



UNDG meeting

19 February 2016, 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM (EST)

DC1 – 21st Floor, Hank Shannon Conference Room

Meeting Report

Opening remarks by the UNDG Chair

1. The UNDG Chair, Ms. Helen Clark, opened the first UNDG meeting of the year by introducing Mr. Amir Abdulla, Deputy Executive Director of WFP, in his new role as UNDG Vice-Chair as of 1 February 2016. The UNDG Chair noted that in his dual capacity as UNDG Vice-Chair and Co-Chair of the UNDG Sustainable Development Working Group, Mr. Abdulla would help ensure that the UNDG further advances the integration agenda and working across the entire UN Charter with focus on how the UN system can best engage together in order to support and deliver on sustainable development results.
2. Speaking on UNDG priorities for the year 2016, the UNDG Chair noted that the UNDG had no time to lose in following up on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the other historic agreements reached by Member States in 2015, which would guide development priorities for a generation to come. The first World Humanitarian Summit in May, the Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants in September, and HABITAT III in October presented important opportunities to further advance a global vision for sustainable development in 2016.
3. The UNDG Chair noted that 2016 was also a major opportunity for UN reform. Member States could define a forward-looking vision for the role of the United Nations system in support of implementing the 2030 Agenda through the upcoming ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment, the ECOSOC Dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the UN development system, and the next Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review resolution due to be adopted by the General Assembly in December. The UNDG Chair noted that business as usual was not an option, and that the UN development system was facing a choice between actively initiating change itself or else risking being changed.
4. With regard to the UNDG's role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the UNDG Chair noted that eighteen countries (and growing) had volunteered to report on the roll-out of the 2030 Agenda at the forthcoming High Level Political Forum and that UN Country Teams stood ready to support those programme countries, which had volunteered to report. She noted that the UNDG had developed a set of core principles to guide its collective support for achieving the SDGs, as no single entity could claim an exclusive mandate over any single goal or for all targets within a goal. Instead, each entity needed to offer its unique expertise and commit to working collaboratively to achieve shared results. She noted that the UNDG had released its Mainstreaming Guide to RCs and UNCTs right on time as over eighty UNCTs had already received requests for SDG data, policy sensitization, or planning and mainstreaming support from governments.



5. The UNDG Chair emphasized that the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for UN Country Teams helped the UN development system deliver joined-up support. It was critical for the UNDG to complement the fast roll-out of the SOPs at the country level with accelerated progress in implementing supporting reform measures at headquarters in the framework of the UNDG Action Plan and to demonstrate notable successes in this regard to Member States in 2016. **She called on all UNDG Principals to message strongly to their own country and regional representatives in this regard.**

6. Speaking on what it would take for the UNDG to deliver on the SDGs, the UNDG Chair noted that financing had a big influence on how the system worked together, in that it could either incentivize or disincentivize collaboration, pointing to the need for the right blend of financing instruments, including pooled funding in support of collective approaches. The UNDG also needed to strive for greater and continuous innovation as well as greater transparency throughout its operations at the global, regional and country levels, including in the use of data, technologies, partnerships and public outreach. Middle income countries increasingly focused on the UN system's knowledge and policy advice and the UNDG needed to quickly adapt to these shifting demands. The UN system would continue to uphold internationally agreed norms and standards, with UNCTs focusing on serving the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized so as to ensure that no one is left behind.

7. Speaking on the need for greater integration, the UNDG Chair noted that at the last CEB Session, the Secretary-General had called on the Executive Heads of the UN funds, programmes and specialized agencies to work in a cohesive and integrated fashion "across the Charter." The UNDG Chair noted that the 2030 Agenda required the UN system to break down the silos between its development, humanitarian, peace, security and human rights work. The UNDG Chair noted that the focus on protracted crises had brought humanitarian and development actors more closely together. In order to shift from delivering aid to ending need, as called for by the Secretary-General's report for the World Humanitarian Summit, the UN development system needed to work even more closely with humanitarian actors as had recently happened, for instance, in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey.

8. Speaking on the role of leadership, the UNDG Chair noted that the UNDG needed to promote bold and courageous leadership at all levels. At the country level, Resident Co-ordinators/Humanitarian Co-ordinators needed to be empowered to oversee a more collaborative delivery of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding support towards collective outcomes with the requisite authority to do so, as called for by the Secretary-General's report for the World Humanitarian Summit. She emphasized that bold leadership was also needed at the global level by UNDG Principals and UNDG ASGs as well as from the six Regional UNDG Teams, to take forward a more integrated agenda.

9. With regard to the 2016 QCPR, the UNDG Chair noted that until the new framework was in place, it would be important for the UNDG to continue to place the highest priority on implementing the *current* QCPR and to accelerate progress towards the QCPR-aligned UNDG Strategic Priorities for 2013-2016, which would significantly enhance the UN development system's credibility. The UNDG Chair noted that with the new QCPR, Member States had the opportunity to agree on an ambitious reform agenda that could steer the UN development system towards greater integration, coherence and impact over the next few years. She noted that the UNDG had made a lot of progress in this regard, which she intended to report to the upcoming ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment.

10. **The UNDG Chair noted that the UNDG had yet to ensure full implementation of the Management and Accountability System as called for by the current QCPR. The UNDG Chair requested DOCO to undertake**



a stocktaking by reaching out to all UNDG members to assess the status of implementation and to report back to the UNDG at its next meeting.

11. Speaking on the UNDG cost-sharing agreement in support of the Resident Co-ordinator system, the UNDG Chair noted that it was encouraging that seventeen of the eighteen UNDG member entities were contributing in the 2016-2017 funding biennium, but not all entities have contributed their expected amounts in full. **She noted that the immediate goal was to close the funding gap of \$17.5 million for the 2016-2017 biennium, and that 3-4 UN entities still owed significant amounts which she asked that they cover as soon as possible.** She also noted that the contribution of the UN Secretariat, which accounted for \$13.5 million, was still pending approval by the General Assembly's Fifth Committee.

12. In order to ensure the longer-term sustainability of RC system funding, the UNDG Chair proposed to conduct an independent review of the cost-sharing agreement as soon as the certified financial statements for the first funding biennium 2014-2015 would become available by the end of June. The UNDG Chair requested the ASG Advisory Group and DOCO to prepare terms of reference for the review for consideration by the UNDG.

Item 1: 2016 ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment and Second Phase of the ECOSOC Dialogue on the Longer-term Positioning of the UNDS

13. Mr. Thomas Gass, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, briefed the UNDG on the preparations for the ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment and the Second Phase of the ECOSOC Dialogue, noting that it would be important that the ambition of the 2030 Agenda be translated into other legislative frameworks, including the next QCPR. By taking stock of the implementation of the 2012 QCPR, the ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment played an important role in this regard with a view to considering required changes, particularly with regard to strengthening cross-pillar integration to maximize the UN system's overall impact, coherence and cost effectiveness.

14. Mr. Gass noted that the ECOSOC OAS would be primarily informed by the 2016 Secretary General's Report of the QCPR, supplemented by four survey reports of programme country governments, Resident Co-ordinators, Operational Management Teams, and UN agency headquarters. These and further analytical studies and surveys could be accessed on the new QCPR website: <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/oas-qcpr>. Mr. Gass noted that it would be important for Member States to provide feedback on the Secretary-General's report, which was due to be re-issued in June with an additional section on recommendation for the next QCPR.

15. With regard to the ECOSOC Dialogue, Mr. Gass informed the UNDG that an Independent High-level Team of Advisors (ITA) had been established to support Member States through the ECOSOC Bureau by providing recommendations regarding the changing role of the UN development system in light of the 2030 Agenda. Co-chaired by Mr. Juan Somavia of Chile and Mr. Klaus Töpfer of Germany, the ITA would be working until June 2016 and produce a series of proposals to promote coherent interlinkages between functions, funding, governance, organizational arrangements, capacity and impact, and partnership approaches of the UN development system. As part of its consultations, the ITA would also visit agency headquarters in Geneva and undertake a mission to Addis Ababa to gain a regional perspective and possibly also country visits.



16. With regard to the ECOSOC Dialogue retreat on 26-27 February, Mr. Gas snoted that the retreat would seek to kick-start the second phase of the dialogue with political momentum. It would be informed by a summary of the proposals put forward during the first phase of the Dialogue as well as by a compilation of new proposals submitted by Member States.

Item 2: Briefing on recent and ongoing work of the ASG Advisory Group

17. The ASG Advisory Group Chair briefed the UNDG on recent and ongoing work of the ASG Advisory Group, noting that the Group had been focusing on identifying concrete strategies for how the UNDG could most effectively support implementation of the 2030 Agenda, guided by the note “UNDG delivering together in support of the 2030 Agenda.” Noting that the UNDG’s primary focus was directed at the country level, the ASG Advisory Group Chair emphasized that the UNDG would also need to work in sync at the regional and global levels with a view to integrating its work across the UN system’s pillars as well as to linking the normative and operational aspects of the UN system’s work.

18. The ASG Advisory Group Chair noted that in follow-up to the Principals Advisory Group retreat on the margins of the CEB Fall Session in November 2015, the ASG Advisory Group had been working on four concrete tools in support of the UNDG’s collective support for the 2030 Agenda, three of which were due to be endorsed by the UNDG at its present meeting: (1) a set of common messages for a strategic 2016 QCPR; (2) a proposal for a theory of change for the UNDS to function as a system for relevance, strategic positioning and results; and (3) a UNDG perspective on the implications of universality. The fourth deliverable, a discussion paper on the role of UN pooled financing mechanisms to deliver the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, was due to be completed and would be shared with the UNDG shortly. The ASG Advisory Group Chair noted that the paper could subsequently also be shared with the CEB and serve to inform the ECOSOC Dialogue.

19. With regard to other priorities for 2016, the ASG Advisory Group Chair noted that the ASG Advisory Group would remain committed to providing RCs and UNCTs with key tools such as new guidelines for the next generation of strategic UNDAFs, the completion of the Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) tools, and tackling remaining bottlenecks at headquarters in the framework of a Plan of Action for Headquarters 2.0. The ASG Advisory Group would also remain closely engaged in the ECOSOC Dialogue and the preparations for the next QCPR.

Item 3a: UNDG key messages for a strategic 2016 QCPR

20. Mr. Olav Kjørven and Mr. John Hendra, Co-Chairs of the informal group on the QCPR, which the UNDG established at its meeting on 26 June 2015, presented the draft UNDG key messages for a strategic 2016 QCPR, noting that the messages had been prepared in a broadly consultative process and with inputs from the ASG Advisory Group. They noted that following UNDG endorsement, it would be important for all UNDG members to use the messages in their individual and collective engagement in the ECOSOC Dialogue and the lead-up to the QCPR. As the Dialogue progressed, the messages would need to be further adjusted and refined over the course of the year.



21. **The UNDG endorsed the key messages for a strategic 2016 QCPR. The UNDG Chair requested the ASG Advisory Group to ensure the continuous updating and refinement of the messages in light of the evolving dialogue.**

Item 3b: Theory of Change for the UNDS to function as a system for relevance, strategic positioning and results

22. Mr. John Hendra, Senior Co-ordinator for UN Fit For Purpose, presented the draft “Theory of Change for the UNDS to function as a system for relevance, strategic positioning and results” (TOC), noting that it responded to the need for the UN development system to work in a much more integrated way and to have a common understanding of how this can be achieved. The TOC was meant to inform the formulation of the next set of UNDG Strategic Priorities, UNDG guidance and tools for UNCTs, and the second phase of the ECOSOC Dialogue. Mr. Hendra noted that the TOC had been developed in a broadly inclusive and iterative process, involving seven focus groups and over 200 staff in the field. The paper emphasized the need for continuous experimentation and innovation and identified several critical areas for greater investment including funding, leadership, capacities and mobility of staff, strategic, change management, shared metrics and evidence. Mr. Hendra noted that the development of a 2.0 version of the TOC would be a very complex undertaking that would require the full buy-in, leadership and participation from the other pillars of the UN.

23. **The UNDG endorsed the “Theory of Change for the UNDS to function as a system for relevance, strategic positioning and results” as “Version 1.0.” The UNDG, its working mechanisms and members will use the Theory of Change in support of the implementation of the UNDG Strategic Priorities and Work Plan, the preparation of guidance and tools for UNCTs, as well as in support of the second phase of the ECOSOC Dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the UN development system and the preparations for the 2016 QCPR resolution.**

24. **The UNDG agreed to explore and contribute to the development of a “Version 2.0” of the Theory of Change that would encompass more explicitly how the UNDS would work in a more integrated manner in transition and conflict-affected countries and that could serve as a collective theory of change for the entire UN system. The UNDG Chair requested the Advisory Group, with support by the Senior Co-ordinator for UN “Fit for Purpose”, to explore the feasibility of a Version 2.0 of the Theory of Change jointly with relevant parts of the UN system.**

Item 3c: Universality and the 2030 Agenda

25. Mr. Magdy Martínez-Solimán, Co-Chair of the UNDG Sustainable Development Working Group, presented the discussion note on “Universality and the 2030 Agenda,” highlighting that the note focused on the impact of universality on the UN development system based on an analysis of what universality meant for the UN system in practice – including with regard to the universal review of the 2030 Agenda; strengthening policy, programmatic, operational, and normative linkages; organizational arrangements; and engagement in High Income Countries. While some entities had stated that they did not seek to extend their footprint and operational presence – even



though they might well be committed to working in non-traditional countries and to provide services at request of all Member States – universality would ultimately have a transformative effect on the UN development system overall, including with regard to greater integration of the development, humanitarian, human rights and peace and security aspects of its work.

26. The UNDG endorsed the discussion note “Universality and the 2030 Agenda,” recognizing that it is the beginning of a process. The UNDG Working Groups, particularly the Sustainable Development Working Group, the Programme Working Group, the Business Operations Working Group, the Leadership Working Group, the Human Rights Working Group and the UN working group on Transition will follow-up on actions listed in the discussion note as per the allocation of tasks proposed therein. In doing this, they will work closely to ensure coherence among work streams and products coming out of this work.

27. DOCO will reach out to UNDG members to collect examples and best practices of UN agency legal arrangements in High Income Countries, from which other entities may wish to learn and adapt.

Item 3d: UNDG conflict and development analysis tool

28. The UNDG Vice-Chair presented the draft UNDG conflict and development analysis (CDA) tool on behalf of the Co-Chairs of the UN Working Group on Transition. He noted that the CDA tool had been conceptualized as an agency neutral tool to provide guidance to UNCTs on conducting conflict analysis to further a common understanding amongst UN personnel and to inform high-level strategy and programme design. The CDA could be conducted in a range of settings, including as part of a strategic planning process such as the development of a new UNDAF or ahead of mission deployments, in anticipation of a new programme with key conflict dimensions, or in light of a potential trigger event including major elections or outbreaks of violence. The CDA could also be applied to inform early warning systems. The CDA was not meant to represent the only approach to conflict analysis but could serve as one tool among others in the toolbox.

29. The UNDG endorsed the conflict and development analysis tool. The CDA will be presented to UN Secretariat entities to seek endorsement for the tool to be issued and disseminated as a UN tool. Alternatively, the CDA will be issued and disseminated as a UNDG tool to RCs, UNCTs and Regional UNDG Teams.

Item 3e: 2016 UNDG work plan

30. The UNDG Vice-Chair presented the draft 2016 UNDG Work Plan, noting that it had been prepared in consultation with the Co-Chairs of all UNDG Working Groups. Mr. Navid Hanif, Vice-Chair of HLCP, and Ms. Jan Beagle, Vice-Chair of HLCM complemented the presentation by highlighting synergies and complementarities of the work programmes of the three pillars of the CEB. Mr. Hanif noted that the objective of the HLCP had always been to leverage the strength of policy making based on a close feedback loop between policy making and practice. He highlighted inequality, climate change and disaster risk reduction as key areas on which HLCP and the UNDG would be working closely together in 2016.



31. Ms. Beagle noted that HLCM had successfully advanced a series of short-term results in addition to seeking longer-term transformation. She highlighted that the UNDG and HLCM had successfully worked on the Business Operations Strategy, which would need to be brought to scale in 2016 alongside a range of other supporting initiatives to drive innovation and the sharing of good practices at the country level. At headquarters level, achieving agency compliance with IATI standards would be a key priority for 2016.
32. **The UNDG endorsed the 2016 UNDG work plan. Final written comments on the work plan are due to be submitted by COB Friday 26 February. UNDG Working Groups, Regional UNDG Teams and UN DOCO will refine their work plans at the activity level on the basis of the UNDG work plan template. The 2016 UNDG work plan with key results and deliverables to be published on the UNDG website**
33. The UNDG Chair announced that there were a number of vacancies in the co-chairing of the UNDG Working Groups, including for the Sustainable Development Working Group, the Programming Working Group, the Communications and Advocacy Working Group and the Human Rights Working Group.
34. **UNDG members are requested to express their interest in co-chairing any of the four working groups by submitting the name of a nominated candidate to the DOCO Director by COB Friday 26 February. The DOCO Director will subsequently submit a consolidated list for consideration to the UNDG Chair. The appointments will initially be until the end of 2016.**
35. **The UNDG agreed to review the UNDG working mechanisms in a comprehensive manner towards the end of the year to ensure the UNDG is optimally configured to respond to the new QCPR resolution and the next set of UNDG strategic priorities.**

Item 4: AOB

UNDAF Guidance

36. The DOCO Director briefed the UNDG on the status of the development of the “UNDAF Draft Guidance Version 1.0,” noting that it called for a major strategic shift and integrated approaches in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The draft guidance had been sent to all Co-Chairs of the UNDG Working Groups, the Regional UNDG Teams, as well as the UN Evaluation Group and the Multi Partner Trust Fund Office. It would also be shared with the inter-agency expert group on the SDG indicators to ensure it was fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda. The revised draft of the guidance would subsequently be shared for feedback with the UNCTs due to prepare new UNDAFs. A final draft would subsequently be shared with the UNDG for endorsement.

UNDG Principals / ASG engagement

37. The UNDG Chair requested UNDG members to keep their respective Principals closely informed of the discussions and outcomes of UNDG meetings so as to avoid information gaps. She also encouraged all UNDG members to ensure their representation at ASG level at UNDG meetings as foreseen in the UNDG working arrangements.