



UNDG Working Mechanisms Conveners Retreat

19 May 2011, 09:00 – 17:00 hours

Vienna International Centre, Vienna, Austria

Final Meeting Summary

Agreed Action Items

- 1. All Working Mechanisms will revisit their work plans and, in light of the points raised at the Conveners Retreat, set clear priorities for deliverables for the remainder of 2011, with particular emphasis on:**
 - a. Preparing inputs for upcoming global events**
 - b. Effectively aligning work across the Working Mechanisms and with Regional UNDG Teams and UNCTs**
 - c. Strengthening the evidence base of tangible impact achieved through coherent UN system action at country level**
 - d. Considering options and possible mechanisms for more effective knowledge sharing**
 - 2. All Working Mechanisms will identify issues requiring consideration and decision by UNDG Principals**
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Item 1 – Introduction

1. The UNDG Working Mechanisms Conveners Retreat was opened by Wilfried Luetkenhorst, UNDG Vice Chair, who drew attention to several important factors influencing the work of the UNDG generally and the WMs in particular. These included several key international meetings on the horizon for 2011 and 2012: the Busan High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in November 2011; the Montevideo High-level Tripartite Conference on Delivering as One in November 2011; the ongoing climate change negotiations, with a COP 17 in Durban in November 2011; and preparations for Rio+20, to be held in Rio in 2012. The UNDG needed to provide coherent assessments and proposals on behalf of the UN development system for each of these major events. In this context, it was critically important for the UN system to fully align the poverty reduction agenda with the strongly emerging emphasis on low-carbon, green growth, and reflect an integrated approach in its programmes and operations at country level. Funding for agencies, funds and programmes in the UN development system was under very serious pressure, inter alia as a consequence of the 2008 financial crisis, which was now hitting major donors, with a potential to impose drastic budget cuts (both core and non-core) on UN organizations. In this context, key donors were indicating that they expect UN agencies to fund coherence initiatives increasingly from their own core budgets, with the current One UN funding being seen as in the nature of transitional seed funding. Furthermore, there was an emerging trend of some donors shifting emphasis from longer term development interventions, with a focus



on institutional change, to a shorter-term focus on immediate aid and easily measurable and quantifiable results. This shift in emphasis called for a coherent response from the UNDG and other actors in the UN development system. The UNDG Vice Chair emphasized that, against this backdrop, it was important to fully capitalize on the UNDG Strategic Priorities, the new Working Mechanisms modalities and the deliverables contained in their work plans; together, these elements constituted an excellent, and indeed unprecedented, platform for the UN system to move forward coherently and effectively.

2. The Director of DOCO informed participants of the serious resource and staffing constraints being faced by DOCO with negative implications for the level of support it could provide to UNDG WMs, Regional UNDGs Teams and UNCTs, and on moving forward on evidence-gathering in terms of progress achieved in implementing the UNDG Strategic Priorities.

3. The facilitator of the Retreat, David Fairman of the Consensus Building Institute, summarized the purpose of the Retreat and its five objectives: i) review progress of UNDG Working Mechanisms (WMs) on objectives set out in UNDG Strategic Priorities Work Plan; ii) highlight successes, challenges and lessons learned in WMs to date; iii) assess alignment of WMs with each other, Regional UNDG Teams and UNCTs in pursuing UNDG Strategic Objectives, iv) identify potential adjustments to WM priorities for remainder of 2011, based on assessment of progress and lessons learned; and v) identify any issues to raise at UNDG's 8 June 2011 meeting. (A list of participants is attached as **Annex 1**.)

Item 2 – Interaction with UN Country Teams

4. As an innovative feature, the Retreat also interacted by videoconference with the Malawi Resident Coordinator (RC), and separately with the Ukraine Resident Coordinator and members of the Ukraine UNCT to receive feedback on progress achieved in their work on the UNDG Strategic Priorities.

5. Several insights on the ways in which UNCTs are driving the UNDG Strategic Priorities, emerged in conversation with the Malawi RC:

- As a voluntary adopter of the Delivering as One approach since 2006, Malawi has built strong shared leadership, structures for joint programming, common services and related business practices, and external demonstration of the advantages of a coherent UN
- While the UNCT has achieved cost savings through common services, those savings are relatively small as a percentage of the programme budget. The primary use of savings has been for modest additional investments in operational efficiency
- In its current transition plan, the UNCT has strengthened its focus on joint programming and joint programmes, as a bridge to its next UNDAF
- By aligning the timeframes for UNDAF development and implementation with the national development planning process, and engaging very directly in the planning process with an MDG focus, the UNCT has been able to have significant impact on the national development plan in key MDG areas
- Substantively, the UNCT was able to demonstrate that gender inequality was a key driver of MDG gaps, ensure greater attention to gender in the national development plan, and show the UNCT's comparative advantage in closing gender gaps
- In general, Malawi's UNCT has received important and effective support from the Regional Directors, regional gender experts, and DOCO in the preparation of its transition plan and UNDAF. Regional Directors played a key role in helping guide the UNCT on several issues; however, responses from Regional Directors to UNCT requests have not always been timely



- Malawi is an excellent example of effective collaborative leadership in a UNCT, but other voluntary adopters also have important coherence lessons. There may be value in bringing such UNCTs together with counterparts from UNDG WMs to draw out those lessons
6. Additional insights were provided by the Ukraine RC and members of the Ukraine UNCT:
- Ukraine's government has a strong focus on economic reform and EU accession; accordingly, the primary focus of the UNCT has been on ensuring integration of the MDGs and related social protection goals in national planning and programming
 - With limited donor support in Ukraine, the primary focus of the UNCT has been on providing upstream policy support to the country's government
 - The preparation of the current UNDAF was synchronized with the government's planning cycle, and the UNDAF is clearly linked to government priorities, but goes beyond them in some areas where the UNCT placed emphasis on the normative importance of MDGs
 - The UNDAF preparation process was challenging in terms of time commitment, some aspects of engagement with government, and definition of UNDAF results indicators (ultimately left out of the UNDAF). Regional PSG provided excellent support, as did DOCO through planning support and RCO budgetary support
 - The UNCT has chosen not to prepare an UNDAF Action Plan, because of perceived high transaction costs relative to operational value. The UNCT is moving forward with common services and common premises

Item 3 - Progress, successes, challenges and lessons relating to the UNDG strategic priorities and alignment of the working mechanisms

7. Each Convener made a presentation on the work of their WMs, which highlighted the priorities decided by each WM, the progress achieved, any inter-linkages with other WMs, the Regional UNDG Teams and UNCTs, as well as challenges faced. (The individual progress reports are attached as **Annex 2**.) In the ensuing discussions, it was noted that all of the WMs have made significant progress since October 2010 in defining their work plans consistent with the UNDG Strategic Priorities, organizing their membership, and initiating work on priority work plan items.

8. Conveners noted a number of key drivers and factors contributing to progress and successes in their WMs:

- Creating an open, frank atmosphere within the WM
- Investing time at the outset to clarify WM objectives, roles and responsibilities, including time to address points of disagreement in a constructive way
- Using external drivers and constraints to ensure effective priority setting and maintain focus. Key drivers included the UNDG Strategic Priorities Work Plan and its timetable; major global events to which the WMs are meant to contribute; and the reality of limited agency staff time and resources to commit to each WM

9. Conveners also noted a number of challenges to the effectiveness of the WMs in implementing their Work Plan:

- Uneven agency commitment to active, sustained participation and the need to clarify the responsibilities and decision-making authority of WM members



- Severely limited financial and staff resources within the WMs and within DOCO to gather evidence systematically, and to engage with other WMs, Regional UNDGs, or UNCTs; or to engage with the other pillars of the CEB
- Insufficient communication among the WMs about the tasks they are undertaking, leading in some cases to partial duplication of work
- In some cases, lack of explicit guidance from the UNDG Principals within their agencies to support the active participation of their agency staff in the work of the UNDG
- Need for a clearer understanding of how to engage Regional UNDG Teams in the WMs

10. Regarding key alignment challenges and opportunities across the WMs, the Conveners highlighted four core issues that affect their capacity to fully implement their Work Plans:

- Limited incentives within agencies for staff to commit time and resources to the global work of the UNDG
- Inconsistent application of the M&A Framework as the basis for coordinating the work of the UNDG at global, regional and country levels; specific issues were noted with regard to business practice harmonization and mutual accountability in the RC system
- Limited coordination across the three CEB pillars (UNDG, HLCM and HLCP), and with ad hoc UN bodies in preparation for key upcoming global meetings; coordination challenges across the UN system were also noted specifically for the post-crisis transition architecture
- Significant obstacles in knowledge sharing across the WMs, on a wide range of development issues

11. At the same time, Conveners noted some important opportunities for a well-aligned UNDG to have significant impact in preparation for major upcoming events:

- The preparation of one consolidated UNDG Report for the Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, including an explicit focus on results definition and reporting, could enable the UNDG to re-affirm global partners' commitment to a focus on longer-term development results, rather than shifting back to a focus on results from short-term aid delivery. A report drafting process is underway, and can be strengthened by full UNDG commitment to provide a single report with a unified political and substantive message
- The Busan Forum also offers an opportunity to address the transition funding gap, and strengthen the global architecture for managing transitions from relief through recovery to development activities
- The Delivering as One meeting in Montevideo could provide a strong opportunity to demonstrate the ability for well-coordinated UNCTs to make a major contribution to development impact at country level
- The run-up to the Rio+20 meeting could be an opportunity for the UNDG to present a strong vision for the ways in which its work contributes to linking the three pillars of economic, social and environmental sustainability

12. In each case, the UNDG needs to work at the global level, drawing on regional and country experience and expertise, to create a clear message, with strong supporting evidence, and maintain the alignment of its members in the face of some countervailing pressures for agencies to pursue individual interests.



13. Regarding the MDG acceleration agenda, it was noted that this provides an excellent opportunity for the UNDG to show results in the short as well as longer term by moving forward with determination and in unison.

Item 4 - Cross-cutting priorities for the UNDG at the global level through 2011

14. In light of their discussions, the Conveners identified several priorities for the UNDG at global level, consistent with the Strategic Priorities and Work Plan but requiring additional effort and alignment:

1. Action by the UNDG Principals to ensure that agency incentives are fully aligned with the M&A Framework (Strategic Priorities Work Plan item 2.2)
2. Commitment by all UNDG members to provide a consolidated UNDG Report for Busan, with a strong political and substantive focus on development results, supported by high-quality evidence of UNDG implementation of Paris Declaration commitments
3. Commitment by the UNDG to advocate jointly at Busan on the need for funding and coordination mechanisms to fill gaps in the relief to development continuum
4. Creation of a shared UNDG approach to preparation for Rio +20
5. Agreement on a consolidated UNDG approach to global knowledge sharing, potentially based on a fully shared Internet platform
6. Cross-cutting review of WM work plans and deliverables in light of the significant constraints on agencies and DOCO in supporting the work of the WMs, and in light of the emerging top priorities for the remainder of 2011

Item 5 - Potential top priorities for the WMs

15. During a short breakout session, the WM Conveners reviewed their individual Work Plans in light of the day's discussion, and identified possible top priorities for each WM over the next several months, linked inter alia to the preparation for several upcoming global meetings and the preparation for the opening of the UNGA in September.

16. The WM Conveners focused on top priorities in several categories:

- Generating evidence of tangible joint UNCT impact at country level, and of UNDG coherence at the global level
- Providing continuous support to Regional UNDG Teams and UNCTs
- Preparing for upcoming global meetings
- Ensuring alignment among the WMs and other elements of the UN development system at global level
- Identifying key issues for consideration by the UNDG Principals

17. The Conveners noted that these were preliminary ideas about potential top priorities to be closely reviewed within their WMs and to lead to refining their work plans as appropriate, following further WM discussion and decision.

Item 6 - Conclusion

In conclusion, appreciation was expressed to DOCO and its staff for the excellent work carried out, not only at the global level, but also in terms of support provided to the RTs and UNCTs. It was also noted that in view of the impact of donor cutbacks on DOCO's funding and staffing, a sustainable solution would need to be found.

Annexes:

**1. List of participants
UNDG Working Mechanism Conveners' Retreat
Vienna, 19 May 2011**

| Working mechanism | Name |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. JFBO Network | Mari Simonen |
| 2. WG- RCSI | Jan Beagle |
| 3. WG- RCSI | G. Assaf |
| 4. UNDG-HRM | K. Wah Kang |
| 5. UPN | Jane Stewart |
| 6. TT on Gender Equality | M. Doraid |
| 7. UNDG-ECHA WGT | Torben Due |
| 8. MDG TF | Olav Kjørven |
| 9. TT on Aid Effectiveness | Sigrid Kaag |
| 10. UNDG Vice-Chair EFW SC Chair | W. Luetkenhorst |
| 11. DOCO | Deborah Landey |
| 12. Facilitator | David Fairman |



2. UNDG Working Mechanism Conveners' Retreat, 19 May 2011 Progress update

A. Working Mechanism: UNDG/ECHA Working Group on Transition (WGT)

Priorities

- How to further foster coordination and coherent messaging across different transition fora, including optimal use of UNDG/ECHA WGT
- Coherent messaging on Civilian Capacities Review, WDR, International Dialogue, INCAF (e.g. on issues such as instruments (PCNA), funding (two tier MDTFs))
- Dialogue on the role of Regional UNDG teams in transition issues

Progress to date

- Coordinated input provided to the OECD/DAC INCAF process, the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, and to preparations for HLF4
- Conflict analysis and support streamlined in UNDAF guidance and workstreams; roster established and used; PCNA tool-kit revised to increase focus on prioritization, capacity building and flexibility; joint programming and DaO reflected in integration guidance
- Support to country-specific integrated planning processes, including participation in Secretariat-led integrated (mission) task forces (I(M)TFs) and support to and participation in country-specific missions to support the RCs and UNCTs

Inter-linkages with other Working Mechanisms, Regional UNDG teams and UNCTs

- Business Operations and Joint Funding: i) Funding/MDTFs (e.g. OECD/DAC's INCAF, pooled funds study, MDTF study); ii) Support issues (e.g. Support Working Group on integration)
- UNDAF Programming: Conflict analysis support, DaO in transition countries
- TT on Aid Effectiveness: Preparation for Busan ('Pillar 2', linkages with International Dialogue and INCAF)
- UNCTs: Policy advice and support, building on loop of feedback on lessons learned

Challenges

- The different transition fora not well coordinated. Risk of multiplicity of efforts or even contradictions.
- Lack of resources for transition
- Increased leadership and ownership of UNDG members



Inter-linkages with other Working Mechanisms, Regional UNDG teams and UNCTs

To date:

- UPN/MDG TT co-chairs exchanged early views concerning areas of work
- Gender Task Team UNDAF analysis shared with UPN
- QSA Retreat attended by representatives of UPN, Regional UNDG and UNCT

Future:

- Link with other mechanisms on analysis parameters for desk reviews
- Share results of desk reviews



B. Working Mechanism: UNDAF Programming Network (UPN)

Priorities to date

- Establish the UPN in the context of UNDG Strategic Priorities and Work Plan (focus on outputs 1.1, 1.2, 3.1, 3.2)
- Deliver value-added support for 2011 UNDAF roll-out
- Strengthen UPN as a virtual network
- Prepare/complete outstanding guidance and information as per UNDG

Progress to date

- Terms of Reference and 2011 Work Plan have been drafted and agreed
- QSA Guidance Note being drafted building on Turin retreat with participants from UPN, Regional UNDG and UNCTs (supporting UNDG output 1.1 and 3.2)
- Desk Review of 2009-10 UNDAFs being completed by UPN members (supporting UNDG outputs 1.1, 1.2)
- UPN will guide consultant preparing analysis of “level of engagement by UNCTs in national policy and programme dialogue” (supporting UNDG output 1.1)
- UPN will consider results of 2011 UNDAF training sessions and broad issues about UNDAFs raised by participants in the QSA retreat (supporting UNDG outputs 1.1 and 3.2)
- UPN members assessing existing knowledge sharing/communication platforms to determine best fit to enhance UPN’s virtual capacity (supporting UNDG outputs 3.1, 3.2)
- RBM Handbook complete and pending endorsement; Guidance Note on Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability complete and issued; Guidance Note on Mainstreaming Food and Nutrition Security under UPN, UNCT review; task team to support UNDG Rio+20 preparations in operation (supporting UNDG outputs 1.1, 3.1, 3.2)

Challenges

- How to best engage Regional UNDG in the Network
- How to enhance virtual nature of the Network
- Inter-relationships among the working mechanisms-sharing of information and knowledge
- Budgets- how to fund work of the Network; use of DOCO funds/overlap of DOCO activities with those of the Network
- How to get “ahead of the curve”- design annual analyses to provide ongoing evidence of good/innovative more strategic UNDAF examples based on signed UNDAF documents, UNDAF M&E elements; RC annual UNDAF reports etc.

C. Working Mechanism: Joint Funding and Business Operations Network (JFBO)

Priorities to date

- ❖ The objectives and priorities of the Network are driven by the undg Strategic Priorities 2010-2011 and the related work plan which call for maximizing operational and administrative efficiency through harmonizing business practices, accelerating business practices reform and making more effective use of common services.
- ❖ In the area of Business Operations, the JFBO Network focuses on undg responsibilities under the joint undg-HLCM Implementation Plan developed to address a number of the identified bottlenecks in harmonization and simplification of business practices.
- ❖ The undg JFBO Network incorporated the items under undg responsibilities from the undg-HLCM joint implementation plan into its own work plan, in particular in Common Services, Common Premises, Procurement, ICT and HACT areas. Business owners were nominated for each of these areas to drive the implementation of agreed deliverables forward.
- ❖ In addition, in the area of business operations, the JFBO is also:
 - pursuing integrated approach to programme and operations/joint funding by focusing on undaf roll-out countries of 2010 and 2011;
 - facilitating the establishment of a coordinated mechanism to expedite legal clearance of inter-agency agreements;
 - facilitating inter-agency dialog and initiatives in the finance area, when required by countries;
- ❖ In the area of Joint Funding, the work focuses on the fulfilment of undg responsibilities for oversight of Multi Donor Trust Funds as required by the Management and Accountability Framework.
- ❖ The JFBO Network is informed on the continuous work and results of the Expanded Delivering as One Funding Window Steering Committee, priorities agreed and results achieved.

Progress to date

- ❖ The undg and HLCM have collaborated with the UN System Staff College to ensure that an integrated approach to programmes and operations is implemented at the country level. The scope and substantive focus of the Regional undaf workshops have been revised to make sure the integrated approach to this year undaf roll-out countries is introduced. The workshops' agenda now integrates programming, business operations and joint funding. Lessons learned from the 4 regional undaf workshops will be used to fine-tune and improve training material and sessions.
 - (a) The Business Operations part of the Regional undaf Workshops was designed and is cost-shared in close cooperation with the HLCM. The workshops were designed to follow the undg-HLCM Implementation Plan and aimed at increasing OMT capacity and participants' skills to operate under greater cost efficiency and further implementing harmonized business practices.
 - (b) The Joint funding part was developed by the Joint Funding Sub-Committee and included in four regional undaf workshops held in 2011. Having been translated in French and Spanish and tested in a mock-up session organized for various HQ staff, the training module was used by resource people from UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP and MDTF Office in the regional undaf workshops, whose mission costs were cost-shared by the respective organizations and DOCO. The need for further dissemination of knowledge and institutionalization of training module, through RC and RCO induction workshops etc., was emphasized.



- ❖ As recommended by the UNDG-HLCM High Level mission, a HACT Global Assessment is being launched. The Terms of Reference for the HACT Global Assessment have been developed and discussed by the HACT Advisory Committee and are currently finalized based on agencies' comments. The Assessment will be carried out as a result of implementation experiences and to address common issues that have emerged and cannot be resolved within the existing guidelines and framework.
- ❖ The process of the development of a M&E Framework to ensure monitoring of efficiency gains and effectiveness indicators for Common Services is being launched. The work will be done based on information and experience gathered at the country level and on the feedback from countries on how realistic these indicators should be and how they should fall into the existing approach of common services through the Process Approach Model.
- ❖ In the Common Premises area, tools, technical advice/guidance and recommended solutions were provided to UNCTs in 23 countries by the Task Team on Common Premises under the JFBO Network.
- ❖ In the ICT area, a proposal was drafted which supports the effective establishment of DaO, in particular, the harmonization of Business practices at the country level. The proposal suggests a development of an ICT platform that would function as an enabler to more efficient programming and other inter-agency work such as the implementation of a whole catalog of common services. Following the example of Mozambique, ICT products, such as supplier databases, procurement websites, data warehousing, programme development, budgetary framework development, monitoring and results reporting via Intranet or direct access would be adequately supported, though more work with support from inter-agency headquarters teams will be required in this area. In addition, on-demand support was provided to countries.
- ❖ In the Procurement area, it has been agreed that the HLCM PN's WG on Harmonization integrates the UNDG deliverables from the JFBO work plan under the participation of UNDG colleagues. In order to effectively deliver its work plan and support the working group, a two dedicated positions have been established under the lead of UNICEF. The recruitment process has been successfully finalized. A Procurement Specialist has been recruited and starts on 16 May. The Administrative Assistant (GS-5) is recruited and started administrative tasks for the Specialist.
- ❖ In the legal area agencies were requested and provided their feedback on how agencies legal departments intend to implement the UNDG-HLCM report recommendation for fast-tracking the legal clearance of country-level agreements. The way forward on the establishment of a coordinated mechanism will be discussed and agreed upon at the upcoming JFBO Network meeting scheduled for 24 May.
- ❖ In the Joint Funding area, the Study on Operational Effectiveness of MDTFs has been launched and is in its final stage. The study will assess efficiency and effectiveness of administrative, managerial and accountability arrangements for MDTFs, their management procedures, systems and impact on transaction costs. The final report is expected to be available on 20 May. The report will be presented at the UNDG ASG and at the full UNDG meetings. Its findings and recommendations will inform further refinement of MDTF related policies and tools as appropriate. It is expected that the study will be presented at the June UNDG-donor meeting on MDTFs.
- ❖ Working arrangements with World Bank, European Union and other donors requesting modifications to standard agreements are being discussed by the Fiduciary Management Oversight Group. Follow-up to EC consultations related to the charge of indirect costs within pass-through fund management modality is underway.
- ❖ The revised guidance on MDTFs expanded to cover the management and closure of funds has been endorsed by the UNDG and made available to countries.
- ❖ To ensure timely response to country-level requests, especially with the purpose of avoiding delays in establishment of MDTFs because of substantial deviations from the UNDG agreed legal instruments, a common Joint Funding account (FMOG.support@undg.org) has been set up and is being monitored by DOCO.
- ❖ In the finance area, the standard template agreement for transfer of funds between agencies is being finalized
- ❖ Meetings of the EFW Steering Committee and Consultative Group for the Expanded Funding Window took place on 28 March. There are 19 countries that applied for funding in 2011, with the total approved



allocations of more than \$90 million. The SC meeting discussed and approved allocations to those countries as well as discussed and reached agreement on other issues related to the EFW functioning, including the EFW review and agreement on indicators for reporting. An expanded EFW meeting with a larger number of donors is scheduled for October this year.

Inter-linkages with other Working Mechanisms, Regional UNDG Teams and UNCTs

- ❖ Under the CEB umbrella and as called by the UNDG Strategic Priorities, there is growing collaboration between the UNDG and the HLCM: working together in pursuing the objective of coordination and harmonization of the UN system in the areas of management and administration. The UNDG focuses on supporting countries in application of the existing guidelines as well as norms and policies developed by the HLCM.
- ❖ In the ICT area, a joint UNDG-HLCM working group has been established to take forward the implementation of the joint implementation plan. In the Procurement area, the HLCM Procurement Network's WG on harmonization will include UNDG members and UNDG deliverable as part of its work plan. To ensure close collaboration and avoid any potential duplication in work, the HLCM Secretariat is invited to meetings of the JFBO Network, is part of the JFBO regular mailing list and took part in initial teleconferences with the chairs of the established joint groups.
- ❖ To ensure the involvement of the regional level, the invitation to the first meeting of the Joint Funding and Business Operations Network meeting was extended to Regional UNDG Chairs or a representative from their group. Regional Coordination Specialists are part of the regular JFBO mailing list.

Challenges/lessons learned

- ❖ Moving the agenda of the harmonized business operations and joint funding further requires commitment by the UNDG members and close cooperation with the HLCM Network.
- ❖ It is important that lead agencies in each key technical area under the JFBO Network assume and recognize their responsibility for driving the implementation of their groups' work plans and achievement of deliverables.
- ❖ It is important that the workload related to Reference Groups is recognized by the respective agencies and appointed chairs, and members are appraised and rewarded by their respective organizations for driving implementation of their groups work plans and achieving the agreed deliverables in the assigned areas of work (e.g. Joint Funding Sub-Committee, Common Services Task Team, HACT Advisory Committee, ICT group etc) which could result in renewed commitment to achieve the agreed results.
- ❖ It is important to ensure a continuous UNCT commitment at the country-level to integrate, effectively institutionalize and follow-up with the support provided in the areas of Business Operations and Joint Funding.
- ❖ Active engagement by agencies is the key condition for the achievement of agreed results, e.g. close cooperation among UN organizations as part of the Joint Funding Sub-Committee led to the development of a Joint Funding training module within a relatively short timeframe and ensured the availability of agencies' resource people for the regional UNDAF workshops through cost-sharing arrangements between DOCO and agencies.
- ❖ Systematic use of UNDG guidance and UNDG agreed legal instruments in joint funding and business operations areas needs to be regularly reinforced (through trainings; communications to UNCTs) in order to avoid delays in achieving results at country level.



D. Working Mechanism: Working Group on RC System Issues (WG-RCSI)

Priorities to date:

As per the UNDG Strategic priorities—the WG-RCSI is focused on driving relevant parts of the UNDG work plan, through:

- UNDG work plan output 2.2, supporting the implementation of the M&A system;
- UNDG work plan outputs 3.1 and 3.2, mapping, developing and deploying technical expert rosters in the WG-RCSI's specific area of work in the context of a UNDG approach to knowledge management.

This has been translated into four broad areas, which the WG has focused on for the year 2011:

1. Overarching RC system issues (including: the M&A system, recommendations emanating from the HLCM/UNDG field missions, strengthening integrated mission leadership policy and an improved incentive structure for RCs);
2. RC selection (the next generation of the RC Assessment Centre);
3. RC/HC/DO and UNCT performance management (including the One80 tool);
4. RC and UNCT learning and competency development (including specifically the RC induction, the RC handbook and the RC orientation package).

Progress to date:

- Significant M&A system implementation – a key focus of the WG-RCSI over the past year has been tracking and ensuring progress in agency implementation of key action points to clarify and strengthen the roles and accountabilities between the RC and the UNCT members. These include: revising JDs of UNCT members to recognise the authority of the RCs, to include in their JDs the reporting obligations of UNCT members to RCs in relation to results and resources of joint programmes, involvement of RCs in UNCT member's performance appraisals, and ensuring results for UNCT deliverables are included in key assignments of the UNCT members. These elements of the M&A System are fundamental to ensuring the RC has the authorities s/he needs to deliver on the UNCT workplan, and UN priorities in support of national development plans.
- The next generation of theca was agreed and rolled out in late 2010, which has already assessed 48 candidates across four sessions - under the RCAC interagency steering committee. Moreover, to aid in preparing candidates, Preparatory Package for the RCAC was drafted and agreed by the steering committee, and was used at the most recent sessions of the RCAC (in May 2011). An update on the RCAC is proposed to be presented at the upcoming UNDG meeting in June so that the UNDG can review the utilization of the package in improving RC candidate performance in the assessment centre.
- Under the auspices of the Talent Management Task Force – an RC and UNCT learning and competency development initiative has been prepared. Following in-depth data collection and analysis, a draft strategy and work plan has been prepared (for discussion at the WG meeting in May, and possible presentation at the upcoming UNDG meeting in June).
- During the 2010 RC induction programme, overseen by the WG-RCSI, 17 new RCs received briefings and participated in thematic discussions with the agencies, including NRAs and specialized agencies in New York, Rome and Geneva. RCs received detailed briefings by senior UN leadership and discussed how UNCTs could better draw upon the capacity and expertise of NRAs and specialized agencies in common country programming processes. Further strengthening of the RC induction was agreed as a priority for 2011, and a concept note has been developed in response to the request from the UNDG Advisory Group.
- Concept notes for a RC handbook and a RC orientation package have been developed – to be examined by the WG at its next meeting.
- The RC/HC/DO and UNCT performance appraisal system (which includes the One80 competency development tool) was launched by the UNDG Regional Teams, appraising the performance year 2010. This system was developed under the auspices of the WG-RCSI in previous years. It has been agreed once this



cycle is complete, lessons learned and stocktaking of the system will be undertaken – as per the request from the UNDG Advisory Group.

Inter-linkages with other Working Mechanisms, Regional UNDG teams and UNCTs :

- The WG-RCSI will be working with the HLCM / CEB secretariat and the UNDG working mechanism for Business Operations and Joint Funding in following up on the relevant action points for the WG-RCSI from the high level HLCM-UNDG mission on business practices;
- Issues of the accountability of RCs for overall programmatic coordination of the UNDAF and access to funding, is another inter-linkage which will be built with the UNDAF Programming Network – especially the work being undertaken to look at the best practices of RCs and UNCTs in upstream policy engagement of UNDAFs, and the implications for leadership.
- Regional UNDG Teams, RCs and UNCTs are heavily linked in the outputs of the WG, through the in-depth consultations on key initiatives of the WG (e.g. the One80 tool was developed at a workshop with RCs, UNCT members, WG members, and opened by a Regional Team Chair; moreover, the RC/UNCT learning and competency development initiative's key inputs came at a visioning exercise with RCs and UNCT members). In terms of standing membership –the WG is considering, especially inviting Regional UNDG Team members / RCs to broaden engagement and feedback from the field.

Challenges:

- In tracking the implementation of the M&A system, it has been challenging to receive timely feedback from agencies on the level of implementation. WG members themselves have found it challenging to expedite progress, given their differing accountability frameworks and performance management tools.
- Some of the key constraints identified during the talent management initiative (e.g. the incentive structure for RCs, right of return to their agency, etc.) are broader than the mandate of the WG-RCSI, and involve numerous stakeholders such as the ICSC, the HR network and others.
- Talent management and career development are addressed differently within individual agencies which makes it difficult to harmonize tools and policies.
- Talent management and training are not seen to be system priority areas, in terms of funding within agencies.
- In terms of the HLCM/UNDG mission on business practices, some of the relevant challenges for the WG-RCSI include a lack of strong leadership and consistent levels of commitment across agencies for joint/common programmatic and operational modalities, and that the need to empower the RC and ensure leadership involvement in business practices.



E. UNDG Human Rights Mainstreaming mechanism (UNDG-HRM)

Priorities to date

- Strengthening policy and operational coherence on HR and development
- Supporting RCs and UNCT leadership on HR
- Promoting coherent approach to national capacity building on HR
- System-wide advocacy and knowledge sharing on HR and development

Progress to date

- HRBA training material updated and enhanced; and the interagency pool of trainers expanded (particularly French and Spanish speakers)
- Survey of RC/UNCT needs conducted (71% of all UNCTs responded)
- Mapping of agency tools and policies on HR mainstreaming conducted (463 knowledge products mapped, categorized and uploaded onto the HRBA Portal)
- Multi-Donor Trust Fund established to support the workplan implementation
- Discussion initiated on country support strategy based on survey findings

Inter-linkages with other Working Mechanisms, Regional UNDG teams and UNCTs

- UNDAF Programming Network (HRBA for the UNDAF review, expert roster)
- Task Team on Aid Effectiveness ('human rights pillar' in the overall UNDG advocacy for the High-level Conference on Aid Effectiveness in Busan)
- WG on RC System Issues (HRM will consult with WG for the updating of RC guidance on HR, and RC learning support including induction programmes)
- MDGs Task Force (potential areas to be discussed: integrating HR into MDG Acceleration Framework; collaboration with MDGs Campaign on advocacy)
- Discussions with UNDG Working Mechanisms on the RC/UNCT survey findings
- Regional UNDG Teams & UNCTs engagement (discussions planned/ongoing on RC/UNCT survey results and regional support)

Challenges

- Ensuring HR priorities are mainstreamed/closely coordinated across the UNDG
- Additional resource implications for UN to be able to respond to large expectation and new needs from countries (e.g. UPR follow-up, HRBA support)
- How to maximize existing agency resources and technical expertise for support
- Communication: sending right messages to Member States and stakeholders (demystify HR/HRBA concept; demonstrating country-level impact; support to national ownership of HR and development agenda)
- High-level support to RC/UNCT leadership in difficult situations



F. Working Mechanism: UNDG TT for Busan HLF (TT Aid Effectiveness)

Priorities to date

As per the decision of the UNDG, 6 October 2010, the time-bound, task-specific and self supporting team to coordinate joint UNDG preparations for HLF4 seeks to :

- Support UN effective preparations for HLF-4 (joint statement, delegation and side event)
- Contribute to the HLF4 design, agenda and outcomes
- Review UNDG Action Plan on Aid Effectiveness and prepare the PD Survey Report

Progress to date

- UNDG Task Team fully seized of preparations for Busan HLF and consulted on UNDG TT positioning prior to preparatory meetings at the DAC WP EFF. Agencies have access to the WP EFF website with all documents and DOCO designated web page, as well as UNDP resources on aid effectiveness;
- UNDG held a special retreat to discuss preparations and issues for Busan and agree on key priority issues the UNDG seeks to bring to the HLF4 discussions, namely: capacity development; humanitarian assistance and post-crisis and the UN system contribution towards sustainable and equitable development results within a rights-based framework
- UNCTs conducted PD Survey, UNDG report structure on the same adopted by the TT and report under preparation. Interested individual agencies are preparing their own PD Survey progress report.

Inter-linkages with other Working Mechanisms, Regional UNDG teams and UNCTs

- HLCP, UN ECHA on joint UNDG positioning for Busan
- Full cooperation with UNCTs in preparation for the PD Survey and gathering UNCT responses on the same
- Linkages to the MDG Task Team

Challenges

- The Task Team is time bound with a specific output and needs consistency in agency representation and engagement throughout the process leading up to Busan. But the TT is picking up in speed as Busan approaches.
- Busan HLF is not a UN conference, but rather primarily organized by the OECD DAC and the broader Working Group on Aid Effectiveness. This demands different type of preparations and levels of engagement – from country to global level, from partner country to donor negotiations. Outcomes hinge on the decisions of the WP EFF members, so that there is dual negotiation – within UNDG on joint positions and then with stakeholders at the WP EFF, i.e. with other political factors leading on this agenda.
- The UNDG members' diverse mandates and delivery instruments dictate different interests of UNDG members in the aid effectiveness agenda from support to partner country overall aid coordination and management capacities to sectoral mechanisms and capacities. The challenge will be again, as in the preparations for the joint Accra HLF statement to prepare a succinct and joint political statement.

G. Working Mechanism: UNDG MDG Task Force (MDG TF)

Priorities to date

1. Follow up to the MDG Summit Outcome Document
 - 1.1) Promote MDG acceleration
 - Publication of the MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF) Document and dissemination to UNCTs and RCs' Offices
 - Develop coordinated work plan with UNDAF Programming Network. Collaborate with the UNDAF Programming Network to ensure provision of adequate support to the roll-out countries in 2011, in particular on issues such as MDG monitoring, MDG gaps, and actions to promote MDG acceleration.
 - 1.2) Integrated Implementation Framework (IIF) to track financial as well as policy commitments made towards the achievement of the MDGs
 - Identify selected countries to prepare case studies on MDGs achieved through better UN system coordination and application of the IIF as this is roll-out
 - 1.3) UNDG MDG Policy Network
 - Review the MDG Policy Network Business Plan 2009-2010 in collaboration with DOCO
 - Agree on a new Workplan for 2011-2012
 - 1.4) Promote MDG Best Practices
 - Ensure regular review and refinement of MDG best practices in support of UNDG Strategic Priorities
2. The MDG Task Force will fulfill the role of Advisory Board to the UN Millennium Campaign (following the decision of the UNDG Principals Meeting on 6 October)
 - UN MC to develop a strategy for communications/NGO collaboration at the country level
3. Strategically Positioning UNDG for a Post-2015 development framework
 - NCD Summit, September 2011
 - Busan, Korea
 - Rio+20

Progress to date

A MAF Operational Note was developed on how this approach can be implemented at country level, including in the context of inequality, marginalization and discrimination, also on the basis of age and gender and it includes a specific section on the relationship of the MDG Acceleration Framework to the UNDAF process. The MAF Operational Note has received comments from the agencies and will soon be put forward for electronic endorsement.

UN Millennium Campaign is concluding consultations with each of the UNDG members, as requested by the UNDG Chair, to explore the issues of advocacy and campaigning for the MDGs across the UN system, the levels of coordination across agencies and how these efforts might be strengthened. A draft proposal for a UN System Integrated MDG Advocacy Strategy was presented at the Task Force.

The MDG TF has started consultations on the Integrated Implementation Framework (IIF). [The MDG TF members recognize that UNDESA has its own consultation process in place and that the TF does not aim to replace it, but to explore options on how the TF can contribute].



Inter-linkages with other Working Mechanisms, Regional UNDG teams and UNCTs

- MAF/UNDAF Linkages were presented at four UNDAF Roll-out Regional Trainings
- UN Millennium Campaign has held bilateral meetings with UN agencies and UNCTs, civil society and NGOs on a proposal for a UN System Integrated MDG Advocacy Strategy
- MAF Roll-out is being coordinated by the UNCT (via the RC Office) at the country level
- UNDP RBEC will present the MAF at the RDT Meeting
- UNDP RBAP Director to present the MAF at the ESCAP Meeting in May.

Challenges

- Lack of funding for Joint-Work. Need to engage UN agencies to earmark resources (including in-kind contribution such as staff time) and to lead on key deliverables under the agreed MDG TF work plan.
- How to keep the MDG Task Force relevant?
- Streamline communications [The MDG TF space under the UNDG site is currently being updated. A space under the TeamWorks will be created to facilitate communication and information sharing on different MDG initiatives]