



Information note prepared by the Bureau on agenda item 9: Improving the working methods of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board

Background

1. At the first regular session 2003 a report was presented entitled "Follow-up to the report on the rationalization of documentation and the streamlining of the working methods of the Executive Board" (CRP.6) summarizing efforts to streamline documentation and working methods as requested at the annual session 2001.
2. Decision 2003/1 contained an invitation to all Member States, through the Bureau, to present contributions, before 15 May 2003, on the rationale for the improvement of the working methods of the Executive Board and specific proposals in that regard.
3. Subsequent to that invitation, the Board has received a submission from one delegate, dated 14 May 2003, containing a number of constructive suggestions. These related to the length, clarity and timeliness of documentation; the preparation of the annual work plan; the drafting of decisions; joint meetings of the UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP executive boards; improving dialogue between programme and donor countries; and field visits.
4. The Bureau of the Board discussed the working methods of the Board in several meetings during which the actions taken in this regard were noted and suggestions for further improvement were made.

Actions taken

5. Actions already taken to streamline and improve the working methods of the Board include the following:
 - (a) An increased number of substantive informal meetings were held in preparation for the annual session, the second regular session and the joint meetings of the three boards. Delegations' comments and analytical feedback were taken into consideration in further developing the documentation, most notably in the case of the Multi-year funding framework (MYFF) report, the Human Development Report 2003, the Human Development Report consultation process and the biennium budget strategy. A total of 14 informals were held, covering the following themes:
 - Human Development Report 2003
 - Human Development Report consultation process
 - Multi-year funding framework (MYFF) report
 - Biennium budget strategy for 2002-2004
 - Harmonization and simplification (with members of the boards of UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF)
 - (b) Steps have been taken to improve the process of preparing and drafting decisions, with greater transparency achieved by agreeing earlier on the facilitator and the method of facilitation to ensure appropriate and ample consultations, and by providing a time frame within which the draft decision will be completed.

- (c) For the first time, the Bureau initiated a bulletin (*Daily Brief*) issued each morning to provide delegates with a summary of events of the previous day and the work plan for the current day.
- (d) The list of participants was distributed earlier than was the case at previous sessions.
- (e) The consultation process for the programme of work for the year, and for individual sessions, was improved and delegations participated actively in the review and discussion of work programme.
- (f) Members of the UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP executive boards participated in a joint field visit to Mozambique.
- (g) A two-day joint Executive Board Meeting of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP was held at the annual session 2003.

Actions for further improvement

6. Areas identified for further improvement of the working methods of the Board include the following:
- (a) Explore the possibility of an alternative venue for Executive Board sessions that would be conducive to a better exchange among the delegates.
 - (b) Organize a seminar for new members, possibly in November, to familiarize them with regular agenda items as well as key emerging issues facing the Board in the forthcoming year, and with procedural matters related to the work of the Board. Several former and/or current members of the Board should be invited to share their experiences.
 - (c) Distribute a list of common acronyms in all languages as part of the knowledge management process.
 - (d) Arrange for the Bureaux and secretariats of the three Boards to fine-tune the criteria for, and the preparation and management of, future joint field visits and joint meetings.

18 June 2003
