Surveys of Governments, UN country teams, and civil society organisations (CSOs) in programme countries

Results Overview
2 May 2012
General Assembly resolution 64/289 on system-wide coherence mandated the Secretary-General, under the auspices of ECOSOC and in cooperation with UN Resident Coordinators, to put in place a periodic survey, directed to governments, on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the support of the UN system in order to provide feedback on the strengths and main challenges encountered in their interaction with the UN development system.
Overview of the surveys

• Objective to obtain feedback from Governments and other partners on UN operational activities for development

• 111 programme countries completed the Government survey, corresponding to a response rate of 74 per cent

• 518 UNCT members (heads of agency) completed the country team survey, including 78 UN Resident Coordinators

• 291 CSOs completed the CSO survey
Relevance
The majority of programme countries reported the UN’s activities are closely aligned with national priorities.

“The activities of the UN and your country’s development needs and priorities are:

- Very closely aligned
- Closely aligned
- Somewhat aligned
- Not aligned at all

Question answered: 111 programme countries
The UNDAF has helped to ensure alignment

“The introduction of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), or an alternative UN planning framework, has enabled the Government to ensure that the UN’s activities are closely aligned with the national plans and strategies

Question answered: 111 programme countries
UN efforts focus on the MDGs.

“The efforts of the UN are focused on assisting your country in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)”

Question answered: 110 Programme Countries
The functional areas of UN cooperation

7. The following is a list of different types of support the UN may provide. Please check the types of support that are most relevant to your country:

- Strengthening national capacities for policy and strategy development
- Supporting training and institution-building
- Supporting gender equality and women’s empowerment
- Promoting equity and human rights
- Providing advice on development policies and strategies
- Supporting studies on topics such as human development and children
- Providing up-to-date knowledge and technical expertise
- Mobilizing external resources for development
- Facilitating partnerships between government, civil society and the private sector
- Enhancing South-South and triangular cooperation
- Working with national universities and civil society organizations on...
“How quickly does the UN respond when your Government wants to make changes in the areas supported by the UN?”
Non-core activities are mostly as relevant as core activities

“Many UN agencies receive contributions from donors for specific programmes or projects in addition to their regular (core) funds. In general, such additional donor-funded activities are less relevant to your country’s needs and priorities”

Question answered: 108 Programme Countries
Effectiveness
UN contribution to environment sector most significant
‘Very significant contribution’ is related to country presence

“From the following list please select the UN agencies that have made a very significant contribution to your country’s development” (The chart shows the number of times an agency was mentioned as having made a very significant contribution to the country’s development)

UN agencies ranked by country presence
‘Very significant contribution’ is related to volume of funds an agency has to spend

Number of times an agency was mentioned (x-axis) against worldwide expenditures in 2010 (Y-axis has a log scale)
UNDAF helps to achieve better results

“The UNDAF or another UN planning framework has helped the UN to achieve better results than if each UN agency had planned its support to your country separately”
UN effective at developing national capacities

“UN has been effective in developing national capacities”

- Strongly agree (%): 24%
- Somewhat agree (%): 68%
- Somewhat disagree (%): 6%
- Strongly disagree (%): 1%
- Not applicable or don’t know (%): 1%
Contribution to capacity development varies among agencies.

- **UN agencies that HAVE BEEN highly effective in developing national capacities** - 97 countries responded.
- **UN agencies that HAVE NOT been effective in developing national capacities** - 52 countries responded.

UN agencies ranked by country presence.
Use of national capacities and systems is variable

“In order to achieve good results in your country, the UN has used following the approaches as much as possible”

- Used national experts in the design of programmes and projects
- Used national institutions in the design of programmes and projects
- Used national procurement systems
- Used national financial systems
- Used national monitoring and reporting systems
- Used national evaluation capacities

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know
Many ways for UN to improve its effectiveness

“To become more effective in your country, how important is it for the UN to take the following measures?”

- Become more engaged in programme-based approaches, including sector-wide approaches (SWAPs)
- Make better use of the expertise of non-resident UN agencies
- Focus on areas where the UN has a clear comparative advantage
- Improve the monitoring and evaluation of UN-supported programmes
- Do fewer things and do them together as a team
- Make better use of results-based methods
- Improve the design of programmes and projects

Very important | Somewhat important | Slightly important | Not important
Efficiency
Perspectives on using funds economically - from both Governments and CSOs

“The UN uses funds carefully and avoids waste”

Government responses (109)  
CSO responses (276)
Using funds economically – by agency

- **UN agencies that DO pay noticeably close attention to using funds carefully and avoiding waste** - 73 countries responded
- **UN agencies that NEED to pay more attention to using funds carefully and avoiding waste** - 47 countries responded

### UN agencies ranked by country presence

- **UNDP**: 42
- **UNICEF**: 26
- **WHO**: 20
- **UNFPA**: 7
- **FAO**: 6
- **UNESCO**: 2
- **UNHCR**: 2
- **UNAIDS**: 1
- **ILO**: 1
- **WFP**: 1
- **UNFEM/UNWomen**: 1
- **IOM**: 3
- **UNIDO**: 1
- **UNODC**: 3
- **OHCHR**: 2
- **UN-Habitat**: 2
- **UNEP**: 2
- **IFAD**: 1
- **OCHA**: 1

**Number of countries**
“There is a significant amount of duplication among UN activities in the country”
“Do UN agencies sometimes compete with each other for donor funding?”
“If the answer to question 21 [on competition] was Yes, please check any of the following statements that apply” - responses from UN staff:

- 41%: Competition among UN agencies is healthy and the Government welcomes it
- 33%: Competition among UN agencies creates confusion for the Government
- 22%: Competition among UN agencies increases the workload on Government officials
- 4%: Competition among UN agencies diverts the agencies’ attention from the main tasks of providing support to the country
“If the answer to question 21 [on competition] was Yes, please check any of the following statements that apply” - responses from Governments:

- **32%** Competition among UN agencies is healthy and the Government welcomes it
- **31%** Competition among UN agencies creates confusion for the Government
- **29%** Competition among UN agencies increases the workload on Government officials
- **8%** Competition among UN agencies diverts the agencies’ attention from the main tasks of providing support to the country
Competition noticed most in health and humanitarian affairs

Areas where UN agencies see competition (minimum of five instances)

- Health, including HIV/AIDS and mother and child health: 20%
- Humanitarian interventions, including early recovery and peacebuilding: 17%
- Environment, including climate change, water and sanitation: 13%
- Governance, including human rights: 13%
- Food security and nutrition: 9%
- Education: 7%
- Gender: 7%
- Rural/area-based development: 7%
- Social services and protection, youth: 7%
How to reduce transaction costs on Governments

“To reduce the workload on national partners, how important is it for the UN to take the following measures?”

- Use a single format for annual work plans
- Use a single format for progress reports
- Simplify the UNDAF and agency country programming or planning processes
- Designate a lead agency for some thematic issues to represent a common UN approach in the country
- Plan joint monitoring missions and evaluations when working in the same thematic area
- Consolidate its country presence under a single head who is accountable for all UN assistance
- Share office premises
- Share more services in areas such as procurement, human resources and information technology
UN perspectives on how to increase coherence

Looking to the future, how effective would the following measures be in improving UN coherence at the country-level?
- 497 responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Very or somewhat effective</th>
<th>Slightly or not effective at all</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Further streamlining of the programming instruments and processes</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>57</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enhancing the role of programme coordination groups</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>73</td>
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<td>Requesting UN country teams to set annual and multi-year targets for increasing coherence</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>109</td>
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<td>Fully implementing the Management and Accountability System for the Resident Coordinator system</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>195</td>
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<tr>
<td>Giving the Resident Coordinator a stronger coordination role over all the UN funds and programmes</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>205</td>
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<tr>
<td>Giving the Resident Coordinator a stronger coordination role over all the UN country team members</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>194</td>
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<td>Establishing common premises</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>248</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sending clear signals from agency headquarters advocating more UN coherence at country-level</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>248</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harmonizing the agencies’ results-based management systems</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>78</td>
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<td>Harmonizing the agencies’ reporting procedures</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increasing harmonization of business processes</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing the Resident Coordinator’s Office with greater resources</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing the UNDG Regional Team with greater resources</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>240</td>
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How timely are UN agency inputs?

From the following list please assess how timely the UN agencies are in providing inputs (such as advisers and equipment) for development activities: Please check only the agencies for which you have good information, and skip the others.

Timeliness of inputs (Agencies are ranked according to worldwide expenditures in 2009 – minimum 20 responses)

- Inputs are usually timely
- Inputs are sometimes timely
- Inputs are rarely or never timely
Government perspectives on UN agency efficiency

- UN agencies that ARE highly efficient in the way they provide support to your country - 78 countries responded
- UN agencies that NEED to pay more attention to providing support in an efficient manner - 52 countries responded

UN agencies ranked by country presence
Thank You!