



UNDG meeting

26 June 2015, 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (EST)

DC1 – 21st Floor, Hank Shannon Conference Room

Final Meeting Report

Opening remarks by the UNDG Chair

1. The UNDG Chair, Ms. Helen Clark, opened the second UNDG meeting of the year by announcing that the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) had joined the UNDG as an observer, and welcoming Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs. The UNDG Chair expressed her appreciation for the ongoing support DPA had been providing to Resident Co-ordinators, including through their support peace and development advisers in RC offices. In view of RCs working in increasingly complex political and development settings, Mr. Feltman underlined the need for the entire system to support them and expressed DPA's commitment to do its part within the UNDG.

2. The UNDG Chair noted that, in the wake of the recent reform of UNDG membership criteria, she had also written to the Executive Heads of six UN entities, which have become newly eligible for UNDG membership – IAEA, ICAO, IMO, UNRWA, UPU and WIPO – as well as several entities, which had become eligible for UNDG observer status – ITC, UNCDF, UNV, UNISDR, UNICRI, UNIDIR, UNITAR, UNRISD, UNSSC, and UNU, the responses to which were still outstanding. The UNDG Chair also emphasized that the UNDG was trying to accommodate the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which was not part of the UN common system, as a close partner, noting that it would be desirable if IOM decided to join the UN system.

3. The UNDG Chair recalled that the UNDG had agreed on an ambitious work plan for 2015. Over the course of the next six months, UN Member States are expected to reach new global agreements on financing for development (Note: now reached), Sustainable Development Goals, and climate change which would guide global development priorities for the next fifteen years. All these agreements would remain mere words on paper, however, if they could not be implemented. The new agenda would need to seize the attention of peoples and governments, civil society, and business. Institutional capacity development as well as access to finance would be critical. The UNDG Chair emphasized that Member States are looking to the UN development system to help lead on implementation and advocacy. The United Nations development system will need to step up to the task and deliver integrated solutions in support of countries' achievement of the SDGs.

Item 1: ECOSOC dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the UN development system

4. The UNDG Chair introduced the agenda item by noting that the first phase of the ECOSOC dialogue had concluded with a high-level retreat at the end of May, and will be continued under the chairpersonship of a new ECOSOC Vice-President later this fall. While the first phase had mainly focused on stocktaking, the second was expected to develop proposals which could inform the 2016 QCPR. The UNDG Chair highlighted the series of background papers that the UNDG had prepared on the themes of the dialogue, namely on UN system functions,



funding, organizational arrangements, and capacity, impact and partnerships, which had been greatly appreciated by Member States.

5. Sharing her reflections on the outcome of the first phase of the ECOSOC dialogue, the UNDG Chair said that Member States saw the UN development system as a key partner in the implementation of the new development agenda – a fact, which should be duly reflected in the outcome of the Third Conference on Financing for Development and the Post-2015 Summit. Secondly, there would be a recognition that delivering on the new development agenda demanded adaptation and change from all. Within the UN system, this would need to go beyond the Funds and Programmes to ensure a truly system-wide approach. Thirdly, adequate funding would be important, including with a predictable and sustainable core base of resources.

6. Mr. Thomas Gass, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, noted that the time and effort the UNDG had invested into the first phase of the ECOSOC dialogue had been well worth while. The dialogue had succeeded in creating an open and constructive atmosphere, which had encouraged Member States to speak on their own behalf rather than in regional or political groupings. Mr. Gass noted that Member States would be looking to the UN development system to help define sustainable development, which presented a historic opportunity.

7. In terms of next steps, Mr. Gass noted that the roadmap for the second phase of the ECOSOC dialogue might well change under the incoming new ECOSOC vice presidency. A number of ideas had been put forward for the second phase, including establishing an independent advisory group of experts. The UNDG would be consulted on the terms of reference as well as its composition. Moreover, there could be a window of opportunity to focus the next QCPR on the new needs and to shift the focus of the resolution from the detail-oriented model of 2012 towards a more strategic level. By October, UNDESA would need to prepare the part of the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the QCPR, which reviewed progress to date. UNDESA would seek to keep the UNDG as closely engaged as had been the case in the previous year.

8. Ms. Anne-Birgitte Albrechtsen, ASG Advisory Group Chair, briefed the UNDG on the outcome of the ASG Advisory Group retreat of 25 June 2015. She highlighted that there was a shared sense of Member States' growing expectations for a renewed UN development system. The UNDG endorsed the following proposals from the ASG Advisory Group:

9. **In order to explore the proposal of a system-wide strategic framework for the UN development system in the context of the 2016 QCPR, it was suggested to set up a small group, convened by Olav Kjørven, UNICEF. This group will be kept limited in number and informal. UNDG members wishing to join the group are requested to contact Mr. Kjørven copying the UNDOCO Director.**

10. **In order to develop a robust theory of change for an impactful contribution of the UN development system towards the new development agenda, the Senior Coordinator for UN Fit-for-Purpose, Mr. John Hendra, will convene a small group to develop a 'Theory of Change' to define the chain of results/impact 'as a system.' (Senior Coordinator, FFP). UNDG members wishing to join the group are requested to contact Mr. Hendra copying the UNDOCO Director.**



11. **UNDG Working Groups are requested to review their work plans with a view to integrating the development, humanitarian, and peacebuilding dimension of the UN system's work. To this end, the UN Working Group on Transition will review the findings and recommendations of the three major recent reviews – the Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture, the High-level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations, and the High-Level Advisory Group for the Global Study on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 – and advise the UNDG on the implications for the UN development system.**
12. **In response to calls from Member States that the UN development system will need to take more differentiated approaches in support of sustainable development, the ASG Advisory Group had an initial discussion on principles for differentiated approaches. The UNDG Task Team on Universality under the UNDG Sustainable Development Working Group intends to invite UNDG members to a retreat on the issue towards the end of August.**
13. **The UNDG Chair will convene a retreat of the Principals Advisory Group on the margins of the CEB Fall Session on 17 November. The ASG Advisory Group will be invited to join the retreat.**

Item 2: Getting ready for Post-2015

14. The UNDG Chair introduced the agenda item by noting that it would take the combined strength of UN Country Teams to support governments to address the SDGs in a truly integrated manner. The UNDG Chair expressed her concern that the strong and positive recognition of the role of the UN development system in supporting implementation of the new agenda, which had come out of the ECOSOC dialogue, had not yet been reflected in the draft outcome document of the Post-2015 Summit. In view of the broad agenda with 17 goals, one of the key messages would need to be that while countries should track progress against all goals, they would likely focus their efforts on those that are most urgent for them to achieve. A key opportunity for the UNDG to demonstrate its collective commitment and support would be the organization of a joint UNDG side event at the Summit on 25/26 September.
15. Mr. Magdy Martínez-Solimán and Mr. Amir Abdulla, Co-Chairs of the UNDG Sustainable Development Working Group, noted that the objective of the Working Group was to develop a strategy that allows for integrated and coherent support from the UN development system based on MAPS – Mainstreaming, Acceleration, and Policy Support. There had already been strong demand from Governments for integrated missions from the UN development system in support of reviewing national development plans. A guidance package for RCs and UNCTs on how to engage governments and stakeholders to adapt national plans to the SDGs was under preparation. A complementary training package developed by UNITAR had already been successfully piloted in Uganda. The Working Group had also mapped over 140 UN agency tools, clustered according to the SDGs, which would be made available to UNCTs in a user-friendly way.
16. The Sustainable Development Working Group had also been working closely with the Communications and Advocacy Working Group in support of joint messaging and supporting UNCTs in advocacy and public outreach. In addition, the Working Group had been preparing common UNDG messages for the Third Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa and guidance for UNCTs was planned to be released after the conference. Updates



on the Working Group's activities, including its task teams on South-South Cooperation and Gender Equality could be accessed on the UNDG website.

17. The UNDG will provide suggested language for the Post-2015 Summit outcome document on the role of the UN development system in supporting the new development agenda. UNDG members are requested to submit their comments on the draft paragraph shared at the meeting by close of business today, 26 June.

18. The UNDG Chair will send a message to RCs and UNCTs that conveys a sense of urgency for the UN development system to engage collectively, encourages innovation and learning and the sharing of good practices, and commits to a set of products and support services that UNCTs can expect from the global UNDG. All UNDG Principals are encouraged to echo the messaging by sending similar messages to their staff.

19. The UNDG will organize a joint side event at the Post-2015 Summit in September. The preparations are being led by the Sustainable Development Working Group, with the support of UNDOCO and UNDP. The organization of the event will call on the Communications and Advocacy Working Group and the Millennium Campaign to support as needed.

20. UNDG Working Groups are requested to streamline and rationalize their work to the maximum extent and to accelerate key deliverables in their work plans so as to ensure RCs and UNCTs have the necessary tools to support implementation of the new global development agenda as soon as it has been agreed.

21. The UNDG intends to propose that "UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs)" be renamed into "UN Sustainable Development Frameworks (UNSDFs)" under the new global development agenda. It is proposed to present the idea to Member States in the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the QCPR. Reference could be made to the fact that a number of countries have already renamed their UNDAFs into partnership frameworks, seeking to reflect the changing nature of UN support.

Item 3: Revised MOU and SAA for UNDG pass-through and electronic mechanism, including cost recovery rate for pooled funds

22. The UNDG Chair introduced the agenda item by noting that the current UNDG standard legal agreements for pass-through funding modalities dated back to 2008. These instruments had since been used to channel about \$1 billion per year in contributions from over 100 contributors to over 100 inter-agency pooled funds, including UNDG Multi-Donor Trust Funds, One Funds and Joint Programmes. The UNDG Chair noted that a key issue that remained to be agreed on was the harmonized cost-recovery rate to be applied to inter-agency pooled funds using the UNDG pass-through modality. In 2014, the UNDG ASG Advisory Group had referred the issue to the HLCM Finance and Budget Network (FBN) for recommendation, which was due to be forthcoming.

23. Ms. Henriette Keijzers, Deputy Executive Co-ordinator and OIC, Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, presented the revised UNDG standard legal agreements for pass-through funding modalities: Memorandum of Understanding



(MOU) and Standard Administrative Agreement (SAA). She noted that donors had requested a thorough review and revision of these instruments to reflect evolving concerns on key issues including reporting, monitoring and evaluation, risk management, audit, fraud and investigation, due diligence and financing of terrorism. Moreover, there was a need for updating these documents in order to reflect lessons learned with pooled funds, changes in policy, such as the Standard Operating Procedures, and the results of several UN inter-agency groups on issues related to shared accountability, such as the Framework for Joint Internal Audits of United Nations Joint Activities.

24. Ms. Keijzers highlighted that the revised documents were the result of an inclusive consultation process which had been led by the UNDG Fiduciary Management and Oversight Group (FMOG) over a period of two years among all UNDG member entities as well as 25 donors. Ms. Keijzers noted that there were still diverging views with regard to the harmonized cost-recovery rate, with some New York-based funds and programmes preferring an increase from 7% to 8% while such an increase would be difficult for the UN Secretariat and Rome-based funds and agencies. While the formal recommendation from the FBN on the matter was still pending, given that there was no consensus to increase the rate to 8%, the proposal would likely be for it to remain at 7% for the time being.

25. **The UNDG endorsed the revised UNDG standard legal agreements for pass-through funding modalities - Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Standard Administrative Agreement (SAA) - subject to final agreement on the harmonized cost-recovery rate to be applied to inter-agency pooled funds using the UNDG pass-through modality. The UNDG welcomed the revised agreements as a significant achievement, which exemplified the UN truly working as one, and which provided UNDG members with standardized terminology, which could also be adapted for agency-specific purposes.**

26. **The recommendation from the HLCM Finance and Budget Network regarding the harmonized cost-recovery rate to be applied to inter-agency pooled funds using the UNDG pass-through modality will be shared with the UNDG once it is received. The UNDG will be requested to endorse the harmonized cost-recovery rate electronically within two weeks.**

Item 4: Guidance Note on Human Rights for Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams

27. The UNDG Chair introduced the agenda item by noting that the previous UNDG policy guidance on human rights dated back to 2000, which was why a substantial update was required to reflect the many policy and institutional developments over the last decade, including the establishment of the Universal Periodic Review mechanism, updated policy guidance from the Secretary-General's Policy Committee, and the Human Rights Up Front Initiative.

28. Ms. Flavia Pansieri, Co-Chair of the UNDG Human Rights Working Group, presented the draft UNDG Guidance Note on Human Rights for Resident Co-ordinators and UN Country Teams by noting that it responded to the increasing demands from RCs and UN country leadership for more practical guidance to advance the human rights agenda strategically at country level. Ms. Pansieri highlighted that the guidance had been designed to serve as a very practical reference with concrete examples. A draft version had been consulted with 24 RCs and UNCTs as well as the five Regional UNDG Teams and OCHA.



29. The UNDG welcomed the Guidance Note on Human Rights. It was noted that it should also inform other UNDG guidance, which was currently under preparation, and that it would be important to ensure corresponding linkages. It was further suggested to use the guidance as a key reference for future RC induction trainings and to bring it to the attention also of partners and stakeholders, so as to familiarize them with the mandate and role of RCs with regard to Human Rights.

30. **The Guidance Note on Human Rights was unanimously endorsed by the UNDG [UNHCR reserved the right to confirm whether it had been consulted in the drafting process, which has since been confirmed]. The Guidance Note will be disseminated with a joint letter by the UNDG Chair and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to RCs and UNCTs. UNDG members are requested to encourage their Executive Heads to also share the guidance with their staff.**

Item 5: AOB

Farewell of Ms. Anne-Birgitte Albrechtsen, ASG Advisory Group Chair

31. The UNDG Chair announced that Ms. Anne-Birgitte Albrechtsen, Deputy Executive Director of UNFPA, who had been chairing the ASG Advisory Group since 2015, would be leaving her current position at the end of the month to become the new CEO of Plan International. The UNDG Chair expressed her sincere gratitude and appreciation to Ms. Albrechtsen, recognizing in particular her dedication and leadership in driving the UNDG Strategic Priorities and the Standard Operating Procedures and her deep commitment to the common cause of the UN, and wished her all the best for her future. The UNDG Chair emphasized that it would be important for the UNDG and its Advisory Group to keep up the momentum, and that Ms. Albrechtsen's successor would need to be someone with considerable intergovernmental experience and a deep understanding of the UN development system coordination mechanisms, as the system moves into the new QCPR process and the transformation required to address the new development agenda ahead.

32. **Upon consultation with the UNDG Principals Advisory Group, the UNDG Chair will shortly announce the new Chair of the ASG Advisory Group.**