



# Communicating as One

Lessons Learned from  
Delivering as One in 2007



**UNITED NATIONS**  
**DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

# Communicating as One

## Lessons Learned from Delivering as One in 2007

**Michael Kovrig**  
**Strategic Communications Specialist**  
**UN Development Operations Coordination Office**

This report summarizes and analyses the efforts of the eight Delivering as One pilots<sup>1</sup> to communicate strategically as coherent UN country teams in 2007 and early 2008. Based on the pilots' own reporting, it is clear that communications is playing a crucial role in supporting the change management process and the UN country teams' ability to deliver as one United Nations. At the same time, there are growing indications that Delivering as One is strengthening country-level communications. The effort to work together more coherently appears to have increased the role of the UN Communications Group at the country level, encouraged more strategic communications on behalf of the UN system as a whole, and raised the UN's public and media profile in the pilot countries.

While each pilot started from a different position and has found different solutions, there are many commonalities in the challenges they have encountered and practices they have developed. Overall, the pilots report that by communicating together they have adopted a more harmonized approach to the UN's work with Government, donors and other stakeholders on communication. They have created unified UN country team strategies for joint advocacy and communications covering both the One Programme and the Delivering as One change process. Communications are increasingly focused on giving key stakeholders compelling messages about the UN's role in the country, the concrete results the UN delivers, and its lasting impact on human development. The pilots have been giving greater priority to both internal and external communications and strengthening their networks and relationships with stakeholders. Joint advocacy efforts have expanded and are providing more opportunities to integrate cross-cutting issues into broader advocacy messages. The teams have found that a more cohesive UN can play a more influential role in advocacy and policy support.

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<sup>1</sup> The pilot countries are Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Viet Nam, and Uruguay. Two "self-starter" country teams, Malawi and Papua New Guinea, also provided material for this report.

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The level of dialogue and communications among UNCT members and non-resident agencies has increased, and the teams are better aligned to a common vision and set of results. The pilots note that communication is a key component of any change process, and the establishment of strengthened UNCGs or communications working groups and task forces has been a critical factor in improving the flow of information between agencies and UN staff members. Increased interaction among UN system communications officers has enhanced inter-agency understanding and knowledge, and preparing joint communication strategies, work plans, campaigns and websites has fostered a stronger sense of togetherness among communications officers.

Stakeholders' appetite for information on Delivering as One has been overwhelming. Daily requests from donors, missions from UN headquarters, and many bilateral and multilateral missions, have been very time-consuming for communication staff, while also providing many more opportunities for engagement.

## Starting Points: The Situation Before Delivering as One

### UN Communications Group Functioning, but with Limited Commitment

Before beginning to Deliver as One, the pilots report that they had UN Communications Groups, but in most cases the range of activities undertaken was small, meetings were infrequent, and the level of commitment to common communications efforts was quite limited.

Tanzania's UNCG held monthly meetings planned public awareness-raising activities together, especially for UN Day. However, the group suffered from a lack of commitment and agency focal points for communications had very limited time to dedicate to joint activities. Mozambique's communications professionals viewed their agency-specific work as their primary responsibility, and their commitment to joint activities did not match UNCT expectations. Joint activities were seen as unwanted extra work, resulting in unequal burden-sharing and defeating the purpose of the UNCG. Pakistan's UNCG met bi-monthly as an information-sharing group. Collective work was limited to planning a few events together.

Similarly, Viet Nam's communications group was also little more than an information-sharing body. It had many assignments, but few staff members took responsibility for delivering on the UNCT work plan. In the absence of accountability, efforts were based on goodwill.

One exception to this overall picture was Albania, where the team had been conducting joint public information and advocacy work for the past four years. This provided a foundation for the team to build on.

### Agencies Executing Individual Communications Strategies with Limited or no Coordination

The vast majority of communications funding and staff time was channeled into agency-specific communications strategies. These individual plans were typically unrelated to the strategies of other agencies or to the joint UN communications strategy. Agencies were often unaware of each other's campaigns and events, and did not coordinate messages. In many cases joint efforts were limited to the annual UN Day celebrations. Viet Nam also notes that aside from advocacy for the Millennium Development Goals, there were few attempts to craft coherent and effective UN campaigns and messages or to think strategically about advocacy, and consider where the UN's true strengths lie. Communications were agency-specific, informal, sporadic, needs-based, and uncoordinated.

### Limited Capacity for Strategic UN System Communications

Many of the pilots report that human resources for strategic communications (as opposed to basic information provision) was inadequate relative to their objectives. Capacity to coordinate inter-agency communications and shape a common strategy was also typically lacking. For example, in Viet Nam the Resident Coordinator's Office had only one volunteer communications officer from 2004-2006. Rwanda found that in the absence of a UN Information Center it was difficult to form a cohesive communications team.

### Internal Communications to Support Reform Not Prioritized

Prior to Delivering as One, internal communications were not a priority. In embarking on the change management process, the country teams realized that staff needed to be informed throughout the process. But senior managers typically didn't focus enough on internal communications and communications staff were not truly prepared for the scale of the task in terms of expertise, guidance or resources.

## Lessons Learned and Good Practices

An analysis of the eight pilots' reports on their experience with communicating together reveals a number of common experiences, lessons learned and successful practices.

## Leadership and Commitment: Making Communications a Priority

The full UN Country Team must agree that communications is an essential component of the change management process and also a core function of what the UN does as an advocate for policies and global norms. Mozambique found it helpful to make communicating together the fifth pillar of Delivering as One. The Resident Coordinator and the heads of agencies must see themselves as the UN's lead communicators. Buy-in from senior management is essential. Piloting a more coherent UN country team requires changing the attitudes and behavior of both institutions and individuals.

For example, Mozambique's UN team decided to include communication as a fifth element of Delivering as One (together with One Programme, One Leader, One Budgetary Framework, and One Office). The decision reflected the vital role that communication plays in the UN reform process.

The Resident Coordinator must really play the "One Leader" role, speak across agencies and issues and truly be the face of the UN in the country. After consulting with non-resident agencies, the RC speaks on their behalf in the pilot countries.

The pilots also emphasized the importance of personal commitment, teamwork, good coordination, common interests, and leadership to make the changes work. Until individuals feel empowered, the UNCG will not be empowered. You need personal dedication together with an understanding of the UNCG's value.

Viet Nam said UNCTs should question why things are being done a certain way, to see if the justification still applies. Treat the pilot seriously – try new things and push the boundaries of communications.

## Organizational Mechanisms: Strengthened UN Communications Groups

To harmonize their communications activities, the pilots found it very useful to create a UN Communications Group at the country level or strengthen existing mechanisms. These groups are based on the existing formal UNCG terms of reference, but have not been limited by them. Local circumstances and resources, and the presence or absence of a UNIC or Resident Coordinator's Office communications professional dictated different UNCG models. Pakistan noted that the UNCG plays an essential role in communications for development. Mozambique consolidated a UN Communication Working Group composed of communication officers and focal points from the UN Agencies in the country. This has led to greater cooperation and more consistent messages. The objective of this unit is to support the UNCT more efficiently in all communication-related activities related to Delivering as One while also supporting the communication needs of individual agencies. In Cape Verde, with the start of the Joint Office combining UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP, one dedicated communications officer was appointed to represent all four agencies and communicate a common message. Cape Verde subsequently initiated a UNCG to facilitate collaboration with the RC Office, UNV and the other two resident agencies, FAO and WHO, and their communications officers.

Viet Nam pursued a unique approach to building a dedicated UN Communications Team that operates as a single unit with staff members from UNFPA, UNDP and UNICEF sharing the same office and working from a joint work plan (see sidebar: “Viet Nam’s UN Communications Team”).

The pilots noted that it was very important to demonstrate clear benefits to agencies of participating in joint communications work. This requires strategic planning to ensure that UNCT communications are not simply additional work. The pilot communications teams all recommend meeting regularly to build relationships and share information consistently. Viet Nam found it effective to open up agency mandates and flagship products in cases where there is added value in working together for a big push, for example on the *Human Development Report* and *State of the World’s Children*. Tanzania noted that its Joint Government-UN Steering Committee provides oversight for external communications on the progress of Delivering as One.

**Sequencing and preparation mattered.** Viet Nam found it best to first form the communications team, then create a joint plan and strategy, and then implement the plan. Once the team had produced products and ensured that its visibility and value was clear, Viet Nam evaluated the challenges and lessons, reported back and worked to fix them. Pakistan first developed a work plan and then requested funds for it from the common transformation fund. Many of the pilots found it useful to hold a retreat to discuss communications, prioritize and develop a strategy. Retreats were most effective when they involved not only UNCT communications professionals but also senior decision-makers and communications staff from non-resident agencies.

## Viet Nam’s UN Communications Team

In the Viet Nam pilot the UN Communications Team has been operating as a single unit, with staff members from UNFPA, UNDP and UNICEF sharing the same office and working from a joint work plan. The co-located team sits and works together on a daily basis, bringing together staff, plans and budgets from UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS, UNV, and the RC Office. An additional communications officer without agency affiliation was contracted with financial support from Ireland.

The team’s experience has reinforced the strategic importance of communications to Delivering as One, but more importantly it has showed the benefits of moving from an agency-based communications model to an issue-based approach. The team has continued to meet agency priorities, provided important services to the entire UNCT (such as a news summary, weekly newsletter, and a UN website), while supporting Delivering as One with communications advice and products. Media representatives say they appreciate being able to contact a central UN hub where their enquiries, questions and requests can be managed and directed.

Viet Nam still has an informal network of all the communications officers and focal points of the other (non-participating) agencies. The wider network holds semiannual meetings to develop a joint events calendar and discuss major activities.

Following a year-end retreat to review progress and make recommendations for the coming year, Viet Nam recognized that continuing institutional challenges related to human resources, IT and budgetary flexibility will need to be addressed in 2008 if the Team is to continue on this path of innovation. A human resources consultant was hired in early 2008 to do a competency mapping exercise and needs assessment of the team to help guide next steps.

Protocols are also being finalized to clarify where the Team can support the UNCT, as well as establishing conditions for how other UN agencies can join as Viet Nam enters the One Plan 2 phase of the One UN Initiative. An Annual Report will be prepared and widely shared, highlighting lessons learned and areas of continued challenge.

**The pilots divide work by issue, sector, or audience with a task force for each.** Many of the pilots found it effective to create dedicated task forces for a particular theme or target audience. Some gave each joint programme with a communication component a communication focal point who ensures smooth information-sharing and coordination of all communication activities. Having a lead agency for each of the working groups or task forces to coordinate activities was helpful in Tanzania. Pilots used various mechanisms to create task forces. Letting communications staff volunteer for task forces that interested them was one approach.

After some initial adjustments, the shift from agency to issue-based communications tended to strengthen UNCT communications messages and products, the pilots report. They are more complete and reinforced by broader expertise. They have also helped to simplify the often confusing set-up and organization of the UN system for the public and media, providing them with the option of a single source for UN information and access. At each UNCG meeting, task forces can provide updates on achievements, plans and challenges. The RC communications specialist can provide support and be part of every task force to ensure synergy and integration of information, messages, branding, and focus.

The pilots are also demonstrating that non-resident agencies can be part of communicating together. For example, UN Albania will soon launch a joint programme with UNESCO leading and UNDP and the government as the main partners. The UNESCO Office in Venice will distribute press materials to media in Italy, expanding the reach of the country team's communications.

**Guidelines on communicating together have been helpful.** The pilots say it can be useful to draw up a set of agreed guidelines or protocols on communicating together that define the roles and responsibilities of the UNCT's communications professionals and other staff and managers. Agencies' financial responsibilities should also be defined. The guidelines could also include criteria and minimum qualifications for recruiting new communications staff. The UNCT management team should endorse these guidelines (see Annex 2: "Communication guidelines for Delivering as One in Tanzania").

## Funding, Office and Human Resources

**Pooled funding.** Tanzania found it useful to have a common budget with funds apportioned to the different task forces. Lead agencies or offices within the task forces receive the funds and are accountable for spending them and ensuring that activities are implemented. Funds are disbursed according to agency guidelines and procedures. Through UN Tanzania's One Fund, donors can finance the three elements of the One Programme, one of which is the Delivering as One Communication Strategy. Tanzania also underlined the importance for the UNCGs at country level of having a substantial budget available. There is no doubt that the funding that has been made available to UNCG Tanzania as part of the pilot (initially from a few donor countries supporting Delivering as One communications directly and this year also through the One Fund), has been a very important motivation factor and enabled the team to take joint communication to a new level. In the past, Tanzania struggled to get agencies to contribute to its limited number of joint communication activities. Additional funding has

really meant that the UNCT as well as individual agencies have benefited considerably from the new opportunities of implementing much larger-scale communication activities and enhanced networking.

In Viet Nam a One UN Support Facility has been established with UNDP as the Managing Agent to provide additional resources for change management and programme support, including innovative policy articulation as One UN, and adequate tools and capacity for effective internal and external communication through the One UN Communications Team.

**Improving Communications Capacity.** UN Mozambique plans to undertake a communication capacity assessment and capacity development to enhance its ability to apply the communication strategy and implement fully the joint communication work plan. Albania has recruited a UNV communications specialist and plans to have training on strategic communications for agency programme staff. Viet Nam is insisting on firm criteria for new recruits. Since the UN does not have the capacity at country level to train new staff on the basics of communications, new team members must be communications professionals, “able to be hired on Monday, and start working on Tuesday.”

**One Communications Office.** Sharing a common space sends a physical message that communicating together is no longer business as usual but rather a step toward a true UN communications team, one pilot observes. In Viet Nam communications officers from UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA now share a physical office. Mozambique’s UN Communications Working Group is planning to co-locate through a gradual process. One agency has offered the physical space and the entire group will have workstations to be used for the appropriate joint activities. Mozambique’s UNCT shares this vision and says it now needs stronger support to create the unit.

## Strategy

**Developing a UNCT Communications Strategy at the outset has a positive impact.** All of the pilots concluded that a common communications strategy with a UN-wide advocacy agenda is essential. The strategy should cover internal and external communications, how the UN is Delivering as One, programme communications, and advocacy issues. The pilots used communications to promote Delivering as One and strategically position the UN in the country, presenting it as a united, coordinated and efficient family of organizations working to support the national development agenda. Agency communications strategies were integrated into the overall UNCT strategy in various ways.

Not all pilots crafted communications strategies at the start of Delivering as One, and they observed that having a defined strategy from the beginning would have resolved many difficulties. While templates and generic strategies can be useful references, it’s crucial to tailor the strategy to suit the needs of the country team’s specific stakeholders and situation, they reported. Some of the pilots have already begun to evaluate their early efforts, and they recommend making evaluation part of the overall strategy.

Communications are crucial for change management and need to be an integral part of programme planning. The UNCG needs to take the initiative to discuss the objectives of Delivering as One with all staff, partners and the media. The process, results and benefits of Delivering as One and UN



programmes must be clearly and convincingly conveyed. Change management should start with a comprehensive, extensive and systematic communication campaign that has various phases in line with the phases of the change process. When this was not done, information was often not provided in time, or provided in an ad hoc manner after the fact, which was frustrating for staff and stakeholders.

The pilots recommended starting with a thorough analysis and segmentation of the UN's stakeholders and audience groups to identify the most influential decision-makers and opinion leaders, both internal and external, ranging from key donors and government officials to influential journalists and active members of the public, as well as key UN personnel at HQ and in the country team. For example, as part its Change Management Communications, Pakistan identified 15 "early converters" and opinion leaders and trained them as UN Reform Champions certified to impart knowledge on Delivering as One.

Some pilots said the communications work plan should specify the staff time that individual agencies commit to joint activities, e.g. 20%. Joint activities should also be also reflected in the respective agencies' work plans, with each activity given a designated lead agency to ensure that the product or service is delivered.

A common UN communications strategy also helped to ensure that UN representatives truly communicated as one, sharing messages and reinforcing each other with consistent statements. This did not prevent individual agencies from communicating on their particular areas. Rather, it ensured that messages were consistent and part of a strategic set of messages that were repeated through multiple channels. Pilots also noted that joint advocacy efforts provided an excellent opportunity to integrate cross-cutting issues into broader advocacy messages. Rwanda found that working together as a team in the development of the communication strategy increased inter-agency communication, knowledge of agency systems and structures as well as mutual understanding.

While it is too early to evaluate the impact of the pilots' strategies, it's clear that they are stronger when they include specific, measurable objectives and include mechanisms to evaluate progress toward them.

## Internal Communications

Staff are an important audience for general communications, because UN team members need to know what the whole team is doing and why, the pilots observed. For change management, it's even more critical. Success depends on commitment from all important stakeholders, most crucially of all, the UNCT staff. There is a need to ensure open and honest communication and regular information sharing between Heads of Agencies and staff members. It's also vital to advocate the importance and usefulness of communicating together. Malawi, a "self-starter" on working together as one, also observed that systematic internal communications is needed to ensure effective One Programme implementation and operational transformation.

The pilots conducted staff briefings, dialogues and town halls, issued internal bulletins, established an intranet, and organized other learning and training mechanisms. An email box for suggestions and questions can be useful. Differences arising from different business models and functions need to be

openly addressed through a continual exchange of views and search for common practices. Pakistan's UNCG found it useful to conduct a perceptions survey among UN staff and then organize a town hall to discuss Delivering as One. Periodic briefings to all UN staff in the country helped make sure that everyone was on the same page regarding the steps and objectives of reforms.

The pilots reported a significant increase in inter-agency communication and mutual understanding as part of Delivering as One, and this helped to build a sense of ownership. They found it important to make everyone on the UNCT feel part of the whole process. One pilot recommended delegating specific tasks to the full communications team, with clear guidelines to ensure follow-through. Tanzania said that involving every member of the UNCG in the implementation of the Action Plan is critical to ensuring that everyone plays an active role.

Some pilots tasked their UNCG with organizing change management and team building exercises to help the group to function better, think beyond individual agencies and see that joint communication benefits not only the whole UN but also agencies individually. Pakistan used 172 volunteer "champions" for Delivering as One who were trained to conduct dialogue sessions at various levels and locations. Tanzania has followed suit. Public debates were also conducted to address concerns, and UN Day celebrations brought over 1,000 UN staff members together in Pakistan to discuss the change process at a town hall meeting.

The UNCGs needed to keep up with new political and policy developments in the UN system and interpret them effectively for domestic audiences. For example, Mozambique found that "One UN" led to a misconception that agencies would be merged, and had to quickly shift its messages to "Delivering as One".

## Communications Tools and Activities

The pilots consistently report that Delivering as One led to an increase in public activities and communications products, particularly on cross-cutting issues and the coherence process.

**Key Messages and talking points:** The pilots all found it useful to generate and disseminate key messages and FAQs about Delivering as One and UN programme activities. Mozambique observed that messages on Delivering as One should focus on how the UN's capacity to support the government and other partners will improve. Others noted that messages on reform must clearly articulate the benefits for each group of stakeholders and the actions they must take.

**Joint press releases:** The pilots all employed joint press releases and announcements when communicating about Delivering as One, joint programming and other UN-wide topics. In general, they tried to issue joint announcements whenever possible. The teams found that a flexible approach was necessary, sometimes resulting in a common UN press release, or a joint release between a few agencies, or a single agency release, depending on the issue.

**Networking and partnerships:** Tanzania commented that strengthening partnerships is at the core of its communications strategy, and simplified communication is required to achieve this goal. The pilots recommended creating contact opportunities between UN counterparts and civil society through debates, seminars, workshops, and discussions around issues of wide interest. These can also include cultural developments, book festivals and artistic performances. The pilots held regular briefings for donors and Town Hall meetings for all UN Staff to ensure an adequate level of information sharing about the initiative. Some pilots also initiated consultations with government communication officers which have proven useful in ensuring that information is widely disseminated and all actors buy in to the Delivering as One process. Rwanda created a network of communication officers from the government, donors and other partners as a means to build channels of communication into larger audiences within these organizations. Rwanda emphasizes personal relations and word of mouth through these networks. These new forums for sharing information and knowledge also provide new possibilities for line ministries and government departments with previously limited contact with the UN to gain access its expertise. Pilots with UNICs also engaged with local youth and developed UN club activities around Delivering as One.

**UNCT website and email:** The pilots found it effective to create a common UN website for the country team, collecting substantive information from all agencies on their areas of work. How this has been organized varies with the local context. In some cases it is a shared site with each agency uploading content with a content management system, in others a portal linking together individual agency websites. In the latter case the portal should still be a user-friendly one-stop shop for general information about the UN. Email newsletters, electronic media releases and blogs are important parts of the website strategies. For example, in addition to re-launched UNCT website, Viet Nam's team maintains a document sharing site for public use (<http://unvietnam.wordpress.com/>) where all the key Delivering as One materials are posted. Some of the pilots also established an intranet to keep staff up-to-date. This was most effective when supported by email.

**UN Country Team identity and promotional materials:** The pilots all tried to develop a common UN Country Team visual identity and in some cases drafted design and usage guidelines for press releases, folders, business cards and signage, and other promotional items. The collective identity typically serves as an umbrella for individual agency logos and branding. The UNCT logo usually appears on all UNCT-wide communications, and together with individual agency logos in certain cases. It has not supplanted the use of agency logos, but rather is conceived as an additional visual cue that all the agencies are part of one family. The pilots have also designed various common UNCT templates for products such as press kits and brochures on the UN's work in the country.

**Delivering as One newsletter or updates:** All of the pilots created some form of newsletter or blog to update stakeholders on progress with Delivering as One. Most newsletters have been two pages long, published monthly, and focus on news and practical tips. Frequency and providing useful information are considered more important than elaborate design.

**Media relations and training:** The pilots found joint media briefings and training sessions effective. Viet Nam’s team proactively organized media field visits linked to major advocacy themes or events during the year, as well as media learning sessions where several agency voices and perspectives were brought together to serve as a resource for the media. UN Viet Nam also provided media training for UN staff in the country.

**Campaigns, briefings and events:** The pilots all conducted joint communications campaigns around Delivering as One. Additionally, their communicators worked together on other campaigns and events. The UNCG in Tanzania drew up a list of UN observances to be commemorated by the Country Team, with one lead agency expected to come up with a joint statement that describes every agency’s contribution. Uruguay organized activities intended to present the UN system as open and accessible, including a campaign to disseminate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in public places and a music performance featuring diverse artists. Pakistan also decided on certain events that are jointly implemented. Joint UN–Government press conferences were found to be a useful mechanism of demonstrating a common purpose and the UN’s relevance. Viet Nam’s communications team worked together with the other focal points to ensure that special days were not ad hoc one-off events but instead were well-grounded in other initiatives in the country and relevant to the country’s situation. Where possible the team plans to build a series of strong advocacy activities around the day, involving media through learning sessions. Key advocacy issues prioritized by the UNCT should take center stage and be “communicated as one.”

**Audio/visual products:** Albania developed a joint “UN in Albania” video documentary highlighting the UN assistance in the country with a specific focus on Delivering as One. Pakistan is in the process of developing a corporate video for Delivering as One in Pakistan.

**Media monitoring and press review:** Pilots reported it can be efficient to pool resources to monitor media and produce a press review for the entire country team. Covering media this way also helps to create the sense that everyone is part of a UN team.

## Challenges and Obstacles

The pilots report that they encountered a number of difficulties in trying to “Communicate as One”, most notably: limited willingness to prioritize communications, inadequate attention to internal communications, lack of strategic communications expertise, unclear objectives for the UNCT and Delivering as One, insufficient financial resources, and different agency policies on public information and human resources.

**Failure to prioritize communicating together:** Some pilots found that managers did not devote enough time and energy to communications as part of the change management process. The main problem was the lack of senior-level understanding of the role, potential and importance of communications for Delivering as One. At the same time, UNCG members did not give enough attention or commitment to communicating on coherence issues. In many cases change management did not start with

communication and very few joint communications activities were planned to support Delivering as One in the early months. Resolving this situation has required strong messages from senior managers.

**Unclear role for the UNCG:** The role of communicators in the UN system is not clear enough, Uruguay said. They need to have a specific role and profile as a newsroom (or news machine) installed inside the system with a mandate to hover around and pick up stories for internal and external audiences. By aligning institutional priorities with the interests of the public, the UN can develop an inter-agency understanding on what needs to be communicated and how. Uruguay is responding to this challenge by strengthening its communications team and trying to create a permanent “brainstorming climate.” Communicators need to go beyond their communications mandates and become catalytic players in the programming process. Viet Nam concluded that the informal approach applied in 2007 would have to change and become more structured.

Suggested solutions from Viet Nam include a common work plan for the year endorsed by the RC and heads of agencies, UNCT agreement on the advocacy agenda and key messages for the year, building surge capacity into the work plan, and enforcing protocols within the team with support from the RCO and agency heads. Pakistan said the UNCG should not be limited to one aspect of communications but provide a full range of services: public information, communication for development, programme communications, and internal communication. The members of the UNCG should be included accordingly.

Mozambique’s Communication Working Group said one of its greatest challenges has been to define and differentiate the activities that are being undertaken in the framework of the “Delivering as One” initiative from those that are related to the normal functions of the UN system. This has led to delays in the finalization of the Communication Strategy and its endorsement by the UNCT.

In Cape Verde, because the new UNCG had to deal with new situations, there were many missed opportunities for cooperation, sometimes causing duplication of work. As the communication issues were not planned together it was sometimes difficult to combine the existing activities and priorities. Additionally because the non-resident agencies were not included in the process, there were limited opportunities for their support. “Communication was the sum of the parts but not necessarily more.” Country-specific terms of reference for the communications group are now being developed.

**Insufficient internal communication:** Some pilots realized belatedly that internal communication should have been addressed from the start to ensure that staff feel ownership and involvement in the Delivering as One process, and to alleviate fears sparked by change. Communication with staff on the implications of the One Programme was often not sufficient to allay fears and misunderstandings during the reform process. Information was not consistently communicated to a same degree to all staff, perpetuating the perception that reform would lead to a reduction of staff. Pakistan found that the large size, the dynamics and the dispersed nature of the country team made effective information dissemination difficult. An intranet and common calendar proved to be useful organizational tools when staff are geographically scattered. Tanzania concluded that the reform process elicits uncertainty and

confronts inertia both internally and externally that resist change. Resistance from staff often arises from a perceived fear of job losses and fear of the unknown through processes such as re-profiling. In some cases, external relationships and networks may have to be redeveloped. Communicating clearly the objective and expected impacts of the reform is critical. To this effect, improved tools for information sharing have to be developed.

**Inadequate staff capacity for strategic communications:** Many of the pilots report that human resources for communications are inadequate as several agencies do not have experienced communications officers in country, and communications focal points who are not communication professionals do not necessarily add value to the UNCG. In other cases, resident agencies do not have communications focal points at all, which makes integrating them into a common strategy even more difficult. Many UNCG staff are public information officers who lack the expertise to engage in programme communication. Pakistan remarked that lack of capacity limits the team's ability to craft and execute innovative communications plans, which results in information gaps. Communications Groups felt overloaded, and joint activities were often seen as additional and unrelated to agency work.

**Human resources policies impede communicating together:** Agency-oriented terms of reference for staff are an obstacle, the pilots said, as it leads communications officers to prioritize agency communications. "If they had more time to dedicate to joint activities we could move mountains," Rwanda noted. Mozambique tried to address this issue by making joint and agency communications complementary. Viet Nam has struggled with the problem that different agencies are expected to achieve the same ends with very different levels of staff capacity. Team members often have to do work that goes far beyond their job descriptions, and are faced with dual reporting lines and multiple managers. The structure, workflow, and evaluation systems for the team are informal and based on the goodwill of staff members. Further HR challenges include differences in grading and scaling of comparable positions, different performance assessment systems linked to specific agencies that leave little to no room for joint assessments, staff motivation challenged by unclear career development prospects in the joint team set-up, and working with a team that is not built from needs to meet the demand, but is rather a compilation of existing human resources.

Viet Nam concluded that the UN needs to invest in a sustainable communications team and not depend on "as available" staffing through JPOs and short-term contracts. Joint performance evaluation tools could be helpful, as would harmonized levels and pay scales for the UN Communications Team and an improved, appropriate organizational and accountability structure.

**Bureaucratic obstacles to working together and producing common statements:** Tanzania reported that coming up with one statement at country level with inputs from all agencies concerned addresses the challenge of dealing with many messages received from different Headquarters. However, sometimes it has proven difficult to get inputs from everyone concerned and produce the joint statement to everyone's satisfaction in a timely manner. A well-structured and all-inclusive country-level statement is key to making HQs agree to the fact that agencies are no longer disseminating all the

individual agency statements to the local press. Designating a lead agency for each topic helps to address the issue of responsibility. In general, limited communications between agency headquarters has led to difficulties and needs improvement. Viet Nam observed that agencies become more open to new and different ways of doing things when the value of doing so is demonstrated.

**Agencies' graphic guidelines limit pilot flexibility in defining a collective UN identity:** Pilot communications teams have tried to develop graphic guidelines for a common visual identity for all UN agencies to be used in all external communications in the programme country. This significantly increases a coherent and coordinated communications message. However, some agencies have very strict graphic guidelines defined by headquarters, and these have become bottlenecks for fully implementing the new visual identity. The pilots called for more flexibility on graphic guidelines, at least in Delivering as One countries.

**Goodwill ambassadors for agencies do not support Delivering as One:** Many agencies have goodwill ambassadors that are used strategically to promote individual agencies. When these ambassadors arrive in a pilot country it becomes contradictory and does not support the idea of coherent communication, some pilots noted. They thought it would improve matters if the guidelines were revised and mandates broadened to enable goodwill ambassadors to promote the UN as a whole, at least when visiting pilot countries.

**Lack of clarity on how to integrate non-resident agencies into the UNCG:** This is a current challenge for Cape Verde and others. Aside from including non-resident agencies in the UNCT website, the communications team hopes to increase their contributions, particularly to results related to the One Programme, but also to broader issues such as advocating for the MDGs and showcasing how the UN can make a difference in various thematic areas. Viet Nam has grappled with how to expand the communications team in a way that makes sense and ensures continued service to invested agencies while providing support to others. The UNCG at the country level needs clear guidance on how to support non-participating agencies, theme groups and joint programmes.

**Lack of common office space for the UNCG:** This has presented impediments in Mozambique. The UNCG would like to co-locate, but currently agencies do not share an office. The second-best option is to have a workstation for the group in the Resident Coordinators Office, but since there is no space available there, an agency has offered to provide it. As noted earlier, some of Viet Nam's communications officers now share an office.

**Insufficient budget for communications:** In Mozambique's first year there was no clear budget for communication. This was resolved by agencies donating resources to meet designated activities in the work plan. Viet Nam noted that there are no formal agreements regarding cost-sharing of both activities and operations of the UN Communications Team. In general the lack of a common UNCT budget for communications is an impediment to implementing a common communications strategy, although the pilots have found a number of creative solutions through agreements on using agency resources.

## Conclusions and Requests from the Pilots

While the Delivering as One pilots have made significant progress in Communicating together, there is a clear need for greater systemic communications support to country teams. The pilots and the Development Operations Coordination Office have identified needs and requests in the following areas.

1. **Consistent messages.** Country teams striving to Deliver as One need very clear messages from headquarters that they have to stop seeing themselves only as single agencies and increasingly think and act as a system. Consistent and unambiguous messages supporting the coherence process from UN agency HQs are vital to sustain the efforts the country teams are making. These messages need to come from the SG, DSG and executive directors and be consistently conveyed down the chain of managers from HQ to country level and back again. Joint statements by senior officials on the desirability and benefits of working together as one would be particularly inspiring. Leaders should clearly articulate that teamwork will be lauded and rewarded, and explain why it's important for the UN to Deliver as One. HQs might also encourage Member States that share this priority to convey similar messages.
2. **Internal communications** are crucial to managing institutional change and were not initially made enough of a priority in many of the pilots. The UNCG and communications offices could explore ways to strengthen internal communications capacity and systems both within and between agencies and country teams, particularly on sensitive institutional topics such as working together as one. For example, there is an ongoing need for UN Development Group principals and senior managers to explain complex topics such as capacity assessments, the delineation between UNDP and UNDG governance, the mutual accountability shared by the Resident Coordinator and the UNCT, the roles of the RC and the UNDP country directors, and the strategic objectives of Delivering as One. It could be useful to form a network of communications focal points and spokespeople who are responsible for circulating and conveying messages on coherence issues. The UNCG could also encourage agencies to feature Delivering as One and related topics more frequently on intranets and in internal newsletters.
3. **Guidance on forming a UNCG-Country.** The UNCG's agreed guidance on terms of reference for forming a UNCG-Country has been very helpful. There is an ongoing need to ensure that new staff at the country level are aware of these ToRs. However, the pilots note that more detailed guidance on the mechanics, options and process for forming, organizing and strengthening a UNCG at the country level would be helpful. Country teams need expert support and training to develop integrated communications strategies that take into account their wide range of situations, resident agencies and resources (for example, what to do when a UNIC is not present). Support on how to balance communicating on both inter-agency and agency-specific work would be welcome. It would be helpful to keep an inter-agency roster of communications experts who have experience in creating UNCGs and crafting UNCT strategies and are available to advise and facilitate. The pilots are also demonstrating that non-resident agencies can be part of joint communications work. For



example, the UNESCO Office in Venice will distribute press materials to media in Italy for the launch of a joint programme in Albania.

- 4. Guidance on joint statements.** Many of the pilots have developed guidelines for issuing common UNCT statements, particularly on Delivering as One and cross-cutting issues such as the MDGs. It could be useful for the UNCG to review some of these pilot guidelines with a view to developing consensus guidance that builds upon the existing (and very helpful) UNCG-Country ToRs. Common questions are when to issue joint vs. individual agency statements, and who takes the lead, particularly in the absence of a UNIC. In some cases there are clear advantages to issuing a common UN message; other times it may be more effective for agencies to speak individually. For example, in most pilots the Resident Coordinator speaks on behalf of the UN system and the SG, and following consultations, also speaks on behalf of agencies. At the same time agency spokespeople continue to speak on their particular issues, and may also find it helpful to deliver agreed common UN messages as well. The intent of “communicating together” is to amplify the UN’s voice through consistent messages while ensuring that agencies continue to advocate for their mandates. UN agency staff need to understand they can still “sell” their agencies in terms of describing the great results they are achieving, as a basis for fundraising. The challenge is to do both. Country teams also need systems that facilitate faster and more informed decisions and approvals for common statements, particularly when responding to the news or crisis situations. Guidance could also note the importance of sharing statements in a timely manner between agencies at all levels, and to systematically circulate internally key messages from the Secretary-General and agency HQs.
- 5. Inter-agency knowledge network.** A UN system knowledge and practice network for communications professionals could help country-level staff to exchange information, messages and good practices from a deeper pool of talent. This could be supported by the UNCG and modeled on the Coordination Practice Network, MDGNet and Huritalk hosted at [www.undg.org](http://www.undg.org).
- 6. Tools, tips and training.** Country teams often request generic UN tools, tips and training on strategic communications, policy advocacy, communications for development, crisis communications, internal communications, and communications for change management. These could draw on good practices from across agencies and country teams. RC communications officers are often unclear how to get further training and would benefit from more UNCG guidance. There is also a need for communications products that summarize what the full UN development system does operationally. The UNCG and DPI could help gather this information. The most useful links and documents could be collected online and shared via an inter-agency communications network.
- 7. Delivering as One communications tools.** Country teams need tools to explain Delivering as One and efforts to increase the coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of UN development operations. Drawing on the pilots’ products, DOCO is producing generic tools and will make them available online. It would be helpful if the UNCG could review and endorse the key messages in these products.

8. **Flexible graphic guidelines and templates.** Guidelines and common templates are needed for UNCT and RC Office communications products, covering format, layout, use of logos and visual identities (separately or together), and dissemination. These would need to complement agency guidelines, not replace them. Agencies clearly need to retain visibility, distinct identities and the ability to brand their activities as important elements of fundraising strategies and speaking out on their mandates. At the same time, there is a need to convey the image of a coherent UN team working together at country level. It could be useful for the appropriate experts in agencies to discuss the areas of corporate branding where new approaches may be necessary to support working together as one in programme countries. DOCO could help to facilitate such discussions, which could eventually lead to some agreed UNCT guidelines that create a win-win result for agencies and the UN system.
9. **UN Country Team websites and RCO email aliases.** Country teams frequently request guidance on a standards and templates for developing their common UNCT web portals, which currently follow very different styles. Perhaps the UNCG could help develop guidelines. Some agencies feel strongly that Resident Coordinators and their offices need a distinct email alias to convey their impartial UN system role (they currently use @undp.org). The HLCM IT Working Group has a sub-group working on pilot IT issues, and the UNCG may wish to discuss this issue with it to ensure that the communications implications are fully taken into account.
10. **UN Goodwill Ambassadors.** In addition to advocating for their core mandates, Goodwill Ambassadors for specific agencies and themes could be encouraged to also promote the wider UN system when visiting programme countries. This could involve educating ambassadors about how their agency and its mandates are part of a larger whole, providing them with talking points on the UN, and helping them explain that being part of the UN family is one of their agency's strengths. Country teams have also expressed interest in appointing country-level UN goodwill ambassadors. For example, following the recommendation of the Secretary-General's office, the UN in Zambia recently named Marsha Moyo as the UN Millennium Development Goals Advocate for Zambia.
11. **A UN system roster** of communications specialists, graphic and web designers, audio/visual production experts, translators, facilitators, trainers, consultants, and other technical experts could facilitate support to UN Communications Groups at the country level. It appears that considerable cost savings could be quickly realized if some of these services were rendered to the UN system as whole instead of on a country basis; e.g. graphic design templates could be shared between several UNCTs. There is also a need for communications specialists to provide short-term additional support (surge capacity) to country teams developing strategies or coping with emergencies. It would be helpful to have a UNCG roster of people available to join a UNCT for a week or a month in these instances.

## Further Activities for UNCGs at the Country Level

The Delivering as One pilots had the following specific comments on possible ways to build on the existing UNCG-Country terms of reference.

- i. Regular meetings: some of the pilots found it useful to hold weekly UNCG-Country meetings during particularly intense periods of change management, campaigns or crisis.
- ii. Some pilots added communications campaigns to point (xi) in the original UNCG guidance.
- iii. UN System promotion kit: UNCG produces a UN promotion kit to be used for different target audiences and events. The kit includes brochures, fact sheets, stickers, roll ups, T-shirts etc.
- iv. Internal communication: UNCG elaborates a special strategy and plan for the specific needs of internal communications, especially in countries engaging in change management. Some activities could include an internal UN bulletin and general staff meetings and briefings.
- v. Networking: UNCG facilitates networking and information exchange among communication professionals at country level. This includes media professionals and communication professionals among UN partners such as Government, NGOs and donors.
- vi. Capacity-building: UNCG organizes training for UN communication officers in various skills essential to efficient communications. This includes writing skills, graphic design, internal communication, and web publishing. It could include Communication for Development. With its focus on communicating for results to complement the corporate communicating results, C4D would help profile the inter-agency development work. Capacity building also includes media training for the UN Representatives and Communication Officers for each agency and training in UN issues for local journalists to enhance the knowledge of the UN's work among local media.
- vii. Programme communications, communication for development, policy advocacy, and communications for behavioral impact: Where UNCGs have the capacity, they could be encouraged to integrate their communications more closely to support overall UNCT programming objectives, e.g. for joint programmes.