

# ASSESSING COMMITMENT TO THE PARIS DECLARATION

This chapter reviews the commitment expressed by UNDG members in support of implementing the PD. It builds on the evidence obtained from the five entities participating in the evaluation plus UNDG, which signed the PD on behalf of its members. The country case studies validate actions taken by these and other UN organizations and their effects in the countries. The pertinent findings from the country studies are presented in Chapter 6, except in cases where they illustrate headquarters versus UNCT actions. Throughout the review careful attention was paid to the PD's five dimensions: ownership, alignment, harmonization, results-based management and mutual accountability.

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This assessment addresses the performance of the UNDG as the principal signatory of the PD within the United Nations. Attention is also paid to the broader role played by the United Nations in pursuing economic and social development. The 2000 United Nations Millennium Declaration, the development of the MDGs, the 2002 Monterrey Consensus, and the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, as well as recent UN initiatives to overcome the fragmentation of the UN system so that it can better serve its members, give new impetus to economic and social development.<sup>19</sup> These UN actions reflect a more universal consensus than the PD, which supports the MDG but gives greater specificity on the *means* to achieve development effectiveness.

Recently, the UN system has focused on the change in the spectrum of development assistance agents—the expanded role of non-Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) donors, non-governmental organizations, charities and the private sector. It has drawn attention to an evolving aid architecture that requires renewals in policies, tools and partnerships with different bilateral and multilateral actors. It also looks to comprehensive and more long-term development interventions that bring together environment and development concerns, humanitarian assistance, crisis management and post-crisis and conflict recovery. Therefore, the UN reform process is geared not only to rationalization and better management, but also to bringing together specialized parts of the system to provide holistic support to development and simplification, harmonization and alignment of its policies and practices. This UN system-wide development clearly goes beyond the scope of this evaluation. However, attention is drawn to some UN system-wide initiatives that are evidently in support of the PD consensus (see Box 1).

## 3.2 UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT GROUP

One month after signing the PD, the Chair of the UNDG wrote to all RCs<sup>20</sup> conveying the core message of the PD. He urged the RCs and their staff to take 'effective leadership' in

19 Economic and Social Council, 'Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities of the United Nations Development System', July 2007.

20 Letter dated April 6, 2005, signed by Marc Malloch Brown, Chair, UNDG.

## BOX 1. UN SYSTEM-WIDE INITIATIVES THAT SUPPORT THE PARIS DECLARATION

Behind UNDG stand UN system-wide high-level committees (established in the late 1990s as part of the process of UN reform) that were designed to ensure alignment and harmonization of activities across the UN system. The Chief Executives Board (CEB) is supported by two high-level committees—the High-level Committee on Programmes (HLCP), and the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM). Although these committees are not directly associated with the PD, their eventual effects will support the PD goals.

The main committee corresponding to the PD context is the High Level Committee on Management, which reports to the UN Chief Executive Board for Coordination and is responsible for: coherent, efficient and cost-effective management matters that cut across the UN system of organizations; identifying, promoting and coordinating management reforms that will improve services and productivity and increase efficiency across the UN system. Specialized networks operate within the framework of the Committee: the Human Resource Network,<sup>21</sup> the Finance and Budget Network,<sup>22</sup> the Information, Communication and Technology Network,<sup>23</sup> and the recently established Procurement Network.<sup>24</sup>

In November 2006, the Independent High-Level Panel on the UN System Wide Coherence appointed by former Secretary General Kofi Annan, delivered its report 'Delivering as One'. The report includes a number of recommendations to overcome the fragmentation of the UN system so that it can deliver as one, in true partnership with and serving the needs of all countries in their efforts to achieve the MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals. UN ONE at present is being piloted in six countries (none of which was covered under the present assessment).

supporting partner countries in their efforts to implement the PD.

On July 1, 2005, the executive heads of all UNDG members approved an Action Plan for implementing the PD.<sup>25</sup> As summarized in the Chair's follow-up letter to the RCs<sup>26</sup> there were three main principles of the commitment: putting national development plans at the centre of UN country programming, strengthening national capacities, and increasingly

using and strengthening national systems. Under these three principles, the Action Plan:

- Recognized the critical role of the UNCTs in their contribution to national analytic work, as in the preparation of PRSs, including the incorporation of other commitments of the Millennium Declaration.
- Emphasized the need for synchronization of the UN country programme cycles with national planning cycles.

21 The network has two major roles: to provide strategic advice to the chief executives of the system on human resource management development, ensuring best practices across the system; and to prepare on behalf of the Chief Executive Board for coordination, input and exchange with the International Civil Service Commission, which since 1975 has been responsible for the regulation and coordination of the conditions of service of the United Nations common system of organizations.

22 The network is responsible for providing advice and strategic guidance in respect to issues of common concern to UN system organizations as a whole. These include results-based budgeting, international accounting standards, auditing and oversight mechanisms, financial reporting, programme support costs, fraud prevention, and others. Of particular relevance to harmonization under the PD is the plan of all UN system organizations to adopt International Public Sector Accounting Standards no later than 2010. The Task Force on Accounting Standards recommended the adoption of these standards in 2005. After network endorsement, the High Level Committee on Management approved adoption in November 2005.

23 The network provides advice to senior management of the organizations in respect to the long-term strategic development of information systems technology and services. It also reviews information and telecommunications standards with a view to advancing best practices across the UN system.

24 In March 2007, the High Level Committee on Management designated the Inter-Agency Procurement Working Group as the new procurement network of High Level Committee on Management, and renamed it 'High Level Committee on Management Procurement Network'. UNDP/ Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office continues to serve the network as its secretariat.

25 For an update of the Action Plan, see: UNDG, 'Implementing the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness: Action Plan of the UNDG Development Group, Mid-Year Status Report 2007'.

26 Letter dated July 22, 2005, signed by Marc Malloch Brown, Chair, UNDG.

- Urged that UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) outcomes be derived from national priorities and plans.
- Asked for review and redefinition of the concept of ‘capacity development’ to implement Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of operational activities for development of the UN system and PD.
- Urged UNDG members to amend regulations that inhibit the use of national systems for sector reporting, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), annual performance reviews, progress reports and procurement, subject to board approvals.
- Established a Working Group on Aid Effectiveness to support implementation of the PD at the country level (through the RC and UNCT system). The group unites headquarters-level staff working on aid effectiveness within all UNDG members and meets monthly.

The three principles and the Action Plan fall within the PD areas of ownership and alignment. Moreover, they contain important elements of harmonization and managing for results, and to a lesser extent, mutual accountability.

UNDG took the following actions:

- Surveyed all RCs, regardless whether their countries have signed the PD, with the Leadership in PD Monitoring Survey in order to encourage discussion on the principles of aid effectiveness underlying the PD.
- Intensified staff training on the changing aid environment and the PD.
- Included a request in the annual RC report to cover aid coordination and follow-up to the PD.
- Developed a UNDP website dedicated to aid effectiveness and internal collaboration on PD implementation, with UNDG-wide access for sharing of tools, lessons, practices and discussions.
- Facilitated RC communication with partner country governments on the roll-out of the baseline survey on the initial state of commitment to indicators in the PD on behalf of the OECD-DAC.

In sum, UNDG worked toward implementing the PD at the level of the UNDG itself (with the heads of UNDG members agreeing on an action plan) and through the RC and UNCT at the country level. In doing so, UNDG recognized that already existing instruments and processes that applied to the PD needed to be revised and improved: Common Country Assessments and UNDAFs would require changes in scope, selectivity and timing; UNDG members would have to help strengthen national capacities in order to make the PD goals of an increased role of national execution and reliance on national systems a reality. Similarly, UNDG recognized in the Chair’s letter that the aim of reducing transaction costs had already been “one of the key objectives of UNDG’s simplification and harmonization efforts started in 2002,” but that this required a new commitment, noting that “sadly, we have not made enough headway”, the July 2005 letter advocates “this situation needs to change.” While UNDG identified areas amenable for such improvements—sector reporting, M&E, annual performance reviews, progress reports, and procurement (though not disbursements or audits)—it did not express a commitment to these changes in terms of specific indicators. In addition, the letter did not focus on harmonization across UNDG members to help reduce transaction costs for partner countries; rather, the emphasis was on strengthening national systems.

Finally, in his July 2005 letter, the UNDG Chair encouraged UNCTs in partner countries that did not participate in the Paris High-Level-Forum to educate their counterparts about

the PD, “especially through the adoption of national harmonization action plans.” Here, the UNDG Chair evidenced leadership in not only implementing the PD through the UNDG members but also seeking to expand the PD to non-signatories. The number of countries that have signed the PD has grown from 91 to 121 since March 2005.<sup>27</sup>

As the Mid-Year Status Report 2007 points out, progress has been made under the UNDG Action Plan in various areas:

- UNCTs provided substantial technical support to countries in formulating, revising and implementing national development strategies or PRSs.
- UNDG established a policy network on MDGs to provide policy and operational advice to UNCTs in their technical support work.
- Changes were made to synchronize UNCT planning cycles with national planning cycles.
- UNCTs supported national partners in sector support arrangements, such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) involvement in sector wide approaches (SWAPs).
- Agencies increased efforts to use national systems on procurement, although significant variances remain.

Although the UNDG Chair’s letter of July 2005 also highlighted the need for improved harmonization among the excessive number of Project Implementation Units and the low share of UN assistance in 2006 reflected ‘on

budget’ (33 percent), there is still considerable room for improvement.

The UNDG Working Group on Aid Effectiveness recently prepared a policy paper titled ‘The UN in the Changing Aid Environment’.<sup>28</sup> The paper reiterates UNDG commitment to the PD and its active contribution at the country level through the RC system and the UNCTs. It also outlines further steps for UNDG to move forward with the PD agenda, such as the need to orient the UNDG members’ work away from “fragmented implementation toward a coherent programme framework based on national strategies.”

### **3.3 UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT COORDINATOR SYSTEM: UN COUNTRY PRESENCE**

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The system of UN RCs who chair the UNCTs<sup>29</sup> was in place before the PD. This system, together with already existing analytical and programming instruments like the Common Country Assessment, the UNDAF and the Joint Assistance Strategy, is an important vehicle for UNDG to assist in the implementation of the PD.

This assessment of the leadership role and commitment of the RC/UNCT system to the PD is informed both by the UNDG developments noted earlier in this report, the findings of the evaluation team in six countries, and a survey of the RCs carried out under the present assessment.<sup>30</sup> Overall, the survey applied to the RCs depicts a very high level of UNCT

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27 Available online at [www.OECD.org](http://www.OECD.org).

28 UNDG, ‘The UN In the Changing Aid Environment’, draft, September 2007.

29 UNCT consists of representatives of UN agencies, mainly those resident in country. However, the UNCT is also open to other UN organization representatives.

30 See Annex 5 for details on the survey. The respectable response referred to earlier underscores the robustness of the survey findings. It should be noted that the survey relates to the present status of the PD implementation and of the RC/UNCT role rather than to the changes that have been introduced since the PD was signed. Note also that all the percentage figures shown in the following discussion aggregate the ‘adequate’ and ‘high’ ratings by the RCs.

commitment to the PD: 90 percent report commitment as ‘adequate’ to ‘very high’ in signatory countries (SCs) and 100 percent in non-signatory countries (NSCs).<sup>31</sup> The most frequent supporting comment was, “UNDAF is fully based on national development plans.” As this assessment of the RC/UNCT system in terms of the five PD dimensions shows, this optimistic self-evaluation contrasts with the more critical RC views on the state of progress under the PD by partner countries and donors.

**Ownership:** Prior to the PD, country ownership was already at the heart of the UNDAF, at least in the numerous countries where the UNDAF relied fully on national development strategies and programmes. The RC answers in the survey indicate that such country ownership commitment in practice is not that clear cut: Only 47 percent of RCs from SCs (and 44 percent from NSCs) report that in their country “overall national development strategies and programmes [were] monitored and linked to the budget;” 53 percent of RCs from SCs indicated that “strategies are prepared in a participatory way, including broad segments of civil society” while only 38 percent from NSCs report the same. The difference in ownership between SCs and NSCs is even more pronounced when it comes to “participation of civil society in the preparation of national strategies:” 62 percent of RCs from SCs estimate civil society participation as ‘adequate’ or higher, while only 31 percent from NSCs report the same. This is one of the strongest indicators that RCs and UNCTs face greater challenges in their development assistance tasks in NSCs.

The experience of the six countries covered by this assessment confirms that UNDAFs were reliant on the national development strategies

and programmes—the first step toward agency programmes and strategies that support national development strategies. Nevertheless, concerns remain regarding the strength and coherence of national programmes, as these were found to vary considerably across countries.

**Alignment:** The main progress on alignment by the UNCT took place with respect to development strategies, including aligning the time periods of national development plans and UNDAF. The results of the survey noted that: “donors align [adequately/highly] with country strategies,” 65 percent in SCs and 53 percent in NSCs; but are reluctant “to use strengthened country systems,” 38 percent in SCs and 21 percent in NSCs; while “countries strengthen development capacity with donor supports,” 45 percent in SCs and 43 percent in NSCs.

The country case studies report that UNCTs have played a positive role in strengthening alignment across the agencies and with the partner country, but variations in agencies’ procedures, even on simple matters such as planning cycles, were still the rule. This illustrates the limitations of a UNCT in aligning individual agencies within the specific country context.

**Harmonization:** Progress in harmonization has proven to be rather difficult. This is reflected in the RC responses, with only 25 percent in SCs and 13 percent in NSCs reporting that “donors [among which UNDG members are included] implement common arrangements and simplify procedures” at an adequate or higher level. Regarding “a more complementary division of labour,” 40 percent of the RCs in both SCs and NSCs found an adequate or higher level of donor actions.

31 Survey question: “To what extent has the PD’s emphasis on demand-driven development cooperation been reflected in UN development policies, programmes, processes, systems and procedures?” The difference between the results of the responses from SCs and NSCs is hard to explain, but it is clear that the reported commitment is very high across the two types of countries.

The country studies show that partner countries consider harmonization and improved alignment as critical to obtaining cost savings in development assistance and improving development aid effectiveness. In particular, savings were expected through harmonized programme implementation, including: budget and annual work programme; selection, recruitment and remuneration of project personnel; procurement and financial management, including accounting and auditing; and M&E. Feedback from the country visits reflect considerable frustration in this regard, including UNDG members whose RRs are caught between their institution's procedures and the desire at the local level to have greater flexibility for harmonization vis-à-vis other agencies and the government.

The initiative taken by the four Executive Committee (ExCom) members of UNDG<sup>32</sup> toward a Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT)<sup>33</sup> illustrates the complexity of harmonizing a particular area of operational activity, even across a small number of UN organizations. However it also shows that it is possible, especially when there is leadership and acknowledgement across organizations of the need for such harmonization. Progress on HACT has been limited in the case studies countries, but heads of UNDP regional bureaux have reported progress among other countries.<sup>34</sup>

At the same time, some aid recipients in partner countries have expressed concerns that the goal of increased cost effectiveness could be used as a rationale to reduce Official Development Assistance (ODA).<sup>35</sup> Another politically sensitive

concern is that harmonization is seen by some as a broad move toward direct budget support (DBS), especially from bilateral sources, resulting in a need for public disclosure at the national level and reminiscent of colonial-type relationships. However, others found DBS a welcome instrument for getting away from the constraints imposed under project and programme assistance.

**Managing for results:** The RCs report in the survey that the link “between country programming and an accepted results framework” is now adequate or better in 52 percent of the SCs and 40 percent of the NSCs. At the same time, RCs consider donors’ reliance on countries’ results-oriented and monitoring frameworks as very weak. It was ranked adequate or better in only 20 percent of cases (with only a two percentage point difference between SCs and NSCs).

The country case studies confirm that systematic strengthening of national statistical offices is a decisive factor in providing timely information for results-based management, critical to the PD’s objective of Managing for Results. Progress in this appeared strongest in Ethiopia. Sweden’s 15 years of support in building the national statistical system in Laos is another illustration of effective long-term assistance.

**Mutual accountability:** The RCs in the survey responded that in 62 percent of the SCs and 43 percent of the NSCs “donors provide transparent and comprehensive information on aid flows.” RC annual reports for the countries visited were found helpful in presenting such

32 UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP.

33 “The Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers to Implementing Partners (HACT) was launched in 2005 by the Executive Directors of the UNDG ExCom agencies as a clear and specific response to the Paris Declaration on Aid effectiveness. In particular, it promotes our partners’ self-reliance and the use of national system and procedures, and provides for more systematic efforts to strengthen national capacities.” From a letter from UNDG to RCs, dated 15 October 2007.

34 A good example: the meeting of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean with the evaluation team was dominated by a presentation of the extensive Region’s experience with HACT.

35 There are many dimensions to this fear as illustrated by the comment that greater efficiency may mean dismissal of aid workers.

information on UNCT related aid flows. RCs were less sanguine about the adequacy of partner countries' budgets and reporting procedures: 49 percent in SCs and 33 percent in NSCs.

The feedback from the country case studies suggests that there is a long way to go to achieve the PD objective of joint assessments of mutual progress in implementing agreed commitment on aid effectiveness. Moreover, feedback from case-study countries included broad concern about donor commitments in regards to both level and predictability of support.

### **3.4 UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT GROUP MEMBERS**

This evaluation reviewed the performance of the five very different UNDG members: UNDP; UNIFEM, which is attached to UNDP and belongs to the UN Programmes and Funds; UNAIDS, which is a Joint UN Programme; IFAD, a Specialized Agency that also belongs to the International Financial Institutions; and UNECA, one of the five Regional Commissions that report to the Economic and Social Council. Their experience in implementing the PD captures that of a broad range of UNDG organizations. The team also found sufficient evidence of the efforts made by UNFPA to further illustrate the experience of the participating entities.

#### **3.4.1 UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)**

UNDP, the head of which chairs the UNDG, was closely associated with the PD from the start and undertaken the PD commitments on a broad basis. In parallel, UNDP relations with

the DAC during the past two years have been up-scaled substantively. Through its Bureau for Development Policy and Bureau for Resources and Strategic Partnerships, collaboration has been diversified and the new strategic engagement has affected a number of areas relating to the PD.<sup>36</sup> UNDP is now a member of the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness and Board observer, and on behalf of the UN system, UNDP is member of the Working Party's Steering Committee for the preparation of the Ghana 2008 High Level Forum.<sup>37</sup> It is also a member of the Joint Venture on Monitoring PD that consists of 14 DAC members and acts as Secretariat for the Joint Venture on Procurement.

UNDP has supported the DAC outreach and capacity development activities, co-organized a panel on the PD during the 2005 World Summit with the DAC and the World Bank (WB). It has facilitated OECD-DAC partner-country participation in Bolivia, Ghana, Mali, Nicaragua, Senegal, South Africa, and Uganda. UNDP/UNDG also supported the OECD-DAC PD Baseline Survey field testing and roll-out.

UNDP organized a series of regional workshops<sup>38</sup> on PD implementation (challenges, opportunities and lessons learned) in collaboration with development partners<sup>39</sup> that advocated for PD principles and commitments, capacity development opportunities for partner countries and partnerships. Moreover, the UNDP Community of Practitioners on Aid Effectiveness and the DAC facilitation process have strengthened partnership and collaboration with developing countries on the aid effectiveness agenda. This effort is now being extended to the civil society organizations.

36 Fragile states/Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery; Managing for Development Results and Evaluation/ OSG and Evaluation Office; capacity development, aid effectiveness, procurement/Bureau for Development Policy /Capacity Development Group; public finance management/Bureau for Development Policy /PRG.

37 Letter to RCs, dated 17 July 2007, signed by Olav Kjørven, Assistant Administrator and Director Bureau for Development Policy

38 Western Balkans, West Africa, Asia Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Arab States.

39 WB, African Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, OECD-DAC and national governments.

At headquarters, UNDP's Bureau for Development Policy now provides overall support for an effective UNDP engagement with DAC. Its Capacity Development Group prepares an annual report on Capacity Development and Aid Effectiveness, with focus on the achievements on PD implementation. Within the context of UNDG's Action Plan, UNDP has established a framework for follow-up to the PD that has become a cross-cutting project for the Bureau for Development Policy.<sup>40</sup> The work programme of the Capacity Development Group covers all areas of the PD, with most of the workshops focused on Africa.

Through the RC/UNCT system, UNDP has intensified efforts to support alignment and harmonization in Cambodia, Malawi, Nicaragua, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, and Viet Nam. Areas of intervention relate to: employing PRSPs as frameworks for planning; programming and financing the MDG targets at the country level in a more integrated and long-term manner; supporting existing MDG costing initiatives; aid coordination mechanisms and facilitation of donor-recipient country partnerships for resource alignment and results; development of specific aid management and monitoring tools; support to capacity development in DBS environments, sector-wide approaches and procurement.

Finally, UNDP's Bureau for Development Policy/Capacity Development Group has addressed effectiveness measurement under its project, 'Aid Effectiveness for Reducing Poverty and Achieving the MDGs—UNDP Support to Developing Countries'.

**Ownership:** Within the UNCT, UNDP has tended to lead the work on UNDAF and respected the UNDAF framework in preparing its own Country Programme Document. Consistent with the PD on ownership, UNDP "respected partner country leadership and helped strengthen their capacity to exercise it"<sup>41</sup> through a wide range of capacity development programmes, often in partnership with other donors. The strength of country ownership, however, varied significantly across the country cases. UNDP's role was more demanding in countries with weaker capacities.

**Alignment:** UNDP experience has been that common ownership around country development policies and strategies, and support from UN organizations as well as bilateral and other multilateral donors, has been strongest in crisis situations. Examples of joint programming were found in Avian Flu (in Lao PDR) and support to election processes (in Mauritania and Ukraine). Alignment across organizations in crisis situations has been more compelling than for long term development. For example, in humanitarian work, there already exists a high degree of joint planning and programming, consolidated appeals for funding, etc., among UNHCR, World Health Organization (WHO), World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF and others.

When it comes to alignment on procurement, UNDP's policy is to prefer National Execution Modality.<sup>42</sup> UNDP works with countries to assess if their procurement systems are in line with international procurement practices, then encourages the use of UNDP National Execution Modality Guidelines. This modality

40 'Aid Effectiveness for Reducing Poverty and Achieving MDGs—UNDP Support to Developing Countries'. UNDP Bureau of Development Policy, Project No. 50520.

41 Paris Declaration, para 15.

42 Adopting this new management approach UNDP had to deal with the realities of changes affecting the aid environment: Changing role of UNDP from mainly funding and implementing downstream activities to emphasis on upstream activities involving advocacy, policy support and capacity strengthening and adopting National Execution (NEX) as a predominant mode of delivering assistance.



was in use long before the PD, but PD appears to have strengthened this approach.<sup>43</sup> In some cases, UNDP has worked with countries to improve their procurement procedures and system.

**Harmonization:** UNDP has used a number of opportunities to promote harmonization within the UN system. Some of the examples include: Common Financial Regulations and Rules (five organizations have harmonized their regulations related to procurement); UN common coding system; common procurement reporting format; and a common database of suppliers (United Nations Global Market, adopted by 12 UN organizations); and, as previously noted, the effort made with the three other ExCom members of UNDG to harmonize disbursements under HACT.

**Managing for results:** Results-based management has been systematically built into most UNDP programmes in recent years. One of the most visible elements of the approach was the adoption of Multi-year Funding Frameworks, with strategic goals designed to help focus the programme and improve communication with external stakeholders, particularly national governments. Alignment of country office programmes with strategic goals was further promoted by a shift of focus from project outputs to outcomes.<sup>44</sup>

**Mutual accountability:** Reporting on UNDP programmes is a standard procedure. The country case studies expressed positive attitudes regarding UNDP reporting and reliability.

### 3.4.2 UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN (UNIFEM)

UNIFEM is the women's fund of the United Nations. It has the dual mandate of supporting gender equality at the country level in line with

national priorities as well as promoting stronger support by the UN development cooperation system for gender equality and women's empowerment. For UNIFEM, aid effectiveness implies addressing gender inequalities in development. UNIFEM sees a major opportunity for increased emphasis on implementation of national commitments to gender equality in the context of the PD principles' (national ownership, alignment and harmonization).

UNIFEM works towards more coordinated support for gender equality and women's empowerment by the UNCTs and other development partners. With 15 sub-regional offices and programme offices in approximately 40 countries, UNIFEM often works through networks and UNCTs to provide support and technical expertise. Since late 2005, UNIFEM has been focusing on national, regional and global initiatives to strengthen the gender equality dimension of implementing the PD. To a large extent, these initiatives have been aimed at education of advocates for gender equality.

The following are the key achievements by UNIFEM at the global, regional and country levels:

- **Global:** UNIFEM has developed a strategic partnership with the European Commission (EC). In November 2005, UNIFEM and EC cosponsored the first global gathering on gender equality and the PD, bringing together government and civil society partners to discuss opportunities for accelerating progress on gender equality. UNIFEM is an observer to numerous OECD-DAC working parties and networks (including GenderNet and GovNet), which have commissioned background analysis and organized meetings

43 UNDP procurement under National Execution during 2006 was \$1.13 billion, or nearly 48 percent of total procurement under its programmes.

44 UNDP, Evaluation of Results-based Management in UNDP. Evaluation Office 2007.

to examine the challenge of ensuring that gender equality and human rights are advanced through implementation of the PD. With the International Labour Organization (ILO) as part of the EC/UN programme, UNIFEM is supporting creation of a website on gender equality and aid effectiveness ([www.gendermatters.eu](http://www.gendermatters.eu)).

- **Regional:** UNIFEM has convened regional consultations<sup>45</sup> in nearly every region in which it works to bring together gender equality advocates from national mechanisms, women's networks, ministries of finance and planning, relevant government departments, UN organizations and bilateral donors. These regional consultations were designed to support greater knowledge, demand and partnerships related to gender equality and aid effectiveness. A set of working papers has been produced from these workshops to support stronger attention to gender equality at country level.
- **Country:** UNIFEM engages with the PD at the country level in two ways:
  - A new programme 'EC/UN Partnership on Gender Equality for Development and Peace' is being implemented in 12 pilot countries: Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Suriname and Ukraine. The purpose of the programme is to provide concrete evidence that addressing gender inequality contributes to sustainable, effective development and to create a demand at the country level for attention to gender equality in the context of PD implementation.

➤ UNIFEM also supports coordination and capacity development on gender equality in a number of areas related to the PD that are described under the sections on national ownership, alignment, managing for results, and mutual accountability.

With regard to the five PD principles UNIFEM has made the following contributions.

**Ownership:** At least 120 countries have developed national plans for women's empowerment or national laws and policies on specific sectoral issues. Over the past three years, UNIFEM supported efforts in 27 countries in this area. UNIFEM also supported legal and policy work in 52 countries and on democratic governance in 14 countries. This work was done as part of coordinated effort of the UNCTs and other partners. The plans are nationally owned but are often under-funded. UNIFEM has made it a high priority to support initiatives to mainstream gender equality commitments into national plans and other processes such as PRSPs, National Development Strategies, Joint Assistance Strategies and MDG processes. Since 2001 (prior to the PD), UNIFEM has supported 30 countries with Gender Responsive Budgeting.

**Alignment:** At country level, UNIFEM contributes to the formulation of UNDAF, which in recent years has increasingly been aligned to national development strategic frameworks, MDGs and sectoral focus of which national gender policies and action plans are key. UNIFEM engagement in the UNDAF processes has increased from 14 in 2004 37 to 42 in 2006.<sup>46</sup> UNIFEM has supported stronger gender equality dimensions in UNDAFs through

45 Held in Burundi, Djibouti and Ghana in 2006 and in Kazakhstan, Indonesia and Zambia in 2007.

46 UNIFEM, 'Report to the 46th Session of the UNIFEM Consultative Committee', 2006.

chairing. UNIFEM undertook two reviews of the gender dimensions of UNDAFs in 2002 and 2005 and has provided feedback to the UNDG on the findings as well as guidance on how to strengthen gender equality in UNDAFs overall.

**Harmonization:** UNIFEM has worked closely with UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA to develop guidance for staff on complementarities in the work of the four organizations in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment at the country level.

**Managing for results:** UNIFEM has promoted the use of disaggregated data and gender indicators in planning and programming frameworks in close working partnerships with regional commissions (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and UNECA). It supports efforts to bring statistical producers and statistics users together. This contributes towards monitoring the performance of public policies on gender equality. In its internal work, UNIFEM has developed a guide to results-based management from a gender-equality and human-rights based perspective and provides training to staff and partners using this methodology, which it has also shared with other UN organizations.

**Mutual accountability:** UNIFEM supports the work of gender equality advocates both in government and in civil society organizations to ensure accountability of both development partners and national governments for global commitments to gender equality. UNIFEM is placing stronger emphasis on building internal and partner capacity on gender-responsive evaluation including support for networks such as the African Evaluation Network. UNIFEM has had important experience convening multi-stakeholder gender equality evaluations involving

a number of donors and national partners (for example, in Rwanda and Afghanistan) and has prioritized this and peer evaluations with sister UN organizations in line with the PD in its Strategic Plan 2008-2011.

### 3.4.3 JOINT UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

UNAIDS is a special UN entity that is the collaborative AIDS-related programme of 10 UNAIDS cosponsors (ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, WFP, WHO and the WB) and the UNAIDS Secretariat. It is guided by a Programme Coordinating Board, a Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations and a Unified Budget and Work Plan. UNAIDS was assigned the role of a facilitator and mediator for all partners in country-led efforts to enhance national AIDS responses. This work is carried out through the Secretariat and UNAIDS offices at country level. UNAIDS, with its partners, has developed an overall vision for the AIDS response as well as a number of policy instruments and guidance papers in support of these processes.

As UNAIDS noted in a meeting earlier this year, it considers itself well ahead of the PD agenda in that it was already working on universal principles that later gained global recognition with the PD principles and the UN Reform initiatives and deliberations: "UNAIDS was born 10 years before its time. Had it been born now, it would not have faced so many of the difficulties it did in the beginning."<sup>47</sup> This self-assessment in terms of adherence to the PD principles is based on the following:

- In April 2004, a set of guiding principles for national AIDS responses, known as the 'Three Ones' principles were endorsed by national and international partners and institutions.

47 UNAIDS and UN Reform, '20th Meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board', Provisional agenda item 3.1, Geneva, Switzerland, 25-27 June 2007.

They included: One agreed HIV/AIDS Action Framework that provides the basis for coordinating the work of all partners; One National AIDS Coordinating Authority, with a broad-based multi-sectoral mandate; One agreed country-level Monitoring and Evaluation System. The Three Ones became widely accepted as the optimal architecture to ensure the most efficient use of resources, and to ensure rapid action and results-based management in national AIDS responses. However, although the principles provided overall guidance, they were soon considered insufficient to efficiently support scaling up efforts. In June 2005, the Global Task Team on Improving AIDS Coordination Among Multilateral Institutions and International Donors was launched. It provided a number of specific recommendations for implementing the Three Ones. Through its recommendations for empowering national ownership, alignment and harmonization and stressing the need for a more effective multilateral response and accountability and oversight, it piloted key PD themes from an AIDS-response point of view.<sup>48</sup> It also reiterated the UNAIDS Secretariat mandate to lead a process with UNAIDS cosponsors to clarify and cost a UN system division of labour for technical support to assist countries to implement their annual priority AIDS action plans.

- UNAIDS contribution to the alignment and harmonization arrangements recommended by the Global Task Team appeared in the

Consolidated UN Technical Support Plan for AIDS. The plan addresses implementation blockages based on the comparative advantages of the cosponsors and a rational division of labour and foresees the identification of lead organizations for each technical support area.<sup>49</sup>

- The UN Secretary-General further supported these processes in December 2005 when he directed the RCs “to establish joint United Nations Teams on AIDS with one joint programme of support.” Directions were given for the teams to work under the authority of the RCs and the overall guidance of the UNCT to be facilitated by the UNAIDS Country Coordinator.<sup>50</sup>
- In 2007, UNAIDS and the WB launched the Country Harmonization and Alignment Tool (CHAT).<sup>51,52</sup> The CHAT is harmonized with key principles of the PD monitoring framework. At the country level, CHAT is meant to provide detailed qualitative information on participation, harmonization and alignment as well as on organizational processes and relationships, and the roles and functions of both national and international partners in the national AIDS response. At the global level, CHAT reports will be used to identify international trends and gaps related to partner support for the international AIDS response.
- Another key tool is the Unified Budget and Workplan that unifies in a single two-year strategic framework the coordinated AIDS

48 The Global Task Team, ‘A pathway to implement the “Three Ones”, Opportunities for Scaling Up the Response to HIV at Country Level’, Guidance Note.

49 The Lead Organization—either a Co-sponsor or the Secretariat—was envisaged to be the single entry point for government and other relevant country-level stakeholders requiring support within a particular UNAIDS technical support area. The Lead Organization would be primarily responsible for coordinating the provision and/or facilitation of this technical support, as identified in the Technical Support Division of Labour.

50 Letter from the Secretary General, Koffi Anan to UN Resident Coordinator of 12 December 2005.

51 ‘Country Harmonization and Alignment Tool (CHAT)’, Geneva, Switzerland, June 2007.

52 Field testing of the pilot CHAT was carried out in seven countries (Botswana, Brazil, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, Nigeria, Somalia, and Zambia) and extensive involvement of national civil society was ensured in addition to full engagement and feedback elicited from national and international partners in the piloting countries.

actions of the 10 UNAIDS sponsors and the Secretariat. It is meant to serve as a framework for monitoring and assessing outcomes of UNAIDS efforts and to promote cohesiveness in tracking and reporting and access to information of the co-sponsors. It was developed through a collaborative process involving all co-sponsors and the Secretariat.<sup>53</sup>

Since its creation, UNAIDS has been mandated and has worked for principles that are in line with the PD. The PD reinforced these efforts and UNAIDS' role at the country level when other development partners were mandated together with partner countries to engage in the implementation of joint, concerted and efficient interventions.

**Ownership:** Ownership was promoted by supporting the formulation of National AIDS Strategies and multi-stakeholder national coordination platforms chaired and facilitated by national stakeholders. The channelling of funds through the Global Fund constituted a particular challenge to joint coordination efforts in many countries. This is because the Global Fund structures have worked in parallel with other national coordination fora supported by UNAIDS, such as the National Aids Councils. Global Fund grant recipients have tended to be empowered, typically Ministries of Health, and sometimes lose sight of overall national response needs and efforts.

**Alignment:** Efforts toward alignment have been supported by the Joint Teams, in cooperation with other development partners, through established country team/working groups in most countries. These have facilitated an

enhanced dialogue with development partners on substantial issues relevant to national strategies. UNAIDS has also, in line with the 'Three Ones' vision, been a key advocate for joint monitoring and evaluation systems including the institution of a regular joint review of progress towards the main AIDS related goals. A total of 75 Joint Teams have been created so far as well as 110 country teams. Policy and guidance papers have been put at the disposal of these groups.

**Harmonization:** These structures have also formed an important platform for harmonization efforts and joint programming.<sup>54</sup> The CHAT tool was developed to help national authorities and their partners assess the engagement of country-based partners in the national response and the degree of harmonization and alignment among international partners.

**Managing for results and mutual accountability:** CHAT is also relevant for ensuring focus on results and helping to form a basis for national processes of mutual accountability for performance in national AIDS responses. Initiatives to put more specific accountability mechanisms in place, such as individual accountability related to job performance and joint accountability related to the division of labour among agencies and how they are supporting national processes, are still to be elaborated.

#### 3.4.4 INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (IFAD)

IFAD was active in the drafting of the PD and signed the Declaration. In addition, IFAD has participated in other fora that support the principles of the PD including: the Initiative on UN System-wide Coherence (on which the

53 '2006-2007 Unified Budget and Workplan. Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Framework'.

54 "No other UN entity serves such a cross-cutting function as UNIADS, rallying disparate UN bodies, including the World Bank, around a common cause and exemplifying the potential for a reformed UN system," 20th Meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board, 25-27 June 2007.

President of IFAD was a member of the High-level Panel); the OECD-DAC International Finance Institutions Joint Venture on Managing for Development Results, which promotes harmonization of frameworks for measuring and monitoring development results;<sup>55</sup> and co-sponsored the Third Round Table on Managing for Development Results held in Hanoi in February 2007. IFAD is also participating in all eight One UN country pilots and plans to outpost two CPMs who will be located in two of these countries.

The President of IFAD has impressed on the importance of following up on the PD principles. He emphasized that as a signatory to the PD, IFAD was committed to working with governments and other development partners to fulfill the PD partnership commitments, and that the interface with the UN family take place foremost at the country level.<sup>56</sup> He ensured that IFAD adopted a systematic approach to integrate PD principles in the full range of its activities.<sup>57</sup> The recent report on IFAD's development effectiveness devotes a full Chapter to 'Progress in Implementing the Partnership Commitments of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness' and draws on the 2006 survey organized by OECD-DAC to monitor progress on the PD, concluding that IFAD already conforms with many of the PD commitments.<sup>58</sup>

Unlike most of the larger UN organizations and International Finance Institutions, IFAD does not have a tradition of country representatives. Its CPMs are mostly based at headquarters.

However, through its three-year Field Presence Pilot Programme, IFAD did establish a presence in 15 countries based on locally recruited, highly qualified professionals. While the initial pilot programme was to close at the end 2007, it will now continue with a slight increment of CPM out-postings. IFAD's in-country persons are mostly located in UNDP offices, though in some cases they are located in Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) or WFP bureaus. As a result, a closer interaction at the level of the UNCTs may be observed over the past two years. In the many countries that do not have an IFAD country presence, CPMs from Rome continue to join UNCTs as necessary. The lack of permanent representation at the country level has limited the IFAD's ability to play the full partner role that would be necessary to ensure that rural development gets appropriate attention in the UNCTs. The feedback from IFAD country managers has been that in many countries, UNCTs focus mainly on the social and humanitarian dimensions of development while agriculture and rural development are relegated to secondary place. IFAD considers that a more balanced approach between social and production oriented development is needed in countries with large rural poverty.

Against this background, IFAD has sought to work closely with its sister agencies in Rome, FAO and WFP. IFAD has pursued harmonization initiatives with respect to four areas: agricultural investment; policy formulation, capacity development, knowledge management and advocacy; emergency and rehabilitation; and administration.

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55 The International Finance Institutions Working Group on Managing for Development Results is producing a joint annual report on their own performance and effectiveness through the Common Performance Assessment System. IFAD is using some of the assessment system's indicators for benchmarking its own performance.

56 This was confirmed in a report to the IFAD Board. 'IFAD'S Participation in the Harmonization Initiative and the 2005 Paris High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness', 18-20 April 2005.

57 'IFAD's Strategic Framework 2007-2010'. Report to Executive Board 12-24 December 2006. 'Results Measurement Framework for reporting on progress achieved against the IFAD Strategic Framework 2007-2010'. Report to Executive Board, 11-12 September 2007

58 'Report on IFAD's Development Effectiveness', Report for Executive Board, 11-13 December 2007.

Assessment of the administration focus was reported on at the September 2007 Executive Board.<sup>59</sup> The three other areas will be reported on at the Executive Board in December 2007.

Commitments to donor harmonization at the country level have been more difficult to achieve: division of labour amongst international organizations is proving to be a complex issue. To date, there have only been a limited number of Joint Assistance Strategies. IFAD, with its limited country presence, has participated in Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia and the United Republic of Tanzania, where it signed a memorandum of understanding with the government and its development partners that defines ways to develop and implement the Joint Assistance Strategy.

**Ownership:** A unique feature of IFAD is that it is also an International Finance Institution and provides loans to countries for projects that are implemented by the governments. IFAD's country strategy and programming instrument, the Country Strategic Opportunities Paper, is now prepared in close cooperation with country representatives. This process, which started before the PD, has advanced to a point where IFAD's Board members have noted that management may be relying too much on such inputs. IFAD's observation on ownership is that the PD has stimulated dialogue at the country level on how to improve the quality of aid. It has also encouraged donor agencies to increasingly use country systems, thus empowering national institutions.

**Alignment:** Progress has been less pronounced in this area. Alignment with UNDAFs has been handicapped by IFAD's limited country

presence and the fact that the UNDAFs often make little reference to agriculture and rural development. As a result, IFAD signatures in UNDAF have not been frequent. Conversely, there is now frequent use of local procurement systems for IFAD projects, where such systems meet IFAD requirements.

Alignment with other donors has become more important with IFAD's renewed efforts at co-financing. However, the new initiatives to obtain co-financing from other donors, have resulted in more parallel, rather than joint, financing. This reflects continuing reluctance by many donors to use a fully harmonized approach.

**Harmonization:** In general, IFAD does not use its funds for DBS. Therefore, harmonization has been pursued most systematically through SWAPs. IFAD introduced a new policy for SWAPs in 2005<sup>60</sup> and engages actively in existing agricultural SWAPs in Honduras, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Tanzania, and Uganda. Experience with agriculture and rural development SWAPs is mixed.<sup>61</sup> Although they have contributed to a more systematic dialogue between donors and government, strengthened government leadership and improved coordination among donors, there have been only a limited number of agricultural SWAPs to date, and traditional projects continue to be dominant in the sector. Similarly, IFAD has found it difficult to move more broadly toward DBS because the goods and services for the beneficiaries under its loans (e.g., supply of inputs, building of small infrastructures, marketing services) are not well suited to be provided by government. Thus alternative channels to private sector, municipalities and the like are being sought.

59 IFAD, 'Collaboration on Administrative and Processing Work between FAO, WFP and IFAD', 2007.

60 IFAD, 'Sector Wide Approaches for Agriculture and Rural Development', IFAD Policy, 2005.

61 Evans et al., 'Formulating and Implementing Sector-Wide Approaches in Agriculture and Rural Development – Synthesis Report', Report to the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development, Overseas Development Institute, 2007.

**Managing for results:** As part its 2005 Action Plan, IFAD has introduced a comprehensive set of results-oriented management instruments with a corresponding reporting hierarchy, including Results-Based Country Strategic Opportunities Programmes (RB-COSOP), Divisional Management Plans and a Results Measurement Framework. A major deliverable of the RB-COSOPs relates to harmonizing results management tools with partner countries' emerging Performance Assessment Framework performance evaluation.

**Mutual accountability:** IFAD is engaged in a variety of relationships that impact aid effectiveness. For example, IFAD is a member of consultative groups such as Consultative Group to Assist the Poor and is undertaking a joint evaluation with African Development Bank on Agriculture and Rural Development in Africa. In addition, IFAD participates in some UNDAFs and has recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the African Development Bank on moving towards mutual accountability in western and central Africa. In addition, annual reviews of RB-COSOP implementation are expected to involve other in-country donors. At the project-level, emphasis is placed on ensuring increased beneficiary participation in interventions targeting activity planning, implementation and M&E. Efforts are also being made to provide full disclosure of AWPBs in projects and assess implementation progress and impact.

#### **3.4.5 UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA (UNECA)**

UNECA has a dual role as the regional arm of the UN and as a key continental institution along with the African Union and the African Development Bank. The pressing nature of the development challenges facing Africa and the potential downside of their exclusion from the benefits of globalization led UNECA to re-examine its strategic orientation in 2006-2007

in order to respond fully to the needs of its member states and their regional economic communities. This resulted in a focus on two related areas:

- **Promoting regional integration** in support of the African Union's regional integration agenda, including assistance to the regional economic communities that will require work on a range of cross-border activities and initiatives in several sectors that are vital to the regional integration agenda.
- **Meeting Africa's special needs and emerging global challenges**, emphasizing: support efforts to eradicate poverty, placing African countries on the path of growth and sustainable development, reversing the marginalization of Africa in the globalization process, enhancing Africa's integration into the global economy, and accelerating the empowerment of women. It also takes into account the important role of good governance and strong institutions in the development process.

Building partnerships with other organizations is to be given major attention to ensure coherence and avoid duplication on continental issues. UNECA will work with UNDP, the agencies in the UNDG and others. Accordingly, UNECA will align its activities with the United Nations family through consultations at the regional and sub-regional level.

Given the significance of the PD for Africa and the interest that African countries have shown in the PD, UNECA was actively involved in the PD. It views the PD, the Monterrey Consensus, the World Summit Outcome and the G8 Gleneagles Declaration, as promises made by Africa's development partners for an overall effort to scale up resources for development in the region—commitments driven by the need to accelerate progress toward meeting



the MDGs.<sup>62</sup> UNECA considers the PD to be “the first comprehensive attempt made by developing and developed countries to take concrete steps to enhance aid effectiveness.”<sup>63</sup>

Against this background, UNECA has played a major role in addressing the *mutual accountability dimension* incorporated in the PD. Following up on a request of the New Partnership for African Development Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee, UNECA and OECD prepared a ‘Joint Report on Development Effectiveness in Africa’ in 2005.<sup>64</sup> The purpose of this first report was to establish a system of tracking performance by both African countries and their OECD development partners against the publicly stated commitment that had been made with the founding of the New Partnership for African Development,<sup>65</sup> the Monterrey Consensus, the PD and the G8 Action Plan for Africa. The report covers the following areas:

- MDGs: Inclusive growth and the role of agriculture and trade
- Governance and capacity development: Africa’s critical frontier
- Aid flows and the quality of aid: Scaling up and implementing the Aid Reform agenda
- Policy coherence: Challenges for African and OECD governments

The PD commitments are an integral part of the report. The 2007 performance benchmarks of the Joint Report are to be monitored in the next review process that is planned in time for the 2008 High Level Forum.

Since the Joint UNECA-OECD Report, UNECA has assessed progress against the Monterrey Consensus and the PD using four country case studies.<sup>66</sup> The 2007 report found the following progress along the five PD dimensions.<sup>67</sup>

**Ownership:** Progress in this area has been mixed, with some countries taking effective leadership (Kenya) while others (Malawi) have not.

**Alignment:** Some progress was made in aligning donor support to developing countries’ national development frameworks, however, progress in aligning donor support to country institutions and processes was considered ‘lackluster’. Lack of predictability of aid flows was reported as undermining development effectiveness.

**Harmonization:** Again, mixed results were found. Some donors expressed strong willingness for harmonization, including joint missions, joint analytical work and joint donor-government assessment of technical capacity development (for example in Kenya). But in other countries (Malawi, Mozambique) multiple and overlapping processes, missions, reviews and meetings continue to be the norm.

**Managing for results:** Progress in this area is limited. Donors continue to rely on their own M&E systems due to weak and fragmented country M&E systems, despite commitments to support countries in strengthening their systems.

**Mutual accountability:** Studies reveal that although African countries have progressed in

62 UNECA, ‘The Monterrey Consensus and Development in Africa: Progress, Challenges and Way Forward’, August 2007, p v.

63 Ibid, p 18.

64 ‘Promise and Performance: Applying Mutual Accountability’, October 2005.

65 At the 37th Summit of the OAU in July 2001 when the New Partnership for African Development strategic framework document was formally adopted.

66 Ghana, Kenya, Malawi and Mozambique. Study was commissioned by the African Forum and Network on Debt and Development.

67 UNECA, ‘The Monterrey Consensus and Development in Africa: Progress, Challenges and Way Forward’, August 2007.

strengthening their accountability to donor countries, they have made limited progress in improving accountability to their domestic constituencies, including parliaments and civil societies, undermining the ownership for the development process.

Recently, UNECA issued the results from a survey of African policy makers in 32 countries.<sup>68</sup> The survey sought to capture their perception of progress made in the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus. The returns came mainly from central banks, ministries of finance, planning and economic development. Overall, the respondents responded that progress on reaching the Consensus objectives was very limited except for debt relief. Performance was especially disappointing in the areas of international trade and external and domestic resource mobilization. According to respondents, the main challenges to implementing the Consensus were poor governance, weak infrastructure, a non-supportive investment climate, inadequate implementation of policies and strategies, lack of national ownership of development programmes, lack of harmonization of aid by donors, the unpredictability and tying of aid to suppliers from donor country, and low access to the markets of developed countries.

UNECA has taken on the commitment under the PD in the area where it has a special advantage: mutual accountability. The question has been raised regarding how UNECA's focus on building up regional economic communities on the African continent can be linked to the PD objectives. While this subject is not ready for consideration under the present assessment, given the absence of any reference to regional integration in the PD itself, it may well fit into future deliberations on the scope of the PD.

### 3.4.6 UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (UNFPA)

Consultations with UNFPA at the headquarters level indicated strong leadership provided in implementing various dimensions of the PD. The UNFPA strategic direction focuses on supporting national ownership, leadership and capacity development. UNFPA has also encouraged a results-based management framework more fully in the last two years.<sup>69</sup> UNFPA is gradually moving from a focus on projects to policy formulation. Thus, over the past two years UNFPA has increased its involvement in SWAPs.

Recently, UNFPA produced guidance notes on its new role in a changing aid environment, 'From Policy to Practice—Operational Guidance Notes 2007'. These provide guidance to staff at the country level on the shift in UNFPA's strategic entry for development support to countries. The new technical focus areas are in line with the PD principles: risk analysis and management, budgets, audits, procurement, resource mobilization and staffing requirements.

The following brief review of UNFPA contributions to PD implementation focuses on harmonization, alignment but also on results management and mutual accountability:

- In at least eight, of the 27 countries in which UNFPA is active, its financial contributions are harmonized with country funding mechanisms.
- UNFPA organized numerous workshops and developed a resource document on SWAPs, based on experiences in the field.
- Advocated its UNFPA mandate within the framework of national strategic framework and sector policies, strategies including budgets.

68 UNECA, 'Perspectives of African Countries on the Monterrey Consensus: Results of a Survey', October 2007. Out of 106 questionnaires sent out 57 were returned, reflecting a response rate of slightly more than 50 percent.

69 UNFPA, 'Strategic Plan, 2008-2011: Accelerating Progress and National Ownership of the ICPD Programme of Action', 2007.

- Advocated result based approaches to strengthen the design and implementation of SWAPs.
- Made a concerted effort in the last two years to apply Results Based Management. UNFPA now prepares Bi-Annual Budgets in Results-based Management Framework.
- Commissioned an evaluation of SWAPs in the eight countries where it is involved: Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. The evaluation results are expected in April 2008 and will be presented at the High Level Forum on PD to be held in Accra, Ghana.

UNFPA has country offices in all of the six countries included in this evaluation, and it plays a significant role in their UNCTs. Some specific UNFPA activities merit mention in the context of their support to implementation of the PD.

- In Mauritania, UNFPA leads the UNCT in HIV/AIDS related work. Reproductive health issues were high on the respective working group's agenda. However, SWAPs were not at an advanced stage there.
- In Ethiopia, UNFPA plays a key role in advocating reproductive health issues at the policy levels. These were included in the national strategic framework. UNFPA also exercises a leadership role in advocating gender equality issues on behalf of the UNCT vis-à-vis all development partners.

Working closely with the government (ministries of Finance and Economic Development, Gender, and Health), UNFPA took the successful initiative for a Basket Gender Fund to address health and reproductive issues within a framework of addressing gender inequalities. The programme, Leave no Woman Behind, addresses education, maternal mortality and the empowerment of women through the extension of micro-credit.

- In Lao PDR, UNFPA plays a lead role in the Health Sector Working Group and in the development of a SWAP that is now at an advanced stage. UNFPA is also responsible for advocating for gender equality. When it comes to harmonization of agency funding, UNFPA is one of the three EX-Com Agencies that already have operationalized HACT.

Concerns were raised regarding UNFPA joint planning with other UN organizations within the UNCT context. UNFPA in Ethiopia reported that more progress was made on maternal health and gender issues when UNFPA worked directly with relevant ministries as opposed to awaiting the work within the UNCT group: the advocacy for gender programme and a Gender Fund was an example. The UNFPA country office's concern in this context evidently was related to the level of commitment to addressing gender equality which it viewed as rather weak among various agencies represented in the UNCT.

## KEY FINDINGS REGARDING COMMITMENT

- Commitment to the PD principles was strong among the UNDG members reviewed, particularly in regards to ownership and to alignment with national development strategies. The behaviour expected under the PD was much facilitated by the already prevailing principles of engagement by UNDG members vis-à-vis partner countries and other development partners. However, RCs and UNCTs may face situations, such as human rights or emergency assistance, that extend beyond the scope of the PD. Thus, at times, commitment to the PD may be challenged in some countries by more overriding concerns.
- Implementation of the PD was greatly helped by institutional arrangements (mainly RC/UNCT system and roundtables) and processes (such as UNDAF) that had been put in place by UNDG before signing the PD in March 2005. These elements have been reinforced by the PD—a finding that is supported by RC assessments of progress made under the PD dimensions in PD signatory versus non-signatory countries.
- Application of the PD principles was uneven when it came to alignment and harmonization. Alignment was generally considered positive between donor and partner strategies, but poorer regarding donors' use of strengthened country systems. On the whole, harmonization was poor among UNDG members and other donors. However, efforts have been made in aligning UNDG members' activities (using strengthened country systems) and in harmonizing some UNDG members' activities. Adapting UNDG members' processes to the PD principle of greater harmonization remains a major challenge for the group.