



CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Remarks by Helen Clark
UNDP Administrator and Chair of the UN Development Group

on the occasion of the ECOSOC Panel discussion:

“Strengthening the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator: role of accountability frameworks, resources and results reporting.”

Geneva, 15 July 2011

This afternoon’s session focuses on strengthening the leadership role of the UN Resident Coordinators and looks at the role of accountability frameworks, resources and results in this context.

As I stated at this morning’s session, these are challenging times for development, but they are also times of opportunity. They call on us to strive for the maximum development impact with the resources we have. In the UN development system, we must strive to provide ever higher quality services to programme countries to enable them to accelerate MDG progress, advance peace and stability, and achieve sustainable human development. The effectiveness of the UN Resident Coordinator System is central to our efforts to achieve that.

Improving accountability

When we empower Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams, streamline decision-making, and lay out clear lines of accountability, we do improve the coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency of the UN at the country level.

But first we must ensure that there is a talented pool of Resident Coordinators to draw from. Last year, the UNDG amended the Resident Coordinator Assessment to ensure that it was properly geared to assessing the competencies required of RCs. Fifty per cent of the assessment now measures the candidates’ capacities to respond to a range of humanitarian crises. RCs must be assessed as able to respond quickly and effectively if and when crises develop.

The training and induction of RCs now includes briefings on global development trends – thus encouraging RCs to think strategically and over the horizon, and to be able to make critical and timely connections to emerging and global opportunities and challenges.

The work of RCs is guided by the UNDG Management and Accountability System, which sets out both their roles and accountabilities and those of UNCT members. The System has been in place for three years. In general, we can say that Resident Coordinators and UNCTs are working better together, and more often than not are sharing the burden of co-ordination. For example, UNCT member organizations increasingly:

- recognise the officially defined role of the RC within the job description of their country representatives;
- include UNCT deliverables in the assignments and performance appraisals of their country representatives; and
- report programming results and resources available for joint programmes to their RC.

RCs, in turn, are becoming more involved in the performance appraisals of UNCT staff. To enable the Resident Coordinators who are also Resident Representatives to focus more on UNCT-wide issues, particularly in complex environments, UNDP has established 51 Country Director posts.

UN Resources

Core resources are the bedrock of operational activities for development organizations, with non-core resources acting as a vital supplement. Striking an appropriate balance between the two is important for maintaining strategic focus and coherence in our work. In this respect, the UNDG is grateful for the resources a number of member states continue to provide to support the RC system. Your contributions are critical investments in the capacity of the UN development system.

In its coordination role on behalf of the UN development system, UNDP continues to cover the costs for the Resident Coordinator posts, many costs of their offices, and a significant portion of what is needed for the Development Operations Coordination Office. In 2010 the cost of that to UNDP was \$73 million, and was covered mainly from our core budget. UNDG members also contribute to some costs of coordination - helping to fund some country level coordination activities and some costs of UNDG work at regional and global levels.

The draft ECOSOC resolution on progress in implementing the TCPR “invites the UNDG to review existing funding modalities in support of the RC system, including appropriate burden sharing arrangements...” Should this request remain in the final ECOSOC resolution, we will work together as UNDG agencies to identify and pursue ways to undertake further burden-sharing more systematically.

Results reporting

The objective of the system-wide coherence agenda has been to maximize the UN's ability to deliver results. The measurement and communication of results is also critical. A UNDG-HLCM study has been commissioned to identify common UN results reporting principles, in order to improve the way we communicate the UN's contribution to national development achievements. To explore these and other ideas, a briefing on results reporting is being planned for a joint meeting of Executive Boards later this year.

The current resource-constrained environment could lead to an unfortunate focus on short term development results. Yet it is critical that the UN development system stays focused on the big picture, and on development results which can be sustained over time. The UN is uniquely placed to help strengthen the national institutions and systems which build national resilience and sustain development progress.

For the UN development system to maximize its potential, effective, empowered, and visionary leadership is needed at all levels. We look forward to the continuing support of Member States for our efforts to ensure that such leadership is supported.
