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**Executive Board  
Third Regular Session**

**Rome, 20–24 October 2003**

# INFORMATION NOTES



Distribution: GENERAL

**WFP/EB.3/2003/INF/10**

6 October 2003

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

## JOINT SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARDS OF UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF AND WFP

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# Note to the Executive Board



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## **JOINT SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARDS OF UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF AND WFP**

### **1. Simplification and Harmonization**

1. The Executive Director of UNICEF provided an overview of the 18-month-long simplification and harmonization process undertaken by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Executive Committee in implementing the provisions of the triennial comprehensive policy review (General Assembly resolution 56/201 of 21 December 2001). These included the new Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP), which gave each agency a standard format for planning with partners for the duration of the programme cycle. She stressed that the ultimate test for all the simplification and harmonization efforts would be greater effectiveness and reduced transaction costs.
2. The Chairperson of the UNDG Programme Group explained the objectives, guiding principles and approaches of the simplification and harmonization process; provided a status report on progress to date; and introduced one of the simplification and harmonization tools – the UNDAF results matrix. Five countries – Benin, Ecuador, Kenya, Niger and Pakistan - were presenting their country programmes to the Executive Boards and testing the new simplification and harmonization tools.
3. The Chairperson of the UNDG Management Group explained the principle behind common resource transfer modalities among Executive Committee agencies, which would reduce the burden on government partners. On joint programming, the objectives were to improve effectiveness and achieve better results and to improve efficiency specifically to reduce transaction costs for Governments as well as donors. The goal was to produce revised guidance by the end of 2003. She explained the three modalities of resource management: parallel funding; pass-through; and pooled funding. She described sector-wide approaches (SWAPs), another resource modality, as a form of pooled funding.
4. A representative of the Government of Benin and the United Nations Resident Coordinator for Benin reported on the experience to date in that country.
5. Speakers agreed that the work on simplification and harmonization, which was essential to increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations system, had made significant progress and remained on track. Work in this area was central to programme delivery and would help to reduce transaction costs, while placing developing countries firmly “in the driver’s seat” with regard to their national goals and priorities. The relation of simplification and harmonization with poverty reduction strategies and the UNDAF was seen as an important aspect. Speakers stressed the importance of linkages with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) and the international financial institutions.
6. Many speakers expressed appreciation for advances made by the funds and programmes in the area of joint programming, although some indicated that joint programming should be pursued where it is appropriate, and in close consultation with the Government. Referring to a recent decision by the UNICEF Executive Board on joint programming, speakers suggested that other UNDG Executive Committee agencies should follow up on the issue.
7. The issue of resource mobilization was raised by several speakers, with a number of them encouraging the pooling of resources and integrated budgeting. Other issues raised included: the need to strengthen coordination; the need to strengthen national



capacity-building; the importance of lessons learned; and the need for enhanced monitoring and evaluation in order to demonstrate that these initiatives can work at the country level.

8. Numerous comments were made about the future role of the joint meetings of Boards. They were seen by a number of delegations as an appropriate forum for policy dialogue, and it was suggested by these delegations that they be institutionalized, that reports and other background material be prepared jointly and in a timely manner by the relevant secretariats, and that they be given the authority to make formal decisions. A number of other delegations dissented from these proposals. Other suggestions for future agenda items included assessments of progress in simplification and harmonization and joint field visits.

## **2. Briefing on Iraq**

9. The representatives of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP briefed the Executive Boards on their ongoing and planned activities in Iraq. They all reported progress in their respective areas of competence, which included reproductive health, education, immunization of children, food distribution, water supply and sanitation, energy supply, job creation and capacity development, especially since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1483. They also reported that the number of national and international personnel in Iraq had increased and were extending services to more areas despite the lingering security problems.
10. They reported that their activities were being coordinated and harmonized among the respective organizations, on the one hand, and with those of other stakeholders, including NGOs community-based organizations, to ensure coherence, efficiency and effectiveness. UNICEF, for example, was collaborating with the World Health Organization in the assessment of the health sector; UNFPA was partnering with other agencies to provide health facilities for women; and UNDP was working with WFP in support of dredging activities. UNDP was also creating jobs to support sectors where other agencies were involved, such as the health sector. The funds and programmes were all involved in the undg working group on recovery and reconstruction coordinating the needs assessment effort.
11. The Executive Boards were also briefed on planned meetings for 23 and 24 June 2003 on the United Nations appeal, as well as a technical informal meeting, to share information on forward planning for the reconstruction of Iraq.

## **3. Transition from Relief to Development**

12. The Executive Director of UNICEF gave a progress report on the undg Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) working group on transition issues, in her capacity as its chairperson. The working group had been established to promote national leadership in the transition from relief to development, and to clarify the role of both the United Nations and donors in supporting this process. Priorities during the transition phase included support for consolidation and stability, restoration of basic services and infrastructure, promotion of human rights and local capacity-building and support for refugees and internally displaced persons. The working group was focusing on eight countries and/or subregions that reflected a variety of circumstances, including countries with Security Council mandates, peace-keeping offices, special representatives of the Secretary-General, or the adaptation of existing tools like the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP). The working group would present a progress report to the Economic and Social Council in July, and submit its report to the Secretary-General by September.



13. The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mozambique said that her country had a long history of coordination with the United Nations system, focusing both on immediate needs and long-term development. As demonstrated during the recent field visit by members of the Executive Boards, government ownership was central to this process, and coordination among all partners was the key to its success.
14. Issues raised by other delegations included: the need for increased coordination between United Nations agencies, including not only the funds and programmes but also the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations; the need to consider natural as well as man-made disasters in the exercise; the need for the funds and programmes to focus on strengthening the capacities of people affected by disasters and the need to address gender issues in the transition phase.
15. Asked for update on the “Four Rs” (Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction) concept developed by UNHCR, and the Brookings process, concerning the gap between emergency funding and long-term reconstruction needs, the Executive Director said that the working group was trying to integrate the lessons of those initiatives. Recent missions to Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka would be assessed in its upcoming reports.
16. The issue of adequate funding was raised by several speakers. One representative said that his Government has established a separate budget line for transitional activities, 70 per cent of which had been channelled through the United Nations. Other funding challenges were the lack of coordination when transition moved from relief to development, and the lack of instruments for doing so, including the CAP. A final speaker referred to his Government’s recent extensive experience in Afghanistan, where a lot of infrastructure had to be rebuilt while people still had to be fed and security was a problem. Because of good coordination between agencies, there had been good results, and these lessons were being applied to the country’s assistance to Iraq via international organizations.

#### **4. Building on Monterrey**

17. Delegations said that the Monterrey Consensus, reached at the International Conference on Financing for Development, had stressed that actors should remain engaged in follow-up activities through relevant intergovernmental and other governing bodies of stakeholders, and share experiences in the implementation and mainstreaming of the Consensus in United Nations operational activities at the national level.
18. They also stressed the urgency of galvanizing the follow-up activities, in particular the reduction of poverty, marginalization and destitution. They underscored the importance of a new compact among donor and recipient countries.
19. Delegations strongly supported the creation of instruments to measure the implementation of Millennium Development Goal 8, on developing a global partnership for development. They called on UNDP and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to develop such tools in full consultation with developing countries. They also stressed the significance of mutual accountability by donor and recipient partners.
20. Delegations renewed their determination to support the activities of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations, while underlining the need for increased official development assistance (ODA) in a stable and predictable manner. They also emphasized the importance of coherence, coordination and simplification of procedures and programmes, and active partnership by all actors to increase efficiency and effectiveness in resource utilization. They also observed that democratic governance and



the rule of law were essential elements in establishing an enabling environment for domestic resource mobilization and the building of domestic capacities to empower countries to be responsible for their own development. Some delegations, demonstrating their support of follow-up activities to the Monterrey Conference, announced increased contributions to ODA.

21. Representatives of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP reported on activities in their respective areas – democratic governance, vaccinations, reproductive health, empowerment of women and humanitarian support undertaken in programme countries – in the implementation and mainstreaming of the Monterrey Consensus. They said that although their resources remained below demand, the Monterrey Conference had resulted in announced contributions to ODA, without which the situation would have been worse as a result of deflationary pressures in major donor countries. They stressed the need for better coordination among themselves and with other bilateral donors and international financial institutions, especially the World Bank, for effective and efficient utilization of scarce resources. They also supported the need to develop tools to measure performance and monitor impact at the national level.

## **5. HIV/AIDS: Addressing the Recommendations of the Five-year Evaluation of UNAIDS**

22. The Executive Director, UNFPA, provided an overview of the five-year evaluation of UNAIDS, highlighting the findings, the implications for agencies, the recommendations of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) and how agencies had begun to address them. The Chair of the United Nations Theme Group on HIV/AIDS in Malawi, highlighted the challenges faced by the United Nations system at the country level, using Malawi as a case study. The Coordinator of the National AIDS Commission of Portugal, representing the Chair of the PCB, made a presentation focusing on UNAIDS governance-related issues and recommendations pertinent to the Executive Boards of the co-sponsoring agencies.
23. Delegations stressed the importance of recognizing the dynamic nature of the epidemic and the need to break the silence and stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS. They stressed that reproductive health should not be delinked from HIV/AIDS. Speakers noted that in meeting the challenge of HIV/AIDS, it was essential to mobilize additional resources, both financial and human, and to ensure that the response was results-based and gender-sensitive, with particular attention focused on the needs of women and girls. Numerous delegations underscored the need to strengthen cooperation among the agencies, particularly at the country level and within the theme groups. It was stated that the United Nations system should facilitate national efforts through increased coordination and donors that should be prepared to support UNAIDS coordination mechanisms, including fully funding all components of the UNAIDS unified budget and work plan. Delegations encouraged the co-sponsors of UNAIDS to bring further consistency to their HIV/AIDS response.
24. Several delegations recommended that there should be a standing agenda item for the Executive Boards on the PCB recommendations and decisions. A number of delegations encouraged the agencies to undertake joint programming and also recommended that joint field visits focusing on HIV/AIDS should be organized in cooperation with UNAIDS for members of the Executive Boards. Delegations underscored the importance of system-wide sharing of the lessons learned from UNAIDS regarding improving the working methodology of the PCB and encouraged full cooperation and communication among the Executive Boards and the PCB. Emphasizing the linkage between food security, nutrition



and HIV/AIDS, delegations stressed the need to coordinate food aid with other types of aid in addressing the epidemic. Delegations also pointed out the need to contribute to the ongoing discussion and dialogue on HIV/AIDS and governance issues in their own countries.

25. The agencies noted the guidance and recommendations offered by delegations and offered examples of their harmonized and collaborative work in addressing the HIV/AIDS crisis in Southern Africa and elsewhere. They welcomed the emphasis on gender and on the linkage between reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention, and concurred that food and nutrition should be a component of the strategy to fight HIV/AIDS. The lack or depletion of human resources resulting from the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the impact on the absorptive capacity of countries was underscored. The agencies agreed that innovative entry points were necessary to tackle the epidemic and that a results-based approach was essential.

## 6. Millennium Development Goals in Nepal

26. The debate was based on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in Nepal, with presentations by representatives from the Government, the United Nations country team and a non-governmental organization.
27. Delegations stressed that the primary responsibility for mainstreaming the goals into operational activities and reporting lies with the country. They called on the United Nations to provide adequate support in that regard.
28. Delegations commented, asked questions or sought clarifications which included: (a) the consultation process; (b) the integration of the goals into the UNDAF, the 10-year development plan and PRSP; (c) the relationship between the United Nations and the World Bank in development policy and in monitoring the goals; (d) the harmonization and coordination of activities among various donors in such sectors as capacity-building for data collection; (e) alignment of indicators and targets to reflect specific national situations; (f) the role of the United Nations system in conflict resolution; (g) the relationship between the United Nations and non-State actors; and (h) the costing of implementing the goals at national level.
29. The respondents said that comprehensive consultations had been conducted among parliamentarians, civil servants, special interest groups, women, different community entities and regions and the donor community. They spoke about the convergence in the design of strategies for the UNDAF and the goals. Objectives and outcomes in such areas as girls' education, provision of safe drinking water and reduction of child and maternal mortality had been clearly spelled out. The Millennium Development Goals had also been incorporated into the PRSP process and the United Nations team in Nepal had worked closely with the World Bank and other relevant stakeholders. The overall relationship between the United Nations and the World Bank at the global and national levels was good. A joint note by the heads of UNDP and the World Bank had been sent to all staff on their working relationship whose activities complement each other.
30. The indicators and targets had been realigned through extensive consultations, without losing the universality of the goals. The costing exercise was considered essential in determining how much was required to meet the targets. In the area of coordination and harmonization, donors were working together, for example, to build capacities for data collection and analysis and to enhance coherence, efficiency and effectiveness. Through decentralization, the UNDP governance programme had enhanced local communities' participation in the implementation of goals for education, with support from other United Nations agencies.





31. The panel said that on conflict, the Government and the United Nations system were working together to address the root causes. The United Nations had adopted a strategy and was strengthening its capacity in that area. Members of the Boards were informed that NGOs and other non-State actors were working closely with the government and the country team to publicize the Millennium Development Goals through advocacy messages. A national conference of NGOs had adopted a resolution on promoting awareness of the goals at all levels in the country.







**JOINT SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARDS  
OF THE UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF AND WFP  
New York, 6 to 9 June 2003  
Conference room 2**

**AGENDA**

***Day One: Friday, 6 June***

*10:00 to 1:00 pm*

**ITEM 1: Simplification and Harmonization**

- Opening remarks by the President of the WFP Executive Board, H.E. Mr. Anthony Beattie (UK)
- Presentation by the UNICEF Executive Director, Ms. Carol Bellamy, the UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Development Policy, Mr. Shoji Nishimoto, the UNICEF Comptroller and Director of the Division of Financial and Administrative Management, Ms Ellen Yaffe, the UNDP Resident Representative in Benin, Mr. Moustapha Soumare and the Government representative, Mr. Yessoufou Mamoudou, Director of Coordination and External Resources.
- Discussion
- Concluding remarks by the President of the WFP Executive Board.

*12:30 to 1:15pm*

**Briefing on Iraq: Video-conference with the WFP Executive Director, Mr. James Morris, the UNFPA Executive Director, Ms. Thoraya Obaid and the UNICEF Executive Director, Ms. Carol Bellamy and the UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, Ms. Julia Taft.**

- Introductory remarks by the President of the World Food Programme Executive Board, H.E. Mr. Anthony Beattie (UK)
- Discussion
- Concluding remarks by the President of the WFP Executive Board



Afternoon meeting: 3:00 to 4:00 pm

**ITEM 2: Transition from relief to development**

- Opening remarks by the President of the UNICEF, H.E. Mr. Jenö Staehelin (Switzerland)
- Briefing by the UNICEF Executive Director, Ms. Carol Bellamy on the progress of the work of UNDG-ECHA working group
- Discussion
- Concluding remarks by the President of the UNICEF Executive Board

4:00 to 6:00 pm

**ITEM 3: Building on Monterrey**

- Opening of the meeting by the President of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board, H.E. Mr. Roble Olhaye (Djibouti)
- Introductory remarks by Mr. Bruce Jenks, Director of the Bureau for Resources and Strategic Partnerships in UNDP; Ms. Thoraya Obaid, UNFPA Executive Director Mr. Edwin Judd, Director of the Programme Division in UNICEF, Charles Vincent, Deputy Director WFP New York.
- Discussion
- Concluding remarks by the President of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board

**Day Two: Monday, 9 June**

10:00 to 1:00 pm

**ITEM 4: HIV/AIDS: Addressing the Recommendations of the UNAIDS Five-Year Evaluation**

- Opening remarks by the President of the UNICEF, H.E. Mr. Jenö Staehelin (Switzerland)

Part I: Operational Issues

- Introductory remarks by Ms. Thoraya Obaid, UNFPA Executive Director and Dr. Charlotte Gardiner, Chair, United Nations Theme Group on HIV/AIDS, Malawi;
- Discussion

Part II: Governance Issues

- Introductory remarks by Professor Fernando Aires Alves Nunes Ventura, Coordinator, National AIDS Commission, Portugal, Representing the Chair of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB)
- Discussion
- Concluding remarks by the President of the UNICEF Executive Board



1:30 to 2:30 pm

**Informal consultations on the joint field visit by members of the UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP Executive Boards to Mozambique**

- Opening remarks by the President of the World Food Programme Executive Board, H.E. Mr. Anthony Beattie (UK)
- Introductory remarks by the team leader, H.E. Mr. Lebohang Moleko (Lesotho)
- Discussion
- Concluding remarks by the President of the WFP Executive Board

3:00 to 6:00 pm

**ITEM 5: MDGs monitoring: Case study Nepal**

- Opening remarks by the President of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board, H.E. Mr. Roble Olhaye (Djibouti)
- Introductory remarks by the UNDP Administrator, Mr. Mark Malloch Brown
- Presentation by the Honourable Vice-Chairman of the National Planning Commission in Nepal, Dr. Shankar Prasad Sharma; the President of the NGO Federation of Nepal, Mr. Gauri Pradhan; the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Nepal, Mr. Henning Karcher; the UNFPA representative, Mr. Buill Musoke; the UNICEF representative, Ms. Suomi Sakai and the WFP representative, Ms. Erica Joergensen
- Discussion
- Concluding remarks by the President of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board

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