2. Due to the high level of prestige and recognition of the UN in society and among official institutions, the UNCT has an important role in facilitating dialogue between different stakeholders. Building bridges between different sectors should be achieved through dialogue between public administrations and society. The UNCT should therefore clarify the roles its members will utilize, e.g. technical adviser, advocate, convener, facilitator, and/or capacity builder and ensure that these roles are mutually reinforcing.

3. While planning its activities and projects in the country, the UNCT should take into consideration follow-up actions based on positive results and lessons learned from completed (joint) programmes. As it is important to support the country's preventive efforts in tackling problems at an early stage, the UNCT should assist in effective coordination between various stakeholders in relevant areas.

4. The UN should provide advice where necessary on policy topics and solutions in the priority areas assist in their implementation and provide further support to the Government in institutional capacity building while making use of its full technical expertise and normative mandates. The UN should also continue its support to the Government in promoting good governance, democracy and the rule of law.

5. Gender equality and women's empowerment should be strengthened as a cross-cutting issue across the UN programmes, including full use of tools such as the System-wide Action Plan.

6. The UNCT should continue to support as a matter of priority the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment and their mainstreaming across national policies. Similarly, helping in awareness-raising within society and among public officers/civil servants is important. The challenges in the area of rule of law and the issue of access to justice, also within the framework of fighting impunity, should be a key focus.

7. As women are faced by many structural challenges and are victims of violence, inadequate health services, lack of education, unemployment etc., the UNCT should promote the potential of women's empowerment for the economic development of the country and sustainable social inclusion, both through projects specifically designed to address the needs of women as well as through mainstreaming gender in all projects.

8. When addressing the problem of violence, the role of the whole community, the family situation and school relations should be taken into consideration, in addition to the challenges outside these environments. The UN should further support regional solutions for regional challenges with regard to violence.

9. Special attention should be dedicated to youth with focus on skills training, education, building a culture of peace, human rights awareness, participation in decision-making processes and strengthening social relations.

10. The UNCT should strengthen cooperation with civil society to identify areas where delivery should be left to NGOs. The UNCT should therefore further promote constructive collaboration with NGOs and strengthen their partnership with authorities.

11. The UN should support the building of integrated strategies for disaster risk management, continue to support risk reduction projects in public infrastructure and promote the involvement of community organizations, including women, and the incorporation of the gender perspective into every phase of disaster risk management, response and recovery.

12. The UNCT should work in close collaboration with the Government and other development partners towards sustainable agricultural development in order to achieve food security and good nutrition. Special focus should be given in this regard to women and smallholder farmers and securing land tenure rights.

13. The UNCT should give special attention to combating malnutrition in all its forms, with a special focus on children in the first 1000 days of their lives, as malnutrition imposes high

economic, social and human development costs. Complementing this approach, focused interventions are required to ensure that children are brought out of poverty and that their high levels of exclusion are addressed in a sustainable manner, including through the strengthening of national integral child protection systems.

14. The UNCT should assist the Government in improving national data and statistics as well as the incorporation of the data collected into strategies and actions.

15. The UNCT should strengthen its support and facilitation of South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives.

16. The UNCT should continue to assist the Government in building further on the socioeconomic progress achieved in recent years and continue to provide policy advice for inclusive and sustainable economic development. The potential for further advances in the areas of education, healthcare systems, food security and nutrition and social protection should be properly addressed with a view to reducing poverty and inequality. Migration-related challenges need further collaborative support on the part of various actors. The UNCT should also continue to support and assist the Government on tax reform.