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First Regular Session**

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PROVISIONAL REPORT OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARDS OF UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF AND WFP

The present report is submitted on a provisional basis because the section 'Simplification and Harmonization' has not yet been approved by the different boards bureaux.

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PROVISIONAL REPORT OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARDS

OF UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF AND WFP

New York, 23 to 26 January 2004

HIV/AIDS: Regional initiatives

1. Following preliminary comments by the President of the UNICEF Executive Board, the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) summarized global regional initiatives to fight HIV/AIDS. Next, representatives of the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNFPA, UNICEF and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) briefed the joint Board on efforts to fight the pandemic in eastern and southern Africa, emphasizing links among HIV/AIDS, nutrition and governance.
2. Delegations agreed that HIV/AIDS is a growing threat urgently requiring greater attention, action and funds. Coordinated action and results-monitoring was needed among the United Nations organizations, with the roles of each clearly defined. One speaker suggested that UNAIDS be the main coordinator at country level. Several speakers requested that more information on coordinated United Nations efforts be provided at future joint meetings of the Boards. Delegations also called for stronger linkages among United Nations organizations and other groups.
3. Several delegations voiced concern over the danger of the dispersal of resources due to the wide diversity of donors and programmes. To harness resources effectively, it was suggested that every country implement “three ones”: one national AIDS strategy, one national AIDS commission and one way to monitor and report progress. Greater joint funding was also proposed.
4. The panel acknowledged the danger of resources dispersal, which can be addressed through the “three ones”. As for results, the common country assessment (CCA) acted as a joint gauge. The bulk of funds and resources are given to Governments, who should be helped to channel them effectively. On all fronts, more accountability was needed.
5. In response to suggestions that each country’s HIV/AIDS strategy should be incorporated into development planning and the poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) process, the panel said that the PRSP process is a cornerstone of national HIV/AIDS efforts, along with sector-wide approaches (SWAPs) and nationally-driven coordinating mechanisms.
6. Many delegations emphasized the interconnection among HIV/AIDS, poverty, food insecurity and governance issues. One delegation asked for a report at a future joint Board



meeting on coordinated support for food security, specifically cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The panel replied that attention to interconnected issues was growing; that multi-partner efforts were promoting agriculture through conservation farming and other methods; and that FAO played an important role in nutrition, food security, orphan care and other areas.

7. Delegations felt that an effective response to HIV/AIDS also involved taking actions to build local capacity; empower girls and women; promote the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV; support public health initiatives and increase access to social services; balance prevention, treatment and care; reduce the price of drugs and increase their availability; build a continuum of humanitarian assistance to development; secure more stable and predictable funding; enlist greater support of the private sector; and intensify scaling-up.
8. In closing the discussion, the President of the UNICEF Executive Board requested that presentations and responses at next year's joint meeting of the Boards better reflect coordinated action and mechanisms.

Simplification and Harmonization

9. WFP's Deputy Executive Director, speaking on behalf of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP, summarized progress with the simplification and harmonization agenda. The 2003 Chairs of the Programme and Management Groups briefed on the Joint Programming Guidance Note and its links to the UNDAF Results Matrix, followed by the Resident Coordinator, a.i. from Niger, who described country level experiences in preparing the results matrix, identifying opportunities for joint programming.
10. The Meeting reaffirmed the importance of the Simplification and Harmonisation agenda for all stakeholders in development. At its core it was about doing business more effectively and efficiently. The UN work was a subset of a broader agenda agreed by the international community in Rome in early 2003. It would form part of the forthcoming discussions on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR). The Meeting agreed that the developments reported in June 2003 and on this occasion demonstrated both the complexity of the subject (ranging as it did over such issues as financing modalities, common houses and common services, the importance of leadership by Resident Coordinators and whether human resources management regimes provided adequate incentives to collaborate) and its importance in relation to difficult cross-cutting issues such as food security and HIV/AIDS.
11. The Meeting was greatly impressed by progress but at the same time impatient for further results. It recognized that the questions posed by the work were difficult and in some cases threatening. There was a need to make better connections with agencies working on humanitarian issues and to consider the implications for the Specialised Agencies. There was much scope for imaginative thinking about the Simplification and Harmonisation agenda widely defined. The Joint Meeting wanted to see such thinking; to see it quickly; and to be fully involved in the process, for example through informal brainstorming sessions.
12. The President of WFP's Executive Board presented an informal paper on "The Role of the Annual Joint Meeting", responding to governance questions raised at the 2003 Joint Meeting. Two questions were posed: whether to translate the Joint Meeting into a decision-making body; or to continue within the existing mandate and aim to improve the usefulness of the event. These could of course be pursued in parallel. There was broad support for the suggestions in the paper for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the Joint Meeting under its existing mandate. These would be pursued by the Board



Presidents, who would meet immediately after the session to plan the next Joint Meeting. On the more radical option of investing the Joint Meeting with decision-making authority there was a range of views, with some delegations regarding this as a logical next step in the evolution of governance while others were unpersuaded that it would add value to the existing machinery. It was noted that the question was already under review: paragraph 28 of ECOSOC Resolution E/2003/L.20 on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR) requests “a report on the assessment of the value added of the joint meetings of the Executive Boards and their impact on the operational activities segment of the Economic and Social Council and ... recommendations as appropriate.” The Joint Meeting accordingly looked forward to an early issues and options paper on the subject, for informal discussion with the membership, preferably in March.

The Resident Coordinator System

13. Opening remarks by the President of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board preceded an introduction to the assessment centre by the Director of the United Nations Development Group Office (UNDGO). Two resident coordinators who had undergone the new assessment process described their experiences.
14. Delegations questioned the appropriateness of self-selection for the assessment, particularly in comparing the old and new systems. They wanted candidates for resident representative/resident coordinator (RR/RC) positions to be drawn from the widest possible field and queried the adequacy of the applicant pool, noting the need for gender balance, coaching and learning plans. They asked about developing-country representation and the pre-selection and progress measurement systems. They felt that special representatives of the Secretary-General working alongside RCs should undergo similar assessment.
15. Speakers asked if the increasing complexity of the RR/RC/security coordinator role was consistent with simplification and harmonization, and whether the assessment process drained time and funds from substantive work.
16. The panel clarified that all future candidates would undergo the assessment, focusing on competencies and substance. The process – described by those who had experienced it as unbiased and geographically and gender-balanced – lasted three days. Nominating agencies covered the cost, ensuring nomination of only the ablest candidates.
17. The UNDGO Director described the new procedure for identifying and training candidates at an early stage, adding that the various surveys used in the past facilitated comparison between old and new assessments. She added that the company conducting the assessment employed staff from a wide variety of backgrounds and countries.
18. The Lesotho country team, introduced by the Lesotho RR/RC, explained how the RC system in Lesotho supports the Common Country Assessment, United Nations Development Assistance Framework and Poverty Reduction Strategy paper processes, and their alignment with the Millennium Development Goals.
19. Speakers agreed that progress made in the RR/RC system was yielding tangible results, though resources destined for Lesotho had dwindled even for HIV/AIDS programmes, making “scaling up” impossible. Some suggested that work towards a stronger system could be funded by the United Nations as a whole or by individual countries. They emphasized that an RR/RC needed a balance of personal qualities and substantive knowledge. It was stressed that in crisis and post-crisis situations United Nations organizations must work in coordination, not in competition with each other.



20. The Administrator stated that, in future, RC/RRs would contribute to the evaluations of country team members with support from Regional Directors. He noted the need for additional RC/RR candidates with humanitarian backgrounds. He acknowledged delegations' suggestions for increased funding, mentioned the new trust fund for RC system support, and indicated that core resources were increasing. The United Nations' Country presence should be small and relevant rather than large and fragmented and, he concluded, United Nations organizations must work in close, constant collaboration with donors and governments in order to remain relevant.

Security

21. Following opening remarks by the President of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board, the Executive Director of UNICEF, representing UNDP, UNFPA, WFP and UNICEF, briefed delegations on United Nations staff safety and security.
22. Delegations encouraged intensification of efforts at all levels to ensure staff safety and security, including strengthening local support to United Nations missions, ensuring investigations of attacks, and punitive measures against perpetrators of crimes. The role of host governments in bringing to justice those responsible for attacks/threats was underscored. Delegations inquired if the lack of cooperation from host governments resulted from lack of capacity or lack of commitment. They asked about measures being undertaken to restore confidence in the United Nations. Delegations were interested in knowing how to ensure cooperation between non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the United Nations organizations.
23. Delegations inquired if security costs were covered by the regular budget of the United Nations and if recurring security costs impacted development assistance delivery costs. Noting that security costs should not overburden regular resources, speakers asked what funds were allocated by United Nations funds and programmes for security. Delegations asked about the criteria used to classify countries as high or low risk and inquired if security measures were different in those countries. One delegation asked about the recommendation concerning United Nations common premises.
24. Delegations underscored that concrete and visible results at the country level could be a source of local security. Information gathering and reliable threat analysis were underscored. Some delegations noted with approbation the formation of a committee by the United Nations to investigate the terrorist bombings in Baghdad, and stressed the importance of doing the same whenever United Nations personnel were subjected to similar treatment.
25. In responding, the Executive Director, UNICEF, concurred that the United Nations needed to regain the humanitarian space within which a degree of security was ensured because United Nations staffs were recognized as neutral and impartial providers of humanitarian support and development assistance. She agreed that cooperation with NGOs was essential. Regarding the budget for security, she noted that in 2002-2003 the budget for UNSECOORD was \$53 million, about \$12 million of it coming from the regular budget and the remainder from other agencies' budgets. For the 2004-2005 biennium the budget figure was \$86 million, with \$15 million being from the regular budget. She stated that there were both one-time and recurring costs associated with security. Concerning common premises, she clarified that there was no change in policy, the recommendation being that they be looked at on a case-by-case basis in terms of security requirements.
26. She noted that UNSECOORD had primary responsibility for determining the security phase in a given country. The representative of UNSECOORD added that at the country level the designated official and his/her team determined the security phase based on a



risk/threat analysis. Furthermore, security phases 3, 4 and 5 could only be declared with the approval of the Secretary-General.



ANNEX A



JOINT MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARDS
OF UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF AND WFP
New York, 23 to 26 January 2004

Annotated Agenda

Day One: Friday, 23 January

Item 1: HIV/AIDS: Regional Initiatives 10:30 to 13:15 hrs

Chair: President of the UNICEF Executive Board

Introduction by: Ms. Thoraya Obaid, Executive Director, UNFPA

In response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic in eastern and southern Africa, the UNAIDS Executive Director, United Nations Regional Directors and heads of delegations attending the African Union meeting held in July 2003, in Maputo, signed a declaration entitled, "Accelerating Country and Regional Action on HIV/AIDS in Eastern and Southern Africa".

The Joint Meeting will hear a general introduction on regional initiatives, followed by a presentation on the case study of eastern and southern Africa, based on the United Nations mission report prepared by Messrs. James Morris and Stephen Lewis, and in the context of the above-mentioned declaration. This presentation will include information on the status of implementation and implications for the different United Nations organizations. While acknowledging that it is too early to see tangible results related to these initiatives, the presentations will aim at informing Board members on United Nations plans to support efforts made by governments in the fight against



HIV/AIDS and, more particularly, on the framework of action required to implement this endeavour.

Item 2: Simplification and Harmonization 15:00 to 18:00 hrs

Chair: President of the WFP Executive Board

Introduction by: Ms Sheila Sisulu, Deputy Executive Director, WFP

The Joint meeting will assess progress made on the issue of Simplification and Harmonization (S&H) since June 2002, review lessons learned from using the approved tools, and be briefed on their status, including that of joint programming. The meeting will also discuss the next steps of the S&H workplan, based on the documentation provided by the Secretariat and a Note from the President of the WFP Executive Board.

Day Two: Monday, 26 January

Item 3: Resident Coordinator System 10:00 to 13:00 hrs

Chair: President of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board

Introduction by: Mr. Mark Malloch Brown, Administrator, UNDP

The Resident Coordinator System: The Joint Meeting will review the function of the Resident Coordinator and how the role is evolving. Among the areas of change to be considered in the meeting are the improvement of United Nations in-country coherence, including: the design and implementation of the UNDAF and its link to the PRSP process and the MDGs; improved relations between the United Nations and the World Bank through more effective coordination, as part of RC/United Nations participation and coordination with the donor community; and reduction in transaction costs for government and other development organizations in engaging with the United Nations in country.

Resident Coordinator competency assessment: The Joint Meeting will also review the Resident Coordinator Assessment Centre and in particular its response to changes introduced in the implementation of the revised system since September 2001. It will also focus on the issue of United Nations organizations that have staff filling Resident Coordinator and Resident Humanitarian Coordinator posts.



Item 4: Security 15:00 to 16:30 hrs
Chair: President of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board

Introduction by: Ms. Carol Bellamy, Executive Director, UNICEF

The Joint Meeting will receive a briefing on issues related to staff security and recent developments in the UN security management system. Topics to be covered will include the current situation, managing and addressing an intensified level of "traditional" risks, responding to the new threats of terrorism, implementation of recent General Assembly resolutions on the issue, and specific actions taken by the four UNDG Executive Committee members.

The briefing will cover the situation at headquarters and field levels, including the issue of Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS), the roles and accountabilities of key positions in the security network, the assessment of risks, and the implications of more stringent security measures on programme design and implementation, as well as the role and responsibilities of governments.



ANNEX B

THE ROLE OF THE ANNUAL JOINT MEETING

Note by Anthony Beattie, President of the Executive Board of the World Food Programme

Introduction

1. During the discussion of Simplification and Harmonisation at the Joint Meeting in June 2003 a number of ideas were floated about the role of the Joint Meeting. I undertook to reflect on the matter and to contribute a note to assist further discussion in January 2004. This is the result. It is written in a purely personal capacity and does not represent the views of the Executive Board of WFP.

The Origin and Status of the Joint Meeting

2. Formally the Joint Meetings of the Executive Boards originated in GA resolution 52/12 of December 1997 (Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform). Thus:

12 Accepts that management of funds and programmes would be enhanced by greater integration of intergovernmental oversight, and requests the Economic and Social Council, in the context of the next triennial policy review of the United Nations, during its operational activities segment of 1998, to consider arrangements for closer integration of the governance oversight of UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF, with consecutive and/or joint meetings of the existing Executive Boards, bearing in mind the respective mandates of the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes;

13 Takes note, in this context, of the decision already taken by the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA and the Executive Board of UNICEF to organise a joint meeting in January 1998.

3. WFP was not represented at the first meeting in 1998 but joined the second in January 1999. The seven meetings thus far organised (including the present one) have taken place in New York, coinciding with one exception (2003) with the January sessions of the Boards of UNICEF and UNDP/UNFPA. Since it is impracticable to bring the WFP Board to New York, WFP is represented by members of its Bureau, usually the President and the Vice-President.
4. The agendas of the Joint Meeting are discussed and agreed by the respective Bureaux. The lead responsibility for arranging the meeting rotates between the Board secretariats. Responsibility for chairing sessions is agreed between the Board Presidents. The Joint Meeting has no decision-making authority and no rules of procedure. The formal output consists of a report of the proceedings compiled by the Board secretariats which then goes to the respective Boards, who deal with it as they see fit.
5. The first meeting in 1998 lasted half a day. The next four lasted a day each and dealt with one principal subject, usually involving a high-level panel in the morning followed by discussion in the afternoon. The time allotment was extended to two days for the June 2003 meeting, which dealt with five subjects. The January 2004 meeting will cover four subjects in two days.
6. It has been generally accepted that the topics discussed should be chosen on the basis that they are of common concern to all the Boards, and should not duplicate the work of individual Boards or ECOSOC and the GA. The history is annexed.



Issues for consideration

7. The most radical question to consider is whether there is a case for translating the Joint Meeting into a decision-making body which takes over some of the functions currently vested in individual Boards. If so, what is it and what are the arguments for and against? Self-evidently, any step in this direction would have profound implications for the governance structures of the Boards and would have to be prosecuted through the relevant legislative bodies, notably ECOSOC, the FAO Council for WFP and the GA — most obviously in the context of the forthcoming Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR).
8. Less radically, we could consider what might be done within the existing mandate to make the Joint Meeting more useful. As a starting point for discussion, here are seven possibilities.
9. Be more precise about the objectives and scope of the Joint Meeting. An over-arching objective might be along the following lines: ` ‘To assess the extent to which the funds and programmes are collectively making a difference on the ground; and improving their effectiveness and efficiency by exploiting synergies, sharing experience and learning from one another.’ Subsidiary objectives might be to:
 - monitor and evaluate the operational impact of the S&H initiatives introduced jointly by the Funds and Programmes;
 - enlarge understanding of cross-cutting programming issues (eg HIV/AIDS, Food Security, and the Relief to Development Transition);
 - review and promote joint work on common organisational processes and systems (eg Human Resource Management, Results-Based Management, Evaluation, Governance, Business Process Reviews, Decentralisation and the work of Country Teams).
10. Be more strategic. In particular, plan agendas two or three years in advance, so as to capitalise on key events in the programming cycle.
11. Improve the quality of debate at the Joint Meeting by drafting and circulating papers in advance (rather than relying on Powerpoint presentations and papers tabled on the day). This would of course have cost implications.
12. Be more ambitious about results. Aim to generate operationally useful conclusions from each session, summed up by the chair and reflected in a short paper circulated at the close of the Meeting.
13. Get Boards to take more notice of the results, by encouraging them to discuss and act, if they see fit, on the conclusions of the Meeting.
14. Build in a feedback loop by inviting Boards to report back on their follow-up of Joint Meeting conclusions in a paper tabled for information (or for discussion, if participants wished) at the next Meeting.
15. Exploit synergies by reflecting current Joint Meeting objectives and current concerns in the terms of reference for Joint Field Visits and field visits by members of individual Boards and circulating reports on such visits to the next Joint Meeting (for discussion if warranted).

20 January 2004



JOINT MEETING AGENDAS 1998–2004	
January 1998	UN reform and its impact on the Funds and Programmes
January 1999	Resource flows, follow-up to international conferences, Resident Co-ordinator system Monitoring and evaluation: use of common indicators Harmonisation of programme cycles; common premises and services; UNDAFs and CCAs
January 2000	UNDAF in India
January 2001	Poul Nielson 'The UN and Europe: active multilateral partners' Progress with CCA indicator frameworks Discussion with Executive Heads of Funds and Programmes Staff Security
January 2002	Millennium Development Goals CCAs and UNDAFs Harmonisation and Simplification of Procedures Staff Safety and Security Briefing on the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan
June 2003	Simplification and Harmonisation Progress report on Transition from Relief to Development Building on Monterrey HIV/AIDS: the five-year evaluation of UNAIDS Millennium Development Goals in Nepal
January 2004	HIV/AIDS: Regional Initiatives Simplification and Harmonisation Resident Co-ordinator System Security

