



**JOINT EVALUATION OF
THE UNDG CONTRIBUTION
TO THE PARIS DECLARATION
ON AID EFFECTIVENESS**

FIRST PHASE

**UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT GROUP
JOINT EVALUATION
IFAD • UNAIDS • UNECA • UNIFEM • UNFPA • UNDP**

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JOINT EVALUATION OF THE UNDGP CONTRIBUTION TO THE PARIS DECLARATION ON AID EFFECTIVENESS (FIRST PHASE)

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FOREWORD

This report presents the assessment of a joint independent evaluation conducted by the evaluation offices of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) of the contribution made by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) to the implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (PD). The evaluation was conducted under the umbrella of the first phase of a joint evaluation on the implementation of the Paris Declaration by partner countries and bilateral and multilateral partner agencies. The UNDP Executive Board, in decision 2007/24, approved the 2007–2008 programme of work for the Evaluation Office, including the conduct of the evaluation on the Paris Declaration.

The Paris Declaration, signed by UNDG in March 2005, stresses that effective partnerships among development partners and recipient countries are based on the recognition of national leadership and ownership of development strategies and results. While these principles were adhered to and recognized by the United Nations prior to the Paris Declaration, most explicitly in the Millennium Declaration and the Monterey Declaration signed in 2000 and 2002 respectively, UNDG was interested in taking stock of its contribution to development effectiveness in the new aid environment.

While the Paris Declaration has a strong focus on monitoring, it also highlights the importance

of cross-country evaluations. The Declaration states that the evaluation should provide a more comprehensive understanding of how increased aid effectiveness contributes to meeting development results and that it should be applied without imposing additional burden on partners. Progress towards aid effectiveness will require political and conceptual agreement on approaches to measuring and understanding both the quantity and the quality of development assistance. The UNDP Executive Board, recognizing the need to take stock and learn from UNDP and UNDG experience in new aid modalities, approved the inclusion of this evaluation in the Evaluation Office's work plan in its annual session in 2007.

The joint evaluation addresses UNDG initiatives in support of the implementation of the Paris Declaration. The report notes where UNDG comparative advantage has been demonstrated, identifies gaps, and provides recommendations to improve the effectiveness of current approaches to aid modalities and aid effectiveness and their contribution to long-term development. The emphasis was on providing recommendations to strengthen the adoption of principles of national ownership, alignment to national development priorities, harmonization, managing for results, and mutual accountability.

This is the first phase of the evaluation and, since the Paris Declaration was only signed in 2005, is a formative evaluation concentrated on identifying what constitutes better practice in regard to the implementation of the Paris Declaration.

Evidence for the assessment was drawn from case studies in six countries, namely Cameroon,

Ethiopia, Gabon, Lao PDR, Mauritania and Ukraine. Additional evidence was derived from: interviews and focus-group discussions in UNDP, UNIFEM, IFAD, ECA, and UNAIDS headquarters in New York, Geneva, Rome, and Addis Ababa; an electronic survey of UN Resident Coordinators in signatory and non-signatory countries of the Paris Declaration; and a comprehensive desk review of related programme and evaluative literature.

The evaluation identifies specific challenges faced by UNDG. It concludes that the experience in implementing the five Paris Declaration principles has varied substantially across principles. Progress was most evident regarding support of country ownership and alignment with national development strategies. There were also some interesting cases of progress regarding mutual accountability. However, progress relating to alignment in using country systems and harmonization across UNDG members shows the greatest room for improvement. The degree to which cross-cutting issues like gender mainstreaming, rural development and capacity development were addressed within the Paris Declaration context varied from country to country and there is significant room for improvement.

There are important recommendations to make increased use of national systems, to the benefit of the partner countries, in order to strengthen national capacities and reduce transaction costs. UNDG should increase the use of relevant results frameworks and strategies that enable partner countries to monitor and evaluate results in the development of their capacities to achieve national development goals and progress towards the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. UNDG could harmonize its approach among its members and other development partners to strengthen

national capacities. The evaluation recommends that UNDG adopt a complementary approach to incorporating cross-cutting issues like gender mainstreaming, capacity development and rural development, as was done in the response to HIV/AIDS.

The report is the result of the dedication and team work of a number of people. We would like to express our particular gratitude to the evaluation management team comprising a dedicated group of evaluation officers, particularly Ashwani Muthoo and Andrew Brubaker in IFAD, Paul De Lay, Steven L. Jensen and Ini Huijts in UNAIDS, Urbain Zadi and Kwabia Boateng in UNECA, Elena Marcelino and Belen Sanz in UNIFEM and Oscar A. Garcia in UNDP who ably served as task manager of the evaluation.

Special thanks are expressed to the following UN Resident Coordinators, Sophie de Caen, Bintou Djibo, Gboroton Sarassoro, Narjess Saidane, Sonam Yangchen Rana and Frank O'Donnell, and members of the UN country teams in the countries visited by the evaluation team, as well as the colleagues in New York, Geneva, Rome and Addis Ababa, who provided vital feedback to the team to enable them to reach their conclusions.

We are very grateful to numerous government representatives and civil society representatives in the case-study countries who were very generous with their time and ideas.

We are deeply grateful to the team that conducted the evaluation. The team leader, Hans Wyss, who rigorously led the drafting of the evaluation report; Kim Forss, who developed the methodology and members of the team, and Janie Mary Eriksen and Neddy Matshalaga, who fully participated in case-study and headquarters missions and contributed to the evolution of the main report.

The report went through extensive quality control and peer review process and comments were also received from members of the UNDG working group on aid effectiveness, whose evaluation offices did not directly participate in the evaluation, including UNFPA, FAO, UNESCO and UNDGO. We would like to express our particular thanks to the co-chairs of the working group Dia Timmerman and Dasa Silovic.

The report also benefited from the quality assurance system established by the international management group of the umbrella Paris Declaration evaluation conducted under a common terms of reference. In particular, we would like to thank John Eriksson and Rikke Ingrid Jensen for their valuable comments as peer reviewers.

The evaluation management group invited independent experts to join an advisory panel for the evaluation. The members of the panel were Steven Browne, Deputy Executive Director and Director of Operations at the International Trade Centre (ITC), Geneva and author of several books on aid and development); Carolina S. Guina, former head of ASEAN cooperation unit and capacity building expert,

Asian Development Bank; and Clare Anne Dickinson, Deputy Director of the HIV/AIDS Division at HSLP, London. The final report benefited greatly from the comments and suggestions of the external advisory panel.

Other colleagues in the UNDP Evaluation Office made important contributions to the report, including Tega Shivute, who helped with the desk review; Michelle Sy, who handled administrative support; and Anish Pradhan who provided information technology support to the electronic survey and to the publication process.

As the report points out, the main challenge with the framework analyzed in the evaluation is the dynamic nature of the environment for development assistance. I hope that this evaluation will be useful in helping UNDG chart a course that enhances development effectiveness in the countries where the UN development system works.



Saraswathi Menon
Director, Evaluation Office

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CHAT	Country Harmonization and Alignment Tool
CPM	Country Programme Manager
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DAG	Development Assistance Group
DBS	Direct Budget Support
EC	European Commission
ExCom	Executive Committee
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NSC	Non-signatory Country
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PD	Paris Declaration
PRS(P)	Poverty Reduction Strategy (Paper)
RC	Resident Coordinator
RR	Resident Representative
SC	Signatory Country
SWAP	Sector Wide Approach
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Fund for Women
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March 2005, the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) signed the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (PD), as a participating organization, jointly with 91 countries, 25 other participating organizations and 14 civil society organizations.

In 2006, the UNDG¹ agreed with partner countries and donors to conduct an evaluation of its contribution to the implementation of the PD between 2007 and 2010 using a two-phased approach. The first phase, a formative evaluation, is to focus on inputs, implementation process and outputs (to the extent possible). The second phase, a summative evaluation, is to focus on implementation results and outcomes. The first phase will contribute to the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness scheduled for September 2008 in Accra, Ghana.

Nine countries and 11 development partner agencies have volunteered to conduct an evaluation of their own performance under the PD as an input into the first-phase evaluation. They agreed to use a common framework terms of reference, adapting it to their specific requirements. The countries are Bangladesh, Bolivia, Philippines, Senegal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Viet Nam and Zambia. The development partners are Asian Development Bank, Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, United Kingdom and UNDG.

The UNDP Executive Board, in decision 2007/24, approved the 2007–2008 programme of work for the Evaluation Office, including the conduct of the evaluation on the PD. Since UNDG was a participating organization in the PD, UNDP Administrator as chairman of UNDG invited all its principals to conduct a joint evaluation. Within UNDG, it was agreed that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) would carry out the assessment jointly with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM).² The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has also contributed to the evaluation.

The **objectives** of the evaluation were to:

- Assess UNDG initiatives in support of the implementation of the PD
- Assess United Nations Country Teams' (UNCTs)³ initiatives related to increasing aid effectiveness
- Learn about lessons from PD-related initiatives and strategies implemented by UNDG organizations at the corporate and country levels

The **design** of the evaluation centred around three dimensions identified as principal contributors to development partner behaviour:

1 For a list of members of the UNDG, see Annex 2.

2 Two UNDG member organizations that agreed to carry out the joint assessment are direct signatories of the PD: UNECA and IFAD. This was additional to the commitment made by UNDG.

3 Teams consist of representatives of UN agencies, programmes and funds, both resident and non-resident.

commitment, capacities and incentive systems. In addition, the evaluation was to examine four cross-cutting subjects: gender equality, HIV/AIDS, rural development and capacity development. Finally, the evaluation was to recognize the specificity of UNDG in the implementation of the PD while acknowledging the broader UN contribution.

The main elements of the **methodology** were to:

- Assess PD-related actions by the participating UNDG entities, recognizing that some PD dimensions were already principles of engagement of UNDG members prior to the PD.
- Conduct six country case studies to determine the UNDG role in fostering the PD principles at the country level.
- Assess the four cross-cutting issues in both headquarters and country case studies. Case studies were conducted in Cameroon, Ethiopia, Gabon, Lao PDR, Mauritania and Ukraine;
- Conduct an electronic survey of the United Nations Resident Coordinators (RCs) who chair the UNCTs in both signatory and non-signatory countries for systematic feedback on the implementation of the PD.

The evaluation recognized some major limitations, including: the PD's short implementation period, absence of a common baseline on the PD commitments, and the samples' biases of self-selection and volunteering.

CONCLUSIONS

1. UNDG experience in applying PD principles varied substantially across the five PD principles. Progress was most evident in supporting country ownership and alignment with national development strategies. There

were also some interesting cases of progress in the area of mutual accountability. However, progress relating to alignment in using country systems and harmonization across UNDG members (and beyond) shows the greatest room for improvement. Strong coordination mechanisms involving other development partners and partner governments are critical for RCs/UNCTs to foster PD implementation.

The RC/UNCT role extends far beyond the PD's aid effectiveness objectives. RCs and UNCTs may face issues of humanitarian assistance, crisis management, conflict prevention and peace building that take priority over PD principles. This potential area of competition does not appear to have hindered PD implementation. Some of the UN-related responsibilities that extend beyond the PD may, however, be critical to achieving PD objectives.

- 1.1 The UNDG/UNCT contribution to strengthening **ownership** mainly took the form of assisting governments in strengthening capacity to prepare and execute their country development strategies and deal with new aid modalities such as sector wide approaches and direct budget support. Because country ownership varied largely, the role of the UNCT also varied. The RC offices, as well as individual UN organizations, through collaboration with governments and multilateral and bilateral agencies, have played an important role in creating an enabling environment for achieving the PD objectives. UNDG/UNCT was seen as a trusted partner, supporting countries in fulfilling both their national and international development obligations and in designing and implementing development strategies.

- 1.2 The main progress in **alignment** took place with respect to development strategies at national and sectoral levels, including aligning planning cycles of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) to national development plans. There is room for improvement by UNCTs in other elements of alignment that relate to use of national systems of partner countries (such as reporting, public financial management, country audits and procurement).

Coordination regarding development priority setting and planning among UNCT members and other development partners seems to have improved greatly as a result of thematic groups and larger coordination fora. In all six case-study countries, UNCT understood that it has become increasingly difficult to act in isolation, although fuller joint programming has not yet been achieved.

- 1.3 Some progress did occur in improved coordination among UNCT members and other development partners (most important under the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers initiative). However, partner countries have higher expectations for measurable savings in transaction costs through alignment and **harmonization**. UNCT members felt most constrained in acceding to partner countries' requests to harmonize their headquarter-determined procedures. Thus efforts to reduce transaction costs through harmonization require an approach that addresses the concerns of both partner countries and the many UNCT agencies (and other development partners). Given the wide variance among UNDG member objectives, policies and

procedures, the road to harmonization remains an extraordinary challenge for the UNDG system.

- 1.4 Government capacities to plan and coordinate development partners' contributions are of particular relevance to the PD. For instance, the country case studies confirm that systematic strengthening of national statistical offices is particularly important to **managing for results** by providing credible and timely information. However, effective assistance to statistical offices requires long-term and comprehensive commitments in order to assure the required capacities are built.
 - 1.5 The feedback from the country case studies suggests that there is a long way to go in achieving the PD objective of **mutual accountability** and joint assessments of mutual progress in aid effectiveness. Moreover, feedback from case-study countries included broad concern about donor commitments in regards to both level and predictability of support. UNCT plays a significant role in promoting mutual accountability, for example through its Round Tables that indicate performance under donor pledging, its participation in Consultative Group meetings, its support to governance reforms including strengthening the parliamentary system, and its support to civil society participation. UNECA plays a special role in fostering mutual accountability at the level of the African countries.
2. UNDG and the participating members in this assessment started out well in their **commitment** to respond to the PD principles, both through actions at headquarters and through conveying the importance

of the PD to the RCs and the UNCTs. This relatively fast response was greatly facilitated by development assistance commitments in which UNDG members had already been engaged prior to the PD.

- 2.1 Changes were made to synchronize UNCT planning cycles with national planning cycles.
 - 2.2 UNCTs supported national partners in sector institutional arrangements, such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) involvement in sector wide approaches.
 - 2.3 Agencies increased efforts to use national systems, for example for procurement and operational procedures, thus eliminating Project Implementation Units on procurement. However, significant variances between agencies and countries remain.
3. When responding to **capacities**, UNDG members used existing institutional structures and reinforced them where necessary rather than building additional structures. In the case of a relatively new institution (UNAIDS), it found the PD principles relevant for building national HIV/AIDS responses. Most of the capacity development to enable UNDG members to implement the PD has taken the form of specific instructions, guidelines and training to educate staff about the PD. Prior commitments to major PD principles embodied in the Common Country Assessments and UNDAFs were helpful in this process.
- 3.1 UNCTs provided substantial technical support to countries in formulating, revising and implementing national development strategies and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers.
 - 3.2 UNDG established a policy network on Millennium Development Goals

to provide policy and operational advice to UNCTs in their technical support work.

4. When assessing **incentive systems** in place, the findings are discouraging. Those who are expected to take primary responsibility in implementing the PD, the RCs, find incentives specific to this endeavour weak. The performance evaluation of RCs (which includes an assessment from agencies forming part of UNDG) directly addresses PD-related responsibilities. However, for the many other UNDG member staff involved in the implementation of the PD, this dimension is assessed in their performance evaluation only indirectly, mainly through agreed work programmes. Incentives to implement the PD cannot rely only on traditional incentive systems focusing on the immediate actors concerned. The approach to incentives must be broadened to address directly the factors that stand in the way of greater progress, especially with respect to harmonization.
5. Implementing the PD principles across cross-cutting issues has been uneven. In the case of **HIV/AIDS**, the presence of a UNDG entity (UNAIDS) was helpful to implementing PD principles in this critical area. However, implementation was less successful in the remaining three of the four cross-cutting issues reviewed in this assessment: gender equality, rural development and capacity development. Despite established UNDG member policies on gender equality and the practice in countries without a UNIFEM resident specialist to have a lead person on gender equality from another resident UNDG organization in the UNCT, attention to **gender equality** is still lacking. The degree to which gender equality issues within the PD context was addressed varied from country to country and there is room for improvement: clear

strategies and indicators to measure progress made on gender equality efforts need to exist. With regard to **rural development** and **capacity development**, attention to and coordination by the UNCT can be improved through the respective working groups.

6. Many RCs/UNCTs work in non-PD signatory countries. While non-signatory countries were not specifically assessed in this evaluation (no non-signatory countries were visited), feedback from the survey of RCs suggests that signatory countries are significantly better attuned to the PD principles. Thus RCs and UNCTs in non-signatory countries face greater challenges in helping UNDG members respond to the principles embedded in the PD.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. UNDG should make increased use of national systems for support services, when appropriate and to the benefit of the partner countries, in order to strengthen national capacities and reduce transaction costs. Such support services include: procurement, security, information technology, telecommunications and banking, as well as planning, reporting and evaluation.
2. UNDG should further harmonize and simplify its business practices in order to enhance accountability and transparency of operational activities while ensuring that development assistance to partner countries is provided in a coherent fashion that supports capacity development. Practices that could be improved include: budgeting, audit functions, procurement systems, and professional expertise, including the adoption of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards.
3. UNDG should measure the cost of non-harmonized approaches to development assistance and further standardize and harmonize the concepts and practices to reduce transaction costs.
4. UNDG should create specific, measurable, achievable and relevant results frameworks and strategies that enable partner countries to design, monitor and evaluate results in the development of their capacities at different levels to achieve national development goals and progress towards the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.
5. It is recommended that UNDG encourages governments of partner countries to initiate and conduct joint and country-led evaluations that assess the contribution of the United Nations development system to national development plans and strategies, and to systematize and disseminate lessons learned from these exercises as mechanisms for mutual accountability.
6. UNDG should reinforce its commitment to strengthen the capacity of partner countries, at their request and with their ownership and leadership, to coordinate external assistance, including system-wide and sector-wide approaches and budget support, and to make the best possible use of such assistance, especially by being involved in national planning and monitoring processes and linking the aid effectiveness agenda to the broader development effectiveness agenda.
7. UNDG should harmonize its approach amongst its members and other development partners to strengthen national capacities. Capacity development is commonly associated with various forms of support aimed at individuals (training), institutions (organizational development) and the enabling environment (support to policies and strategies). UNDG should contribute to the capacity of partner countries to optimize the use of new aid modalities.

8. UNDG should further develop and strengthen its knowledge management systems and expertise, including resources readily available at the regional level and from non-resident agencies to better assist partner countries' needs for capacity development.
9. Incentives to implement the PD should address directly the factors that stand in the way of progress, especially with respect to harmonization. UNDG should address the structural obstacles to the adherence of the PD principles as part of a broader UN reform process. This goes beyond the subject of the present evaluation, which addresses PD implementation, though it clearly impacts UNDG's efficient delivery of development assistance.
10. UNDG should adopt a complementary approach to incorporating cross-cutting issues like gender mainstreaming, capacity development and rural development as has been done in the response to HIV/AIDS. In addition, UNCTs should review the adequacy of their arrangements and efforts aimed at gender equality and rural development in countries with substantial rural poverty by going beyond social concerns and addressing rural poverty on a sustainable basis, recognizing systematically the need for production and income improvements.

INTRODUCTION

In March 2005, the United Nations Development Group⁴ (UNDG) signed as participating organization the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (PD) jointly with 91 countries, 25 other participating organizations and 14 civil society organizations.

The main feature of the PD is that effective partnerships among development partners and recipient countries are based on the recognition of national leadership and ownership of development strategies and plans. Within this framework, sound policies, good governance and effective mechanisms are recognized to be needed at all levels to ensure that development assistance produces development results.

While the PD has a strong focus on monitoring, it also highlights the importance of exploring cross-country evaluation processes. The Declaration states that evaluation should provide a more comprehensive understanding of how increased aid effectiveness contributes to meeting development results and that it should be applied without imposing additional burden on partner countries.

Against this background, donors and partner countries agreed to evaluate the implementation of the PD between 2007 and 2010 using a two-phased approach. The first phase consists of a *formative* evaluation concentrating on

inputs, the implementation process, and to the extent possible, outputs. The second phase will be a *summative* evaluation focusing on the results of implementation, to the extent possible, at the outcome level. The results of the first-phase evaluation will be a contribution towards the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to be held in Accra, Ghana in 2008.

Ten countries and 10 development partner agencies⁵ have volunteered to conduct an evaluation of their own performance under the PD as an input into the first-phase evaluation. They agreed to use a common framework terms of reference,⁶ adapting it to their specific requirements. The countries are Bangladesh, Bolivia, Mali, Philippines, Senegal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Viet Nam and Zambia. The development partners are Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, United Kingdom and UNGD.

UNDP Evaluation Office conducted the evaluation on the PD in line with Executive Board decision 2007/24. Since UNGD was a participating organization in the PD, UNDP Administrator as chairman of UNGD invited all its principals to conduct a joint evaluation. Within UNGD, it was agreed that the evaluation would be carried out jointly by IFAD, UNAIDS, UNECA, UNIFEM and UNDP.

4 For a list of members of the UNGD, see Annex 2.

5 The PD's terms 'partner countries' and 'donors' will be used throughout this paper except when reference is made to documents that use different terms like the ones applied here (from 'Evaluation of UN Contribution to the Implementation of the Paris Declaration Terms of Reference, 12 July 2007).

6 'Framework Terms of Reference for the First Phase Evaluation of the Implementation of the Paris Declaration', 25 April 2007.

1.1 GENERAL EVALUATION CONTEXT

According to the framework terms of reference developed for the first-phase evaluation of the implementation of the PD, its purpose is to “strengthen aid effectiveness by assessing what constitutes better practices for partner and donor behaviour in regard to implementing the PD.” The scope of the first phase of the evaluation will begin by establishing “how far political support, peer pressure and coordinated action (from partners and donors as appropriate) are working to get the behaviour changes to which signatories have committed.”⁷

Given the limited time period under review by evaluation—approximately two and a half years—a formative type of evaluation was conducted. A formative evaluation is a method for reviewing programmes while the programme activities are still forming or occurring reviews, thus the focus of the evaluation is on ways of improving and enhancing programmes rather than rendering definitive judgement about effectiveness.

The design of the first phase of the evaluation (2007-2008) comprises: country-level evaluations, donor headquarter evaluations, thematic studies, and a synthesis of the three. In addition, the first phase is intended to help design the second phase of the evaluation, which seeks to assess outcomes and aid and development effectiveness.

1.2 AGENCY-SPECIFIC EVALUATION CONTEXT

UNDG’s membership consists of 27 UN agencies, programmes and funds; 5 regional economic commissions; and 5 observers. After UNDG volunteered to evaluate its performance for the formative first-phase evaluation, it developed its own inter-agency evaluation context: after internal

consultations it was agreed that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) would carry out the assessment jointly with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM).⁸

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide guidance to improve UNDG’s contribution to the implementation of the PD based on an assessment of lessons learned. The emphasis is on learning and providing recommendations to strengthen national ownership, harmonization of aid efforts, alignment to national development strategies, managing for results and mutual accountability.

The objectives of this evaluation are to:

- Assess UNDG initiatives in support of the implementation of the PD, identify where the UNDG comparative advantage has been proven, identify gaps, and provide recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of current approaches to aid modalities and aid effectiveness and their implications for long-term development.
- Assess how United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) have used partnerships at local, national and international levels and positioned themselves vis-à-vis other actors to bring greater coherence and relevance to their initiatives related to aid effectiveness.
- Provide substantive insights on how to ensure that lessons learned from initiatives and strategies implemented by UN organizations at corporate and country levels can be institutionalized within the organizations through systematic monitoring and evalua-

7 ‘Framework Terms of Reference for the First Phase of the Evaluation of the Implementation of the Paris Declaration’, 25 April 2007, page 5.

8 It should be noted that two UNDG member organizations that agreed to carry out the joint assessment are direct signatories of the PD: UNECA and IFAD. This was additional to the commitment made by UNDG.

tion, adapted and made more relevant to country needs.

A related objective is to shed light on the challenges and opportunities facing UN organizations in fostering the development effectiveness agenda as the UN reform process continues towards ‘Delivering as One’ (though there is no overlap between the One UN pilots and the countries included in the assessment).

The scope and focus of this evaluation has been designed around the following three dimensions that were identified as principal contributors to development partner behaviour:

- **Commitment:** The PD calls for a new way of delivering aid whereby country strategies are no longer to be formulated by individual development partners. Instead, the emphasis is on partner country ownership while donors’ cooperation strategies are to be guided by partner government needs-based demands in an aligned and harmonized manner.
- **Capacities:** Development partners and national coordinators have called for more effective interactions on PD issues between headquarter policy advisers and operations staff. This is to overcome uneven capacities (and uneven commitment) between different staff employed by the same development partner. Indeed, a single UNCT might represent very different approaches to aid effectiveness.
- **Incentive Systems:** Development partners’ incentive systems have been reported as critical for efficient development partner behaviour. Pressures for disbursements,

lack of flexibility on staff time, and high staff turnover may create incentives rewarding short-term benefits over longer term and collective gains.

The assessment gives special attention to four cross-cutting subjects: gender equality, HIV/AIDS, rural development and capacity development. Gender equality is essential to the achievement of the mandates of all UNDG agencies.

The Terms of Reference for the evaluation of UNDG contribution to the implementation of the PD are included in Annex 1. They are based on the ‘Guidance for Management of Development Partner Evaluations’ developed by partner countries and development partners participating in the joint evaluation.⁹

In addition, this assessment seeks to recognize the distinctive UNDG contribution to the implementation of the PD while also acknowledging the broader UN contribution,¹⁰ emphasizing the following:

- UNDG is not a donor. Its primary contribution to development is not financial.
- UNDG constituencies are member states. This enforces United Nations neutrality as well as its normative role in following up international conventions and intergovernmental agreements.
- UNDG has a broad presence in countries.
- The UNCT at country level includes United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes, whether resident or non resident.
- The evaluation includes assessments both at headquarters and at the country level.

9 ‘Framework Terms of Reference for the First Phase Evaluation of the Implementation of the Paris Declaration’, 25 April 2007.

10 “The bedrock principles of operational activities of the United Nations system derive from their universal, voluntary and grant nature and their neutrality and multilateralism. Operational activities are therefore strongly anchored in the normative mandates and roles established by the United Nations system. The knowledge, skills and resources made available to developing countries by some 40 funds, programmes, agencies and other entities of the United Nations development system are of unparalleled breadth and depth. But challenges remain to making the United Nations development system more coherent and efficient.” From the General Assembly ‘Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review’, August 2007, pp 4-5.




METHODOLOGY

This evaluation of UNDG contribution to implementation of the PD differs from evaluations by developing countries and development partners in the diversity of both organizations and country contexts, and that the evaluation was carried out under common terms of reference with other agencies. This is both a challenge and an opportunity to further understand how the PD is implemented and the factors that affect UNDG member contributions.

The evaluation framework is based on two intersecting parameters (see Figure 1):

- The contextual factors in development partner countries that may determine the specific structures and processes that influence the implementation of the PD. These are set in place by government, civil society organizations and other national stakeholders.
- The UN activities that follow up the UNDG commitment to the PD that may be important causal factors for the emergence of such structures and processes. The key goal of the evaluation is to establish the link between the implementation of the PD and

FIGURE 1. PARAMETERS FOR EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS IN DEVELOPMENT PARTNER COUNTRIES	STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PARIS DECLARATION	UNDG CONTRIBUTION
		
Macroeconomic variables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Economic performance ■ Aid dependence ■ Public expenditure 	Structures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Formal working groups, task forces, etc. ■ Informal and ad hoc groups 	Commitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Changes in policy ■ Changes in organization ■ Changes in task allocation
Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Public sector performance ■ Transparency and accountability ■ Public participation 	Processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Analytical tasks ■ Information sharing ■ Joint decision making 	Capacities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Knowledge ■ Creativity ■ Learning ■ Individual – systemic
Civil society <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Traditions of organization ■ Voice and influence ■ Networks and links 	Characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Interconnectedness ■ Frequency and density ■ Division of labour 	Incentive systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Results orientation ■ Career development ■ Vertical and horizontal links

the activities of the UN system. These activities should be explained in terms of commitment, capacities and incentive systems.

The main challenge with this framework is the dynamic nature of the operating environment for development assistance. In the 1990s, this was characterized by declining aid and uneven development across regions, especially in agriculture and rural sectors, and increased the havoc due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. At the same time, there were paradigmatic shifts towards poverty reduction strategies and an enhanced emphasis on sustainability, hence the introduction of Poverty Reduction Strategy (Papers), or PRS(Ps), and the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. Recently, there have been major global policy responses to these challenges, including: the 2000 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Monterrey Consensus of 2002 and the 2003 Rome Declaration on Harmonization. These all preceded the PD, which in turn, was followed and reinforced by the United Nations Reform.¹¹ These efforts have been associated with enhanced ownership of development initiatives by recipient countries and closer donor partnerships and coordination. Thus, many of the seeds for implementation of the PD had already been planted prior to March 2005.

One element of the evaluation framework has been recognizing that the foregoing policy responses have occurred hand-in-hand with a shift in decision making from donor headquarters to partner countries. Thus it was crucial that the evaluation give attention not only to what has occurred at UN organization headquarters, but also between headquarters and in-country presences where the intersection affecting the implementation of the PD takes place.

The evaluation matrix in Figure 2 was used to analyze UNDG members' commitment, capacities and incentives for implementing the PD. This analysis addressed the five dimensions of the PD: ownership, alignment, harmonization, results-based management and mutual accountability. Interactive effects between the two sets of parameters noted above were considered only where clear evidence was available. This matrix underlies the assessment presented in this report.

The evaluation methodology was built largely around the case-study method (see section 2.1 Sampling) and included the following elements:

- Assessment of PD-related actions by the participating UNDG entities and their relevance before and after the signing of the PD.¹² In the absence of baseline data

FIGURE 2. EVALUATION MATRIX

	COMMITMENT	CAPACITIES	INCENTIVES
1. Ownership			
2. Alignment			
3. Harmonization			
4. Results-based management			
5. Mutual accountability			

11 This refers to the UN Reform process, a major element of which is 'UN Delivering as One: Report of the Secretary General's High-Level Panel', 9 November 2006.

and the wide variance in progress made towards the PD principles prior to the signature of the Declaration, the analysis assessed change in behaviour since March 2005 as recalled by the stakeholders interviewed during the evaluation. The analysis recognized that some of the PD dimensions were already principles of engagement of UNDG members prior to the PD.¹³

- Conduct of six country case studies to determine the UNDG role in fostering the PD principles. Both the headquarters and country case studies assessed four cross-cutting issues: gender equality, HIV/AIDS, rural development and capacity development.
- Gathering of systematic feedback from the participating UNDG members through staff at headquarters and in country, and country visits from in-country partners and stakeholders. Country visits ranged from three to four days and included interviews with: the UNCT and its members (including more UNDG agencies than those participating in the assessment); representatives of government, civil society and non-governmental organizations; and bilateral and multilateral donors. Interviews were semi-structured and tailored to different audiences. They included systematic recognition of the four cross-cutting issues listed in the previous bullet. Consistency of interviews was further ensured by the evaluation team's make-up, under which two persons of the three-member team participated in all visits to UNDG members and countries (except for the visit to Gabon). This close

overlap also ensured consistency in the analysis of content obtained through interviews and from other information.

- Gathering of systematic feedback through an electronic survey of the resident coordinators (RCs) who chair the UNCTs. This feedback centred on the three dimensions that were identified as contributors to development partner behaviour: commitment, capacities and incentives.
- Review of documents from the participating UN organizations in order to both confirm, and expand on, the stakeholder interviews.

Validation of interview findings by supporting documentation was sought throughout. The country case studies were used to validate findings from headquarters reviews for the participating UNDG members whenever possible.

2.1 SAMPLING

Given the limitations in time and scope of the evaluation, the assessment has used the case-study method¹⁴ extensively in order to add realism and in-depth examples to other information, and to bring together findings from a number of cases. Against this background, sampling was critical in the following areas:

- **Selection of participating UN organizations within the UNDG.** This process relied on self-selection. The UNDG Chair approached all members of the group. Five organizations (UNDP, IFAD, UNAIDS, UNECA and UNIFEM) not only expressed interest in

12 Ideally, the assessment would also have reviewed the changes introduced in non-PD signatory countries for an appreciation of the PD induced changes in 'with and without' cases. This was not feasible under the limited scope of the assessment except for the survey of RCs that allowed a breakdown into PD signatory and non-signatory countries.

13 An alternative approach would have consisted of an assessment of the alignment of UNDG members' work with the PD when the PD was signed. The present assessment, however, focused on the changes since Paris while identifying the progress that UNDG members had made prior to Paris.

14 United States General Accountings Office, 'Case Study Evaluations', Programme Evaluation and Methodology Division, GAO/PEMD-91-10.9.1, November 1990.

participation but also offered financial and in-kind support for the assessment. The resulting group of participants limits the generalizability of the findings, though the country case studies provide robust insight into the UNCTs, which included many more UNDG members. The focus on participating UNDG members was especially helpful when addressing the cross-cutting issues identified in the terms of reference. A special situation arose with respect to UNDG members that do not have permanent resident representatives (RRs) in partner countries. The assessment needed to cover such situations to the extent possible in the context both of headquarters and in-country studies.

- **Selection of countries for field visits and case studies.** UNDP, on behalf of the participating UNDG agencies, sought proposals from all UN RCs for volunteers to participate in the assessment. Five countries volunteered: Cameroon, Gabon, Lao PDR, Mauritania and Ukraine. Ethiopia was added for a broader representation of resident and non-resident organizations' contributions to the PD. The final selection includes markedly different types of countries: three of the countries are aid dependent (Ethiopia, Lao PDR and Mauritania), and three of the countries are middle income countries (Cameroon, Gabon and Ukraine), with Gabon and Ukraine being new PD signatory states.
- **Selection of interviewees during the country visits was done by the country office.** The interviewees included government representatives, bilateral and multilateral development partners and civil society organizations. The short timeframe of the visits determined the nature and scope of the interviewees. The selection of interviewees

for the participating UNDG entities was organized by the respective evaluation offices.

- **Selection of cross-cutting subjects.** The four cross-cutting areas address the concerns of the participating UN organizations.
- **Selection of RCs for the survey.** The evaluation surveyed 119 RCs from both signatory and non-signatory countries; 41 responded for a response rate of more than 34 percent.¹⁵

2.2 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Consistent with the evaluation methodology for data collection (semi-structured interviews, document reviews and a survey) the following instruments were used:

- List of principal interlocutors met during the interviews (Annex 3)
- Documents reviewed (Annex 4)
- Guidance questionnaires used for the semi-structured interviews with different stakeholders (Annex 5)
- The survey of RCs, including questions and resulting answers (Annex 6)

The complementarities between these instruments, the documents reviewed and the information obtained through interviews both at the participants' headquarters and in the six countries should be emphasized.

2.3 EVALUATION MANAGEMENT

A Management Group was set up for the assessment, composed of representatives of the evaluation offices of the participating five UN entities. The group was responsible for

15 The response rate from signatory countries RCs was 36 percent; from non-signatory countries it was 33 percent.

planning and managing the evaluation to ensure its independence and quality. It was chaired by UNDP, which provided one of its staff members as the Evaluation Task Manager to act as the interlocutor between the evaluation team and the Management Group to ensure a smooth process.

At the level of the participating UN organizations, their evaluation office served as the convenor of the meetings and provider of documents.

At the level of the country case studies, the RC was in charge of coordinating the visits.

The evaluation team consisted of three members listed at the front of this report.¹⁶ The team's cooperative effort was strengthened by a week-long workshop and interviews, together with the Evaluation Task Manager, at UNDP headquarters.

2.4 LIMITATIONS

The evaluation faced a number of challenges in analyzing the progress made toward the implementation of the PD including the following:

- **A short implementation period.** The limited time duration of the PD (approximately two and a half years) did not allow for results-based evaluation, as recognized under the terms of reference for the First Phase Evaluation. As noted in footnote 12, one way to overcome this shortcoming would have been the introduction of the comparator group concept into the present assessment methodology to facilitate a comparison of results in countries that did and did not sign on to the PD.¹⁷

- **The absence of a common baseline on the different commitments spelled out in the PD.** While indicators of progress were attached to the PD, these are more focused on financial parameters than the broader development effectiveness dimension that the PD seeks to address. Moreover, the 12 indicators were specified for a later date (2010). However, the main constraint regarding a clear baseline arises from the dynamic nature of the development environment: Varying steps had already been taken under the different dimensions of the PD by both participating agencies and partner countries at the time the Declaration was signed. Thus there are significant issues regarding attributing implementation actions to the PD versus actions taken on the basis of earlier commitments.

- **The samples contain biases of self-selection and volunteering.** Due to the fact that the participating UNDG agencies and countries covered by the assessment volunteered, findings on the progress made under the PD tended to be more favourable than if this had been a random sampling. This limitation was already recognized in the framework Terms of Reference for the First Phase Evaluation of the PD.¹⁸ This point indicates the need for the qualitative approach used under the case method.

- **The short timeframe and the resources available for the evaluation.** The focus therefore is on how the limited information can be used to make observations across the sample groups selected in order to help informed and circumscribed decision making.

16 The initial leader was Kim Foss who was responsible for the inception report and visiting one country for preparing of a pilot country report.

17 A limited but insightful result on differences between signatory and non-signatory countries with regard to progress in PD implementation emerged from survey giving the respective RC perceptions.

18 'Framework Terms of Reference for the First Phase Evaluation of the Implementation of the Paris Declaration', 25 April 2007, p 8.

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.¹⁹ 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 RCs²⁰ 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-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 Executive Board is supported by two high-level committees—the High-Level Committee on Programmes, and the High-Level Committee on Management. 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; and 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,²¹ the Finance and Budget Network,²² the Information, Communication and Technology Network,²³ and the recently established Procurement Network.²⁴

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. One UN 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 1 July 2005, the executive heads of all UNDG members approved an Action Plan for implementing the PD.²⁵ As summarized in the Chair's follow-up letter to the RCs²⁶ 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 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 22 July 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; and 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 2005.²⁷

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’.²⁸ 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

The system of UN RCs who chair the UNCTs²⁹ 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.³⁰ Overall, the survey applied to the RCs depicts a very high level of UNCT

27 Available online at www.OECD.org.

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

29 UNCT consists of representatives of UN organizations, 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).³¹ 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 NCSs; but are reluctant “to use strengthened country systems,” 38 percent in SCs and 21 percent in NCSs; 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 UNDG³² toward a Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT)³³ 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-study countries, but heads of UNDP regional bureaux have reported progress among other countries.³⁴

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).³⁵ 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 has 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.³⁶ 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.³⁷ 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 workshops³⁸ on PD implementation (challenges, opportunities and lessons learned) in collaboration with development partners³⁹ 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 of 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.⁴⁰ 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; and 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"⁴¹ 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.⁴² 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.⁴³ 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.⁴⁴

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 co-sponsored 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).

- **Regional:** UNIFEM has convened regional consultations⁴⁵ 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 the 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 a 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 the country level, UNIFEM contributes to the formulation of UNDAFs, 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 to 42 in 2006.⁴⁶ 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 co-sponsors (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 Co-sponsoring 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 the 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."⁴⁷ 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.⁴⁸ 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 co-sponsors and a rational division of labour and foresees the identification of lead organizations for each technical support area.⁴⁹

- 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.⁵⁰
- In 2007, UNAIDS and the WB launched the Country Harmonization and Alignment Tool (CHAT).^{51, 52} 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, reporting and access to information of the co-sponsors. It was developed through a collaborative process involving all co-sponsors and the Secretariat.⁵³

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.⁵⁴ 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 UNAIDS, 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;⁵⁵ 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 Country Programme Managers, 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.⁵⁶ He ensured that IFAD adopted a systematic approach to integrate PD principles in the full range of its activities.⁵⁷ 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.⁵⁸

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.

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.⁵⁹ 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 2005⁶⁰ and engages actively in existing agricultural SWAPs in Honduras, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Tanzania, and Uganda. Experience with agriculture and rural development SWAPs is mixed.⁶¹ 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 of 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, Divisional Management Plans and a Results Measurement Framework. A major deliverable of the Results-Based Country Strategic Opportunities Programmes 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 Results-Based Country Strategic Opportunities Programmes 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 its 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.⁶² UNECA considers the PD to be “the first comprehensive attempt made by developing and developed countries to take concrete steps to enhance aid effectiveness.”⁶³

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 2005.⁶⁴ 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,⁶⁵ 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.⁶⁶ The 2007 report found the following progress along the five PD dimensions.⁶⁷

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.⁶⁸ The survey sought to capture their perception of progress made in the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus. The returns came mainly from central banks and 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.⁶⁹ 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 and alignment but also on results management and mutual accountability:

- In at least 8 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 ExCom 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.

ASSESSING CAPACITIES

In order to increase capacity for implementing the PD, UNDG members have focused on using existing institutional set-ups, reinforcing them when useful, and educating staff about the PD. The selective strengthening within UNDG and some participating entities was noted in Chapter 3. This is most evidenced by the institutional build-up of UNAIDS since 2004. UNAIDS is the newest programme among the UNDG members and evolved largely along lines found in the PD. Another example of UNDG members adapting capacity to implement the PD is shown in Box 2.

The effort to provide direction on implementing PD started out with the guidance in the UNDG

Chair's letter of July 2005 that included the UNDG action plan for PD implementation and background material on MDGs and UN reform. This was followed with other instructions and guidelines, including the UNDG Paris Declaration Guidance Website on National Ownership and Aid Effectiveness.⁷⁰ The Chair's 2005 letter also recognized pertinent earlier UNDG guidelines, including the UNDG Guidance Note on UN Country Team Engagement in PRSPs⁷¹ and ones on the Common Country Assessment and UNDAF.⁷²

Post PD, UNDP organized a workshop on aid effectiveness for the Western Balkans in 2006.

BOX 2. ADAPTING AN AGENCY'S CAPACITY TO PARIS DECLARATION PRINCIPLES

IFAD is an interesting example of adapting capacity to the PD principles. Since its first association with the PD, IFAD has sought to mainstream the related commitments. This is reflected in the wide range of operational activities that refer to the PD: policy documents, including Country Strategic Opportunities Papers; the corporate-level results measurement framework; lending related documents; and evaluations of the independent Office of Evaluation. These activities show that the PD commitments have been incorporated extensively by management and staff. This success may be a reflection of IFAD's different organizational set-up compared to most UNDG members: IFAD is small and concentrated in one location, which gives it the advantage of management and staff being able to absorb, under strong leadership from the top, the directions emanating from the PD with greater ease than large and decentralized UN organizations. IFAD has shown less of a need for the panoply of formal guidelines and for training. This efficiency was probably underpinned further by two IFAD specific factors: the nature of its close international financial institution interactions with its borrower governments in many areas identified in the PD, and its close involvement in, and familiarity with, the Rome Declaration, which preceded the PD by almost a year.

Adapting IFAD's capacity to the PD was enhanced by its programme to increase its presence in 15 countries that started just prior to the PD, leading to closer interaction at the country level, including through UNCTs. In addition, IFAD strengthened its internal capacity to implement PD commitments by allocating the responsibility for fostering and monitoring PD commitments to a seasoned advisor in the Programme Management Department, which is under an Assistant Vice President.

70 Available online at www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=219.

71 UNDG, 'Guidance Note. UN Country Team Engagement in PRSPs', 1 December 2003.

72 Common Country Assessment and the UNDAF were adopted as strategic planning tools for the UN system as part of the 1998 UN reform agenda. Guidelines for their preparation were first issued in April 1999. They were revised in May 2002, October 2003 and February 2007.

It also organized workshops with OECD-DAC, WB, and the African Development Bank for Eastern/Southern Africa (held in Uganda in 2005) and for North/West/Central Africa (held in Mali in 2006), and follow-up workshops on aid management for Western Balkans (2007), for West Africa (2007), and for Southern and Eastern Africa (2007). The November 2006 UNDP Madrid conference on capacity development also focused on aid effectiveness and PD implementation. UNDP has a website dedicated to aid effectiveness⁷³

and an internal collaborative workspace on PD implementation for sharing of tools, lessons and practices.⁷⁴

The survey of RCs examined the issue of staff guidance on implementing the PD.⁷⁵ Overall, the RCs found the guidance low or insufficient (57 percent in SCs and 80 percent in NSCs). This suggests that guidance should be: increased, adapted to country-specific situations, coherent across different agencies, and enforced by commitment from members.

KEY FINDINGS REGARDING CAPACITY

- UNDG members used existing institutional structures and reinforced them where necessary, except in the case where a new institution (UNAIDS) found the principles underlying the PD relevant to its development.
- Most of the capacity development to enable UNDG members to implement the PD has taken the form of specific instructions, guidelines and training to educate staff about the PD. Prior commitments to major PD principles embodied in such guidance as for Common Country Assessments and UNDAFs were helpful in this process.
- The main challenge for UNDG members to ensure relevancy of their guidance on the PD principles was the need to adapt guidance and training to the varying country circumstances that their UNCTs face.

73 Available online at www.devoid.org.

74 Available online at <http://content.undp.org/go/practices/poverty/aid-coordination>.

75 Survey question was: "To which extent have specific instructions, guidelines, operational directives been developed and disseminated to staff to facilitate implementation and assessment of the PD?"

ASSESSING INCENTIVES

Integrating existing UN development goals with those of the PD requires a reorientation of incentives to become effective. The people who make up the UNDG organizations need to be convinced and motivated on a sustained basis about the new direction. This challenge has been approached through guidance and training as well as personnel performance assessment. The International Civil Service System that is used across the UN does not allow for direct monetary recognition to those UNDG officers who make an outstanding contribution to such an effort (only medals and other non-monetary awards are allowed).

UNDG organizations use Results and Competency Assessments for personal goal setting and recognition for managers. An RC's Results and Competency Assessment contains 5 headings to assess results and competencies as coordinator of the UNCT, 13 itemized headings that relate to other, non-UNCT related, results and competencies, as well as supplementary assessments by senior officers of organizations represented in a UNCT.⁷⁶ A new initiative like the PD that has clear implications for the role of the UNCT will be recognized as part of the RC's assessment. However, the requirement for an assessment of the specific contribution of a UNCT staff member to the implementation of the PD appears to be limited to the RC.

The interview feedback from UNDG agencies and others interviewed through their RRs was that performance assessments address the PD

agenda indirectly through the recognition of staff and managers' contributions to development effectiveness. Setting staff and managers' objectives and performance assessments against PD-related objectives has many facets. It tends to include effectiveness in the achievement of agency programme objectives, such as the development of results-based Country Strategic Opportunities Papers (at IFAD), of sector specific SWAPs (at UNFPA), or of mobilization of pool funding (at UNDP).

The interview feedback also noted that organizations may have objectives that are not always consistent with PD principles. In particular, the pressure within organizations to achieve programme results in a timely fashion is unabated. This pressure takes many forms, such as using well established and locally proven agency-specific procurement rules to achieve urgent purchases and distribution rather than waiting on interagency initiative or adhering to untested partner country rules. In other words, basic incentives to carry out an agency's own programme continue to affect agency staff behaviour, in particular those who anticipate that demand for their personal services could be affected through PD induced harmonization. It takes new incentives to change such patterns.

Therefore, the RC survey responses regarding incentives to implement the PD are of special interest. Only 25 percent of RCs in the SCs (and 20 percent in NSCs) believe that full

⁷⁶ Note that RCs are selected from a pool of candidates from all UN organizations. At present, one third of the RCs are non-UNDP persons; there is an expectation that this proportion would increase to 50 percent in the years ahead.

attention has been given to incentives for PD implementation.⁷⁷ In fact, not one noted that incentives had received ‘very high’ attention. Based on the responses, it appears that incentives have remained unchanged since the PD was introduced. Prior to the PD, performance assessments of in-country staff used core criteria that are now incorporated in the PD: effective relationships with government and other partners, and the ability to integrate agency programmes into a national strategy. However, as noted by one RC, even with the significant weight attached to the RC’s handling of the UNCT, implementation of the agency’s programme was the most important factor in his performance evaluation. As another survey respondent noted, complying

with the PD is just one of several policies that the RC and UNCT are expected to pursue, others include the promotion of peace and respect of human rights. The relative weight of these policy objectives should vary according to a country situation.

This assessment, at both headquarter and country levels, shows that incentives for implementing the PD ought to extend beyond the traditional concept of giving inducements to a person or a team. Intra- and inter-agency obstacles stand in the way of successfully implementing the PD.⁷⁸ Only strong leadership and the conviction among staff that the PD principles are in the interest of the agencies will change the behaviour of resisting necessary changes.

KEY FINDINGS REGARDING INCENTIVES

- Those who are expected to take primary responsibility in implementing the PD, the RCs, find incentives specific to this endeavour weak. However, their performance evaluation directly addresses PD-related responsibilities. For the many other UNDG member staff involved in the implementation of the PD, this dimension is assessed in their performance evaluation only indirectly, mainly through agreed work programmes.
- For incentives to implement the PD to become effective, the concept of ‘incentive’ would need to be broadened to directly address the factors that stand in the way of greater progress, especially harmonization.

77 Survey question: “To which extent are there specific incentives provided by UN agencies – e.g. for recruitment, performance assessment and training – for their management and staff to comply with the PD principles?”

78 Inter-agency obstacles are more transparent and have been identified and addressed under a variety of harmonization initiatives.

IMPLEMENTING THE PARIS DECLARATION AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The six countries that the evaluation team visited vary significantly. Table 1 captures the most important indicators⁷⁹ that were found to determine the context for UNDG members' role during the country reviews. Three countries (Ethiopia, Lao PDR and Mauritania) are highly aid dependent; two are middle income countries (Ukraine and Gabon); while Cameroon falls in a middle range.

UNDG's developmental role through the RC and the UNCT was more pronounced in countries with the highest aid dependency, even more so when compounded by a large population. Furthermore, the role of UN representation in

many countries extended well beyond the development effectiveness role that the PD addresses. For instance, in Ukraine and in Mauritania, the UN representatives played important roles in political reconciliation processes. In Ethiopia, they dealt with major humanitarian problems in conflict areas.

Before assessing progress made by UNDG contributions to PD implementation in the six countries, it is important to note that these countries varied significantly in their commitment to the PD. At one end of the spectrum, Ethiopia was deeply involved in the preparation of the PD (after having been a pilot country for the Rome Declaration) and took the initiative for

TABLE 1. PRINCIPAL CASE-STUDY COUNTRY INDICATORS

COUNTRY	POPULATION (MILLIONS)	HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX RANKING	AID DEPENDENCY*
Ethiopia	72.7	170	17.1
Mauritania	3.2	153	10.0
Lao PDR	5.8	133	11.3
Cameroon	16.7	144	5.5
Gabon	1.4	124	0.8
Ukraine	46.6	77	0.5

*Aid dependency was measured as official development assistance as a percentage of gross national income. Sources: Population and aid dependence, WB; human development index, UNDP.

⁷⁹ Governance, in the broad interpretation (including, for example, corruption levels) has been a contextual factor impacting on PD implementation efforts in all countries. No objective indicator was found to capture fully this dimension.

improving on PD targets after signing the Declaration. At the other end of the spectrum, Gabon and Ukraine became signatories to the PD only subsequent to the March 2005 Paris conference. Gabon's signing of the PD in March 2006 resulted largely from the sensitizing efforts made by the UNCT. Cameroon, Lao PDR and Mauritania were all original signatories. Notably, the government of Lao PDR, endorsed the Vientiane Declaration on Aid Effectiveness at a Round Table Meeting in November 2006, together with 24 development partners. Lao PDR stakeholders described this as an example of 'domesticating' the PD.

The main findings from the country case studies, in terms of progress by, and constraints on, UNCTs are summarized in Annex 7.

6.2 OWNERSHIP

The leadership in developing and implementing national development strategies, including through a broad consultative process, has varied considerably across the six countries. Where national planning was not backed up by sound policies and strategies that addressed poverty reduction as well as sector and thematic strategies, important questions remained as to the strength of ownership. Thus confidence in the national ownership of the strategies and programmes by donors was uneven. The fact that civil society was fragmented and/or not fully engaged in the national planning process was a concern in almost all six country cases. In Ethiopia, participation of civil society organizations was limited. In addition, after a strong initial development strategy, programme and support from donors, the post 2005 election disturbances diminished the predictability of aid flows.

National development programmes are based in most cases on PRSPs that closely follow the PD. However, weaknesses in coordination and

capacities were found to undermine the strength of ownership in most of the six countries. In Cameroon, the strong involvement of the Ministry of Economy and Finance in the PRSP and related medium-term programme was not balanced by a similar involvement of the line ministries.

The UNDG/UNCT contribution to strengthening ownership mainly took the form of assisting governments in strengthening capacity to prepare and execute their country development strategies and plans. Because country ownership varied largely, the role of the UNCT also varied. On the whole, UNCT assistance was found beneficial. However, the Laos experience draws attention to the limits for such support: UNCT's deep involvement in Laos' Vientiane Declaration and the Country Action Plan was helpful but potentially excessive. Country partners noted that it did not leave enough room for true government leadership.

Widespread UNCT assistance in improving coordination in support from external sources merits special mention. The close interaction between the UNCT and DAG in Ethiopia, both under the chairmanship (or co-chairmanship) of the RC, is an example of a very helpful UNDG role, especially during a period of strain between the government and donors in a country with a very large ODA programme. In Gabon, the RC/UNCT was instrumental in setting up a coordination structure for interaction among the development partners. However, given the country's small ODA programme, the impact on overall country strategy was limited.

Most of the findings related to the UNDG/UNCT support for strengthening ownership predate the PD, confirming that this PD objective had already been part of UNDG members' principles of engagement. But the broadly accepted commitment to the PD has reinforced and further shaped past experiences when it comes to ownership.

6.3 ALIGNMENT

At the policy level, generally good alignment was found with UNDG members. UNDAFs were prepared increasingly to coincide with the government's own planning period, facilitating period-specific alignment with government priorities and the often underlying PRSPs. Working groups (in some countries called technical groups) within UNCTs that cover different sectors and/or cross-cutting issues, provided many opportunities for alignment based on joint government-donor planning and programming, from strategy and action plan development to detailed activity level design. The transition to new aid modalities (such as SWAPs, DBS and increased specialization by donors) was helped, for instance in Ethiopia, by the presence since the late 1990s of the DAG co-chaired by the RC and the resident WB Director.⁸⁰ The working groups also have another function that falls within the PD principles by helping UNDG members and broader aid groupings (like DAG in Ethiopia) to achieve specialization and coordination essential for alignment and harmonization (see below).

While the UNDAF advanced alignment by UNDG members represented in the UNCT and under the leadership of the RC, UNDAF is not an instrument for allocating financial resources beyond broad parameters. The effectiveness of the UNCTs and their working groups in terms of alignment of activities had greater significance when it came to action plans and similar programming. However, it appeared that most projects and programmes were still 'going their own way'. This was partly due to the need for frequent change within broadly defined programme parameters, and more important, because some donors felt a need to refocus their

programmes on particular sectors and strengthen service delivery and capacity development.

Governments sought improved alignment and harmonization in order to reduce transaction costs. The Ethiopian government impressed this point by emphasizing the heavy burden imposed by the differences in operational systems used by each donor. Noting that the PD targets had been set at the lowest threshold to satisfy the concerns of approximately 170 countries with highly diverse issues, the Ethiopian government went a step further and sought to improve on the PD targets. As noted, this initiative was put on hold after the 2005 post-election disturbances.

On the whole, progress towards the PD targets for 2010 was low, despite the progress made at the policy level. Where improvements have been reported, they relate primarily to better coordination of aid-related activities. Donors did not significantly increase use of national systems. The reason for this was most often because these systems were not up to international standards. Despite some specific improvements, many of the donor restrictions imposed by agency specific requirements (including the development partners in the UNCT) remain, including in areas of planning, financial arrangements, disbursements, M&E and reporting. It should be noted that none of the six countries belong to the pilot countries for One UN.

The role played by Project Implementation Units was significant in most countries. This is unlikely to change except over time. Greater emphasis was given to the newer modalities of SWAPs and DBS. However, the project implementation and management roles of Project Implementation Units⁸¹ need to be taken on by

80 In mid 2007, the chairmanship was changed to a multilateral co-chair (RC and WB rotating every six months) and a bilateral co-chair (donor country representative rotating every 12 months) in order to ensure fuller representation of the large bilateral donor community.

81 "Where parallel systems exist such as in PIUs [Project Implementation Units], the UN will support transition plans towards fully using national systems..." Letter from UNDG chair, July 2005.

line ministries or specialized institutions (often at local levels)—a development that depends on systematic capacity development at these levels. This process is further complicated by frequent staff changes in the public sector, particularly where a booming private sector is siphoning off some of the better public-sector staff.

6.4 HARMONIZATION

Donors and the UNCT development partners reported some successes in improving coordination of their activities. For example, in Gabon, UNCT facilitated the establishment of an oversight matrix of development cooperation engagements, a tool that was helpful for both the donors and the government. In Mauritania, there was excellent interaction between a highly committed RC and local WB director that overcame institutional constraints, although their departure illustrates that such harmonization may not be sustained. Joint sector programming was observed in various forms in the six countries, especially when it came to HIV/AIDS, where the coordination initiatives of UNAIDS have been paying off at the country level.

However, harmonization in the full PD sense is more distant. Harmonization is difficult to start at the country level. As long as donors have different operating modalities, there is little that even a well coordinated local aid group or a UNCT can do. There is a need for harmonization with local systems, but such harmonization

is unlikely to occur when there is no start at the headquarter or institutional level.

ODA in most of the six country cases is still provided through dedicated projects and programmes, although SWAPs have become more common and DBS has been noted in some cases. This means only small changes have been made to the traditional costly multiple reporting, procurement, accounting and other procedures. The predictability of ODA flows, which is particularly important when it comes to DBS, also affects harmonization. Ethiopia's experience indicates that predictability has regressed rather than progressed (though a partial solution was found in that case through changes in the destination channel for DBS for critical poverty-related services).

Harmonization under the HACT and standard Daily Subsistence Allowance for the ExCom agencies was observed in Lao PDR. Some initial steps had also been made in Mauritania and Gabon. This important initiative suggests that when harmonization is addressed by agency headquarters, the prospects of helping developing partners harmonize procedures and reduce transaction costs are good. HACT is based on a highly demanding initial assessment of country- and project-specific accounting and auditing process. Its introduction therefore requires substantial upfront costs and may even be questioned in countries where ExCom agencies' projects have an overwhelming local contribution. Interestingly, there was no reference to possibly extending HACT and standard Daily

BOX 3. HARMONIZATION VERSUS COORDINATION

A good deal of confusion exists between the definition of 'coordination' versus 'harmonization'. Coordinating donor missions may mean maintaining a large number of missions running in a well coordinated parallel fashion; harmonizing means combining missions of different agencies. Similarly, co-financing may mean coordinated parallel financing with the panoply of multiple procurement/disbursement/reporting arrangement, or harmonized joint financing. Thus coordination *may* mean harmonization but the test for real harmonization is reduced cost and/or a measurably improved service.

Subsistence Allowance beyond the ExCom agencies, although many other UNCT member agencies have programmes that might benefit from HACT.

Harmonization of bilateral assistance faces another challenge in that most donors are anxious to show their constituents specific results from an intervention with a donor's money. Moreover, in cases of DBS or other non-project/programme assistance, an official audit report specifying the effects of assistance may be requested by bilateral donors, even though attribution of specific results to a particular donor may be difficult to establish. Although DBS is an exception for UNDG members, this concern could apply to them as well.

6.5 MANAGING FOR RESULTS

Progress in this area has been mixed, but shows some interesting results. In Cameroon, a PRSP with clearly marked quantified targets and MDG benchmarks and timetables was found, but national statistical data were found to be weak. In Ethiopia, there was a very detailed (some donors felt overly detailed) plan with clear benchmarks tied to the MDGs and a strengthened national statistical office and the promise of annual progress reports.

However, there was often a gap between national development strategies and programmes and results-oriented reporting in the case-study countries. The presence of a strong national statistical office with capacity for beneficiary surveys is critical to credible management of results. Assistance to statistical offices is needed

on a long-term and comprehensive basis in order to build the necessary capacities. Two examples have already been noted: the national statistical office in Ethiopia received long-term assistance from the WB and Sweden's 15 years of support to the national statistical system in Laos.

Donor reliance on national performance indicators was an exception, not the rule, due to a lack of confidence in the underlying systems. Harmonization of reporting, as already noted, is lagging. Donor support for capacity development to improve results-oriented reporting, monitoring and assessment frameworks exists, especially by UNDP.

6.6 MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Overall, mutual accountability is the one area among the five PD dimensions where progress is still at an initial stage. An independent aid assessment, jointly agreed between government and donors and coordinated by UNDP, occurred in Cameroon and Mauritania. A number of governments expressed an interest in more work on mutual accountability, especially in light of concerns about predictability of aid flows.

UNECA's substantial work with OECD-DAC, discussed in Chapter 3, should be viewed as an effort in this area. In addition, UNDP's 2006 Evaluation Policy states the need to provide an objective assessment of contributions to development results, assessing its programmes and operations in a transparent way to enhance accountability towards partner countries. UNAIDS' CHAT tool is aimed at enhancing mutual accountability by assessing the role of the various partners.

KEY FINDINGS REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION

- PD implementation has progressed (at varying levels and speeds) in all countries reviewed, with substantial involvement from RCs and UNCTs. The UNCT role was most evident in the countries with the largest ODA dependency.
- UNCTs and their working groups have provided an important coordination structure for implementing the PD agenda. They were particularly effective where the RC was deeply involved in chairing aid coordination arrangements together with other development partners.
- UNCTs have been helpful in the progress of most PD categories, especially when it comes to the support of country ownership, but also in alignment with partner strategies and in managing results. On harmonization, some specific, substantial progress has been reported (HACT is the best illustration). Partner countries have high expectations regarding harmonization and alignment, thus considerable disappointment exists regarding the lack in reduction of transaction costs. This subject has been even more difficult to tackle jointly with development partners beyond UNDG members.
- Continued country presence and participation in the UNCT is an important factor for a UNDG member to play its full role in the coordinated effort of development assistance, especially where the member has a mandate for a major cross-cutting issue like gender equality or rural development. This is illustrated by the experience of UNIFEM and IFAD, even though another UNDG member may have ably represented them.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The terms of reference for this assessment ask that it “incorporate specific dimensions concerning *gender equality, HIV/AIDS, rural development and capacity development.*” The four dimensions specified in the terms of reference correspond to the principal goals of the four non-regional participating undg members: IFAD, UNAIDS, UNIFEM and UNDP. Additional insights into the gender dimension came from the feedback obtained from UNFPA. The PD does not cover these issues in terms of objectives or targets, though it mentions gender and HIV/AIDS as examples.⁸² While the term capacity development does not appear in the PD, the term capacity development is used, mainly as a requirement for alignment and managing for results. No reference is made to rural or to agricultural development or to any other sector, except indirectly through mentioning the MDGs. The findings of this review are thus limited by these connections to/disconnects from the PD.

7.2 GENDER EQUALITY

There was an absence of incentives among donors, including some UNCTs, to promote the gender agenda. Development partners advocating for gender equality need to provide evidence that gender equality contributes to the PD’s goal of improved aid effectiveness. The

12 pilot countries of the EC/UN Partnership on Gender Equality for Development and Peace⁸³ will focus on gathering evidence that shows that gender equality contributes substantially to aid effectiveness.

In the six case-study countries, gender mainstreaming efforts in the context of implementing the PD remains partial and *ad-hoc*. The position of gender equality efforts within thematic or technical working groups of UNCTs (formed against the harmonization objectives of donors and other development partners), often remains unclear. The role of the Gender Focal Persons in the UNCTs and thematic working groups in advocating for gender mainstreaming is also weak. Some UN organizations have not filled the position of gender focal points and assign junior staff to represent organizations in gender-related UNCT activities.

While UNIFEM plays a key role at the global level in advocating gender equality in the context of the PD, lack of full offices in most countries limits UNIFEM’s advocacy role at the country level. There are guidance notes⁸⁴ from headquarters for the UNCTs on strategies for advocating gender equality at country level, even in countries where UNIFEM is not resident. But their application seems to be spotty and missing the opportunity to benefit gender mainstreaming in national strategic

82 PD paragraph 4. iv. refers to HIV/AIDS as an example of global programmes; paragraph 42 mentions gender equality as a cross-cutting issue.

83 Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Suriname and Ukraine.

84 Available online at www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/taskforces/tfccundat2005.htm.

frameworks such as PRSP processes, National HIV/AIDS Strategic Frameworks and National Budgets' gender equality efforts in sectoral or thematic working groups.

7.3 HIV/AIDS

As noted in Chapter 3, the connection between the PD and UNAIDS operations is very close. UNAIDS is an example of a joint programme by 10 co-sponsoring UNDG members.⁸⁵ HIV/AIDS is thus one area where the coordination process was initiated pre-PD together with an intervention modus that aimed at applying the PD principles of supporting national ownership, coordinated programming and M&E. Further guidance to the national responses was provided by Universal Access targets, the Three Ones and tools like CHAT—all of which are based on PD principles. The Unified Budget and Workplan, which started approximately two years ago, is a good example of coordination of programmes of the aforementioned UNDG members. The Unified Budget and Workplan will provide a vehicle for monitoring programme implementation and efficiency, much along the lines of the PD goal of increasing aid effectiveness.

Reflecting the priority the UN system places on HIV/AIDS, the UN Secretary General directed the RCs to establish a Joint Country Team comprising UNDG members in December 2005. The Joint Team is intended to improve coherence and harmonization within and among UN organizations. Heads of organizations are supposed to provide overall policy and implementation oversight on the HIV/AIDS response. The formation of the Joint Team was meant to encourage UNCTs to renew, strengthen and adapt existing structures to address shortcomings and not to create new structures and processes. UNAIDS country-level coordination efforts have included: supporting establishment of

National AIDS Councils to facilitate multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder involvement; and engaging the Global Fund established Country Coordination Mechanisms for Global Fund grant application, approval and monitoring. All countries visited had National AIDS Councils. At the group level, activities have included joint programming efforts, especially involving UNFPA and UNICEF. The PD may have enhanced the emphasis on HIV/AIDS, but in most cases, agency staff had been assigned to the Joint Country Team groups before the PD and the interactions with other UNCT sectoral working groups have not changed in terms of greater HIV/AIDS mainstreaming.

Progress in promoting national ownership and enhancing the national AIDS responses is relative to country capacities. There are challenges in terms of engaging all the major players in national coordination, and aligning and harmonizing interventions funded by these sources with national strategies and action plans. Increases in financial flows towards HIV/AIDS has triggered not only an enhanced need for coordination but also highlighted the need for additional technical advice. UNDP has at times played a critical role in funding such technical advice. The ability to assign technical advisory roles among agencies and establish a more distinct division of labour is challenging but appears to be initially addressed, although there is a need for further elaboration. The PD has strengthened awareness and commitment with other development partners to the need for coordination and joint programming.

7.4 RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Rural development was a significant issue in all six countries cases, though markedly more among the lowest income countries, especially in

85 UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the WB.

Ethiopia. A connect, or a disconnect, with the PD was evident mainly at two levels.

First, rural development cuts across many sectors, from social (such as health and education) to agriculture (production techniques) to natural resources (water), land registration, infrastructure (roads and electricity) and marketing (agro-industries). Because of this, a number of actors are needed in order to provide a favourable environment for rural development, including many from the private sector such as banks. This environment creates special challenges for channelling ODA to the beneficiaries. The complexity of effective development assistance to the rural poor makes it especially important that alignment and aid coordination is explored fully along the lines of the PD. While SWAPs have been developed in some countries, the opportunities for DBS has been limited.

Second, rural development on the whole has not been easy to fit into the configuration of UNCTs and their working groups. Often, there has been an absence of an IFAD local presence and thus the unique rural development perspective. IFAD's mostly Rome-based CPMs have sought to be in country during critical phases of UNCT sectoral considerations, in particular during the preparation of the UNDAF, but their impact has been limited by the lack of continuous in-country presence. Thus FAO, WFP, WB, and at times, regional development banks and others, were often in the forefront of introducing the rural development perspective into the UNCT and specialized working groups. But underlying this issue is a concern held mainly at IFAD that UNCTs were more focused on social than on production concerns when it comes to rural development. Even where attention is given to social sectors and services in the rural context, a closer integration among the different UN organizations is required to impact poverty in rural areas on a sustainable basis through production and income generation. There remains an important task

for IFAD (in partnership with FAO, WFP and others) to ensure that rural development gets full attention among the UNCTs.

7.5 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The PD has enhanced emphasis on capacity development and resulted in a change in attitude and approach to dealing with capacity development. This was to be associated with a downscaling of Project Implementation Units to focus more directly on developing the capacity of national entities that could take on the functions of the Units. This corresponds with the emphasis on development processes being owned by partner countries in order to be sustainable.

Capacity development is the *raison d'être* of development partners' presence in developing countries and is supported in most sectors at normative, operational and technical levels. Capacity development is in different stages in different sectors and particularly needed in sector diversification efforts, including enhanced emphasis on social sectors where appropriate.

At the macro level, increased attention has been given to public financial management, resulting in a need for training in financial planning tools, anti-corruption measures, and the like. At the sectoral level, capacity development is needed to help partner countries better define and formulate sector strategies and action plans.

An integrated and sector-comprehensive approach to capacity development was observed in the context of SWAPs and in relation to DBS. Some development partners, such as the EC, some UNDG members and international finance institutions, assigned experts to assess capacity and areas for capacity development in preparation for moving towards SWAPs and DBS. At sub-sector, programme and project levels, technical advisory functions have been directed towards national entities.

Training needs varied considerably across the countries. In some, a cadre of well trained staff exist, but are spread too thinly within the overall administrative system and are thus exploited both by the partner country's system and by donors' demands. In some countries, skills development comprises fundamental skills such as language skills (for enhanced development coordination) to more sophisticated technical skills. A need to focus horizontally—for example on generic functions in areas such as budget making, audit functions, procurement systems, and sector expertise—as well as overall planning abilities are at the core of further capacity development efforts. Government capacities to plan and coordinate development partners' contributions are of particular relevance to the PD.

The renewed emphasis on capacity development and bringing it to scale will require a significant change in the allocation of resources. It also means

that the time frame for planning capacity-building activities will need to change to a longer term perspective in recognition of the fact that capacity development and the related human resources skills development require long-term commitments.

There is a strong sentiment among development partners that a significant government-led effort is necessary to develop capacity. Meanwhile a number of *ad hoc* mechanisms to align with poverty reduction strategies and harmonize among development partners are being applied. These render capacity development efforts ad hoc and pursued in a non-systematic way.

There is a large scope for UN involvement in assisting and supporting governments in identifying and defining needs, and in providing overview of the new capacity development issues that have emerged in the initial steps to adhere to PD principles.

KEY FINDINGS REGARDING CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

- **Gender equality:** There is much room for improvement within UNCTs to fully incorporate agencies' policies on women's equality. A greater permanent presence of UNIFEM at the country level and thereby in UNCTs may further gender equality in UNCT development work
- **HIV/AIDS:** Recognition of the issue and the volume of activities addressing HIV/AIDS have rapidly increased. Coordination among the many development partners requires continued effort by the Joint Teams.
- **Rural development:** While there are significant differences in the partner countries' rural poverty, this cross-cutting area would have benefited from a more extensive continued country presence by IFAD, working together with FAO and WFP representatives. The recent introduction of IFAD representatives in a limited number of countries ought to make a difference. There is room for UNCTs giving greater attention to rural development beyond the social dimensions in order to achieve sustainable development based on improved production and income.
- **Capacity development:** As part of the PD, there are new demands for capacity development. As at the macro level, increased attention is being given to public financial management, but there is still a great need for training in financial planning tools, anti-corruption measures, and the like. At the sectoral level, capacity development is needed to help partner countries better define and formulate sector strategies and action plans. The achievement of the PD—and UNDG—objective of reducing the role of Project Implementation Units under ODA depends in good part on further long-term donor support through well focused country-wide strategies and programmes for capacity development.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 CONCLUSIONS

1. UNDG experience in applying PD principles varied substantially across the five PD principles. Progress was most evident in supporting country ownership and alignment with national development strategies. There were also some interesting cases of progress in the area of mutual accountability. However, progress relating to alignment in using country systems and harmonization across UNDG members (and beyond) shows the greatest room for improvement. Strong coordination mechanisms involving other development partners and partner governments are critical for RCs/UNCTs to foster PD implementation.

The RC/UNCT role extends far beyond the PD's aid effectiveness objectives. RCs and UNCTs may face issues of humanitarian assistance, crisis management, conflict prevention and peace building that take priority over PD principles. This potential area of competition does not appear to have hindered PD implementation. Some of the UN-related responsibilities that extend beyond the PD may, however, be critical to achieving PD objectives.

- 1.1 The UNDG/UNCT contribution to strengthening **ownership** mainly took the form of assisting governments in strengthening capacity to prepare and execute their country development strategies and deal with new aid modalities such as SWAPs and DBS. Because country ownership varied

largely, the role of the UNCT also varied. The RC offices, as well as individual UN organizations, through collaboration with governments and multilateral and bilateral agencies, have played an important role in creating an enabling environment for achieving the PD objectives. UNDG/UNCT was seen as a trusted partner, supporting countries in fulfilling both their national and international development obligations and in designing and implementing development strategies.

- 1.2 The main progress in **alignment** took place with respect to development strategies at national and sectoral levels, including aligning planning cycles of UNDAFs to national development plans. There is room for improvement by UNCTs in other elements of alignment that relate to use of national systems of partner countries (such as reporting, public financial management, country audits and procurement).

Coordination regarding development priority setting and planning among UNCT members and other development partners seems to have improved greatly as a result of thematic groups and larger coordination fora. In all six case-study countries, UNCT understood that it has become increasingly difficult to act in isolation, although fuller joint programming has not yet been achieved.

- 1.3 Some progress did occur in improved coordination among UNCT members and other development partners (most important under the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers initiative). However, partner countries have higher expectations for measurable savings in transaction costs through alignment and **harmonization**. UNCT members felt most constrained in acceding to partner countries' requests to harmonize their headquarter-determined procedures. Thus efforts to reduce transaction costs through harmonization require an approach that addresses the concerns of both partner countries and the many UNCT agencies (and other development partners). Given the wide variance among UNDG member objectives, policies and procedures, the road to harmonization remains an extraordinary challenge for the UNDG system.
- 1.4 Government capacities to plan and coordinate development partners' contributions are of particular relevance to the PD. For instance, the country case studies confirm that systematic strengthening of national statistical offices is particularly important to **managing for results** by providing credible and timely information. However, effective assistance to statistical offices requires long-term and comprehensive commitments in order to assure the required capacities are built.
- 1.5 The feedback from the country case studies suggests that there is a long way to go in achieving the PD objective of **mutual accountability** and joint assessments of mutual progress in aid effectiveness. Moreover, feedback from case-study countries included broad concern about donor commitments in regards to both level and predictability of support. UNCT plays a significant role in promoting mutual accountability, for example through its Round Tables that indicate performance under donor pledging, its participation in Consultative Group meetings, its support to governance reforms including strengthening the parliamentary system, and its support to civil society participation. UNECA plays a special role in fostering mutual accountability at the level of the African countries.
2. UNDG and the participating members in this assessment started out well in their **commitment** to respond to the PD principles, both through actions at headquarters and through conveying the importance of the PD to the RCs and the UNCTs. This relatively fast response was greatly facilitated by development assistance commitments in which UNDG members had already been engaged prior to the PD.
- 2.1 Changes were made to synchronize UNCT planning cycles with national planning cycles.
- 2.2 UNCTs supported national partners in sector institutional arrangements, such as UNFPA involvement in SWAPs.
- 2.3 Agencies increased efforts to use national systems, for example for procurement and operational procedures, thus eliminating Project Implementation Units on procurement. However, significant variances between agencies and countries remain.
3. When responding to **capacities**, UNDG members used existing institutional structures and reinforced them where necessary rather than building additional structures. In the case of a relatively new institution (UNAIDS), it found the PD principles relevant for building national

HIV/AIDS responses. Most of the capacity development to enable UNDG members to implement the PD has taken the form of specific instructions, guidelines and training to educate staff about the PD. Prior commitments to major PD principles embodied in the Common Country Assessments and UNDAFs were helpful in this process.

- 3.1 UNCTs provided substantial technical support to countries in formulating, revising and implementing national development strategies and PRSPs.
- 3.2 UNDG established a policy network on MDGs to provide policy and operational advice to UNCTs in their technical support work.
4. When assessing **incentive systems** in place, the findings are discouraging. Those who are expected to take primary responsibility in implementing the PD, the RCs, find incentives specific to this endeavour weak. The performance evaluation of RCs (which includes an assessment from agencies forming part of UNDG) directly addresses PD-related responsibilities. However, for the many other UNDG member staff involved in the implementation of the PD, this dimension is assessed in their performance evaluation only indirectly, mainly through agreed work programmes. Incentives to implement the PD cannot rely only on traditional incentive systems focusing on the immediate actors concerned. The approach to incentives must be broadened to address directly the factors that stand in the way of greater progress, especially with respect to harmonization.
5. Implementing the PD principles across cross-cutting issues has been uneven. In the case of **HIV/AIDS**, the presence of a UNDG entity (UNAIDS) was helpful to implementing PD principles in this critical area. However, implementation was less successful in the remaining three of the four

cross-cutting issues reviewed in this assessment: gender equality, rural development and capacity development. Despite established UNDG member policies on gender equality and the practice in countries without a UNIFEM resident specialist to have a lead person on gender equality from another resident UNDG organization in the UNCT, attention to **gender equality** is still lacking. The degree to which gender equality issues within the PD context was addressed varied from country to country and there is room for improvement: clear strategies and indicators to measure progress made on gender equality efforts need to exist. With regard to **rural development** and **capacity development**, attention to and coordination by the UNCT can be improved through the respective working groups.

6. Many RCs/UNCTs work in non-PD signatory countries. While non-signatory countries were not specifically assessed in this evaluation (no non-signatory countries were visited), feedback from the survey of RCs suggests that signatory countries are significantly better attuned to the PD principles. Thus RCs and UNCTs in non-signatory countries face greater challenges in helping UNDG members respond to the principles embedded in the PD.

8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. UNDG should make increased use of national systems for support services, when appropriate and to the benefit of the partner countries, in order to strengthen national capacities and reduce transaction costs. Such support services include: procurement, security, information technology, telecommunications and banking, as well as planning, reporting and evaluation.
2. UNDG should further harmonize and simplify its business practices in order to

- enhance accountability and transparency of operational activities while ensuring that development assistance to partner countries is provided in a coherent fashion that supports capacity development. Practices that could be improved include: budgeting, audit functions, procurement systems, and professional expertise, including the adoption of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards.
3. UNDG should measure the cost of non-harmonized approaches to development assistance and further standardize and harmonize the concepts and practices to reduce transaction costs.
 4. UNDG should create specific, measurable, achievable and relevant results frameworks and strategies that enable partner countries to design, monitor and evaluate results in the development of their capacities at different levels to achieve national development goals and progress towards the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs.
 5. It is recommended that UNDG encourages governments of partner countries to initiate and conduct joint and country-led evaluations that assess the contribution of the United Nations development system to national development plans and strategies, and to systematize and disseminate lessons learned from these exercises as mechanisms for mutual accountability.
 6. UNDG should reinforce its commitment to strengthen the capacity of partner countries, at their request and with their ownership and leadership, to coordinate external assistance, including system-wide and sector-wide approaches and budget support, and to make the best possible use of such assistance, especially by being involved in national planning and monitoring processes and linking the aid effectiveness agenda to the broader development effectiveness agenda.
 7. UNDG should harmonize its approach amongst its members and other development partners to strengthen national capacities. Capacity development is commonly associated with various forms of support aimed at individuals (training), institutions (organizational development) and the enabling environment (support to policies and strategies). UNDG should contribute to the capacity of partner countries to optimize the use of new aid modalities.
 8. UNDG should further develop and strengthen its knowledge management systems and expertise, including resources readily available at the regional level and from non-resident agencies to better assist partner countries' needs for capacity development.
 9. Incentives to implement the PD should address directly the factors that stand in the way of progress, especially with respect to harmonization. UNDG should address the structural obstacles to the adherence of the PD principles as part of a broader UN reform process. This goes beyond the subject of the present evaluation, which addresses PD implementation, though it clearly impacts UNDG's efficient delivery of development assistance.
 10. UNDG should adopt a complementary approach to incorporating cross-cutting issues like gender mainstreaming, capacity development and rural development as has been done in the response to HIV/AIDS. In addition, UNCTs should review the adequacy of their arrangements and efforts aimed at gender equality and rural development in countries with substantial rural poverty by going beyond social concerns and addressing rural poverty on a sustainable basis, recognizing systematically the need for production and income improvements.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

JOINT EVALUATION OF THE UNDG CONTRIBUTION TO THE PARIS DECLARATION ON AID EFFECTIVENESS ■ 12 JULY, 2007

1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) signed the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005. The Paris Declaration stresses that effective partnerships among development partners and recipient countries are based on the recognition of national leadership and ownership of development strategies and plans. With this framework, sound policies, good governance and effective mechanisms are necessary at all levels to ensure that development assistance produces development results.

While the Paris Declaration has a strong focus on monitoring, it also highlights the importance of exploring cross-country evaluation processes. The Declaration states that the evaluation should provide a more comprehensive understanding of how increased aid effectiveness contributes to meeting development results and that it should be applied without imposing additional burden on partners. Progress towards aid effectiveness will require political and conceptual agreement on approaches to measuring and understanding both the quantity and the quality of development assistance.

The evaluation of the implementation of the Paris Declaration will be undertaken by development partners and partner countries

using a two-phased approach between 2007 and 2010. The first phase will be a **formative** evaluation concentrated on inputs, the implementation process, and to the extent possible, on outputs. The second phase will be a **summative** evaluation focusing on the results of implementation, to the extent possible, at the outcome level.¹ The results of the formative evaluation will be a contribution towards the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to be held in Accra, Ghana in 2008.

Ten countries and 10 development partner agencies have volunteered to conduct an evaluation of their performance. They will use a common framework terms of reference, adapting it to their specific requirements. The countries are Bangladesh, Bolivia, Mali, Philippines, Senegal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Viet Nam and Zambia. The development partners are Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, United Kingdom and UNDP.

UNDP, as one of the 10 development partners, will conduct a joint evaluation together with UNAIDS, UNECA, IFAD and UNIFEM on UN support to new aid modalities, looking both at the performance at headquarters in bringing its procedures and incentive systems in line with the Paris Declaration and at the

¹ Inputs, outputs, and outcomes are defined in the Framework Terms of Reference for the First Phase Evaluation of the Implementation of the Paris Declaration, 25 April 2007. See Annex 1: An Indicative Outline for an evaluation framework for the Paris Declaration.

country level in supporting partner country capacity. It will conduct the independent evaluation according to the norms and standards for evaluation in the UN System.

The engagement of United Nations in supporting the implementation of the Paris Declaration at the country level was implemented under the UN Resident Coordinator System. The evaluation will shed some light on the challenges and opportunities of the role of UN organizations in fostering the aid effectiveness agenda as the UN reform process continues towards ‘Delivering as One’.

These Terms of Reference for the evaluation of UN contribution to the implementation of the Paris Declaration are based on the ‘Guidance for Management of Development Partner Evaluations’ developed by partner countries and development partners participating in the joint evaluation.

2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to provide critical guidance to improve UN contribution to the implementation of the Paris Declaration based on an assessment of lessons learned in terms of what practices have worked and not worked. The emphasis will be on learning and providing recommendations to strengthen national ownership, harmonization of aid efforts, alignment to national development strategies, managing for results, and mutual accountability.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are:

- To assess UN initiatives in support of the implementation of the Paris Declaration; identify where the UN comparative advantage has been proven; identify gaps; and provide recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of current

approaches to aid modalities and aid effectiveness and their implications for long-term development.

- To assess how United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) have used partnerships at local, national and international levels and positioned themselves vis-à-vis other actors to bring greater coherence and relevance to their initiatives related to aid effectiveness.
- To provide substantive insights on how to ensure that lessons learned from initiatives and strategies implemented by UN organizations at corporate and country levels can be institutionalized within the organizations through systematic monitoring and evaluation, adapted and made more relevant to country needs.

3. SCOPE AND FOCUS OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation will focus on the following explanatory dimensions that have been identified as contributors to development partner behaviour:

- Commitment:** The Paris Declaration calls for a radical new way of delivering aid. Country strategies are no longer to be formulated by individual development partners. Instead, with the emphasis on partner ownership, development partners’ cooperation strategies are to be guided by partner governments’ needs-based demands in an aligned and harmonized manner.
- Capacities:** Also within UN offices, whether at headquarters or at field level, uneven commitment to Paris Declaration roll-out may be found as well as uneven capacities between different staff employed by the same development partner. Indeed, a single UNCT might represent very different approaches to aid effectiveness. As a consequence, development partners and national

coordinators alike have called for more effective communication on Paris Declaration issues between headquarter policy advisers and operation staff.

- c. **Incentive systems:** Development partners' incentive systems have been reported as a critical parameter for efficient development partner behaviour. The baseline survey suggests that a number of obstacles work against development partners' ability to meet the commitments made in Paris. These include, amongst other things, inappropriate pressures for disbursements, lack of flexibility on staff time, and high staff turnover, which taken together create incentives that reward short-term benefits over longer term and collective gains.

Promoting gender equality is essential to the achievement of the mandates of all UN organizations participating in the joint evaluation. Hence, the evaluation will assess the gender dimension of the implementation of the Paris Declaration, including the following:

- UN initiatives to support partner countries in improving the countries' key processes, systems and capacities to incorporate gender equality in the countries' national development strategies, programmes, and managing for results and accountability frameworks.
- The extent to which UN organizations have improved their own processes, systems and capacities to adequately reflect the gender perspective, for example, in their programming, operational and reporting requirements to support partner countries more effectively in implementing their commitments to the Paris Declaration.

The evaluation will assess the following specific aspects:

- Emerging trends in new aid modalities and, to the extent possible, what has been the

UN contribution to the implementation of the Paris Declaration, specifically in relation to promoting country ownership, alignment of donors' support to country strategies, harmonization of donors' actions, managing for results and mutual accountability.

- Key characteristics of UN collaboration, highlighting how development approaches have been implemented and have showed results.
- Good practices and operational arrangements in place in UN organization headquarters and field offices for an effective coordination and implementation of the Declaration.

4. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation will be particularly interested in examples of (potential) successes in, and obstacles to, the implementation of the Paris Declaration; how the obstacles have been overcome; and with what results. Hence, the outlined evaluation questions below shall be taken as explorative starting points for the assessments and will be further refined to incorporate specific dimensions concerning gender equality, HIV/AIDS, rural development and capacity building.

ASSESSING COMMITMENT

- How has the Paris Declaration's emphasis on demand-driven development cooperation been reflected in UN development policies, programmes, processes, systems and procedures? Has the implementation of the Paris Declaration affected priority setting for UN development cooperation? Have there been key changes in UN policies, programmes, processes, systems and procedures to facilitate the implementation of the Paris Declaration? What are the main drivers of these changes?
- How is UN commitment to the Paris Declaration demonstrated at the level of

agency headquarters? Has the role of UN headquarters/field offices been adapted to the aid effectiveness agenda? If not, why not?

- Is UNDG fulfilling its Paris Declaration commitments? If there are concerns, what are the reasons for these? Are the concerns linked to the relevance and coherence of the PD commitments and indicators? Are there ways in which these might be overcome?

ASSESSING CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

- What is the level of staff knowledge and understanding about aid effectiveness and its operational implications, particularly in the field?
- Have specific instructions, guidelines, operational directives been developed and disseminated to staff to facilitate implementation and assessment of the Paris Declaration implementation plan?
- How is delegated authority within UN organizations structured, and why? Are the UN organizations sufficiently decentralized (staff, resources, delegation of authority) to address field-based aid management in line with the Paris Declaration? Does UNDP coordinate sufficiently with other UN agencies, funds and programmes for the implementation of commitments to the Paris Declaration?

ASSESSING INCENTIVE SYSTEMS

- Are there specific incentives provided by UN organizations—e.g. for recruitment, performance assessment and training—for their management and staff to comply with the Paris Declaration objectives of ownership, harmonization, alignment and results orientation?
- Are there any perceived disincentives, in respect of other UN priorities?

ASSESSING UN CONTRIBUTION, POSITIONING AND COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARIS DECLARATION

- How has the United Nations supported partner countries in exercising effective leadership over their development policies and strategies?
- How has the United Nations aligned its support to partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and processes?
- How has the United Nations supported strengthening of capacities of partner countries to implement their commitments to the Paris Declaration, particularly with respect to policy making, public finance management, national procurement systems, managing for results and accountability frameworks?
- How has the United Nations contributed to reducing transaction costs for partner countries?

5. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Generally, the evaluation will be undertaken through extensive desk review, field visits to a sample of countries, interviews, and mining of data from the evaluations to be done by the 10 volunteering partner countries. The evaluation will draw from existing assessments of participating agencies that are relevant to this evaluation.

Following are the criteria for the selection of countries for the field visits and case studies: countries that signed the Paris Declaration; countries where UNCT plays a significant role in aid coordination; and countries in which the national government is interested in assessing UN contribution to the aid effectiveness agenda. Five countries have volunteered to participate: Cameroon, Gabon, Mauritania, Lao PDR, and Ukraine.

The selection of case studies conducted to substantiate the evaluation findings at

headquarter level is based on a process of auto-selection that does not enable the establishment of a proper sampling frame.

The evaluation methodology will be further specified and finalized as part of the inception stage of the evaluation.

6. STRUCTURE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

The evaluation will be conducted in three stages:

- **Inception:** The contracted evaluation team will develop an inception report (30 pages maximum) including: a contextualized evaluation approach based on the outlined evaluation questions of the present Terms of Reference; a final sampling frame including the identification of relevant information sources; data collection methods and draft instruments (interview guide, questionnaires, etc.); processes for institutional learning during the evaluation; and a detailed work plan and methodology.
- **Data collection and presentation of preliminary findings:** The drafting of the report will be facilitated by presenting first the preliminary findings of the evaluation (Power Point presentation) to key evaluation stakeholders at the field level and at headquarters, including the Management Group and Advisory Panel.
- **Report preparation:** The evaluation team will take into account feedback received in drafting the narrative report, adhering to the development-partner level evaluation report outline (to be developed). The evaluation report should not exceed 50 pages, including the executive summary. An external advisory panel will be organized to review the quality of the evaluation report. The Management Group and the advisory panel will review the draft report and their feedback will be considered by the evalua-

tion team in finalizing the report. Once the report is finalized, it will be presented to the Synthesis Team of the Joint Evaluation Management Group for its submission to the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to be held in Accra in 2008.

7. EVALUATION TEAM AND COMPETENCIES REQUIRED

An independent evaluation team will undertake the evaluation. It will be headed by a Team leader, with three team members, including a research assistant. Collectively, the evaluation team should have the following qualifications:

- Advanced knowledge and experience in designing and undertaking complex evaluations involving multi-stakeholders, using process and participatory approaches
- Advanced knowledge and experience relating to aid effectiveness policies including that of the Paris Declaration
- Advanced knowledge and experience in managing for results, accountability frameworks and systems, and capacity development
- In-depth understanding of issues relating to gender equality and advanced knowledge and experience in gender analysis, including its application in evaluation methodology
- Experience relating to the work of the different UN organizations participating in the joint evaluation

In particular, the evaluation team leader should possess the following:

- At least 10 years of experience in undertaking evaluations
- Experience in leading evaluations of initiatives supported by multilateral organizations
- Excellent facilitation, writing and communication skills

The Team Leader will be responsible for the timely submission of the following deliverables:

- Evaluation design/methodology and work plan
- Power Point presentation on preliminary findings
- Draft report (50 pages maximum, including Executive Summary)
- Final report (50 pages maximum, including Executive Summary)

8. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

For this joint evaluation, a Management Group will be established composed of representatives of the evaluation offices of the participating UN organizations, namely, IFAD, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA and UNIFEM. It will be responsible for planning and managing the

evaluation to ensure the independence and high quality of the evaluation. Its tasks will include the finalization of the evaluation Terms of Reference, selection of the evaluation team, and review of the draft report. The Management Group will be chaired by UNDP.

UNDP Evaluation Office will then designate one of its staff as the Evaluation Task Manager. The Evaluation Task Manager will act as the interlocutor between the evaluation team and the Management Group to ensure a smooth process for the evaluation.

UNDP Evaluation Office will provide the funds to cover costs directly related to the evaluation. IFAD and UNAIDS will make financial contribution to share the costs. UNECA and UNIFEM will contribute in kind by making available the expertise of their staff through their participation in the Management Group.

UNDG MEMBERS

UNDG membership is 28, plus 5 observers

DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHRLLS	Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing Countries
SRSGCAC	Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict
UN HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDPI	United Nations Department of Public Information
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFIP	United Nations Fund for International Partnerships
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
	Director, Office of the Deputy Secretary General
	Office of USG – Special Advisor on Africa
	Regional Commissions
	Spokesman for the Secretary-General

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INTERVIEW GUIDES – QUESTIONNAIRES

1. INTERVIEW GUIDELINES FOR MEETINGS WITH GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

These interviews will last between 45 minutes and one hour. Most will be conducted as individual interviews, but sometimes there could be two or three persons present. The flow of questions and answers is likely to vary significantly, and the responses should be compared to, and the questions developed, in light of the terms of reference for this evaluation.

1. Introduction: Presentation of the evaluation assignment, a note on the methodology and the work of the evaluation team.
2. The importance of context: What are the major factors in the environment that have influenced the strategic management of aid, national ownership of processes and the commitment to the principles of the Paris Declaration?
3. What mechanisms have been put in place to implement the Paris Declaration? Names of these, mandates, participation, frequency of meetings.
4. Capacity-building initiatives: Document any that took place and the experiences of each.
5. Any specific studies or other initiatives to implement the Paris Declaration? Who took the initiative, how was it financed, when was it implemented and how can that experience be assessed?
6. Which are the most significant features of the changes implemented since 2005?
7. Are there any obstacles to further change? What needs to be done to move forward on the Paris Declaration?
8. Concluding remarks: Summing up the experience to date and the main lessons learned from the past two years.

2. INTERVIEW GUIDELINES FOR MEETINGS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVES

These interviews will last between 45 minutes and one hour. Most will be conducted as individual interviews, but sometimes there could be two to four persons present. These interviews can be more structured than those in the first category.

1. Introduction: Presentation of the evaluation assignment, a note on the methodology and the work of the evaluation team.
2. The importance of context: What are the major factors in the environment that have influenced the strategic management of aid, the role of civil society organizations and the commitment to the principles of the Paris Declaration?
3. How has the Paris Declaration influenced the dialogue between civil society, government and development partners as regards to management of development cooperation? Any new platforms for dialogue? If so, which ones? Experience of participation in these?

4. Capacity-building initiatives: Document any that took place and the experiences of each.
5. Any specific studies or other initiatives to implement the Paris Declaration? Who took the initiative, how was it financed, when was it implemented and how can that experience be assessed?
6. Which are the most significant features of the changes implemented since 2005?
7. Are there any obstacles to further change? What needs to be done to move forward on the Paris Declaration?
8. Concluding remarks: Summing up the experience to date and the main lessons learned from the past two years.

3. INTERVIEW GUIDELINES FOR MEETINGS WITH DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

These interviews will last between 45 minutes and up to two hours. Most will be conducted as individual interviews, but some could also take the form of group interviews with the whole UN Country Team.

1. Introduction: Presentation of the evaluation assignment, a note on the methodology and the work of the evaluation team.
2. The importance of context: What are the major factors in the environment that have influenced the strategic management of aid, national ownership of processes and the commitment to the principles of the Paris Declaration? How did the UN organizations work together in the past? How were development partners coordinated in the past? What are the main sectors of cooperation?
3. What mechanisms have been put in place to implement the Paris Declaration? Names of these, mandates, participation, frequency of meetings. What is the contribution of each actor? Where have strategic initiatives been formulated? What are the roles of different organizations and individuals?

4. Capacity-building initiatives: Document any that took place and the experiences of each. Any specific training programs, new recruitments, policies formulated, or manuals?
5. Any specific studies or other initiatives to implement the Paris Declaration? Who took the initiative, how was it financed, when was it implemented and how can that experience be assessed?
6. Which are the most significant features of the changes implemented since 2005?
7. Are there any obstacles to further change? What needs to be done to move forward on the Paris Declaration?
8. Concluding remarks: Summing up the experience to date and the main lessons learned from the past two years.

4. INTERVIEW GUIDELINES FOR MEETINGS WITH HEADQUARTERS

ASSESSING COMMITMENT

- How has the Paris Declaration's emphasis on demand-driven development cooperation been reflected in UN development policies, programmes, processes, systems and procedures?
- Has the implementation of the Paris Declaration affected priority setting for UN development cooperation?
- Have there been key changes in UN policies, programmes, processes, systems and procedures to facilitate the implementation of the Paris Declaration?
- What are the main drivers of these changes?
- How is UN commitment to the Paris Declaration demonstrated at the level of agency headquarters? Has the role of UN headquarters/field offices been adapted to the aid effectiveness agenda? If not, why not?

ASSESSING CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

- Have specific instructions, guidelines, operational directives been developed and disseminated to staff to facilitate implementation and assessment of the Paris Declaration implementation plan?
- How is delegated authority within UN organizations structured, and why?
- Does UNDP as resident coordinator coordinate sufficiently at country level with other UN agencies, funds and programmes for the implementation of commitments to the Paris Declaration?

ASSESSING INCENTIVE SYSTEMS

- Are there specific incentives provided by UN organizations (e.g. for recruitment, performance assessment and training) for their management and staff to comply with the Paris Declaration objectives of ownership, harmonization, alignment and results orientation?

- Are there any perceived disincentives, in respect to other UN priorities?

ASSESSING UN CONTRIBUTION, POSITIONING AND COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARIS DECLARATION

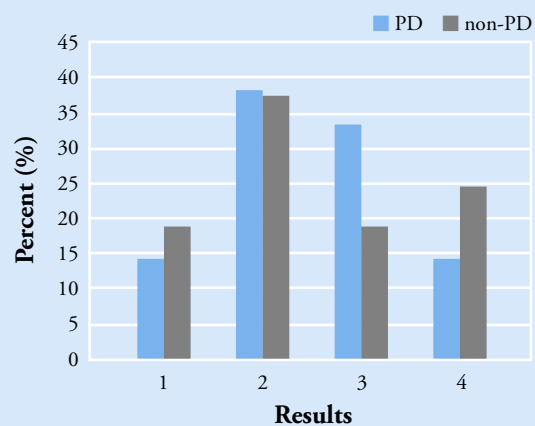
- How has the United Nations supported partner countries in exercising effective leadership over their development policies and strategies?
- How has the United Nations aligned its support to partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and processes?
- How has the United Nations supported strengthening of capacities of partner countries to implement their commitments to the Paris Declaration, particularly with respect to policy making, public finance management, national procurement systems, managing for results and accountability frameworks?
- How has the United Nations contributed to reducing transaction costs for partner countries?

SURVEY OF UN RESIDENT COORDINATORS

- **Surveys sent out—119:** 61 to signatory countries and 58 to non-signatory countries
- **Surveys returned—41:** 22 from signatory countries and 19 from non-signatory countries
- **Response rate—34 percent overall:** 36 percent from signatory countries and 33 percent from non-signatory countries
- **Cross Tab Results** by signatory (PD) and non-signatory (non PD) countries: Survey asked the Resident Coordinators to respond in four categories, from very low (1) to very high (4)

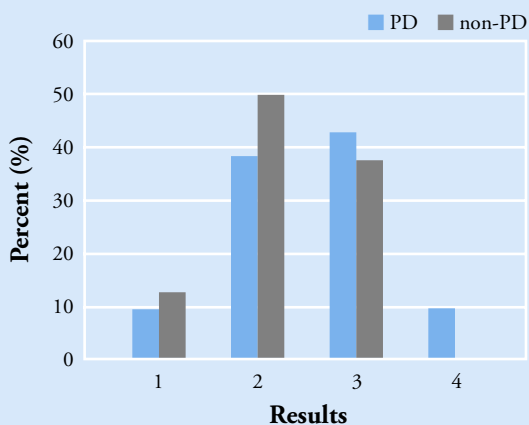
OWNERSHIP: NATIONAL STRATEGIES

Is there a clear national development strategy, monitored and linked to budget?



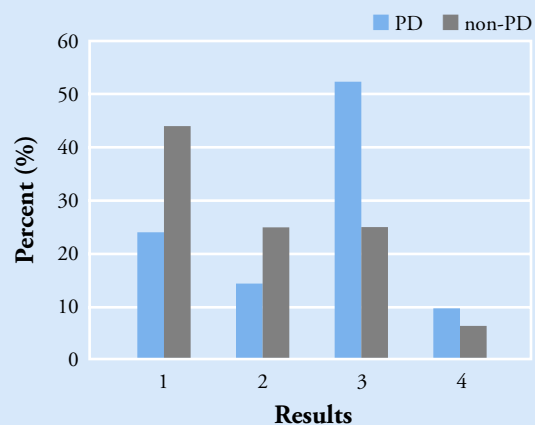
OWNERSHIP: SECTORAL STRATEGIES

Are there sector-level strategies monitored and linked to budget?



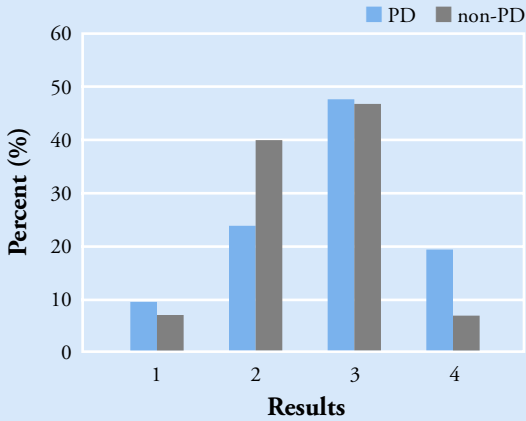
OWNERSHIP: CSO PARTICIPATION

Are strategies prepared in a participatory way including broad segments of civil society?



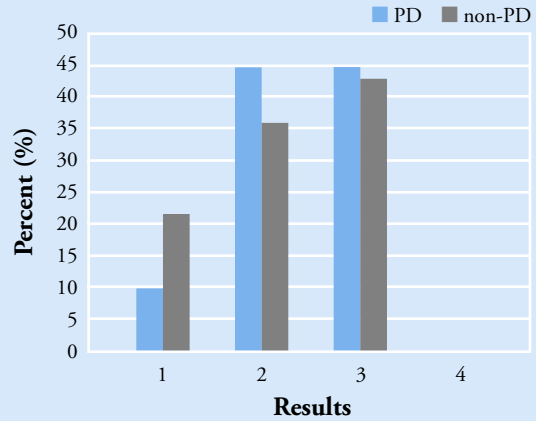
**ALIGNMENT: PARTNER
COUNTRY STRATEGIES**

Donors base their overall support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures: **a) Donors align with partner country strategies**



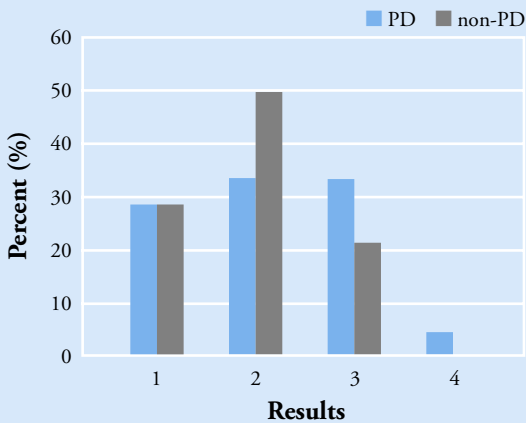
**ALIGNMENT: STRENGTHEN
COUNTRY SYSTEMS**

Donors base their overall support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures: **b) Partner countries strengthen development capacity with donor support**



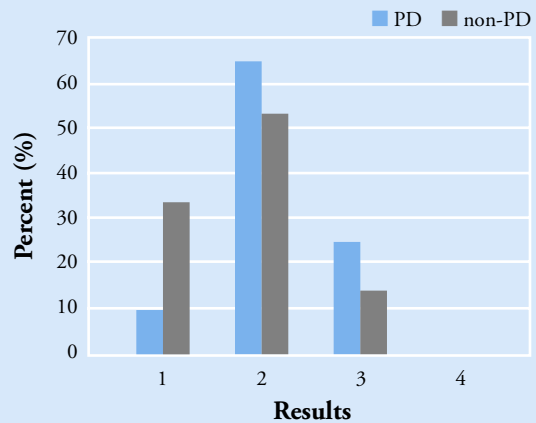
**ALIGNMENT: USE
COUNTRY SYSTEMS**

Donors base their overall support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures: **c) Donors use strengthened country systems**



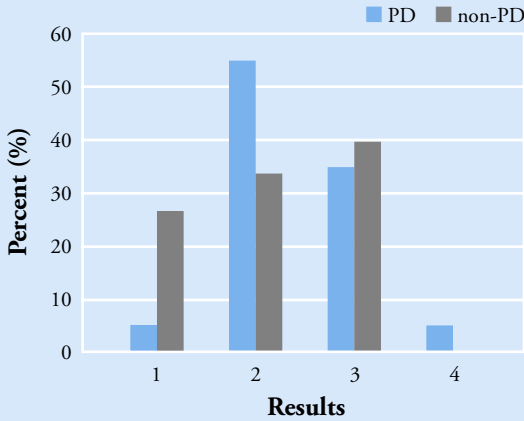
**HARMONIZATION:
SIMPLIFY PROCEDURES**

Donors actions are more harmonized, transparent and collectively effective: **a) Donors implement common arrangements and simplify procedures**



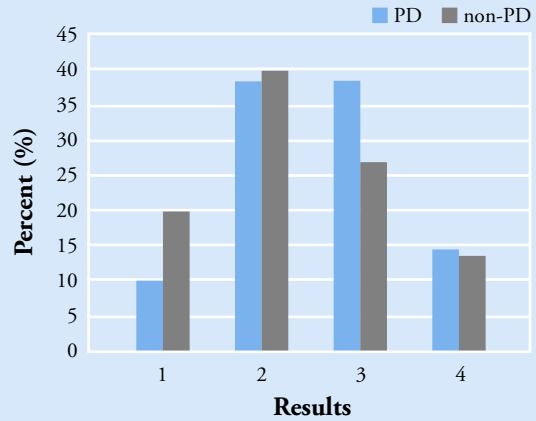
HARMONIZATION: COMPLEMENTARITY

Donors actions are more harmonized, transparent and collectively effective:
b) There is a more complementary division of labour



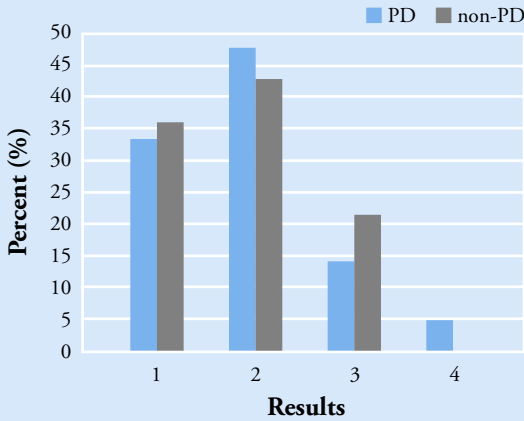
MANAGING FOR RESULTS: PROGRAMME

Managing resources and improving decision making for results:
a) Country programming and resources linked to a results framework



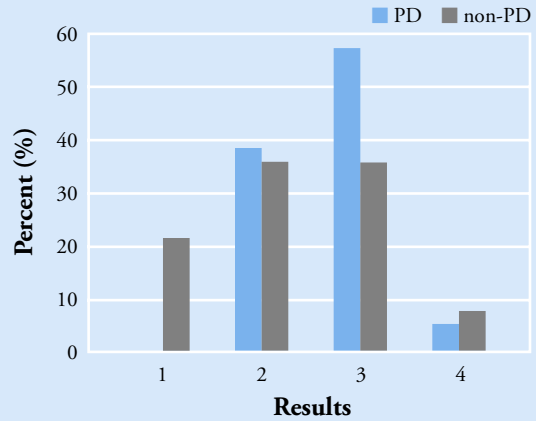
MANAGING FOR RESULTS: COUNTRY

Managing resources and improving decision making for results:
b) Donors rely on partner countries' results-oriented and monitoring frameworks



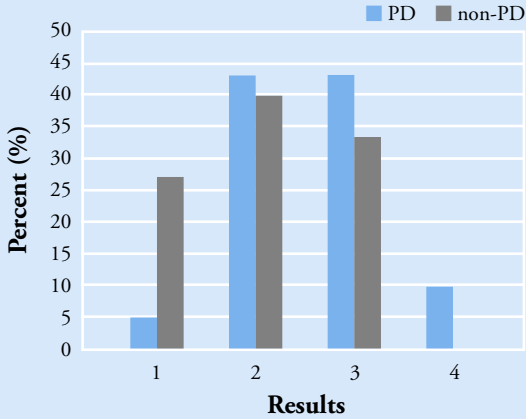
MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY: DONORS

Donors and partner countries are accountable for development results:
a) Donors provide timely transparent and comprehensive information on aid flows



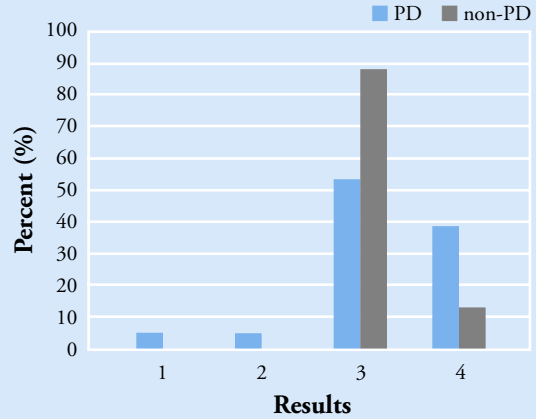
MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY: COUNTRIES

Managing resources and improving decision making for results: **b) Partner countries present comprehensive budgets and report to their legislatures and citizens**



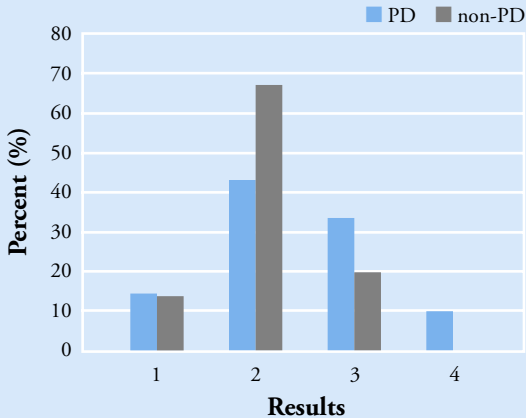
COMMITMENT

To which extent has the PD's emphasis on demand-driven development cooperation been reflected in UN development policies, programmes, processes, systems and procedures?



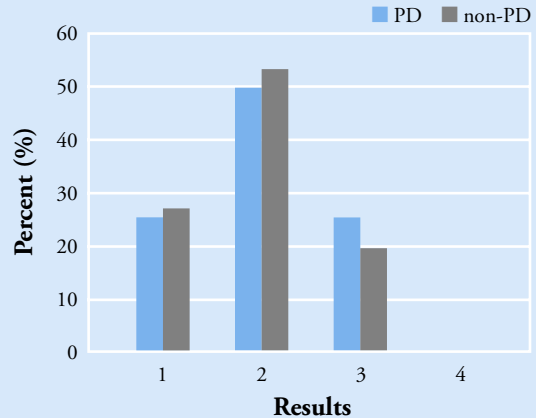
CAPACITIES

To which extent have specific instructions, guidelines, operational directives been developed and disseminated to staff to facilitate implementation and assessment of the PD?



INCENTIVES

To which extent are there specific incentives provided by UN agencies—e.g. for recruitment, performance assessment and training—for their management and staff to comply with the PD principles?



MAIN FINDINGS FROM COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

ETHIOPIA

RC/UNCT activities were supported by: a strong government commitment to the PD; solid government ownership of an economic programme (the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty) focused on poverty alleviation, although it was prepared with consultation rather than civil society organization participation; and a large ODA programme coordinated through the Development Assistance Group (DAG), which was established prior to the PD. Post 2005, election disturbances weakened donor support though much of the direct budget support provided to the government was re-channelled under poverty-alleviation programmes to local governments. The RC in the role of co-chair of DAG (together with WB co-chair) played an important role during the post-2005 election period in maintaining donors' interest in aiding Ethiopia.

PROGRESS

- The RC/UNCT commitment to the PD principles, to the extent it existed before, was further accentuated from 2005 onward.
- The positive role played by RC in DAG improved the PD principle of strengthening predictability of aid flows, in advocating for maintaining aid flows level and poverty orientation of ODA.
- The capacity of the DAG Secretariat, located within UNDP, has been given continued attention though not always

meeting the expectations of bilateral donors. UNDP also has hosted an IFAD 'field presence' since 2006.

- The UNCT developed UNDAF 2007-2011 in full alignment with Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty; all UNCT members including WB signed UNDAF.
- The UNDP Country Programme Document is consistent with UNDAF and the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty. It was prepared in consultation with government and other stakeholders.
- Coordination between the UN organizations' programmes under the umbrella of the UNCT is viewed positively and has led to avoiding duplication and overlaps by participating agencies. Much of the coordination work is being carried out under specialized technical/working groups. A lead agency will take charge of a particular sector or issue even in the case where a UNDG member does not have local representation.

CONSTRAINTS

- The government, concerned about the transaction costs associated with ODA, took the initiative in 2005 for higher PD targets than in the Declaration itself. This was dragged out by donors because of the post-2005 election events. In 2007, the government proposed to the UNDG ExCom members in the UNCT a harmonized programme implementation manual. The

proposal is still under discussion among the agencies, which want to ensure compatibility of the proposed manual with their own institutional process requirements.

- Regarding incentives, the RC sees agencies continuing to place top priority on the carrying out of their respective programmes when it comes to personnel evaluation from headquarters.

LAO PDR

Laos is classified as a least developed country that is heavily dependent on ODA. It is a Single Party Socialist State. The government, together with development partners, has shown commitment to the PD through its 'domestication' in the form of the Vientiane Declaration that was signed by both the government and almost 30 development partners between 2006 and 2007 (with much assistance from UNDP). The government's development efforts are guided by clear national development strategic frameworks: National Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (NGES) 2004-2005 and National Socio Economic Development Plan (NSED) 2006-2010. In the context of implementing the PD, Laos has eight Sector Working Groups, four of which represent the priority development sectors: education and gender, agriculture, health and HIV/AIDS, and rural development and infrastructural development.

PROGRESS

UNCT was very strong under the leadership of the RC. The following are some of the achievements:

- UNCT members played a key role in providing technical support to the formulation of the Vientiane Declaration

and the Country Action Plan, an operational plan for implementing the Vientiane Declaration. They served on task forces for crafting these key documents.

- UNDP provided leadership in organizing the Round Table Meetings (which also date to pre-Vientiane Declaration period). The round table process fosters partnership building and policy dialogue between government and development partners.
- The UNCT's UNDAF of 2007-2011 stays within the national priorities and incorporates Vientiane Declaration principles.
- The three ExCom Agencies (UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF) have operationalized the first stages of HACT, thus providing strong leadership to other development partners to take harmonization efforts seriously. A locally adapted HACT training manual was developed.
- The UNCT has developed a Joint Sustainable Livelihood Programme involving all UNCT members, including agencies that are not resident in Laos. Within this programme, there is a clear division of labour based on the agencies' comparative advantage.
- UNCT members are involved in pre-testing of WB-developed tools for capacity development in the four priority areas.
- UNDP, in partnership with the government Public Service Department, jointly conducted a survey on capacity development needs for the whole public service. The results are due for publication in early 2008.
- The National Execution Unit has played a key role in enhancing government staff capacity on programme management (rules, procedures, programme formulation, execution and M&E). This falls within the context of PD alignment.

CONSTRAINTS

- The government is concerned about having adequate resources to assume leadership of all working groups.
- There is concern among some development partners that the Round Table is not the right forum for coordination and negotiating. It is considered too large with too much 'reporting' characteristics.
- The UNCT reported slow feedback from UNDG headquarters on matters relating to HACT. The draft HACT manual has not received timely inputs to motivate the players at country level.
- The round table mechanism is viewed as lacking in creating a rich environment for analytical work.
- Knowledge of PD issues remains a privilege for senior UNCT staff and may have a negative impact on contribution of all UNCT staff to PD.

MAURITANIA

This country is in a fragile state. It emerged from 30 years of dictatorship in 2005, recently concluding the first-ever democratic election. The economy is on a promising upswing due to recent start of oil production, but expectations may have to be downscaled due to poorer-than-expected quality of oil. Although economic growth has been high in recent years of 6.9 percent and 11.7 percent in 2006, 50 percent of the 2.6 million population live below the poverty line. Mauritania has shown impressive results in its commitment to the PD in a short period of time (this is also influenced by a strong commitment towards reform and progress all levels in Mauritania), bearing in mind that the PD was launched while the country was engaged in a system transition process and needs to build its capacities at all

levels. Differing perceptions exist among development partners as to UN contribution, especially in regards to leadership. The United Nations has an important role to play, but it has to be spelled out and leadership demonstrated in areas where the United Nations has obvious comparative advantages.

PROGRESS

- The PD action plan has triggered ownership and internalization of the PD process. UNDP led advocacy to disseminate PD to national and international partners alike. The United Nations and WB worked closely together and early progress was triggered by the exceptionally good working relationship between the two institutions and individual leadership of the WB Director and RC. However exit of these two key figures demonstrated that the system of enhanced collaboration/coordination was largely born by individuals and not institutionalized enough to be carried on by successors unless they can demonstrate the same commitment and leadership.
- The United Nations supported a national survey, PD action plan, and coordinated support to the election process including the establishment of a 12 million USD multi-donor trust fund. Agreement to move on in instituting HACT, joint mission (60 percent)

CONSTRAINTS

- Some consider it a risk that UN efforts are inward looking, at the expense of external coordination efforts.
- The government is not part of an existing working group structure.
- There is concern among agencies about how reporting can show individual agency attribution.

- Clear identification of issues related to further harmonization has not been made (for example, what specific agency rules and procedures are hindrances).
- There is a lack of a government led coordination mechanism to assign roles of development partners based on their comparative advantages.
- UNCT's oversight/division of labour is lacking.
- At the sectoral/working group level, activities and sector components that may benefit from joint programming have not been identified.

GABON

Gabon, a country of 1.5 million people, of whom 80 percent live in urban settings, has for three decades been a middle-income country with oil as its key asset. The oil reserves are likely to diminish in the future and the country now faces the challenge of diversifying the economy. In the area of governance, accountability, transparency, control of corruption, participation and the existence of a fair legal and judicial system are weaknesses. Civil society is still weak and fragmented.

PROGRESS

- The UNCT/RC was the main driver in sensitizing the government to the importance of PD principles and their relevance for development efforts and aid effectiveness. These efforts were successful and led Gabon to sign the PD in March 2006. The significance of this achievement should be seen in the contextual background of the relatively modest importance of external aid in Gabon. The commitment on the part of the UNCT/RC to undertake this role was induced through headquarters' instructions and guidance and by commitment and leadership on the part of the RC and others.
- The RC office, as well as the UNCT, was instrumental in setting up a coordination structure for regular interaction among development partners. In addition to at least one meeting to convey and share the PD principles, a number of thematic working groups have been established, led and facilitated by agencies with 'natural' comparative advantages in respective sectors.
- The RC office acts as Secretariat for all the working groups and has a key role in convening meetings. The groups convene on a monthly, bi-monthly or tri-monthly basis. All groups have elaborated specific terms and mandates. This has stimulated commitment among development partners to align with government priorities. However, commitment was hampered by a lack of government ability to set priorities and assume genuine ownership of the reference strategies.

CONSTRAINTS

- The government was not part of the groups and saw the enhanced joint efforts among agencies as a 'fait accompli' and ganging up behind closed doors. These statements should be taken in the context of a slow start on the part of the government. The government also complained of a lack of resources to engage in the PD process. It requested further assistance to establish a PD road map and set priorities as well as financial support for the process.
- Coordination groups focus on the exchange of information and share insight into agency programmes, but they need to identify the specific measures needed to apply PD principles. This would include

identification and listing of issues both at the operational and the programme level. Once areas for enhanced harmonization are identified, joint assessments and joint monitoring and evaluation should be followed by identification of specific procedural and administrative issues or challenges to be addressed. These should be brought to the attention of headquarters if not feasible to solve at the country level.

- Lack of resources to engage and implement PD and enhanced coordination efforts are key constraints.
- A government owned and led PD action plan and road map needs to be established, accommodating the government's request for support to do this.

High commitment to the PD and relevant organizational structures were established, although the coordination structure should comprise government and civil society organizations. The PD is, to a large degree, driven by the United Nations with other development partners gradually coming on board and government only about to come on board. The process is time-consuming and many initiatives were put on hold or never developed due to lack of resources. This means that UNCT has been able to identify areas where PD capacity could be developed but has not been able to address those areas.

UKRAINE

Ukraine, a middle income country, is characterized by a volatile political environment, having had four different governments between 2004 and 2007. The country has a relatively small community of development partners. If country ownership is measured by a well developed national strategic development framework, Ukraine stands in a rather

weak position. There are numerous policy development frameworks, but there is not one clearly agreed-upon strategic framework to which development partners can align. Development partners choose policy frameworks that suit their agenda from the available ones. However, in the last few years (2005-2007), the government has worked towards creating an environment for government and development partners to work towards a common goal. The Ministry of Economy and its department responsible for coordination of development partners appear to have better appreciation of PD issues compared to line ministries, which are still struggling with leadership issues.

PROGRESS

- Through UNDP, UNCT played a significant role in enhancing the capacity of the government at the political level to assume ownership and leadership in development.
- Through the catalytic work of the Blue Ribbon Commission (which occurred prior to the PD), UNDP worked consistently on policy dialogue aimed at helping the government to assume leadership. One of the outcomes of this effort was the government Programme of Action of 2005.
- UNCT assisted the government in developing the Donor-Government Working Groups, a coordination mechanism through which development partners and the government can implement the principles of PD.
- There is clear division of labour among members of the UNCT, as they take leadership in different thematic areas in the Donor-Government Working Groups.
- UNCT's 2006 UNDAF indicated efforts made to align to the government Programme of Action 2005. The UNDAF is also aligned to the MDGs.

- UNAIDS, as a member of the UNCT, has provided an environment for harmonization of key players in the HIV/AIDS field. UNAIDS is striving to operationalize the principles of the Three Ones.

CONSTRAINTS

- Not all development partners view UNDP as a neutral broker between the government and development partners. Some donors would prefer to have direct interface with the government rather than have UNDP represent development partners' positions.
- Size of financial support may influence advocacy for the PD. Most development partners believe 'who has the money dictates the rule of the game', and UNCT is viewed as a small player compared to big donors.
- Ukraine does not have a clear PD Action Plan with targets for implementation of the PD.

CAMEROON

Cameroon, due to its oil reserves, is a relatively wealthy middle-income country. However, human development indicators for the 18 million person population are low. The country ranks 144 out of 177 on the human development index. Governance is characterized by a top-heavy civil service with weak institutional capacity and is classified as one of the most corrupt countries in Africa. There is no real involvement of civil society or non-governmental organizations—most still have low capacity and struggle to develop and to participate. There are a few very articulated non-governmental organizations. Cameroon received considerable amounts of ODA but funding volumes have decreased. Many development partners are concerned about a lack of transparency, progress of civil and

political rights, and a commitment to donor cooperation, including the PD. Cameroon is not dependent on ODA, which accounts for less than 2 percent of public expenditure budget. Recognition of and commitment to PD principles is strong and the institutional infrastructure has been strengthened, but staff time allocation and efficiency are a stumbling block to further progress. The application of PD principles are in progress. Important preconditions are in place and there is a strong commitment to proceed, but this is hampered by concerns about corruption and lack of confidence in government efforts among partners.

PROGRESS

- The overall coordination structure for UNCT and development partners was in place pre-PD, but coordination processes gained more strength post-PD and more sectoral coordination groups were established.
- The UNDAF was instrumental in enhancing awareness of the need for coordination. However, it was with the PD that effort to and commitment to 'speak with one voice' gained momentum.
- The first PRSP did not trigger enhanced coordination effort, but with the second PRSP, emphasis was put on coordination.
- The working group structure was instrumental in providing a platform for coordination, however it lacks sufficient government representation especially in line ministries.
- Coordination and joint programming of Avian Flu contingency planning was a good example of a successful joint programme.
- Strategic partnerships exist on gender issues, for example promoting female electoral participation and steps to initiate a gender mainstreaming strategy. The United Nations has an important normative

role to play; gender and anti-corruption cooperation are examples.

- A joint government and development partners independent aid assessment coordinated by UNDP enhanced mutual accountability.

CONSTRAINTS

- Some of the normative functions of UNCT members are not visible. Hence there is a need for agencies to demonstrate attribution while engaging in enhanced coordination.
- There is still a need to harmonize how to work with the government and a more efficient mechanism put in place for sharing information among agencies.
- Although there has been progress on HACT, Daily Subsistence Allowance, and

fees, other functions are not harmonized. For example, every agency does its own governance profile.

- Identification and listing of specific agency constraints in further harmonization efforts need to be elaborated.
- Many UNCT members (and other development partners) felt that the process could not be pushed, given the need to have and develop a common vision as a point of departure that everyone can ‘buy into’. The real challenge is the need for a joint government and development partner vision.
- There are time and resource constraints in engaging in PD processes (meaning engaging in enhanced coordination efforts).
- Commitment and engagement is a result of individual commitment.