



## Chief Executives Board for Coordination

8 June 2007

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### Report of the joint session of the High-level Committee on Programmes and the High-level Committee on Management

(Frascati (Italy) — 20 March 2007)

#### I. High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence

1. The Chairs of the High-level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) and the High-level Committee on Management (HLCM) proposed that, in the light of the extensive reviews of “Pilot countries and ‘One United Nations’ at the country level” and “Business practices” concurrently taking place in the deliberations of the Committees, the agenda of the joint session would focus on other items to allow adequate time for discussion.

#### II. CEB review

2. The Co-Chairs provided an overview of current developments and the status of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) review. It was recalled that, at the CEB retreat of October 2006, the Secretary-General had requested the Directors-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Trade Organization, Juan Somavia and Pascal Lamy, to lead the CEB review process. On 8 December 2006, Messrs. Somavia and Lamy sent a letter to executive heads, asking them to provide their ideas, views and suggestions on ways to improve the CEB and its functioning, effectiveness and impact. Seventeen replies had been received to date. A series of consultations had also been held with representatives of CEB member organizations and additional meetings have been scheduled.

3. While there was strong support for the work under way in ensuring ownership of the CEB by executive heads, the level and content of the envisaged changes were still under consideration. It was anticipated that Mr. Somavia and Mr. Lamy would brief executive heads at the upcoming CEB session and suggest that a pragmatic, step by step approach be employed in moving forward.

4. The Chair of HLCM provided three suggestions for the CEB review team to take into account in this regard:

- (a) Both High-level Committees should be empowered to take decisions;



- (b) The CEB agenda should be restricted to two or three substantive items;
- (c) The documentation for the HLCP, HLCM and CEB sessions should be circulated two to three weeks in advance of the meetings, in order to allow for an intra-organizational consultative process.

### **III. Results-based management**

5. The HLCM Vice-Chair recalled that the two Committees, at their joint session of 30 September 2006, had considered a World Health Organization (WHO) paper outlining the possible content and structure of a joint thematic session on results-based management to be held in early 2007. Since then, the CEB secretariat had been working with WHO, the United Nations Secretariat, the office of the United Nations Development Group and other results-based management experts in United Nations organizations to finalize the planning and organization of a joint workshop on the subject.

6. He explained that the current joint session was intended to provide an opportunity for the Committees to hear two presentations on key challenges and successes in the implementation of results-based management models in Government and United Nations system organizations. The session also aimed to develop a common understanding of the objectives for the above-mentioned joint workshop on results-based management (held at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) headquarters in Geneva on 3 and 4 May 2007). The Vice-Chair thanked WIPO for offering to host this important initiative and all the other organizations that had offered to serve as facilitators of the event.

7. In her presentation, Ms. Liz Davis, Director of the human resources division, Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, offered a human resources perspective on the challenges that organizations faced in implementing results-based management models. She provided an overview of the tools used by the Department for International Development to assign objectives to its staff, monitor their achievement and reward or sanction successful or unsatisfactory performance, respectively.

8. The Assistant Director-General, General Management of WHO, Namita Pradhan, focused her presentation on the principles of the WHO results-based management framework, the process whereby the long- and medium-term strategic plans and the programme budget were developed, and the new mechanisms established to work across regions and headquarters.

9. The ensuing discussion, which was about the usefulness of results-based management as a tool for showcasing United Nations capacity and as a fund-raising mechanism, focused on issues to be considered in applying results-based management in the United Nations system. In particular, the following suggestions were made:

- (a) It was important to focus on the results chain and principles of results-based management;
- (b) A common understanding of the terminology used by different organizations, while not essential, would be beneficial, especially in the monitoring

and evaluation phases, and the workshop of 3 and 4 May could be useful in addressing this topic;

- (c) The cost of achieving each result should be determined;
- (d) The results-based management framework should be fully integrated and the results chain should be used for budgeting purposes;
- (e) Expected achievements over the budget period should be stated clearly for each organization, as should what each of its constituents would do to bring about the expected results, which meant that the specific roles and responsibilities at each level of the Organization should be defined and Member States and donors should be explicitly included in setting the strategic goals;
- (f) Resistance from technical and programme staff should be addressed by establishing explicit links between resource mobilization and allocation and the setting of framework objectives;
- (g) Regarding fostering ownership of results at country level, the inherent inconsistency between real “local” ownership and “conditionalities” imposed by the donor community was highlighted as the critical issue to resolve. A participatory and voluntary implementation of sophisticated results-based management models was considered difficult if not impossible in the context of many developing countries;
- (h) It was noted in reference to assuring accountability for results, especially among senior staff, that many organizations were only beginning to introduce structured models of senior management review, such as balanced scorecards, reverse appraisal and others;
- (i) A structured process to address the need to change organizational culture should include training, targeted human resources policies to support training staff for jobs which were a better fit, coaching, reward systems and encouragement of internal and external mobility.

### **Conclusions and action points**

10. The Committees thanked the speakers for their presentations, endorsed the workshop on results-based management and requested the CEB secretariat to finalize the terms of reference for the workshop, taking into consideration the comments made during the discussion.

11. The Committees encouraged representatives of organizations that had not yet done so to nominate participants for the workshop.

## **IV. United Nations Evaluation Group<sup>1</sup>**

12. In his introduction, the Chairman of HLCP noted that the United Nations Evaluation Group had been requested to prepare a paper for the joint session containing its views on the proposal of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence to establish a United Nations system-wide evaluation

<sup>1</sup> See CEB/2007/HLCM-HLCP/XIII/2 and CEB/2007/HLCM-HLCP/XIII/CRP.2/Add.1.

mechanism. He invited the Chair of the United Nations Evaluation Group to present the note (document CEB/2007/HLCM-HLCP/XIII/2), which discussed existing evaluation capacities, areas for improvement and proposals for system-wide action.

13. In her presentation, the Chair of the United Nations Evaluation Group stressed that any United Nations system-wide evaluation mechanism must be independent in order to be credible. It must, at the same time, meet the priority needs of its stakeholders. In order to advance transparency, accountability and learning, such a mechanism should:

- (a) Promote the quality and independence of all United Nations evaluation work, set policies and foster harmonization of evaluation systems across the United Nations, including minimum standards;

- (b) Undertake evaluations of system-wide strategic issues;

- (c) Promote the development of evaluation capacity in Member States, including the promotion of a culture of independent evaluation, to enable them to take the lead in the evaluation of programmes at the country level.

14. The Chair of the United Nations Evaluation Group emphasized the need to build on and strengthen already existing elements in advancing United Nations system-wide evaluations. In this regard, she highlighted:

- (a) the preparations of the triennial comprehensive policy reviews which draw on available evaluation information through the United Nations system in the area of development cooperation;

- (b) the organizational, managerial and administrative reviews of the United Nations system conducted by the Joint Inspection Unit;

- (c) the evaluation mandate of the Office of Internal Oversight Services covering the United Nations Secretariat.

15. The Chair of the United Nations Evaluation Group was of the view that United Nations organizations would not be seen as performing as “One United Nations” unless evaluation reports were comparable across the system. She said that while the Evaluation Group was an effective forum for professional networking and collaboration, it was neither set up nor funded to carry out system-wide evaluations. She therefore proposed that a small central unit be set up within the CEB framework to facilitate system-wide evaluation, reporting and the further development of evaluation policy and standard-setting for the United Nations system. While the suggested unit would be a system-wide body whose evaluation reports should be shared with the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, the independence of the unit was considered essential. For this reason, she recommended that the unit should be close to CEB but should maintain its autonomy. As for the funding for the unit, she considered that the system-wide nature of the initiative warranted buy-in by all relevant parties.

16. The joint meeting commented extensively on the proposal, focusing on the elements of a strengthened United Nations-wide evaluation system as outlined in the United Nations Evaluation Group paper. Answering questions from organizations, the United Nations Evaluation Group Chair clarified that the proposal entailed a role for the unit that would go beyond consultation and standard-setting.

17. Committee members endorsed the approach suggested in the United Nations Evaluation Group proposal on the need to ensure a distribution of evaluation functions and responsibilities among the evaluation offices of each United Nations system organization, the Evaluation Group and the new system-wide evaluation unit. It was emphasized that on the basis of the subsidiarity principle, work should be undertaken within the evaluation system at the most appropriate level.

18. At their joint session, the Committees also underscored the importance of a system-wide evaluation of the eight “One United Nations” pilot projects. It was stressed that such evaluation should cover both the initial phase of organizing the United Nations system to deliver as one as well as the subsequent implementation phase, and that it should focus on impacts in relation to country priorities.

### **Conclusions and action points**

19. Member organizations welcomed the United Nations Evaluation Group proposal and highlighted the need to further elaborate on the scope, funding, and governance of the suggested system-wide evaluation unit. The Evaluation Group was requested to expand on these aspects of the proposal in cooperation with the CEB secretariat, to take account of the comments provided and to present a revised version of its paper to the two Committees. This initiative was considered to be of relevance to the development of the business practices proposal under consideration by HLCM.

20. With regard to the eight “One United Nations” pilot projects, it was observed that the new system-wide evaluation unit could not be functional in time to conduct immediate evaluations of these projects. The Chairs of HLCP and HLCM were requested to bring this observation to the attention of the United Nations Development Programme Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme prior to the April session of CEB (also see the recommendations on evaluation in the thirteenth session HLCP report, CEB/2007/1).

## **V. Other matters: Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality**

21. The Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women briefed the joint meeting of the outcomes of the sixth session of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 21 and 22 February 2007 (see also CEB/2007/HLCM-HLCP/XIII/CRP.3). She recalled that at the previous joint HLCM-HLCP meeting on 30 September 2006 it had been recommended that the United Nations system-wide policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women and strategy on gender mainstreaming be submitted to CEB for endorsement. Following such action by CEB at its second regular session of 2006, the Inter-Agency Network had set up an ad hoc working group to develop an action plan for the implementation of the policy and strategy.

22. The Special Adviser stated that the Inter-Agency Network had put forward four recommendations as set out below:

(a) Concrete steps be taken to facilitate training of senior staff at the United Nations System Staff College to develop competencies for gender mainstreaming throughout the United Nations system;

(b) Mandatory web-based training on gender mainstreaming be initiated for all staff;

(c) Reporting of information and data by the United Nations country teams to the Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women be standardized and that all United Nations system entities participate in providing a joint report;

(d) The United Nations system entities identify gender balance or diversity focal points in addition to gender mainstreaming focal points.

23. As regards the reporting to the General Assembly on the representation of women in the United Nations system, the Special Adviser explained that the data provided by the organizations of the system were often out of date. She urged organizations to ensure provision of more current and accurate information in order to give a clearer reflection of the situation within the system.

### **Conclusions and action points**

24. While members of the Committees were supportive of the Inter-agency Network recommendations, they sought clarification on the costs associated with the training suggested in subparagraphs 22 (a) and (b) above. The Special Adviser was requested to look into the financial implications of the proposed training in conjunction with the United Nations System Staff College. It was suggested that the development of the proposed training modules should draw on the experience to be found throughout the United Nations system. It was noted that resident coordinators need to be sensitized to the gender dimension and that gender should be integrated into the “One United Nations” pilots. Finally, members agreed to ensure enhanced and timely reporting of data on the representation of women to the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women.

## **VI. Tribute to Secretary of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination**

25. The Chairs of HLCP and HLCM paid tribute to the outgoing Secretary of CEB, Patrizio Civili. On behalf of both Committees, they expressed deep appreciation for the dedication, commitment and collegiality that he had demonstrated throughout his career. Members of both Committees joined the two Chairs in a toast to Mr. Civili.