Results-Based Management in the United Nations Development System: Progress and Challenges

A report prepared for the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, for the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review

Final Report
July 2012

Angela Bester

Acknowledgement

The United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs wishes to express its appreciation to all those who gave of their time to be interviewed and commenting on the draft report, and who readily shared their documents with the consultants. The contributions of those who attended the consultative workshop and assisted in shaping the study are greatly appreciated.

List of acronyms

ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
AusAID	Australian Agency for Internal Development
CEB	Chief Executives Board
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CPC	Committee for Programmes and Coordination
DaO	Delivering as One
DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DFID	Department for International Development
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GA	General Assembly
IADG	Internationally agreed development goal
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
QCPR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
RBM	Results-based management
SWE	System-wide evaluation
TCPR	Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review
UN	United Nations
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
WFP	World Food Programme

Glossary of terms

Activities	Actions taken or work done, using the inputs to produce outputs.
Attribution	The ascription of a causal link between observed (or expected to be observed) changes and a specific intervention. Attribution refers to that which is to be credited for the observed changes or results achieved. It represents the extent to which observed development effects can be attributed to a specific intervention or to the performance of one or more partner taking account of other interventions, (anticipated or unanticipated) confounding factors, or external shocks.
Evaluation	The systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision–making.
Goal	The higher-order objective to which a development intervention is intended to contribute.
Impact	Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.
Indicators	Quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor or intervention.
Inputs	Human, financial, technological and information resources used to achieve results.
Outcomes	Describe the intended changes in development conditions resulting from interventions. They can relate to changes in institutional performance. UNDAF outcomes are the collective strategic results for the United Nations system cooperation at country level, intended to support national priorities.
Outputs	Specific goods and services produced by the programme. Outputs can also represent changes in skills or abilities or capacities of individuals or institutions, resulting from the completion of activities within a development intervention within the control of the organization.
Result	The output, outcome or impact (intended or unintended, positive and/or negative) of a development intervention.

(Most of these definitions are taken from the United Nations Development Group RBM Handbook)

Contents

Executive Summary

Introduction

i. This study responds to the request of the Economic and Social Council in ECOSOC Resolution 2011/7, for the Secretary-General to undertake *"…A review of progress made by the United Nations development system to improve results-based strategic planning and management in order to improve accountability and transparency, and identification of measures to further improve its long-term delivery and results…"*[1] The study forms part of the preparations for the 2012 quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) of the General Assembly. The study was conducted between April and June 2012, by Angela Bester (consultant), supported by Christian Privat (consultant) on request of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).

ii. The study was not one originally envisaged for the QCPR preparations and given the limitations of time the study could not be comprehensive. Within these constraints, the study attempted to provide some insights into the progress made with the implementation of results-based management in the United Nations development system, and to highlight the key challenges in advancing the implementation of results-based management. The study also sought to identify lessons learned from, among others, Delivering as One, to inform results-based management approaches, and proposes recommendations that may be considered by the Secretary-General in his report to the General Assembly.

iii. The data for the study were drawn from literature on results-based management in the United Nations, in other development institutions and government institutions; semi-structured interviews with selected officials of FAO, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, WFP, UNDG at headquarters and regional centres (Latin America and Caribbean; West and Central Africa; and East and Southern Africa); and data from the QCPR survey and the UNDAF study conducted as part of preparation for the QCPR. The draft report was circulated to all interviewees for their comment and factual corrections.

iv. Results-based management is not a stand-alone initiative, but forms part of the broader agenda of reforms in the United Nations. These reforms aim to achieve system-wide coherence on the major policy and operational matters in the United Nations, strengthen accountability, and improve the impact of the United Nations. Underpinning these reforms is a strong focus on results, moving from focusing on how things are being done *(processes)* to what is being achieved or accomplished by the United Nations system *(results).*

Major Findings

What has been the progress since 2007?

v. The various agencies interviewed for the study have implemented many initiatives aimed at improving results-based management in their respective organizations. These initiatives have focused on technical aspects of results-based management, for example, policies, toolkits and

---

[1] United Nations Economic and Social Council, Resolution 2011/7 'Progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/208 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for the United Nations system', 18 July 2011.

training. A number of these initiatives have only been in introduced within the past two years and their efficacy has not yet been evaluated.

vi. Senior managers in some of the United Nations development system are driving a results agenda in their respective organizations. Results-based management has been adopted as a management approach by the leaders of these organizations. There is however an acknowledgment that results-based management is not necessarily understood or embraced by all senior managers.

vii. The United Nations Development Group has developed and implemented an action plan to enhance results-based management at the country level. There has been progress on the implementation of the RBM Action Plan, but it is too early to tell if the intended results or outcomes of the plan have been achieved.

viii. Evaluation is an essential component of results-based management cycle, but the level of investment in the evaluation function appears insufficient for the task. Furthermore, a number of agencies have decentralized their evaluation functions and these decentralized evaluation units appear to lack the necessary skills and resources to produce quality evaluations.

ix. The United Nations Evaluation Group has played an important role in improving the quality of evaluation practice in the United Nation system. However, there remains uncertainty or lack of clarity about the role of evaluation offices within the results-based management systems of agencies.

x. Individual agencies have done much to improve their results-based management frameworks. While this is a positive development on the one hand, it inadvertently may weaken or undermine efforts on UNDAF or inter-agency results frameworks.

xi. Much of the emphasis in the implementation of results-based management has been on developing the strategic plans, country programme documents and the results matrices. The 'managing' for results aspect of results-based management in the form of using information for programme improvement is less prominent.

xii. Donor countries and partner countries that form part of the Multi-lateral Organisation Performance Network (MOPAN) perceive that those agencies surveyed in 2009 and 2010 are making progress with results-based management. The MOPAN surveys have identified areas for improvement, in particular, clarity in definition of outputs and outcomes, institutionalizing results-based management and better use of performance information for programming and decision-making.

xiii. In addition to expectations from donor countries for the United Nations to improve its results-based management, programme countries too perceive results-based management as important for improving the effectiveness of the United Nations development system.

What are the key challenges?

xiv. Agencies are good at defining and measuring results at the output level as outputs are generally amenable to measurement. Meaningful definition and measurement of outcomes is not easy, and many agencies experience difficulty in developing realistic, technically sound indicators for

these levels of results. Some suggest that vague outcomes are also a way to avoid being held accountable.

xv.   Agencies in the United Nations development system are expected to uphold the principle of national ownership of results and as far as possible, use national systems. The challenge for agencies is that in many instances, results-based management in programme countries is either non-existent or under-developed.

xvi.   Country-level programming has to respond to or align to national priorities to ensure relevance and simultaneously be aligned to the corporate priorities of the agency. This can create tension between the corporate level and country level for organizations that operate on a decentralized basis. While these are not inherently contradictory demands, they are not easy to balance.

xvii.   Results-based management is a <u>system,</u> and for it to be implemented effectively, all elements of the system must work. If one aspect of the system is weak, it lessens the overall effectiveness of results-based management. The relevant resources, workable management and accountability systems, and knowledge management must be in place to support results-based management.

xviii.   Agencies perceive that Member States have different expectations and understandings of results-based management. Differences exist between Member States, and between Member States and the United Nations development system.

xix.   Building a results culture and fully institutionalizing results-based management is perhaps the most difficult aspect of results-based management. There are disincentives in the system inhibiting the development of a results culture.

What are the lessons that can inform results-based management approaches?

xx.   The introduction of results-based management or major changes to existing results-based management approaches is not cost-free or cost neutral. Resources must be committed to support implementation. Introducing results-based management cannot be done as a narrow technical exercise. Failing to take into account the institutional and change management issues runs the risk of undermining the initiative.

xxi.   There must be incentives in place for managers and staff to use results-based management. Incentives should be tailored to the context and culture of the organization. It is equally important to remove formal and informal disincentives to results-based management.

xxii.   Accountability is critical for effective results-based management. Results-based management is unlikely to succeed if there is no institutional accountability and individual accountability for results. If organizations and individuals cannot be held accountable for results, then they are less likely to focus their efforts on achieving results.

xxiii.   Many organizations persist in their attempts to measure as many things as possible. This propensity towards complexity is partly driven by multiple reporting demands put on organizations in the public sector. It is also driven by lack of clarity about which results are the most important. In

order to keep performance measurement systems simple, there needs to be an informed demand for performance information or results.

xxiv. Capacity development for results-based management is often conceived narrowly as training of practitioners or field staff in the application of results-based management. Lessons from other studies highlight the necessity of training senior management in results-based management approaches in order to foster senior leadership for results-based management.

xxv. The Delivering as One approach is premised on national ownership of the development agenda (and development results), and national leadership and lessons from the independent evaluation suggest that these principles are essential for sustainability of Delivering as One. The principles of national ownership and leadership are equally applicable to results-based management. If national governments are expected to take the results from the United Nations development system seriously, they should have a say in how the results are defined, measured and reported on.

xxvi. Studies on results-based management emphasize the importance of leadership. They suggest that it is not enough for heads of organizations to simply pronounce that they are committed to results-based management. Leaders need to demonstrate commitment through deliberate action, for example, constantly communicating the results-based management message internally and externally; providing the resources or lobbying for resources for results-based management; and asking the 'results' questions to show that they are important.

Conclusions

xxvii. Agencies, Programmes and Funds interviewed are implementing results-based management, not merely to comply, but because they believe that results-based management has value for them. The enthusiasm for results-based management has not necessarily filtered to all levels of the organizations.

xxviii. There has been progress in the implementation of results-based management since the TCPR. A large proportion of effort has gone into the strategic planning element of the results-based management cycle and in the reporting of results. There are gaps in the managing aspect – using results for decision-making, programme improvement and learning and some agencies are beginning to address these gaps.

xxix. There is no one single model or 'right way' for results-based management. Each agency has its own model or framework to suit its operations and its organizational model. While the United Nations Development Group has provided a framework that could harmonize results-based management concepts and approaches, agencies are likely to retain their own models as they suit their particular circumstances. This poses a challenge for the United Nations development system to respond to demands for information on system-wide results.

xxx. Institutionalizing results-based management is not an easy task and takes time. Agencies, Programmes and Funds are experiencing challenges to varying degrees, in implementing results-based management. For most, developing and sustaining a results culture is proving to be a major challenge.

xxxi.   The lack of adequate results-based management capacity, including evaluation capacity at country level, undermines the quality results-based management at the agency and inter-agency level.

xxxii.   Results-based management is not static. Results-based management within the United Nations development system has evolved and will continue to evolve in response to the broader reform agenda of the United Nations and trends in the international development arena.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The United Nations Development Group should intensify its efforts in strengthening and institutionalization of results-based management in the United Nations development system, with the objective of improving development results as well as organizational effectiveness. This includes reducing unnecessary complexity in results-based management systems and looking at ways to minimize the burden of multiple reporting, scaling up capacity development for results-based management especially at country level, strengthening knowledge networks and communities of practice for results-based management, and investing in developing better guidance and techniques in measuring long-term results in areas that are not easily amenable to measurement.

Recommendation 2: The United Nations Development Group should to articulate and implement a more robust results-focused approach to development cooperation that would facilitate planning, measurement and reporting on system-wide results, including the use of common United Nations Development Group results principles and standardized results-based management terminology. To progress the reporting on system-wide results, the development of a common monitoring system for results should be fast-tracked. Incentives for cross-agency collaboration in results reporting should be improved and disincentives to system-wide results reporting should be removed.

Recommendation 3: The United Nations Development Group should explore options for strengthening the Management and Accountability Framework and achieving alignment between results-based management and accountability. This includes finding ways to strengthen the accountability of United Nations country teams for delivering and reporting on system-wide results at country level.

Recommendation 4: The funds, programmes and specialized agencies should intensify their efforts to inculcate and sustain a results culture in their respective organizations. This includes identifying and implementing suitable incentives for results-based management, removing current disincentives to developing a results culture, investing in developing capacities and competencies for results-based management, and periodically reviewing their results-based management systems.

Recommendation 5: The relevant mechanisms charged with responsibility for independent system-wide evaluation should be requested, to conduct an independent evaluation of results-based management in the United Nations development system and make recommendations to the General Assembly. The evaluation should assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of results-based management, taking into account the changes in the global environment, changes in international development cooperation, and international trends in results-based management. It should include an assessment of state of decentralized evaluation capacity to

support results-based management at country level. The results of the evaluation should feed into the next quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

Chapter 1:   Introduction

Background and purpose

1.   The past decade or so has seen an increased emphasis on results in the United Nations development system. This emphasis on results is part of the broader United Nations reform agenda that seeks to improve coherence of the United Nations system, its effectiveness and its accountability. Results-based management (RBM) has been part of the United Nations reform agenda for well over a decade. Since the 2007 Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR), there have been increased efforts on the part of the United Nations development system to enhance results-based management within individual agencies and at the country level, through the UNDAF, as one of its five programming principles[2]. The application of results-based management in the development field has gained currency and national governments and public institutions increasingly are adopting this approach. Further impetus for improving results-based management comes from demands from both programme and donor countries for the United Nations development system to demonstrate that it is achieving its objectives, that it does so efficiently and that its activities are relevant to the needs and priorities of programme countries and contribute to improved and sustainable development outcomes.

2.   This study responds to the request of the Economic and Social Council in ECOSOC Resolution 2011/7, for the Secretary-General to undertake *"…A review of progress made by the United Nations development system to improve results-based strategic planning and management in order to improve accountability and transparency, and identification of measures to further improve its long-term delivery and results…"*[3] The study forms part of the preparations for the 2012 quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) of the General Assembly and is guided by the following key questions:

   (i)   Where has there been progress in the area of Results-Based Management, by the UN system and different agencies, funds and programmes, at global level and field level in the last four years?

   (ii) What are the key challenges on results-based management that should be the object of a particular attention by Member States, and should be discussed in the Secretary-General's Progress report on the TCPR?

   (iii) How can the QCPR encourage the United Nations to continue to move forward with results models that have the best potential to support programme countries and the UN system in reaching better results?

---

[2] The five programming principles are: human rights-based approach, gender equality, environmental sustainability, results-based management, and capacity development.
[3] United Nations Economic and Social Council, Resolution 2011/7 'Progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/208 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for the United Nations system', 18 July 2011.

(iv) How can issues of reporting results be better addressed to respond to agencies and system-wide reporting needs, without imposing an overburden on UNCTs and agencies, while being adapted to different country contexts?

(v) How can Delivering as One lessons learned for a more coherent and coordinated United Nations be useful in the context of achieving effective development results, guided by a relevant results-based management, monitoring and reporting system?

(vi) What would be the key recommendations that should be pointed to in the Secretary-General's Progress Report on the TCPR?

The detailed Terms of Reference for the study are in Annex C.

Methodology

Defining Results-Based Management

3.   Not surprisingly, there are many definitions of results-based management. The OECD defines results-based management as "*A management strategy focusing on performance and achievement of outputs, outcomes and impacts.*"[4] A more comprehensive description of results-based management appears in the discussion paper of the OECD where results-based management is seen as "*A broad management strategy aimed at achieving important changes in the way in which agencies operate, with improving performance and achieving results as the central orientation. Result based management provides a coherent framework for strategic planning and management by improving on learning and accountability.*"[5] An adaptation of this definition appears in the work of the Joint Inspection Unit on results-based management in the United Nations.[6]

4.   The Office of Internal Oversight Services defines results-based management as "*A management strategy by which the Secretariat ensures that its processes, outputs and services contribute to the achievement of clearly stated expected accomplishments and objectives. It is focused on achieving results, improving performance, integrating lessons learned into management decisions and monitoring and reporting on performance.*"[7]

5.   The United Nations Development Group has adopted a comprehensive definition of results-based management. "*RBM is a management strategy by which all actors, contributing directly or indirectly to achieving a set of results, ensure that their processes, products and services contribute to the achievement of desired results (outputs, outcomes and higher level goals or impact). The actors in turn use the information and evidence on actual results to inform decision-making on the*

---

[4] Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 'Glossary of Evaluation and Results Based Management (RBM) Terms', 2010 edition, p.34

[5] Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 'Glossary of Evaluation and Results Based Management (RBM) Terms', Working Party on Aid Evaluation, 25 October 2000, p. 15.

[6] Fontaine Ortiz, E., Kuyama, S., Munch, W., Tang, G., 'Implementation of Results-Based Management in the United Nations Organizations: Part 1 – Series on Managing for Results in the United Nations System*"*, Joint Inspection Unit, Geneva, 2004.

[7] Office of Internal Oversight Services, 'Review of results-based management at the United Nations: A report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services', 22 September 2008, p.5.

design, resourcing and delivery of programmes and activities as well as for accountability and reporting."[8]

6.   According to UNDP, the main objectives of results-based management are to support accountability to governments, beneficiaries, donors, executive boards and stakeholders; take prompt corrective action; ensure informed decision-making; better management of risks; and to enable organizational and individual learning from experience.[9]

7.   MacKenzie (2008), in reviewing results-based management in the United Nations system at country level noted that while the various bodies in the United Nations had different definitions of results-based management, these definitions tended to revolve around themes of learning and improvement of results.[10] What is evident from the many definitions is that the purpose of results-based management is to achieve improved organizational performance through organizational learning and to meet accountability obligations (Meier 2003)[11].   Furthermore, results-based management is a broader management *strategy* and is not synonymous with performance monitoring and evaluation.

8.   Results-based management is conceptualized as a results chain of inputs-activities-outputs-outcomes-impact. The assumption is that actions taken at one level will lead to a result at the next level, and in this sense, the results chain stipulates the sequence actions taken to achieve a particular result.

Conceptual framework for the study

9.   Assessing the progress made since the last TCPR raises the following question – what criteria should be used to assess progress? What did the United Nations intend to achieve through the implementation of results-based management? The study looked to guidance from past reviews and evaluations of results-based management, particularly within the United Nations.

10.   The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) developed a comprehensive conceptual framework with benchmarks against which it assessed the effective implementation of results-based management in the United Nations in 2004. Box 1 summarizes these benchmarks.

---

[8] United Nations Development Group, 'Results-based Management Handbook: Harmonizing RBM concept and approaches for improved development results at country level', edited draft October 2011, p.10.

[9] UNDP, 'Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results', p.11.

[10] MacKenzie, A., 'Results Based Management at country level: Systemic issues that prevent good UNDAF results and the use of UNDAF results information', Paper presented to the United Nations Development Group's Working Group on Programming Policy, 2 September, 2008.

[11] Meier, W., 'Results Based Management: Towards a common understanding among development cooperation agencies', Prepared for the Canadian International Development Agency, Performance Review Branch, for consideration by the DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness and Harmonisation, October 2003.

11.

Box 1: Benchmarks for effective implementation of results-based management [12]

Benchmark 1: A clear conceptual framework for results-based management exists as a broad management strategy.

Benchmark 2: The respective responsibilities of the organization's main parties are clearly defined.

Benchmark 3: Long-term objectives have been clearly formulated for the organization.

Benchmark 4: The organization's programmes are well aligned with its long-term objectives.

Benchmark 5: The organization's resources are well aligned with its long-term objectives.

Benchmark 6: An effective performance monitoring system is in place.

Benchmark 7: Evaluation findings are used effectively.

Benchmark 8: Results-based management is effectively internalized throughout the organization.

Benchmark 9: A knowledge management strategy is developed to support results-based management.

12.   Mayne (2007), drawing on global experiences of a variety of organizations identified six principles for effective results-based management regimes. Box 2 provides a summary of these six principles that are widely referenced in results-based management literature.

Box 2: Six principles for effective results-based management regimes[13]

Principle 1: Foster senior-level leadership in results-based management.

Principle 2: Promote and support a results culture.

Principle 3: Build results frameworks with ownership at all levels.

Principle 4: Measure sensibly and develop user-friendly results-based management information systems.

Principle 5: Use results information for learning and managing, as well as for reporting and accountability.

Principle 6: Build an adaptive results-based management regime through regular review and update.

13.   The Joint Inspection Unit benchmarks and Mayne's six principles provide useful markers for reviewing results-based management within the United Nations development system and served as the basis for developing a results chain to guide this study. The results chain (Exhibit 3), while it

---

[12] Fontaine Ortiz, E., Kuyama, S., Munch, W., Tang, G., 'Implementation of Results-Based Management in the United Nations Organizations: Part 1 – Series on Managing for Results in the United Nations System", Joint Inspection Unit, Geneva, 2004.

[13] Mayne, J., "Best practices in Results-Based Management: A Review of Experience – A report for the United Nations Secretariat, Volume 1: Main Report", July 2007, p.iii.

contains elements of the principles and benchmarks, focuses on the question of *progress* made with results-based management in the United Nations development system, rather than making a detailed assessment of the implementation of results-based management in the various programmes, agencies and funds that constitute the United Nations development system. The results chain is not comprehensive, nor is it an exhaustive representation of results-based management in the United Nations development system. It is merely intended to guide the line of enquiry in this study.

Box 3: Results chain for progress with results-based management in the United Nations development system

	Changes in results at different levels	Questions
Impact/ Goal	▪ Improved performance of the UN development system: organisational and development effectiveness ▪ Enhanced transparency and accountability	▪ Are there changes in performance, transparency and accountability and to what extent has RBM as a strategy contributed to these change?
Outcome	▪ RBM is institutionalised - Results are used for decision-making, learning , improving performance and accountability at all levels	▪ How are results used? ▪ Is there a culture of managing for results?
Outputs	▪ UN development system has the technical capacity and systems to implement RBM ▪ Results reports produced ▪ Evaluation reports produced	▪ Is there adequate capacity at different levels for implementing RBM effectively? ▪ Has the quality of results reporting and evaluations improved?
Activities	▪ Agencies receive training, tools, guidelines and technical support ▪ Dissemination of good examples and lessons learned, quality assurance ▪ Senior management provides enabling environment for RBM	▪ Has the institutional support for RBM been adequate for effective implementation? ▪ Is there senior-level leadership in RBM?
Inputs	▪ Conceptual frameworks for RBM ▪ Human and financial resources, and systems for RBM ▪ Incentives for RBM	▪ Are there conceptual frameworks? ▪ Do the resources and systems support the goals of RBM? ▪ Are the right incentives in place?

Data collection methods

14.   The study was not one originally envisaged for the QCPR preparations. However, following consultation with agencies in February 2012, it was agreed that the preliminary note prepared by UNDESA for the QCPR, should be expanded. This study is essentially a review, which looks at the progress made with the implementation of an initiative (in this case results-based management), and although it uses some evaluative tools, it is not an evaluation in the strict sense of the term. The following data collection methods were used for the study:

(i)   A desk review of literature on results-based management in the United Nations and in other development institutions and government institutions. Past reviews and evaluations of results-based management in the United Nations and Delivering as One were also consulted. A list of documents consulted is shown in Annex B.

(ii)   A desk review of intergovernmental, inter-agency and agency-specific policies and guidance on results-based management and country-level programming. These documents were obtained from the United Nations websites and from United Nations entities.

(iii) Semi-structured interviews with selected officials of programmes and funds, and specialized agencies. The complete list of officials consulted in in Annex B and includes FAO, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women and WFP. Officials from UNDG at headquarters as well officials in regional centres (Latin America and Caribbean; West and Central Africa; and East and Southern Africa) were also consulted. A total of 25 officials were consulted.

(iv) Data from the QCPR survey and the UNDAF study pertaining to results-based management were extracted and used.

15.   UNDESA established a small reference group with representatives from UNDG, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women and WFP. The members of the reference group had extensive involvement in results-based management at agency and inter-agency level. The first consultation with the reference group was held on 17 February 2012. The inputs from this consultation assisted in formulating the terms of reference for the results-based management study. The draft report was circulated to the reference group for comment and their comments were taken into consideration in finalising the report.

Limitations

16.   This study does not pretend to be exhaustive. Given the limitations of time, the study could not be comprehensive as other studies conducted as part of the QCPR preparations. The results in this report should be interpreted against the following limitations of the study:

(i)   All except three interviewees were from Headquarters in New York, Geneva and Rome. Only two interviewees were from regional offices and no officials at country level were interviewed. There is therefore a strong headquarters bias in the interviewee sample and lack of a country level perspective, though some information could be gleaned from the QCPR survey and other QCPR studies. Furthermore, no Members States were interviewed.

(ii)   All interviews with the exception of one were conducted by telephone and some nuances of the communication may have been lost in the process.

(iii) Given the absence of country level interviews, the study is not able to differentiate sufficiently between the different country contexts (for example, low-income vs. middle-income countries, or countries emerging from conflict vs. relatively stable countries).

(iv) The study relies to a large extent on self-reporting, through interviews and agency documents. While effort was made to validate the information provided, it was well beyond the scope of the study to do this comprehensively.

Structure of the report

17.　　The report is structured in the following way:

(i)　Chapter 2 briefly explores the history of results-based management in the United Nations and in the United Nations development system in particular. The chapter seeks to locate results-based management within the broader context of reforms in the United Nations.

(ii)　Chapter 3 discusses the progress that has been made in the area of results-based management in the United Nations development system. The chapter uses the questions posed in the results chain shown in Exhibit 1.

(iii)　Chapter 4 outlines the key challenges facing results-based management in the United Nations development system. It draws a distinction between technical challenges, for example, challenges relating to issues of measurement and attribution, and institutional challenges, for example, issues pertaining to creating an enabling environment for institutionalization of results-based management.

(iv)　Chapter 5 is forward-looking and explores options for addressing issues relating to reporting, lessons for results-based management from Delivering as One and results models that have the best potential to support programme countries and the United Nations system in reaching better results.

(v)　Chapter 6 draws conclusions and offers broad recommendations for consideration in the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly.

Chapter 2:   The Context - Increased emphasis on results

Historical context

18.   Result-based management, albeit in a broader sense, has been in existence for several decades as a management practice in business and in public administration. The approach of thinking through logically what an organization or business is trying to achieve and how to measure its performance, was popularized by Peter Drucker's concept of Management by Objectives in the 1960s and 1970s. Within public administration and the development sector there emerged the Logical Framework Approach and its variations (outcomes hierarchies and goal-oriented project planning). Other significant precursors to results-based management include performance-based budgeting and corporate performance management.[14]

19.   Results-based management as a distinctive practice or approach came to prominence in the 1990s as part of the public sector reform agenda (also known as New Public Management) of some OECD countries, for example, Canada. A number of bi-lateral agencies (for example, AusAID, CIDA, DFID) and multi-lateral agencies (for example, the World Bank) have adopted results-based management as an approach to managing development cooperation. The adoption of results-based management in development cooperation by bi-lateral organizations was in large part a response to increasing pressure from the public in donor countries to demonstrate the effectiveness of aid. The Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development in 2002 focused attention on management strategies used to achieve development results and the concept of Management for Development Results (MfDR) emerged.[15] MfDR is an approach and set of tools that guide governments and development cooperation agencies in achieving sustainable development results. The emphasis is on *managing* to achieve results.

20.   The United Nations organizations during the 1990s faced similar challenges to those faced by the public sector organizations and bi-lateral donors. There were pressures on funding and demands from contributor countries for greater efficiencies and effectiveness on the part of United Nations organizations. Results-based management in the United Nations evolved over time with the different United Nations organizations each introducing some variation of results-based management.[16]

Results-based management in the United Nations reform agenda

21.   Results-based management is not a stand-alone initiative, but forms part of the broader agenda of reforms in the United Nations. These reforms aim to achieve system-wide coherence on the major policy and operational matters in the United Nations, strengthen accountability, and improve the impact of the United Nations. Underpinning these reforms is a strong focus on results,

---

[14] Vahamaki, J., Schmidt, M. and Molander, J., 'Review: Results Based Management in Development Cooperation', Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, 30 November 2011. This article provides a useful literature review of results-based management in development cooperation.

[15] Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 'Management for Development Results: Principles in Action: Source Book on emerging good practice', April, 2005.

[16] Fonatine Ortiz, E. and Tang, G., 'Results-Based Management in the United Nations in the context of the reform process', Joint Inspection Unit, Geneva, 2006.

moving from focusing on how things are being done *(processes)* to what is being achieved or accomplished by the United Nations system *(results)*.

22.   The early era of results-based management in the United Nations is more accurately described as results-based budgeting, which is a narrower concept than results-based management. Results-based budgeting (RBB) was introduced in 2001 through General Assembly resolution 55/231 and is defined as a *"….programme budget process in which (a) programme formulation revolves around a set of predefined objectives and expected results, (b) expected results justify the resource requirements which are derived from and linked to outputs required to achieve results and (c) in which actual performance in achieving results is measured by objective performance indicators"*.[17] The Joint Inspection Unit, in its assessment of the implementation of results-based management in the United Nations in 2006, noted with concern the confusion within the United Nations about whether it was implementing results-based management or Results-Based Budgeting. This concern was confirmed by the Office of Internal Oversight Services' review of results-based management in the United Nations Secretariat. The review found entities within the United Nations Secretariat lacked a common understanding of the objectives of results-based management and confused it with results-based budgeting.

23.   The Joint Inspection Unit played a critical role in the formal adoption of results-based management as a management strategy in the United Nations. The General Assembly endorsed the Unit's framework for benchmarking results-based management (GA resolution 60/257). The Secretary-General, as part of the reforms to governance and accountability, was requested by the General Assembly to develop a results-based management framework, alongside frameworks for accountability, enterprise risk management and internal control. Following extensive work on the results-based management framework, the General Assembly, in resolution 64/259, requested the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures to accelerate the implementation of results-based management in the United Nations Organization. Importantly, the General Assembly stressed that there should be a sustained focus on results, and requested the Secretary-General to take the measures to achieve a cultural change within the Organization.[18] The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, referring Benchmark 1 of the Joint Inspection Unit's framework, made the important point that '…..*the first and crucial step for the introduction and implementation of results-based management is the development of a clear conceptual framework for results-based management, as a broad management strategy, to be shared among the organization's main parties (Member States, oversight bodies and secretariats) and formally adopted by the competent legislative organ.*'[19] The Advisory Committee saw such a framework as an essential vehicle for promoting a common understanding of results-based management as the basis for advancing the implementation of results-based management in the United Nations Secretariat.

---

[17] Office of Internal Oversight Services, "*Review of results-based management at the United Nations: Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services*", 22 September 2008, p.5.

[18] General Assembly Resolution 64/259 "*Towards an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat*, 29 March 2010.

[19] Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, 'Towards an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat: Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budget Questions', ACABQ (A/64/683), 26 February 2010, p.10.

24.   On considering the report of the Secretary-General on progress towards an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat, as well as reports of the Joint Inspection Unit and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, the General Assembly stressed the importance of results-based management and performance reporting as essential pillars of an accountability framework and requested the Secretary-General to '…*continue to take appropriate measures to accelerate the implementation of results-based management and to include, inter alia, in his next report concrete measures on how the Organization will shift its accountability from the delivery of outputs to the delivery of results.*'[20]

Results-based management and the UNDAF

25.   The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) was introduced as part of the Secretary-General's reform programme presented to the General Assembly in 1997. As a programming tool, it was envisaged that the UNDAF would overcome the fragmentation and duplication among Programmes and Funds at country level. The UNDAF promoted the development of common objectives, and reflected the contribution and funding of each agency to these common objectives. The UNDAF has been through several iterations since its introduction and now include specialized agencies. Endeavours to strengthen system-wide coherence at the country level through the UNDAF cannot be seen in isolation of the drive in the United Nations to focus on results. The UNDAF is accompanied by a results framework and the guidelines for developing UNDAFs specify results-based management as one of the programming principles of the UNDAF.[21] While the UNDAF is a programming tool to be used by the United Nations development system, the General Assembly has consistently emphasized the importance of national ownership, leadership and participation in the development of UNDAFs.

Delivering as One

26.   The Secretary-General's High Level Panel Report on UN System-wide Coherence in November 2006 called for the United Nations to *deliver as one* in areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment to have a greater impact at country, regional and global levels. The report generated intense debate within the United Nations and externally, and the General Assembly did not adopt many of the High Level Panel's recommendations. However in 2007, eight countries (Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay and Viet Nam) volunteered to adopt the Delivering as One (DaO) approach on a voluntary basis. Other countries followed as 'self-starter countries'. The DaO approach calls for coherence at country level through the adoption of 'One Leader', 'One Programme', 'One Budget' and in some countries, 'One Office'. The concept evolved further during implementation with the addition of

---

[20] General Assembly Resolution 66/257, 'Progress towards an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat', 9 April 2012, p.5.
[21] United Nations Development Group, "How to prepare an UNDAF Part I– Guidelines for UN Country Teams", January 2010.

'One Voice' and 'One Fund'.[22] National ownership and national leadership of DaO are important principles underpinning the initiative.

27.   The necessity for evaluating the DaO initiative was recognized early in the process. The General Assembly through resolution 62/208 mandated an independent evaluation of the implementation of DaO in the pilot countries, with the aim of providing an objective view on its contribution and value added, and to identify lessons learned. The independent evaluation was completed in 2012. Earlier in 2007, the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), on request of the Chief Executives Board conducted evaluability assessments of the eight pilot countries and these provided the basis for country-led evaluations in seven of the eight pilot countries.

28.   Delivering as One is a contested concept. There appear to be different interpretations of the objectives of DaO, and concern among some Member States that a'one-size-fits-all' approach might be adopted. There is a degree of ambivalence about DaO at field level of the United Nations development system. The QCPR survey of Resident Coordinators and United Nations Country Teams found that while 55.7 per cent of respondents agreed that DaO would become the new business model for the United Nations, 25.3 per cent were uncertain and 19 per cent did not agree that DaO would become the new business model for the United Nations. The independent evaluation of DaO concluded that the performance of DaO in terms of its relevance to the needs and priorities of governments in pilot countries has been strong. The DaO's effectiveness in terms of contributing to delivering development processes and results, and delivery of better support the evaluation concluded that effectiveness was moderate. The likelihood of sustaining DaO is concluded to be moderate and efficiency has been weak.[23] An important message from the independent evaluation is that DaO has been able to demonstrate positive achievements and in some instances, strategic results in areas such as gender equality, but *'….bolder measures may be required to put the United Nations on a more comprehensive track of reform…'*[24] Of relevance to this study on results-based management is the independent evaluation's noting of challenges in areas of planning, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting on the One Programme.

Results-based management and the evolving development context

29.   The focus on results does not emanate solely from the financial pressures mentioned earlier, but also from the desire on the part of the global development community to achieve sustainable development results. The Millennium Declaration (2000) and the Millennium Development Goals focused attention on the necessity for sustainable development results. The 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness committed partner countries and donors to, among other things, managing for results, that is, "…*managing and implementing aid in a way that focus on the desired results and uses information to improve decision-making*…" and "…*Work together in a participatory approach to strengthen country capacities and demand for results-based management*".[25] Furthermore, partner countries and donors committed themselves to mutual accountability for development results. This

---

[22] Independent Evaluation of Lessons Learned from Delivering as One: Final Summary Report prepared for United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 12 June 2012.

[23] Op. cit.

[24] Independent Evaluation of Lessons Learned from Delivering as One: Final Summary Report prepared for United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 12 June 2012.

[25] Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 'Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action', p7.

commitment is expressed through provision of timely, transparent and comprehensive information on aid flows by donors to their citizens and to partner countries on the one hand, and through partner countries strengthening the oversight role of their legislatures.

30.   The Accra Agenda for Action (2008) prioritised a results focus as one of the key challenges to be addressed in order to accelerate progress in aid effectiveness. It noted that "*Achieving development results – and openly accounting for them – must be at the heart of all we do*" and that citizens and taxpayers in all countries expect tangible results from development efforts[26]. The Accra Agenda for Action outlines specific actions to be taken by developing countries and donors, including working together to develop cost-effective results management instruments. The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (2011) reiterated the commitment to sustainable development results and the principle of focusing on results. It calls for action to strengthen efforts to achieve sustainable results, including better managing for results, monitoring and communicating progress. The Busan Statement reaffirms the importance of national ownership of results and strengthening national capacities.[27]

---

[26] Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 'Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action', p16.
[27] Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation: Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, Republic of Korea, 29 November – 1 December 2011.

Chapter 3: Progress on results-based management since the TCPR

31.   This chapter discusses the progress made by the United Nations development system with the implementation of results-based management since the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of 2007.

State of results-based management implementation in 2007

32.   In order to review progress, it is useful to have a picture of the state of results-based management in the United Nations development system around the time of the TCPR. There have been only a handful of evaluations or reviews of the implementation results-based management in the United Nations. They do however provide some indication of the state of results-based management in the United Nations system immediately prior to the TCPR.

33.   In 2006, the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) conducted a survey of its members to ascertain the role of evaluation in results-based management and identify best practice models. This small study provides an indication of the state of results-based management in 21 UNEG member organizations. Some of the key findings were:

(i) The majority of respondent organizations had adopted results-based management in the late 1990s but only one-third had established comprehensive corporate management frameworks covering all aspects of results-based management. Frameworks did not cover the entire organization and tended to emphasize reporting requirements. Guidance was fragmented in manuals, guidelines and instructions and was process oriented rather than strategic.

(ii) Most respondent organization claimed to have the basic elements of results-based management, namely, formulating objectives, results and indicators, monitoring and reporting. However, they reported that developing indicators, monitoring results and using performance information were the weakest elements of their results-based management. Respondents claimed that evaluation results were not fully utilized to inform decision-making or future programmes.

(iii) Half of the respondent organizations did not see results-based management as helping them to produce credible or useful results. They viewed results-based management primarily as a reporting tool rather than a tool for managing for results.

(iv) Each respondent organization had developed its own model of results-based management. A number of respondent organizations were participating in results-based management harmonization initiatives of the United Nations Development Group, focusing on harmonization at country level.[28]

---

[28] United Nations Evaluation Group, 'The Role of Evaluation in Results-Based Management (RBM)', United Nations Evaluation Group Task Force on Evaluation and RBM Final Report, February 2007. A limitation of the study is that it relied on self-reporting.

34.   In 2007, UNDP Evaluation Office reported on an independent evaluation of results-based management in UNDP. The study found that UNDP had made significant progress in sensitizing staff to results-based approaches and introducing tools to support them, but was not managing for results. It concluded that UNDP had a weak results culture as a number of systemic issues work against developing such a culture. These included *"…..the strong emphasis on resource mobilization and delivery; a culture that does not support risk-taking; systems that do not provide adequate information at the country programme level; a lack of clear lines of accountability ; and a lack of a staff incentive structure…..*" [29] The evaluation further concluded that the challenges experienced by UNDP in introducing result-based management are similar to those experienced by other organizations.

35.   In 2008, the Office of Internal Oversight Services reported on its review of evaluation in the United Nations Secretariat. Although the Secretariat falls outside the scope of this present study, the findings resonate with experiences of some agencies within the United Nations development system. The review concluded that the introduction of results-based management had not brought about any significant shift to an outcomes focus – the system still favoured the tracking of inputs, activities and outputs and that the culture remained compliance-driven rather than results-driven.[30]

36.   In 2008, the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) commissioned an independent study to identify and examine the systemic issues that affect the use of results-based management at country level. The study identified a range of issues including the lack of results focus of UNDAF annual reviews and reports; insufficient routine internal and external demand for information on UNDAF results; discrepancies between results-based management terminology used by agencies and UNDG terminology; lack of ownership of the UNDAF; and agency accountability frameworks did not focus sufficiently on UNDAF results.[31]

---

[29] United Nations Development Programme Evaluation Office, 'Evaluation of Results-Based Management at UNDP', December 2007, p.xi.
[30] Office of Internal Oversight Services, 'Review of results-based management at the United Nations: A report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services', 22 September 2008.
[31] MacKenzie, A., 'Results Based Management at country level: Systemic issues that prevent good UNDAF results and the use of UNDAF results information', Paper presented to the United Nations Development Group's Working Group on Programming Policy, 2 September, 2008.

Box 4: State of results-based management implementation *circa* 2007

Box 2: State of RBM implementation *circa* 2007
▪ Not all organizations in the United Nations development system had comprehensive results-based frameworks covering all aspects of results-based management.   ▪ Some organizations had developed guidance and tools, but these tended to be fragmented and not situated within an overarching policy framework for results-based management.   ▪ Many organizations experienced difficulty in developing indicators for outcomes, or distinguishing between outputs and outcomes.   ▪ Performance information was used primarily for reporting purposes. Results information for decision-making or to inform future programming was under-utilized.   ▪ While staff had become increasingly familiar with results-based management concepts and methodologies, a results culture did not take hold in many of the organizations.   ▪ The various systems, including accountability, technical systems, and resource mobilization ran counter to efforts to build a results culture.   ▪ Results-based management at country level through the UNDAF was weak on a number of fronts.

What has changed since 2007?

37.   **Finding 1: The various agencies[32] interviewed for the study have implemented many initiatives aimed at improving results-based management in their respective organizations. These initiatives have focused on technical aspects of results-based management, for example, policies, toolkits and training. A number of these initiatives have only been in introduced within the past two years and their efficacy has not yet been evaluated.** As discussed in Chapter 2, results-based management has existed in some form in the United Nations development system since the 1990s. Agencies within the United Nations development system have progressively worked on strengthening the implementation of results-based management within their respective organizations. These improvement initiatives focus on strengthening the institutional and individual capacities and include RBM policies and guidelines; training programmes; toolkits for results-based management; and opportunities for knowledge sharing. Some agencies have introduced quality assurance measures to enhance the quality of strategic planning and reporting of results. The ensuing session describes briefly the initiatives taken by selected agencies. The descriptions are not intended to comprehensive or exhaustive, but merely to illustrate the actions taken by various agencies to improve results-based management in their respective organizations.

38.   **FAO** embarked on a renewal programme to address the recommendations for reform made by an independent external evaluation of FAO in 2007. The Immediate Plan of Action adopted in 2008, sets out an ambitious roadmap with 235 actions for FAO's renewal. Underpinning FAO's renewal efforts is a new results-based framework that focuses FAO's efforts on the outcomes or results it needs to achieve, shifting from the narrower concern with how to spend its budget. The

---

[32] For ease of reading, Specialized Agencies, Programmes and Funds will be referred to as "agencies".

framework defines outcomes and indicators and provision was made in the Immediate Plan of Action to develop a new monitoring system. The results-based framework was completed in 2009 and the first full assessment of results is scheduled for 2012. FAO has put a monitoring system in place to track progress with the implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA) and an external assessment of the IPA was conducted by the Office of the Inspector General in 2011, to take a high level review of the implementation of the IPA. The assessment noted the many actions taken by FAO under the IPA, but cautioned that there was much to be done to achieve systemic and fundamental change. [33]

39. **UNAIDS** comprises a number of co-sponsors so its origins and operations are different to other United Nations agencies. results-based management was not part of its initial establishment, and it was only in 2007 that RBM began to feature on UNAIDS's management agenda. The UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board then requested that the UNAIDS Secretariat pay increased attention to results-based management and accountability, and funds be released on the basis of performance. In response to this request, the Secretariat presented a United Budget and Workplan Performance Monitoring Framework (2010-2011) that provides for tracking the linkages between financial resources and programme results. In addition to serving as a monitoring tool, UNAIDS sees the framework as a means of enhancing learning.[34] The framework drew on lessons learned from past United Budget and Workplans in particular, the need for simplicity and functionality of monitoring systems, the need to monitor input, outputs and outcomes and the need to harmonize individual agency systems with the UNAIDS performance monitoring framework. The framework has been improved further with the introduction of the 2012-2015 Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework that emphasizes results (outcomes as opposed to being a workplan) linked to accountability. UNAIDS provides training in RBM at country level, with its monitoring and evaluation officials being the primary recipients[35]. The emphasis of UNAIDS interventions is on strengthening monitoring and measurement for better reporting. In July 2011, UNAIDS issues the new 'UNAIDS Secretariat Workplanning, Monitoring and Reporting Guidelines'. The main purpose of the guidelines is to (i) improve the Secretariat's business practices and systems for greater delivery of results, and (ii) to establish and maintain more stringent internal accountability mechanisms. Results-based programming and management is one of the five principles on which these guidelines are anchored.[36]

40. **UNDP** subjected its results-based management to an independent evaluation in 2007, as mentioned earlier. The evaluation recommendations included the strengthening of leadership for RBM; sharpening the role of the strategic results framework; and providing more and better support to country offices.[37] In 2009 UNDP replaced its 2002 RBM handbook with a new handbook on 'Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results'.[38] The UNDP handbook integrated

---

[33] Food and Agriculture Organization, 'Immediate Plan of Action – IPA annual report for 2011 and direction for 2012', presented to Council, Hundred and Forty-fourth Session, Rome 11-15 June 2012.

[34] UNAIDS, '2010-2011 Performance Monitoring Framework: 24th Meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board, Geneva, 22-24 June 2009'.

[35] UNAIDS, 'Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF)', Geneva, 21-23 June 2011.

[36] UNAIDS, 'Planning for Results: UNAIDS Secretariat Workplanning, Monitoring and Reporting Guidelines', Geneva, July 2011.

[37] United Nations Development Programme Evaluation Office, 'Evaluation of Results-Based Management at UNDP', December 2007.

[38] UNDP, "Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating Development Results",2009.

planning, monitoring and evaluation and refers to this integration as RBM. The life-cycle approach to RBM depicted in the UNDP handbook was adopted by the United Nations Development Group in its RBM handbook. The Executive Board has requested UNDP Evaluation Office to commission an independent review of the UNDP evaluation policy, including the degree to which the approaches advocated in the UNDP Handbook have enhanced results-based management and decentralized evaluation at country level, and to report back in 2013.[39] Going beyond efforts to strengthen UNDP internal results-based management capacities, UNDP has been supporting national partners to improve their results-based management capacities. Some have focused on strengthening 'whole of government' results-based management models tied to national reform agendas, while others have focused on enhancing sector-specific results-based management. UNDP has also engaged in global initiative to enhance national evaluation capacities.[40] UNDP has also taken up the challenge of developing approaches, methodologies, frameworks and tools for measuring seemingly intangible and difficult areas to measure, such as 'capacity development'.

41.   **UNFPA** launched its RBM optimization initiative in 2008, following a study to review its results-based management systems and tools. Through the RBM optimization initiative, UNFPA has taken measures to strengthen and streamline RBM in the organization, many of which were implemented in 2011. These include the launch of the RBM policy; guidelines for developing results robust results frameworks for UNFPA programmes; quality assurance frameworks for country programme documents and quality results reporting; a modular learning programme and RBM training guide; and knowledge sharing of RBM through UNFPA RBM community of practice and intranet resource portal. UNFPA established regional monitoring and evaluation posts in a bid to strengthen RBM in its country offices and have RBM and M&E focal points in country offices.[41] Many of these initiatives are relatively new and have not been subjected to independent evaluation. There is thus no information currently available on the efficacy of these interventions.

42.   **UNICEF** has focused its RBM enhancement efforts on improving the quality, timeliness and accessibility of results information. The Data Companion that accompanies the annual report of the Executive Director provides comprehensive statistical information on results in implementing UNICEF's strategic plan. UNICEF launched VISION (Virtual Integrated System of Information) in January 2012 and has trained over 7,000 users globally. The new system allows UNICEF to monitor operational and programme performance, manage resource and carry out business transactions within a single integrated system. This will enable UNICEF to produce high quality and timely information to its stakeholders.[42] Since 2009, UNICEF has identified results-based management as one of the organizational standards against which country programme documents are assessed and reports annually on this management performance indicator.

---

[39] UNDP, 'Annual report on evaluation in UNDP 2010', report presented to the 2011 Annual Session of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office of Project Services, 8 April 2011, DP/2011/24

[40] In 2009 UNDP co-hosted an international conference on National Evaluation Capacity with the Government of Morocco, and a second conference with the Government of South Africa in 2011. These working conferences have attracted national evaluation practitioners from over 27 countries.

[41] UNFPA, "Management Response to Executive Board: Item 12: UNFPA internal audit and oversight activities in 2009", New York, 3 June 2010.

[42] UNICEF, "Annual report of the Executive Director: progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan", 12 April 2012.

43.   **UN Women** (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women) was established in 2010 and became operational in January 2011. The organization has drawn on lessons learned and the evaluation of the strategic plan of its predecessor, UNIFEM, to inform its strategic plan and results-based management. The evaluation found that the strategic plan and results framework were useful in orienting the organization to a results-based management approach, but that the emphasis on measurement was at the expense of *planning* and *managing* for results. Furthermore, resources available were not commensurate with the ambitions of the strategic plan.[43] According to the annual report of the Executive Director, UN Women has introduced several improvements aimed at building a strong culture of results-based management. These include refining the results and indicators of UN Women's development and management frameworks, establishing baselines where these did not previously exist, and linking results to budgets. Efforts were made to strengthen results frameworks at country level and work plans were subjected to quality assurance. An independent evaluation office reporting directly to the Executive Director is seen by UN Women as another measure to improve RBM in the entity.[44]

44.   **World Food Programme (WFP)** adopted results-based management in 1999, and in 2003 it established a RBM unit with a three-year mandate to support the mainstreaming of results-based management and enhancing performance measurement and reporting. The organization has taken steps to progressively institutionalize and strengthen RBM and as early as 2003 had introduced a RBM orientation guide, followed by a mainstreaming plan in 2006. Subsequent evaluations have revealed that there were shortcomings, notably, WFP's focus on tracking and measuring outputs. WFP has taken steps to address these shortcomings, most notably through the substantial revision of its Strategic Results Framework in 2009, committing it to measuring both outcomes and outputs against targets.[45] The roll-out of the Strategic Results Framework has been supported by tools (Indicator Compendium), a new monitoring system, updated standards and guidance, and staff training.[46] In 2011 WFP further strengthened its results-based management with the introduction of a Management Results Framework. The WFP frameworks are elaborated on a corporate level and then cascade to all office, and are updated annually. Project performance is reported annually, through the Standard Projects Reports and an analysis is published in the Annual Performance Report. Similarly, WFP tracks management results at country, regional and corporate levels. WFP has established dedicated capacities at regional and country levels to focus on the use of performance data for management decisions.

45.   **Finding 2: Senior management in some of the United Nations development system are driving a results agenda in their respective organizations. Results-based management has been adopted as a management approach by the leaders of these organizations. There is however an acknowledgment that results-based management is not necessarily understood or embraced by all senior managers.** Evaluations and studies all are emphatic about the importance of leadership from senior management in the effective implementation of results-based management in organizations.

---

[43] UN Women Evaluation Office, "UNIFEM Strategic Plan 2008-2011: Evaluability Assessment", March 2011.

[44] UN Women, "Progress made on the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women strategic plan, 2011-2013 – Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director", report presented to the Executive Board, 20 April 2012

[45] WFP, "Steps forward: Implementation of WFP Strategic results framework 2008-2013", presented to Executive Board, 21 January 2010 (WFP/EB.1/2010/5-D)

[46] WFP, "Mid-Term Review of the WFP Strategic Plan 2008-2013), presented to Executive Board, 15 May 2012

Senior management sets the tone and gives the signal as to what is important and what is not. There have been pronouncements from Senior Management about the importance of focusing on results (Box 5).

Box 5: What leaders say about results-based management

What Leaders Say about results-based management
▪ *"Results-based management provides a set of principles, approaches, and tools which can help us achieve these goals. By always trying to answer the "so what difference does our intervention make?" question, we will keep our focus on how we can support real and sustainable improvements being made in the lives of those we serve." – **Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator**[47]* ▪ *"….as we continue our work on the MTSP, we are focusing on ways to put* <u>results</u> *in children's lives at the heart of the plan, with a distinction between our* <u>goals</u> *and the* <u>means</u> *to achieve them. This will help us to achieve greater strategic clarity and also enable us more clearly to link UNICEF's work to developmental results."* **Anthony Lake, Executive Director, UNICEF**[48] ▪ *"I am acutely aware that, ultimately, UN Women will be judged by the impact that we have on the ground, by the extent to which we can make a difference in the ability of all women — and particularly those who are most excluded — to exercise their rights and contribute, alongside men, to the development of their communities and countries. We are aiming to establish an integrated results-based management culture and support system to deliver on UN Women mandates. A top priority during the initial months following the approval of the Strategic Plan will be to complete the baseline information that will underpin our reporting and performance assessments." – **Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director, UN Women**.[49]*

46.   Those working on the implementation of results-based management believe that more can be done to foster senior-level leadership in results-based management, by, for example, ensuring that senior managers that are conversant with results-based management terminology and tools so that they fully appreciate the value of the results-based management approach. There were suggestions that senior managers should be trained in results-based management to update their knowledge and understanding. They also believe that if managers valued results-based management, they would be more supportive of staff training and learning networks.

47.   **Finding 3: The United Nations Development Group has developed and implemented an action plan to enhance results-based management at the country level. There has been progress on the implementation of the RBM Action Plan, but it is too early to tell if the intended results or outcomes of the plan have been achieved. [50]** General Assembly resolution 62/208 called for a number of measures to improve the coherence and effectiveness of operational activities for development at country level. As mentioned previously, the United Nations Development Group

---

[47] UNDP, 'Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating Development Results',2009.

[48] Lake, A., 'UNICEF Executive Board Annual Session: Opening Remarks', 5 June 2012, p.3.

[49] UN Women, 'Introductory Statement by Michelle Bachelet at the Annual Session of the UN Women Executive Board', 27 June 2011.

[50] It should be noted that results-based management is one of the programming principles of the UNDAF. A separate, more detailed study on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the UNDAF has been commissioned for the QCPR. The results-based management study does therefore not discuss the UNDAF in any detail.

commissioned a review of the implementation of RBM at the country level. The report has formed the basis of UNDG Working Group on Programming Issues 'RBM Action Plan' that was endorsed by the UNDG meeting in January 2009. The action plan has three focus areas, namely, RBM capacity development, results reporting, and accountability for results.

48.   In terms of *capacity development*, the United Nations Development Group published a RBM manual or handbook in January 2011. The RBM handbook seeks to harmonize RBM concepts used in the United Nations development system and approaches to results-based management. The RBM handbook is succinct and provides explanations of each phase of the RBM cycle, from planning through to using results for learning, programme adjustment and decision-making. It also attempts to address the application of results-based management in crisis and post-crisis settings. The glossary of terms should assist in standardizing the use of RBM terminology. Individual agencies are expected to update and revise their agency-specific RBM manuals. The United Nations Development Group has not monitored this, but from the interviews for this QCPR study, agencies are aware of the manual and some are reviewing their agency-specific manuals. RBM training tools have been developed and rolled out through the United Nations Staff College. As is the case with individual agency initiatives, these United Nations Development Group RBM improvement initiatives are recent and their effectiveness has not been assessed.

49.   The United Nations Development Group has also taken steps to enhance the functioning of regional UNDG teams to provide advice and quality support to United Nations country teams on UNDAF and related matters, with the goal of improving the quality of UNDAFs. The strategy recognized that United Nations country teams need more than training and guidelines and focuses capacity development on three areas, namely, enhanced accountability through stronger leadership and quality assurance; collecting, vetting and disseminating lessons learned, good examples or innovative practices (including lessons learned from Delivering as One); and availability of direct country technical support.[51] How effective have these interventions been and has the situation improved since 2007? The QCPR UNDAF study of forty UNDAF evaluations found that UNDAF results frameworks are often technically poor. Outcome statements are made broad to accommodate all agencies, thus making the UNDAF less strategic. Baselines and indicators are poorly constructed or undefined. [52] The UNDAFs prepared under the new 2010 guidelines have not yet been evaluated and so it is too early to assess if the UNDG's strategy has been effective.

50.   With regard to *strengthening reporting results*, the United Nations Development Group in 2010 issued guidance to UN Country Teams in their progress reporting on the UNDAF. This includes the purpose and principles of results reporting as well a standard operational format for progress reports to ensure a degree of consistency across countries. The quality of UNDAF progress reports depends on the robustness of the monitoring and evaluation of UNDAFs and according to a brief study by UNEG, the quality of UNDAF evaluations is not consistently good.[53] The existence of

---

[51] United Nations Development Group, 'Strengthening UNCT capacity for quality UNDAFs', Background document for UNDG Meeting, 2nd June 2009.
[52] Balogun. P. 'The relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)', a report prepared for the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, May 2012.
[53] Garcia, O., 'Challenges for conducting UNDAF evaluations', Discussion paper presented at the United Nations Evaluation Group Practice Exchange, 21-22 March, 2011.

multiple reporting frameworks and demands within the United Nations development system and from donor countries poses an additional challenge. Agencies country offices need to report to their respective headquarters, while the United Nations also needs to be able to report on its system-wide contribution at country level, both to programme country governments and to donors. The UNDG and the High Level Committee on Management (of the Chief Executives Board) therefore commissioned a study with the aim of setting standards for reporting by United Nations agencies and simultaneously streamlining and simplifying reporting processes. The study, drawing on the UNDAF reporting principles and the principles of reporting established by the OECD-DAC in 2011, identified four tenets principles of results reporting – mutual accountability, transparency, efficiency in utilization of resources, and effectiveness in attaining development results.[54] A background paper prepared for the Joint Meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN Women and WFP in January 2012 indicated that these principles would be integrated into guidance and reporting mechanisms of agencies.[55]

51.   Some 94 per cent of programme country governments in the QCPR survey, within the context of reducing the workload on national partners, favour the use of a single format for progress reports. Also, about 82 per cent of Resident Coordinators and UNCT members considered the harmonization of agencies' reporting procedures to be the most important measure to improve United Nations coherence at the country level.

52.   **Finding 4: Evaluation is an essential component of results-based management cycle, but the level of investment in the evaluation function appears insufficient for the task. Furthermore, a number of agencies have decentralized their evaluation functions and these decentralized evaluation units appear to lack the necessary skills and resources to produce quality evaluations.** Evaluation is generally accepted within the United Nations as an essential tool for demonstrating the effectiveness of the United Nations development system and the General Assembly resolution 62/208 encouraged the of strengthening the evaluation function and promoting a culture of evaluation across the United Nations system. In reality, most evaluation offices or units within the United Nations development system have modest staff resources and budgets. While there have been improvements over the past five years, interviews and survey data from the Review of Independent System-wide evaluation found that resources for evaluation are constrained. Most units/offices have a budget at less than 1% of the total agency annual expenditure and most operate with relatively small numbers of staff – 10 or fewer core professional staff.[56]

53.   There are problems with the quality of evaluations conducted or managed by decentralized evaluation functions. Executive boards, for example, UNDP and UNFPA have requested that these problems be addressed. UNDP Evaluation Office's Annual Report for 2010 shows that evaluation capacity at country level is constrained, with only 27 per cent of country offices having monitoring

---

[54] UNDG-HLCM, 'Common Principles of Results Reporting: A UNDG-HLCM Joint Study – Final Report', 15 July 2011.
[55] UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS, UNICEF, UN Women and WFP, 'Making United Nations operational activity work for accelerated development: Quadrennial comprehensive policy review (Delivering as One, results reporting', Background paper prepared for the Joint Meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN Women and WFP, 30 – 31 January 2012.
[56] Bester, A. and Lusthaus, C., 'Independent System-Wide Evaluation Mechanisms: Comprehensive Review of the Existing Institutional Framework for System-Wide Evaluation of Operational Activities for the United Nations Development System Mandated in the General Assembly Resolution 64/289', April 2012.

and evaluation units, with 51 monitoring and evaluation specialists and five regional advisers. The coverage for outcome evaluations from country offices is low and as is evaluation compliance (only 28 per cent of eligible country offices completed all planned evaluations, while 36 per cent were partially compliant). The quality of outcome evaluations as assessed by UNDP Evaluation Office has improved slightly over the previous year, with 64 per cent of outcome evaluations assessed to be satisfactory or moderately satisfactory and none assessed as highly satisfactory.[57] Similar challenges have been reported by UNFPA in its biennial report on evaluation in 2012. Although the coverage of country programme evaluations has increased to 100 per cent as a result of mandatory requirement for these evaluations, the quality of evaluations is a problem. The UNFPA Evaluation Branch's quality assessment found that only 9 per cent of country programme evaluations are good and 68 per cent were poor. A survey by the branch established that poor planning, insufficient funding, lack of country office skills in managing or conducting evaluations, and the shortage of skilled national consultants were among the key reasons for the poor quality of decentralized evaluations.[58]

54. **Finding 5: The United Nations Evaluation Group has played an important role in improving the quality of evaluation practice in the United Nation system. However, there remains uncertainty or lack of clarity about the role of evaluation offices within the results-based management systems of agencies.** The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), a voluntary professional network of evaluators within the United Nations system, has done much to promote good evaluation practices within the United Nations system. With a membership of about 43-45 United Nations agencies that are expected to subscribe to UNEG norms and standards for evaluation, UNEG is well-placed to influence evaluation practice within the United Nations system. UNEG has played and continues to play a central role in strengthening the evaluation function and improving the overall quality of evaluation practice within the system. Since 2007, the Group has produced several key guidance documents. UNEG, through its system of task forces, has engaged on several critical issues, for example, integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluations and has developed guidance for UNDAF evaluations in collaboration with UNDOCO.[59] UNEG has also played a critical role in coordinating system-wide evaluations, namely, evaluability assessments for the Delivering as One country-led evaluations and the Joint South Africa – UNEG evaluation on the role and contribution of the United Nations development system (2009).

55. As far back as 2005, UNEG established a Task Force on Evaluation and Results-Based Management. In its survey conducted in 2006, the Task Force found that although responsibility for managing the implementation of results-based management rests with the planning and programme divisions of agencies, several evaluation offices/units were involved in RBM-related tasks such as participating in the preparation of RBM frameworks, RBM capacity building activities, quality assurance of RBM frameworks and performance indicators. In terms of UNEG norms and standards for evaluation, such involvement could compromise the independence of the evaluation function.

---

[57] UNDP, 'Annual report on evaluation in UNDP 2010', report presented to the 2011 Annual Session of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office of Project Services, 8 April 2011, DP/2011/24.

[58] UNFPA, 'United Nations Population Fund Biennial Report on Evaluation', report to be presented to the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office of Project Services, 23 April 2012, DP/FPA/2012/8.

[59] United Nations Evaluation Group, 'Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – Towards UNEG Guidance, Guidance Document, UNEG/G(2011)2.

The issue of the role of independent evaluation was discussed at the UNEG Annual General Meeting in 2006, with a proposal that there be further work on defining the role of evaluation in RBM and UNEG considers how to approach the call for a common methodology.[60] There appears to have been no further action by UNEG on this issue. There remains a high level of interest in the topic of RBM and evaluation, as evidenced by the UNEG 2012 Evaluation Practice Exchange seminar. The seminar noted that since the introduction of results-based management in the United Nations development system, the evaluation offices, because of their expertise are drawn into RBM-related tasks, posing a risk to their independence.[61]

56.   **Finding 6: Individual agencies have done much to improve their results-based management frameworks. While this is a positive development on the one hand, it inadvertently may weaken or undermine efforts on UNDAF or inter-agency results frameworks.** The efforts that individual agencies have invested in improving their results-based management frameworks over the past five years are commendable. However, this does not necessarily translate into strong inter-agency results frameworks or UNDAF results frameworks. The accountability structures within the United Nations development system prioritize vertical accountability, namely, from the individual agency at country level, through the headquarters and then to the relevant Executive Board. The demand for performance information of individual agencies appears to be stronger than the demand for performance information on UNDAF. The results frameworks of individual agencies are therefore designed to, first and foremost, serve vertical accountability. Individual agencies, not surprisingly, tend to invest more effort in their agency results frameworks than they do on the UNDAF. The lack of harmonization of results-based management systems of agencies is of concern at the country level where, according to the QCPR survey, 85 per cent of Resident Coordinators and United Nations Country Team members consider that the harmonization of individual agencies' results-based management systems to be the third most effective measure to improve United Nations coherence at the country level.

57.   **Finding 7: Much of the emphasis in the implementation of results-based management has been on developing the strategic plans, country programme documents and the results matrices. The 'managing' for results aspect of results-based management in the form of using information for programme improvement is less prominent**. Interviews with a small sample of agencies suggest that a great deal of effort is put into developing the corporate strategic plan and country programme documents. Given the complexity of the internal and external environment of the United Nations development system, developing robust plans and country programme documents require a great deal of time and effort. Agencies are also investing in better quality assurance and support to country offices to enhance the quality of country programme documents and strategies. The process of developing an UNDAF is an intensive one. The introduction of a shorter or 'lighter' UNDAFs or Country Development Strategy may not necessarily reduce the transaction costs in developing an UNDAF. The experience of developing "One Programme" in Delivering as One pilot countries is that it poses high transaction costs for UNCTs.[62] Interviews with regional staff that provide quality

---

[60] United Nations Evaluation Group, 'The Role of Evaluation in Results-Based Management (RBM)', United Nations Evaluation Group Task Force on Evaluation and RBM Final Report, February 2007, p.3.
[61] United Nations Evaluation Group, 'Report of the UNEG Evaluation Practice Exchange (EPE) Seminar', 23-24 April 2012.
[62] 'Independent Evaluation of Lessons Learned from Delivering as One: Final Summary Report prepared for United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 12 June 2012.

assurance and support suggest that in many cases, the focus of country offices is to comply with 'completing the boxes' in the results framework with little thought to how the performance information will be collected and used. The completion of the country programme documents, results frameworks and UNDAFs consume a great deal of energy and when this phase of the RBM cycle is completed, staff treat the planning phase as the end of the RBM process.

58.   There is evidence from agencies' reports that they use performance information generated by the results-based management systems to report to their respective executive boards and external stakeholders. At a corporate level some agencies aggregate country level performance information and analyze it for identifying trends and challenges. How much of this is fed back to country offices for lessons learning is not clear. Aggregating performance information across several different countries with very different contexts cannot always be done in a meaningful way. The extent to which performance information is used to make decisions about new programmes or adjustments to existing programmes is not known as it was beyond the scope of this review to determine this in detail. The study noted UNICEF's efforts to strengthen the use of data and evidence (performance information) in programming and advocacy for children, and its development of MORES (Monitoring Results for Equity System).

How do others perceive RBM in the United Nations development system?

59.   **Finding 8: Donor countries and partner countries that form part of the Multi-lateral Organisation Performance Network (MOPAN) perceive that those agencies surveyed in 2009 and 2010 are making progress with results-based management. The MOPAN surveys have identified areas for improvement, in particular, clarity in definition of outputs and outcomes, institutionalizing results-based management and better use of performance information for programming and decision-making.** MOPAN conducts annual surveys to assess the organizational effectiveness of multi-lateral agencies. The box below highlights some of the key findings of selected United Nations agencies that were surveyed by MOPAN in 2009 and 2010. It should be noted that the box only captures those dimensions that are directly relevant to results-based management.

Box 6: Highlights of MOPAN Findings

Highlights of MOPAN findings on RBM-related aspects of organizational effectiveness of selected United Nations agencies

FAO (2010)

FAO has embarked on a major, ambitious reform programme and the results from MOPAN reflect an organization in transition. The organizations strategic management frameworks and related documents are perceived to be well-crafted, but implementation is lagging. Donor respondents perceive a need for greater corporate focus for promoting results-based management throughout the organization. Use of performance information and knowledge management are perceived to be adequate, though there is room for making better use of performance information to support planning of new initiatives at country level. The report acknowledged that FAO was undertaking a major renewal programme.[63]

UNDP (2009)

UNDP is seen to perform adequately on all aspects of strategic management. Its results frameworks are rated highly by partners. Donors expressed some reservations about UNDP's capacity to ensure RBM across the organization, and that while the corporate strategy is clear, field offices sometimes engaged in activities not aligned to the corporate strategy. Partners rate UNDP high on project monitoring, while donors express concern about UNDP's ability to use performance information to inform decision-making on new initiatives and programming. Reporting of outcomes is an area identified for improvement.[64]

UNFPA (2010)

UNFPA was rated high on several dimensions. It is seen to have a strong corporate focus on results, as well as a good focus on results at country level. The review of UNFPA documents highlighted some areas that need attention, in particular, the need to make a clearer distinction between outputs and outcomes and a clearer results chain as these were thought to impact negatively on UNFPA's ability to report on results. The assessment also suggested better attention to be paid to the use of performance information for reporting on policy changes and to support decision-making on country-level programming[65].

UNICEF (2009)

UNICEF is seen to perform adequately on most dimensions of organizational effectiveness. With regard to strategic management, UNICEF is seen by national partners to have a strong focus on results at country level, though donors are more critical in their assessment. Its institutional culture to support a results focused is rated as adequate and as is the leadership demonstrated by senior management in driving a results focus. UNICEF is also perceived to use performance information adequately and is considered adequate in the dissemination of lessons learned.[66]

WHO (2010)

WHO was rated highly on the strategic management dimension. The organization's continuous strengthening of its results-based management framework was noted as well as WHO's reinforcement of results-management approaches in its Medium Term Strategic Plan. The MOPAN assessment also suggests that the leadership is driving a strong results focus, though the results culture is not yet fully institutionalized. There is need to improve the distinction between outputs and outcomes so that a clear results chain with relevant indicators can be developed.[67]

---

[63] Multi-lateral Organisation Performance Network, 'Organisational Effectiveness Assessment: Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations', Volume I, December 2011.

[64] Multi-lateral Organisation Performance Network, 'MOPAN Common Approach: United Nations Development Program (UNDP) 2009', February 19, 2010.

[65] Multi-lateral Organisation Performance Network, 'MOPAN Common Approach: United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) 2010', January 2011.

[66] Multi-lateral Organisation Performance Network, 'MOPAN Common Approach: UNICEF 2009', February 19, 2010.

[67] Multi-lateral Organisation Performance Network, 'MOPAN Common Approach: World Health Organization (WHO) 2010', January 2011.

60.   **Finding 9: In addition to expectations from donor countries for the United Nations to improve its results-based management, programme countries too perceive results-based management as important for improving the effectiveness of the United Nations development system**. As part of the QCPR preparations, the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs commissioned a survey of United Nations organizations, governments and civil society organizations. Of the 110 governments responding to the survey, 106 governments agreed that better use of results-based methods was the second most important measure to improve the effectiveness of the United Nations. The only aspect rated more important was getting the United Nations agencies to focus on those areas where they have a clear mandate. Similarly, a very high percentage of respondents from civil society organizations (93%) believe that better use of results-based methods are important for improving the effectiveness of United Nations agencies. Governments and civil society organizations also agreed that improvement in monitoring and evaluation could improve the effectiveness of United Nations agencies.

Box 7: Summary of current state of results-based management in the United Nations development system

Summary of current state of RBM in the United Nations development system
▪ Agencies have implemented many initiatives aimed at improving results-based management in their respective organizations. These initiatives have focused on technical aspects of results-based management, for example, policies, toolkits and training. Many of these initiatives have only been introduced within the past two years and their efficacy has not yet been evaluated.
▪ Senior Management in the United Nations development system is driving a results agenda in their respective organizations. Results-based management has been adopted as a management approach by the leaders of these organizations. There is however an acknowledgment that results-based management is not necessarily understood or embraced by all senior managers.
▪ The United Nations Development Group has developed and is implementing an action plan to enhance results-based management at the country level. There has been progress on some aspects of the RBM Action Plan, notably the publication and roll-out of the RBM Handbook.
▪ Evaluation is an essential component of the results-based management cycle, but the level of investment in the evaluation function appears insufficient for the task. Furthermore, a number of agencies have decentralized their evaluation functions and these decentralized evaluation units appear to lack the necessary skills and resources to produce quality evaluations.
▪ The United Nations Evaluation Group has played an important role in improving the quality of evaluation practice in the United Nation system. However, there remains uncertainty or lack of clarity about the role of evaluation offices within the results-based management systems of agencies.
▪ Individual agencies have done much to improve their results-based management frameworks. While this is a positive development on the one hand, it inadvertently may weaken or undermine efforts on UNDAF or inter-agency results frameworks.
▪ Much of the emphasis in the implementation of results-based management has been on the developing the strategic plans, country programme documents and the results matrices. The 'managing' for results aspect of results-based management in the form of using information for programme improvement is less prominent.
▪ MOPAN surveys indicate that selected United Nations agencies are making progress with results-based management. There are areas identified for improvement, in particular, clarity in definition of outputs and outcomes, institutionalizing results-based management, and better use of performance information for programming and decision-making.
▪ Programme countries (governments and civil society organizations) perceive results-based management as important for improving the effectiveness of the United Nations development system.

Chapter 4: Challenges in implementing results-based management

61.   This chapter discusses the key challenges in implementing results-based management within the United Nations development system. It is important to note that these challenges are not unique to the United Nations development system but are evident in other organizations and governments who are implementing results-based management.

62.   **Challenge 1: Agencies are good at defining and measuring results at the output level as outputs are generally amenable to measurement. Meaningful definition and measurement of outcomes is not easy, and many agencies experience difficulty in developing realistic, technically sound indicators for these levels of results. Some suggest that vague outcomes are also a way to avoid being held accountable**. Defining and measuring results in the development environment is a complex issue for governments and development organizations, and United Nations agencies are no exception. Agencies are able to measure concrete outputs, for example, the number of children immunized or the percentage of households receiving relief. Measurement at the output level is important to enable the agency to monitor the use of resources, implementation of activities linked to those resources and what specifically was delivered through these activities (the outputs). However, results-based management requires that agencies also define and measure at the level of outcomes. Defining measurable outcomes for development interventions such as advocacy, capacity development and advisory services can be done, but are not as straightforward. This is a challenge particularly for agencies shifting to more 'upstream' interventions in middle-income countries.

63.   A related challenge emanates from the pressure from some donor countries on the United Nations development system to quantify precisely their contribution to a development result or outcome in order to demonstrate their value-added and relevance. Long-term transformative development interventions and results are not always easy to define and many factors, often outside the control of agencies, can affect these results. Furthermore, defining results with any real precision for the medium-term, in often fluid and uncertain country contexts and with limited funding is not an easy task. It also tends to oversimplify the development process, which requires an intergenerational horizon and long-term commitment. Some of the agencies interviewed raised the challenges they experience in meaningful measurement of results in the United Nations' normative work and provision global public goods. UNEG and UN Women have developed guidance in evaluating gender equality and human rights.

64.   What is sometimes forgotten is that the United Nations is but one of many development partners in a country. There are other bi-lateral and multi-lateral organizations and civil society organizations working on development issues. In many middle-income countries, the United Nations' financial and human resources are miniscule in comparison to government resources and therefore the role of the United Nations development system is to complement national efforts. Some United Nations country teams and individual agencies are not always clear about the level at which they need to take accountability for results. Under these circumstances, it becomes safer to focus on outputs over which they have control, or define outcomes in sufficiently vague terms lest they be held accountable for these outcomes.

65.   **Challenge 2: Agencies in the United Nations development system are expected to uphold the principle of national ownership of results and as far as possible, use national systems. The challenge for agencies is that in many instances, results-based management in programme countries is either non-existent or under-developed.** Various General Assembly resolutions have underscored national ownership of results, in keeping with declarations on aid effectiveness (Paris, Accra and Busan). In practical terms, this means the agencies in the United Nations development system should not develop their results-frameworks in isolation of national priorities, and should in fact involve national partners in development of results-frameworks to build ownership. This assumes a level of results-based management capacity and interest on the part of national partners, when in many instances this may not be the case. The opinion survey of Member State countries where UNDAFs had been prepared for 2009 and 2010, found that 23 per cent of governments used the 'Managing for Development Results' approach to assessing development results, 23 per cent did not use the approach at all, and 54 per cent used this approach in some parts of government. The UNDAF evaluations consistently raised the issue of lack of ownership by governments of the UNDAF, even though opportunities were made available for government participation. Factors such as high turnover of government officials or lack of understanding of respective roles and mix messages sent by the United Nations development system about ownership were identified in other evaluations.[68]

66.   National monitoring and evaluation capacity is also a challenge. In its 2008 report on national execution of technical cooperation projects, the Joint Inspection Unit found that the monitoring and evaluation of nationally executed projects was not government-led. The Joint Inspection Unit recommended that the United Nations system support national governments in developing the necessary monitoring and evaluation capacity.[69] Some agencies, for example, UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women are engaged in building national evaluation capacity, and UNEG is drafting a conceptual framework for developing national evaluation capacity.

67.   **Challenge 3: Country-level programming has to respond to or align to national priorities to ensure relevance and simultaneously be aligned to the corporate priorities of the agency. This can create tension between the corporate level and country level for organizations that operate on a decentralized basis. While these are not inherently contradictory demands, they are not easy to balance.** There is little doubt that the corporate level of agencies must set the strategic direction of the organization. Senior management at the corporate level are expected to be able to account, based on evidence, for the performance of the organization as a whole and for example, whether it has made a substantive contribution to internationally agreed goals. The corporate level has to be responsive to the priorities of their executive boards and various inter-governmental structures. The temptation at the corporate level therefore is to standardize as far as possible, and to develop detailed corporate strategic plans.

68.   As discussed previously, several General Assembly resolutions have underscored the concept of national ownership of results, as have the various declarations of aid effectiveness.

---

[68] These factors are discussed in 'Joint South Africa-UNEG evaluation of the Role and Contribution of the United Nations System in South Africa', 2009.

[69] Zahran, M. and Fall, P.L., 'National Execution of Technical Cooperation Projects', Joint Inspection Unit, United Nations. JIU/REP/2008/4.

National ownership is a necessary condition for sustainability of development interventions and governments expect agencies to be responsive to national priorities that might not necessarily coincide with corporate priorities. Country offices face the challenge of reconciling corporate priorities with national priorities – how to be responsive to the specific country context and ensure alignment with corporate priorities. Likewise, notwithstanding the standardization of UNDAFs, different countries have different understandings of the UNDAF, and not all countries want the same things from it. Some governments prefer to give primacy to their bi-lateral relationship with individual agencies, while others see the benefit of a coordinated response from the United Nations development system for strategic issues that require a multi-agency response, for example, employment creation. United Nations country teams therefore need to respond differently in their approach to the UNDAF, depending on the country context, yet need to ensure that they satisfy the UNDAF technical requirements.

69.   **Challenge 4: Results-based management is a <u>system,</u> and for it to be implemented effectively, all elements of the system must work. If one aspect of the system is weak, it lessens the overall effectiveness of results-based management. The relevant resources, workable management and accountability systems, and knowledge management must be in place to support results-based management.** One of the major deficiencies in results-based management is the weak link between the results framework and the resources framework of country programmes and UNDAFs. Alignment of plans to resources is a fundamental principle of results-based management, yet in practice there are often gaps between plans and the resources realistically available for implementation. UNDAFs and country programmes are seldom fully funded at the time of their development and resource mobilization to fill the gaps in the budget have to be done during the implementation phase. Alternatively, projects or programmes for which funding is readily available, find their way into the results framework, even if their contribution to the achievement of an outcome is tenuous. This weakens the integrity of the results-based management approach.

70.   For results-based management to be effective there must be management and accountability systems in place to support it. Each agency in the United Nations development system is governed by its own mandate and the management and accountability frameworks reinforce a vertical accountability. This was confirmed by the independent evaluation of Delivering as One that found that the Resident Coordinator and the members of the United Nations country team were mutually accountable, but in practice, vertical accountability within organizations still prevailed over horizontal accountability. The Resident Coordinator is held accountable by the United Nations country team and the entire United Nations system, but does not exercise authority over the United Nations country team.[70]

71.   Agencies are beginning to pay attention to the importance of knowledge management as part of results-based management, particularly for organizational learning. UNFPA, for example, has knowledge sharing as one of the pillars of its strategy for implementation of results-based management and established a global RBM community of practice in 2010. Additionally, the United Nations Development Group, for example, has begun collecting case studies and good practice examples of how people in different agencies and different country contexts have approached issues

---

[70] Independent Evaluation of Lessons Learned from Delivering as One: Final Summary Report prepared for United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 12 June 2012.

such as coordination, results-based management, human rights, etc. The intention is to provide a brief of what has been done, and to encourage the reader to contact the relevant office. The Regional Quality Support and Advisory Team in Latin and Central America has documented good practices. The Evaluation Resource Centre is a repository of evaluations of agencies in the development group. Information on good practice, is however dispersed across the United Nations development system limiting its potential use and impact.

72. **Challenge 5: Agencies perceive that Member States have different expectations and understandings of results-based management. Differences exist between Member States, and between Member States and the United Nations development system**. Agencies perceive Member States to have divergent interests and expectation with regard to results-based management, and this to an extent influences their responses to agencies' plans and results reports. Some donor countries for example, are demanding results information to demonstrate value for money of agencies. They emphasize accountability as they are increasingly under pressure from their citizens to justify aid budgets. Other donor countries place more emphasis on development effectiveness and are concerned with issues of coordination, and how the contributions of individual agencies aggregate to the larger whole. A frustration expressed by some agencies was the mixed messages sent by donor countries that on the one hand champion national ownership of results, and simultaneously expect agencies to attribute results to their interventions.

73. Programme countries have a greater interest in knowing the United Nations is doing for their particular country and how they are supporting national priorities. However, programme countries are not homogeneous, and some are sensitive about what they perceive to be agencies determining outcomes or results for their governments. A number of high middle-income countries have their own results-based management frameworks and reporting systems, and expect agencies to align behind these. Programme countries also expect agencies to be responsive to their immediate needs and care little whether or not their request falls within a predetermined results framework.

74. **Challenge 6: Building a results culture and fully institutionalizing results-based management is perhaps the most difficult aspect of results-based management. There are disincentives in the system inhibiting the development of a results culture**. There is undoubtedly a high level of awareness of results-based management in all agencies of the United Nations development system and many staff do have an understanding of the basic concepts of results-based management and what the United Nations system hopes to achieve through the use of results-based management. The strengthening of an evaluation culture is part of the important task of developing a culture of results. There is a sense at the senior levels that agencies are generally moving in the right direction in their implementation of results-based management and that a culture of results is emerging or getting stronger, relative to where they were in 2007. Agencies are at different stages in their 'maturity' in application of results-based management, so these sentiments may apply to some agencies and not to others.

Building a culture of results does not happen overnight. It takes time and must be accompanied by the necessary incentives for results-based management. There is still some way to go in developing a strong results culture in the United Nations development system, as is reflected in the statements gathered from United Nations staff, in the course of this study.

Box 8: Statements about results culture

Statements about results culture
"There is a results culture, but to a limited extent. People comply with the letter of RBM, but not in the spirit."
"We are pushing RBM as a new way of doing business. Culture change must happen. We are not yet there."
"At country level we still have a mindset of 'delivery' rather than 'results'."
"There should be a culture of results reporting at UNCT level, but this is missing."
"The mindset is a challenge. Knowing the language of RBM is not the same as knowing the culture."
"The purpose of RBM was to make our work more strategic – a strategic approach, strategic partnerships, etc., but it has been reduced to a set of boxes, filling out these boxes and reporting on these boxes."
"We don't have a culture of strategic programming. Strategic dialogue is delinked from the results."
"Some people still see RBM as an add-on. We need to simplify tools for country offices."
"We are asking people for too much detail. People get tired if they don't see if and how the information is used."

75.   *What constitutes a results culture and what inhibits the development of a results culture?* According to Mayne (2007), a culture of results requires an informed demand for results information; supportive organizational systems, incentives, procedures and practices; a results-oriented accountability regime; capacity to learn and adapt; results measurement and results-based management capacity; and clear roles and responsibilities for results-based management.[71] The extent to which these elements are in place varies across the different agencies in the United Nations development system.

76.   From the available evidence, there has been a strong emphasis on getting policies and procedures, the right tools and technical systems in place and providing training in the application of these tools and systems. Teams have provided support to staff country office to develop results frameworks. But policies, systems and procedures are insufficient for building a results culture. There are gaps and disincentives that inhibit the development of a results culture.

(i)   Although results-based management has been adopted as the approach to business in agencies, the appropriate incentives are not necessarily in place. Managers are expected to be accountable for results, but do not always have the authority, power or flexibility needed to influence the results and flexibility to reallocate resources. The Resident Coordinator is a case in point where the *accountability for results does not line up with the management structure and decision-making authority*. The effect of this is that either no one is actually held accountable for results, or managers set targets that are easily achievable and so undermine the intention of results-based management as a tool for change.

(ii) Best practice suggests that performance appraisals should be informed by results and results-based management information. There are weak linkages between results-based management and performance appraisal systems. Large public sector organizations such as the civil service

---

[71] Mayne, J., 'Best practices in Results-Based Management: A Review of Experience – A report for the United Nations Secretariat, Volume 1: Main Report', July 2007, p.3.

and United Nations agencies are not good at managing poor performance. Where there are no consequences for poor performance, there is little incentive for others to perform.

(iii) Using funding indiscriminately to reward or punish is a strong disincentive to building a results culture. Budget cuts across the board penalize those who have performed well, even though they may appear fair. However, rewarding only those who produce results is discouraging to those who have been implementing results-based management but have not yet produced results.

(iv) If managers constantly ask for reports on outputs and ignore outcome information, it serves as a disincentive to staff and sends the message that it is not worth putting in the effort required for effective results-based management.

(v) The lack of feedback from headquarters to country offices, and from managers to staff, on reports is a major disincentive as those who have supplied the information do not know if the information has been of use or if it needs to be improved. Little or no learning takes place.

(vi) The United Nations development system works through a number of development partners in government and the non-government sector. In order to build and sustain a results culture, it is necessary that development partners acquire the capacity for results-based management. Although agencies do make reference to developing national capacity, their results-based management strategies and evaluation strategies focus almost exclusively on capacity development within their respective agencies.

Box 9: Summary of challenges in implementing results-based management

Summary of challenges facing results-based management in the United Nations development system
- Agencies are good at defining and measuring results at the output level as outputs are generally amenable to measurement. Meaningful definition and measurement of outcomes is not easy, and many agencies experience difficulty in developing realistic, technically sound indicators for these levels of results. Some suggest that vague outcomes are also a way to avoid being held accountable.   - Agencies in the United Nations development system are expected to uphold the principle of national ownership of results and as far as possible, use national systems. The challenge for agencies is that in many instances, results-based management in programme countries is either non-existent or under-developed.   - Country-level programming has to respond to or aligned to national priorities to ensure relevance and simultaneously be aligned to the corporate priorities of the agency. This can create tension between the corporate level and country level for organizations that operate on a decentralized basis. While these are not inherently contradictory demands, they are not easy to balance.   - Results-based management is a system, and for it to be implemented effectively, all elements of the system must work. If one aspect of the system is weak, it lessens the overall effectiveness of results-based management. The relevant resources, workable management and accountability systems, and knowledge management must be in place to support results-based management.   - Agencies perceive that Member States have different expectations and understandings of results-based management. Differences exist between Member States, and between Member States and the United Nations development system.   - Building a results culture and fully institutionalizing results-based management is perhaps the most difficult aspect of results-based management. There are disincentives in the system inhibiting the development of a results culture.

Chapter 5: Lessons that can inform results-based management approaches

77.   This chapter discusses lessons from the Delivering as One experience and other studies on results-based management and attempts to identify those lessons that could potentially assist the United Nations development system in progressing results-based management at the agency and inter-agency levels.

Introducing change or new approaches

78.   The introduction of results-based management or major changes to existing results-based management approaches is not cost-free or cost neutral. Resources must be committed to support the implementation. Delivering as One pilot countries required additional resources, particularly in the Resident Coordinator's office, to support the implementation of this new approach. The independent evaluation of Delivering as One (2012) in fact concluded that the efficiency of Delivering as One has been weak. If additional resources cannot be made available, then there should be a reallocation of resources from lower priorities.

79.   One of the ironies of results-based management is that their introduction into organizations is seldom subjected to the rigour of results-based management approaches or tools. They do not make explicit the theory of change underpinning results-based management, nor do they employ results frameworks that can assist in monitoring the progress of implementation and evaluating the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the results-based management initiative. A valuable lesson from Delivering as One is that early on in the process, there was a decision to monitor implementation carefully and to subject the initiatives to independent evaluation. This is particularly important where an initiative is a highly contested one. Lessons learned in the Delivering as One have been documented for others to draw on.

80.   The introduction of results-based management or major changes to existing results-based management approaches is likely to require a structured change management approach. The anticipated benefits do not materialise in the short-term, and people require encouragement to continue with the change in the face of obstacles and little to show for the effort. It is important that there be a proper change management process when introducing a new programme. Introducing results-based management cannot be done as a narrow technical exercise. Failing to take into account the institutional and change management issues runs the risk of undermining the initiative.

Introducing incentives for results-based management

81.   The literature on results-based management as well as evaluations of results-based management within the United Nations system, for example, the evaluation by UNDP Evaluation Office (2007), stressed the importance of having incentives in place for managers and staff to use results-based management. Mayne (2007) also highlighted this issue and developed a catalogue of incentives and disincentives for results-based management. More recently, the independent evaluation of Delivering as One noted that "*United Nations staffs currently lack incentives in performance appraisal and career development for maintaining sufficient motivation around*

Delivering as One."[72] What is evident from these studies and the literature is that the issue of incentives cannot be dealt with on an ad hoc basis. There needs to be a framework for incentives and how they should be applied. The important question to ask in developing incentive frameworks is what kind of behaviour we want to reward. Incentives should be tailored to the context and culture of the organization and should be appropriate for that context and culture. Importantly, incentives need not be financial. Non-financial incentives can be equally powerful. Examples of non-financial incentives for individuals include personal recognition, public recognition, awards for championing results-based management; and incentives for organizational unit's delegation of authority, or constructive feedback on results reports. Some organizations use budget increases as an incentive for results-based management. Financial incentives should be used judiciously and must be based on reliable performance information to avoid distortion of the incentive. It should also be balanced against the need to give encouragement to those who work on difficult assignments where it is difficult to demonstrate measurable results. Incentives should be monitored to ensure that they do not have negative unintended consequences that undermine the objectives of results-based management.

Removing disincentives for results-based management

82.   It is equally important to remove disincentives to results-based management. There are formal disincentives and informal disincentives, the latter being difficult to remove. The informal disincentives include the attitude and behaviour of managers who do not see the value of results-based management and do it simply to comply; managers who only ask for information on activities and outputs and display little interest in outcome information; and not releasing staff for results-based management training. Formal disincentives include accountability and reporting systems that only focus on activities; and 'across the board' budget cuts. It is essential to identify precisely what these disincentives are in the organization, and work on their removal. This is an essential part of building a results culture and requires support of the leaders of the organizations.

Accountability is critical to effective results-based management

83.   Results-based management is unlikely to succeed if there is no institutional accountability and individual accountability for results. If organizations and individuals cannot be held accountable for results, then they are less likely to focus their efforts on achieving results. The importance of accountability has been emphasized in numerous studies, including the work of the Joint Inspection Unit on results-based management. Accountability has to be linked to authority over how results are to be achieved and the resources to achieve the results. The QCPR study on the UNDAF and the independent evaluation of Delivering as One illustrate how the lack of formal authority of Resident Coordinators makes it difficult to hold Resident Coordinators accountable for UNDAF results. The lack of clear accountability at the institutional and individual levels serves as a disincentive for results-based management, and runs counter to developing a results culture in an organization.

---

[72] Independent Evaluation of Lessons Learned from Delivering as One: Final Summary Report prepared for United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 12 June 2012, p.32.

Measuring results – keeping it simple

84.   There are many studies, for example, by the World Bank that warn against the dangers of introducing overly-complex performance measurement systems, yet many organizations persist in their attempts to measure as many things as possible. This propensity towards complexity is partly driven by multiple reporting demands put on organizations in the public sector. It is also driven by lack of clarity on the part of managers about which results are the most important. The temptation is to collect everything 'just in case' someone asks for it. Ultimately, a large number of indicators mean more expensive data collection, resource-intensive data analysis and reporting. Only a small proportion of the data is ultimately used and this becomes very discouraging for those who collect and analyze the data. In order to keep performance measurement systems simple, there needs to be an informed demand for performance information or results. This means having a dialogue with those who request the information to understand their needs, and also to inform them of what is feasible or reasonable, and what is not.

85.   The challenge of performance measurement is not only about simplicity, but also about the prospects of valid and reliable measurement of 'intangible' results. Not everything is amenable to accurate measurement. What is sometimes forgotten is that the performance indicators used in results-based management are only <u>indicators</u> about what has happened and cannot tell the full performance story. They should be complemented with contextual information, and it should be understood that there will be a degree of imprecision about the data. 'Not everything that is important can be measured and not everything that is measured is important.' Measurement also influences behaviour of staff and managers and they are likely to focus on those things that are being measured. This in itself is not a problem, provided what is being measured is important for the achievement of results. There is the risk that other aspects of work receive less attention because they are not being measured or reported.

Developing results-based management capacity

86.   Capacity development for results-based management is often conceived narrowly as training of practitioners or field staff in the application of results-based management. Lessons from other studies highlight the necessity of training senior management in results-based management approaches in order to foster senior leadership for results-based management. The United Nations Development Group RBM Action Plan identified training of Resident Coordinators, Country Representatives and their Deputies as one of its capacity development initiatives. The emphasis is on the UNDAF and at country-level. Studies show that developing capacity and understanding of results-based management should ideally occur at all levels of the organization.

National ownership and leadership, and national capacity

87.   The Delivering as One approach is premised on national ownership of the development agenda (and development results), and national leadership and lessons from the independent evaluation suggest that these principles are essential for sustainability of Delivering as One. The principles of national ownership and leadership are equally applicable to results-based management. If the United Nations development system is serious about ensuring their results contribute to national results and do not remain 'UN results', it must engage in substantive and substantial dialogue with national partners on how results are defined, measured and reported on. Most

governments have a system of government performance monitoring, and some are better than others. There are also high middle-income countries that have government performance monitoring systems that are sound. It is therefore important that the United Nations development system do not develop their result-based management system in isolation of national systems.

88.   Where national systems are weak, agencies should consider supporting the development of national results-based management capacity. This will be mutually beneficial for governments and agencies – the national systems are strengthened, agency systems have buy-in from national partners and are more likely to produce results information that is of use to government and national partners. Joint evaluations and country-led evaluations (for example, the DaO country-led evaluations) also provide opportunity for building national evaluation capacity.

89.   Where countries have good evaluation capacity, country-led evaluations are potentially effective vehicles for holding the United Nations development system to account. The Joint South Africa-UNEG evaluation of the role and contribution of the United Nations system (2008) was initiated by the Government of South Africa that wanted a more strategic partnership with the United Nations development system at country level. What is significant about the joint evaluation was that the evaluation was not confined to the development pillar or UNDAF, but covered the other pillars of peace and security, environment and humanitarian matters.[73]

Demonstrating leadership

90.   Studies on results-based management explore the issue of leadership extensively, including, Binnendijk (2001), the Joint Inspection Unit (2004, 2006) and Mayne (2007). What these studies suggest that it is not enough for heads of organizations to simply pronounce that they are committed to results-based management. They need to demonstrate commitment through deliberate action, for example, persisting and not giving up too early when there are implementation problems; setting reasonable yet challenging expectations for staff; constantly communicating the results-based management message internally and externally; providing the resources or lobbying for resources for results-based management; and asking the 'results' questions to show that they are important.

---

[73] United Nations Evaluation Group and Government of South Africa, 'Role and contribution of the United Nations development system in South Africa', UNEG, 2009.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

91.   The results chain formulated for this study has at the Impact/Goal level, 'enhanced transparency and accountability; and improvements in organizational effectiveness and development effectiveness' of the United Nations development system. These enhancements and improvements are understood to be the objectives of results-based management for the United Nations development system. It was well beyond the scope of this study to assess performance at the level of Impact/Goals and therefore the conclusions offered are confined the lower levels of the results chain. The limitations of the study in only interviewing a small sample of organizations and not interviewing Members States and country offices charged with implementing results-based management should also be borne in mind.

92.   **Conclusion 1: Agencies, Programmes and Funds interviewed are implementing results-based management, not merely to comply, but because they believe that results-based management has value for them. The enthusiasm for results-based management has not necessarily filtered to all levels of the organizations.** There are some leaders in the United Nations development system who believe that there is value in using results-based management approaches. From the evidence available, they have been driving a results agenda, and see a number of benefits from adopting results-based management. Results-based management provides the framework for leaders and those whom they lead, to keep in mind what impact they are trying to make, and what sustainable improvements they want to see. It has become a tool for them to demonstrate their relevance, their contribution and their comparative advantage. Results-based management has provided a disciplined, structured approach to their strategic planning, monitoring and reporting on progress and achievements. At the country level, results-based management provides to a considerable extent, a common language for agencies to discuss and negotiate their respective plans and contributions to UNDAFs and joint programmes. For the evaluation community within the United Nations, results-based management has raised the profile of evaluation as an integral management tool. However, there appears to be a compliance focus to results-based management at field level, focusing on the 'boxes'.

93.   **Conclusion 2: There has been progress in the implementation of results-based management since the TCPR. A large proportion of effort has gone into the strategic planning element of the results-based management cycle and in the reporting of results. There are gaps in the managing aspect – using results for decision-making, programme improvement and learning and some agencies are beginning to address these gaps.** A number of agencies have gone through a process of reviewing and revising their results-based management systems, and have invested in developing internal capacity for results-based management over the past five years. There has been investment in developing the tools and frameworks to support managers and staff as well as provision of hands-on support in developing plans and results frameworks. There has also been investment in improving the reporting at agency and inter-agency level. The guidance and support on *how* to manage for results have featured less prominently.

94.   **Conclusion 3: There is no one single model or 'right way' for results-based management. Each agency has its own model or framework to suit its operations and its organizational model. While the United Nations Development Group has provided a framework that could harmonize results-based management concepts and approaches, agencies are likely to retain their own models as they suit their particular circumstances. This poses a challenge for the United Nations development system to respond to demands for information on system-wide results.** Results-based management cannot be standardized easily within the United Nations development system because of the different governance structures and mandates of the different agencies within the system. Complete standardization is not desirable as it would strait-jacket agencies and become something they do for compliance rather than for better management and development results. However, some level of standardization is necessary as United Nations development system increasingly is being asked about system-wide results. The challenge is to find an approach to system-wide results reporting that can accommodate the differences in mandates and approaches, and enable aggregation and comparison of results of different agencies.

95.   **Conclusion 4: Institutionalizing results-based management is not an easy task and takes time. Agencies, Programmes and Funds are experiencing challenges to varying degrees, in implementing results-based management. For most, developing and sustaining a results culture is proving to be a major challenge**. Results-based management has been in existence in the United Nations development system for over a decade and all agencies, programmes and funds subscribe to some form of results-based management. There have been major efforts to develop the guidance, systems, tools and capacity to support the implementation of results-based management. There are some technical challenges, for example, defining and measuring results, but these are not insurmountable. There are institutional challenges that are not easily amenable to technical solutions. These include the lack of alignment between results-based management systems and accountability systems; the indiscriminate use funding to reward or punish; distortion of priorities by non-core funding; lack of informed demand for performance information; different understanding and expectations on the part of Member States about results-based management; and tensions between corporate priorities and national priorities. While leaders and managers espouse the value of results-based management, there is not a clear package of incentives within agencies, programmes and funds for staff at lower levels and in country offices to fully embrace results-based management 'as a way of doing business'.

96.   **Conclusion 5: The lack of adequate results-based management capacity, including evaluation capacity at country level, undermines the quality results-based management at the agency and inter-agency level.** The quality of UNDAFs, country programme documents and decentralized evaluations has been identified as a problem in previous reviews and the capacity, notably the skills in country offices has been identified as a major contributor to the problem. The capacity problem does not end with country offices. Governments, who are in principle the owners of development results, do not necessarily have large pools of staff skilled in results-based management.

97.   **Conclusion 6: Results-based management is not static. Results-based management within the United Nations development system has evolved and will continue to evolve in response to the broader reform agenda of the United Nations and trends in the international development arena**. The resolutions at Busan, the current crisis in the Euro zone and resolutions emerging from

the Rio+20 conference are among some of the issues and trends that could influence results-based management in the near future.

Recommendations

98.   The study has identified recommendations for inclusion in the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly. These recommendations should ideally be implemented over the next four years and their implementation followed up during the next quadrennial comprehensive policy review process.

99.   **Recommendation 1:** The United Nations Development Group should intensify its efforts in strengthening and institutionalization of results-based management in the United Nations development system, with the objective of improving development results as well as organizational effectiveness. This includes reducing unnecessary complexity in results-based management systems and looking at ways to minimize the burden of multiple reporting, scaling up capacity development for results-based management especially at country level, strengthening knowledge networks and communities of practice for results-based management, and investing in developing better guidance and techniques in measuring long-term results in areas that are not easily amenable to measurement.

100.   **Recommendation 2:** The United Nations Development Group should to articulate and implement a more robust results-focused approach to development cooperation that would facilitate planning, measurement and reporting on system-wide results, including the use of common United Nations Development Group results principles and standardized results-based management terminology. To progress the reporting on system-wide results, the development of a common monitoring system for results should be fast-tracked. Incentives for cross-agency collaboration in results reporting should be improved and disincentives to system-wide results reporting should be removed.

101.   **Recommendation 3:** The United Nations Development Group should explore options for strengthening the Management and Accountability Framework and achieving alignment between results-based management and accountability. This includes finding ways to strengthen the accountability of United Nations country teams for delivering and reporting on system-wide results at country level.

102.   **Recommendation 4:** The funds, programmes and specialized agencies should intensify their efforts to inculcate and sustain a results culture in their respective organizations**.** This includes identifying and implementing suitable incentives for results-based management, removing current disincentives to developing a results culture, investing in developing capacities and competencies for results-based management, and periodically reviewing their results-based management systems.

103.   **Recommendation 5:** The relevant mechanisms charged with responsibility for independent system-wide evaluation should be requested, to conduct an independent evaluation of results-based management in the United Nations development system and make recommendations to the General Assembly. The evaluation should assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of results-based management, taking into account the changes in the global environment, changes in international development cooperation, and international trends in results-

based management. It should include an assessment of state of decentralized evaluation capacity to support results-based management at country level. The results of the evaluation should feed into the next quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

Annex A: List of documents consulted

34th plenary meeting (2011) Resolution: *2011/7 Progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/208 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system*18 July 2011. 14 march 2008 (A/RES/62/208)

Balogun, P. (2012) *The relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF),* a report prepared for the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, May 2012.

Bertrand, D. (2002) *The Results Approach in the United Nations: Implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration.* Joint Inspection Unit, United Nations,(JUI/REP/2002/2), Geneva, June 2002.

Bester, A. and Lusthaus, C. (2012) *Independent System-Wide evaluation Mechanisms: Comprehensive Review of the Existing Institutional Framework for System-Wide Evaluation of Operational Activities for the United Nations Development System,* April 2012

Binnendijk, A.(2001) *Results Based Management in the Development Co-operation Agencies: A review of experience.*

Bonn, Adaptation Fund Board. Eighth Meeting Results Based Management Framework. Adaptation Fund Board November 16-18, 2009. (AFB/B.8/8)

Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation: Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, Republic of Korea. 29 November – 01 December 2011.

Clark, H. (2011) 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.

Duignan, P. (2009), *United Nations Results-Based Management System - An analysis, Outcomes Theory Knowledge Base* Article No. 244. Retrieved 2 April 2012 from http://knol.google.com/k/paul-duignan-phd/the-united-nations-results-based/2m7zd68aaz774/81

Flint, M. (2003) *Easier Said Than Done. A Review of Results-Based Management in multi-lateral development institutions,* United Kingdom, March 2003.

Fontaine Ortiz, E. and Tang, G (2006) *Results-based management in the United Nations reform context*, Joint Inspection Unit, United Nations, JIU/REP/2006/6, Geneva (2006)

Fontaine Ortiz, E., Gorita, I., Kuyama, S., Munch, W., Tang, G. and Vislykh, V. (2004) *Overview of the series of reports on managing for results in the United Nations system*, Joint Inspection Unit, United Nations. JIU/REP/2004/5 Geneva (2004)

Fontaine Ortiz, E., Kuyama, S., Munch, W., and Tang, G. (2004). *Implementation of Results-Based Management in the United Nations Organisations PART I, Series on managing for results in the United Nations System*, Joint Inspection Unit, United Nations. JIU/REP/2004/6,Geneva (2004)

Fontaine Ortiz, E., Kuyama, S., Munch, W., and Tang, G. (2004). *Implementation of Results-Based Management in the United Nations Organisations PART II, Series on managing for results in the United Nations System*. Geneva (2004)

Fontaine Ortiz, E., Kuyama, S., Munch, W., and Tang, G. (2004). *Implementation of Results-Based Management in the United Nations Organisations PART III, Series on managing for results in the United Nations System*. Geneva (2004)

Food and Agriculture Organization (2012) *Immediate Plan of Action – IPA annual report for 2011 and direction for 2012,* presented to Council, Hundred and Forty-fourth Session, Rome June 2012.

Garcia, O. (2011) *Challenge for conducting UNDAF evaluations*, Discussion paper presented at the United Nations Evaluation Group Practice Exchange. 21-22 March 2011.

Hauge, A. and Pena, J.C. (2007) *Inspection on Results-Based Management (RBM) Practices at the United Nations, Economic and social commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).* UN Report 27 July 2007 (INS-07-003)

Independent Evaluation of Lessons Learned from Delivering as One: Final Summary Report prepared for United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. 12 June 2012.

Lake, A. (2012) *UNICEF Executive Board Annual Session: Opening Remarks*, 5 June2012.

MacKenzie, A. (2008) *Results Based Management at country level: Systematic issues that prevent good UNDAF results and the use of UNDAF results information.* Paper presented to the United Nations Development Group's Working Group on Programming Policy. 02 September 2008.

Mayne, J. (2007) *Best practices in Results-Based Management: A review of Experience.* A report for the United Nations Secretariat, Main Report Volume 1, July (2007)

Meier, W. (2003). *Results Based Management: Towards a common understanding among development cooperation agencies,* prepared for the Canadian International Development Agency, Performance Review Branch, for consideration by the DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness and Harmonisation, October (2003)

Multi-lateral Organisation Performance Network (2010) *MOPAN Common Approach: United Nations Development Programme* (UNDP) *2009*. January 2010.

Multi-lateral Organisation Performance Network (2011) *MOPAN Common Approach: United Nations Population Fund* (UNFPA) 2010. February 19 2010.

Multi-lateral Organisation Performance Network (2011) *MOPAN Common Approach: World Health Organization* (WHO) 2010. January 2011.

Multi-lateral Organisation Performance Network (2011) *Organisational Effectiveness Assessment: Food and Agricultural Organization* (FAO*) of the United Nations.'* December 2011.

Office of International Oversight Services (2008) *Review of results-based management at the United Nations: A report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services.* 22 September 2008.

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2000) *Glossary of Evaluation and Results Based Management (RBM) Terms.* Working Party on Aid Evaluation, 25 October 2000.

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2005) *Management for Development Results: Principles in Action,* A source book on emerging good practice, April (2005)

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2005), *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action,* March 2005.

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2010) *Glossary of Evaluation and Results Based Management (RBM) Terms*, (2010)

Treasury Board Secretariat, *Guide for the Development of Results-based Management and Accountability Frameworks*. Treasury Board Secretariat, August 2001.

UN Women (2012*) Progress made on the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women strategic plan, 2011-2013 – Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director,* Report to Executive Board 20 April 2012.

UN Women Evaluation Office (2011) *UNIFEM Strategic Plan (2008:2011). Evaluability Assessment*, March 2011.

UNAIDS (2009) 2010-2011 *Performance Monitoring Framework:* 24th Meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board, Geneva, 22-24 June 2009.

UNAIDS (2011) *Planning for Results: UNAIDS Secretariat Workplanning, Monitoring and Reporting Guidelines'*, Geneva, July 2011.

UNAIDS (2011) *Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF),* Geneva, 21-23 June 2011.

UNDG-HLCM (2011) *Common Principles of Results reporting: A UNDG-HLCM Joint Study Final Report.* 15 July 2011.

UNDP (2002) *Results-Based Management Concept and Methodology (2002)*

UNDP (2009) *Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Development Results* (2009)

UNDP (2011) *Annual report on evaluation in UNDP 2010,* Report presented to the 2011 Annual Session of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population fund and the United Nations Office of Project Services. 8 April 2011, (DP/2011/24)

UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS, UNICEF, UN Women and WFP (2012) *Making United Nations operational activity work for accelerated development:* Quadrennial comprehensive policy review. 30-31 January 2012.

UNFPA (2008) *Report of the Executive Director for 2008: Progress in implementing the Strategic Plan (2008-2011).*

UNFPA (2010) *Management Response to Executive Board: Item 12: UNFPA international audit and oversight activities in 2009*, New York, 3 June 2010.

UNFPA (2011) *United Nations Populations Fund Biennial Report of Evaluation,* report to be presented to the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office of Project Services, 23 April 2011 (DP/FPA2012/8).

UNICEF, *"Annual report of the Executive Director: Progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan",* 12 April 2012.

United Nations Development Group (2011). *Results-based Management Handbook: Harmonizing RBM concept and approaches for improved development results at country level.* October 2011.

United Nations Development Group, *How to prepare an UNDAF – Guidelines for UN Country Teams*, January 2010.

United Nations Economic and Social Council (2011). Resolution: *Progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for the United Nations System,* 18 July 2011 (62/208).

United Nations Evaluation Group (2007). *The Role of Evaluation and Results-Based Management (RBM),* United Nations Evaluation Group Task Force on Evaluation and RBM Final Report. February 2007.

United Nations Evaluation Group (2011) *Frequently Asked Questions for UNDAF Evaluations,* (2011)

United Nations Evaluation Group (2012) *Report of the UNEG Evaluation Practice Exchange (EPE) Seminar,* 23-24 April 2012.

United Nations General Assembly (2010) Resolution 64/259 *Towards an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat*, 29 March 2010.

United Nations General Assembly (2012) Resolution 66/257 *Progress towards an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat*, 9 April 2012.

United Nations General Assembly Resolution on the Report of the Second Committee (A/62/424/Add.2)

United Nations General Assembly, Sixty-sixth session Agenda item 132: *Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations Progress towards an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat*. 9 March 2012 (A/66/738)

Vahamaki, J., Schmidt, M. And Molander, J. (2011) *Review: Results Based Management in Development Cooperation,* Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, 30 November 2011.

WFP (2010) *Steps Forward: Implementation of WFP Strategic results framework 2008-2013,* Presented to Executive Board, 21 January 2010 (WFP/EB.1/2010/5-D).

WFP (2012). *Mid-Term Review of the WFP Strategic Plan (2008-2013).* Presented to Executive Board. 15 May 2012.

World Health Organisation (2006). *5TH Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board: Reports of the JIU (Joint Inspection Unit). Previous reports: implementation of recommendations. Secretariat,* 14 December 2005.

Zahran, M. and Fall, P.L. (2008) *National Execution of Technical Cooperation Projects,* Joint Inspect Unit, United Nations. (JIU/REP/2008/4), Geneva, 2008.

Annex B: List of People Consulted

Balaji, Lakshmi Narasimhan *Chief of Strategic Planning, Division of Policy and Strategies, UNICEF*

Belbase, Krishna *Senior Evaluation Specialist, Evaluation Office, UNICEF*

Brömme, Norbert *Chief, Performance Management and Reporting Branch (RMPP) Performance & Accountability Management Division (RMP)Resource Management & Accountability Department, WFP*

Castells, Nuria *Evaluation and Inspection Officer, Joint Inspection Unit*

Conte, David *Programme Coordinator, Forestry Department Organization-wide Strategy Team Leader "Sustainable Management of Forests and Trees" , FAO*

Crawford, Beth *FAO*

Daly, Gerald *Policy Adviser, Business Operations Joint Funding, UNDOCO*

Davids, Christopher *Senior Advisor, UN Coherence, Governance and Multilateral Affairs, UNICEF*

Guallar, Maria *UNDAF and UNDG LAC Support Officer, UNDG LAC Secretariat for Latin America and the Caribbean.*

Guha, SK Chief *Institutional Development, Programme Division, UN Women*

Hannan, Abdul *Advisor on Policy Coherence and Procedures Operations Support Group, Executive Office, UNDP*

Hassan, Pervez *UN Development Operations Coordination Office*

Jan, Zarak *Policy Specialist, UNDOCO*

Kasturiarachchi, Asoka *Policy Advisor, Capacity Development Group, Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP*

Kaye, Chris *, World Food Programme*

Kedowide, Francois-Corneille *Regional Evaluation adviser, Member of QSA/PSG and Chair of QSA/PSG a.i., Regional UNDG Team – WCA*

Manente, Karin *World Food Programme*

Mathiot, Dominique *Chief, Programme Performance Team, UNAIDS*

Patrick Tiefenbacher *Advisor on Corporate InnovationExecutive Office/Operations Support Group, UNDP*

Ramirez, Liliana *Policy Specialist, UNDOCO*

Sekar, Chandra *Planning Specialist, Division of Policy and Strategies, UNICEF*

Sibanda, Backson *Regional Evaluation Adviser, UNDP Regional Service Centre for East and Southern Africa*

Thorpe, Ian Team Leader, *Knowledge Management, Monitoring and Evaluation, UNDOCO*

Usmani, Farah *Planning Adviser, ESPB, Programme Division, UNFPA*

Woll, Bettina *Aid Modality Specialist, Capacity Development Group, Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP*

Annex C: Terms of Reference

Preparations for 2012 Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of the General Assembly

Study on Results-Based Management

Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination

Department for Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations

16 March 2012

1. Context

The Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) of the General Assembly of operational activities for development is the mechanism through which the General Assembly establishes system-wide policy orientations for the development cooperation and country-level modalities of the UN system in response to the evolving international development cooperation environment.

The 2012 QCPR will assess the impact, effectiveness, efficiency, and coherence of UN operational activities for development. This will include (i) reviewing the implementation of policies established in GA resolutions 62/208 on the triennial comprehensive policy review and 64/289 on system-wide coherence and (ii) exploring in particular depth areas identified by ECOSOC resolution 2011/7, which provides guidance to the Secretary-General on analytical preparations for the 2012 QCPR.

The QCPR process also provides an important opportunity to Member States to engage in a dialogue on how to adapt UN operational activities for development to the changing global development cooperation context. The Secretary-General facilitates the QCPR process by providing Member States with impartial, balanced and forward-looking analysis on the implementation of GA and ECOSOC policies through several methods: firstly, survey of programme countries, country teams and civil society organizations on UN operational activities for development, secondly, a series of analytical studies on selected issues, thirdly, a desk review of key documents in all substantive areas, and, fourthly, country visits to programme countries. Analytical preparations for the 2012 QCPR particularly focus on policy issues felt to require special attention by Member States, in several areas.[74]

2. Background

The analysis of progress in Results-Based Management is part of the key substantive activities and the consultative process planned as part of the analytical preparations for the 2012 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, and will lay the ground for future collaboration for all stakeholders in this domain.

This study responds to the request made by ECOSOC Resolution 2011/7, to the Secretary-General to undertake "a review of progress made by the United Nations development system to improve results-based strategic planning and management in order to improve accountability and transparency, and identification of measures to further improve its long-term delivery and results."[75] *See Annexes 1,2 and 3 for further details on the mandate from the General Assembly and the Secretary-general's reports and resolutions.*

---

[74] Those areas are analyzed through: a review of progress to ensure national ownership and leadership, including through the use of national systems; an assessment of the functioning of the resident coordinator system; funding, the critical mass of core resources and recovery of support costs; progress to improve results-based strategic planning and management; an analysis of how the characteristics, approaches and strategic and programming frameworks of United Nations system operational activities should evolve to respond to various country situations, based on the principles of national ownership and leadership, and to the evolving international development cooperation environment; a review of progress at the country level in improving coordination on mainstreaming gender equality and the empowerment of women; and (k) an assessment of the UNDAF.

[75] ECOSOC resolution 2011/7 (paragraph 14.h) mandates the SG to review and report on progress in this area, as follows: *Requests* the Secretary-General to pay particular attention, in the report for the 2012 quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, to: A review of progress made by the United Nations development system to improve results-based strategic planning and management in order to improve accountability and transparency, and identification of measures to further improve its long-term delivery and results.

In order to initiate this review, the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) convened an informal meeting in February 2012, with development entities of the UN system and leading experts, in order to start discussing progress in improving results-based strategic planning and management in UN funds, programmes and agencies. The following agencies participated to the meeting: UNDESA (Convenor), UNICEF, UNWOMEN, UNFPA, UNDP, WFP, DOCO), and three DESA consultants.

The purpose of this meeting was to take stock of progress in improving results-based strategic planning and management in UN funds, programmes and agencies since the adoption of GA resolution 62/208 on the TCPR. A DESA consultant had prepared a preliminary note to facilitate discussions in the meeting. It was planned that this note would subsequently be updated to reflect as accurately as possible the current state of affairs in this area. Participants were asked to bring to the meeting an up-to-date information on progress in this area in their respective entities, and to provide feedback on the note.

Participants in the meeting strongly encouraged DESA to expand the work already undertaken, in view of analyzing current RBM guidance and practice in Headquarters and in the field. It was felt that the 2007 TCPR did not accurately reflect the complexity of this issue, and the challenges ahead; and that the 2012 QCPR should go beyond the TCPR Resolution 62/208.

In addition, given the current Review of Strategic Planning in the UN system organizations being conducted by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), participants suggested that the study should focus on Results-Based Management in order to avoid duplicating efforts. The JIU study will also feed into the QCPR preparations.

3. Objectives

This study will analyze progress made in Results-Based Management, by the UN system and by different agencies, funds and programmes, at the global and levels, in the last four years since the 2007 Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR) Resolution 62/208 was adopted.

The study may focus in particular on four main areas where significant achievements seem to have been made: 1. UNDAF guidance, 2. RBM Handbook, 3. Common principles on results reporting, and 4. Field level use of RBM through the UNDAF, and other UN development cooperation mechanisms, such as Delivering as One.

4. Scope of analysis

The study should be guided by the following questions:

➡ Where has there been progress in the area of Results-Based Management, by the UN system and different agencies, funds and programmes, at global and field level in the last four years?

➡ What are the key challenges on RBM that should be the object of a particular attention by Member States, and should be discussed in the Secretary-General's Progress report on the TCPR?

➡ How can the QCPR encourage the United Nations to continue to move forward with results models that have the best potential to support programme countries and the UN system in reaching better results?

➡ How can issues of reporting on results be better addressed to respond to agencies and system-wide reporting needs, without imposing an overburden on UNCTs and agencies, while being adapted to different country contexts?

➡ How can Delivering as One lessons learned for a more coherent and coordinated United Nations be useful in the context of achieving effective development results, guided by a relevant RBM, monitoring and reporting system?

➡ What would be the key recommendations that should be pointed to in the Secretary-general's Progress report on the TCPR?

5. Users

The primary users of the study will be the General Assembly and ECOSOC, which have been mandated to establish, monitor and evaluate UN operational activities for development.

Another important user will be key UN system inter-agency mechanisms, such as the CEB and its three pillars: UNDG, HLCP and HLCM.

Other important users will include UN Agencies, funds and programmes involved in operational activities for development, including at headquarters, regional and country levels.

This study will be discussed with key stakeholders, and will ultimately become an input to the Secretary General's progress report for the QCPR.

6. Methodology

The study will require a holistic and comprehensive collection and analysis of information from various sources, including:

First, a desk review of intergovernmental, interagency and agency-specific policies/ guidance on RBM and country-level programming;

Second, a desk review of past UN and external studies/evaluations regarding RBM;

Third, an analysis of RBM against certain criteria in a sample of countries covering all country types by income (LDCs, MICs), fragility (normal development settings and countries in transition from relief to development, disaster prone countries), UN presence (large, middle or small UN presence) and reform status (delivering as one, self-starter or others); and

Fourth, some consultations with colleagues in DESA, UN entities and interagency bodies, and possibly some selected field staff with relevant expertise and experience, through interviews and a mission to New York.

In addition, the study will also particularly benefit from the analytical preparations for the QCPR especially: 1) the UNDAF study, based among others on (i) an analysis of findings of UNDAF evaluations and mid-term reviews, and (ii) the findings of the surveys of member states, RCs and UNCTs, as well as CSOs on the quality of support provided by the UN development system; 2) the findings of the desk review of QCPR-related topics; and 3) an analysis of new issues related to operational activities.

The findings and recommendations of the study will be peer reviewed by experts and selected UN entities, and discussed in Expert Group Meeting(s) scheduled for the end of March and April 2012.

7. Key tasks

The study will entail the following tasks:

➢ Prepare a first framework/outline of the study;

➢ Consult with relevant DESA, notably various Development Cooperation Policy Branch focal points on QCPR and UN colleagues on the purpose and scope of the study, including relevant documents;

➢ Prepare an inventory of documents as part of the desk review *(see Annex 4 for a preliminary list);*

➢ Undertake an analytical review of these documents with a view to identifying key findings and recommendations that are felt relevant for the study;

➢ Conduct interviews with key stakeholders;

➢ Prepare a report with a description of the context, the current situation on RBM, and key findings and recommendations;

➢ Provide an Executive summary of the main findings and recommendations of the study, and a shorter text to be used in the Secretary-General's report on the QCPR.

➢ Submit a CD-ROM with all the documents reviewed, in electronic form to be used as a basis for knowledge management purposes.

8. Deliverables

The consultant will be expected to produce the following deliverables:

- A first framework / detailed outline of the study.

- A report with a description of the context, the current situation on RBM, and key findings and recommendations.

- A CD-ROM with all the documents reviewed, organized by folders.

9. Qualifications

The consultant is expected to possess the following qualifications:

- Excellent knowledge of UN development operations at the country, regional and global level; working experience in more than one UN entity is desirable;

- Excellent knowledge of Results-Based Management, the UNDAF process and UN country programming;

- Strong analytical and drafting skills;

- Good understanding of research methodologies;

- Advanced university degree in economics, public administration, development studies/management, business administration or related field.

10. Timeframe

The consultant is expected to commence work on 23 April 2012 and complete the assignment no later than 31 July 2012.

11. Performance success indicators

- The outcome of the paper to be credible and useful by stakeholders; and
- The findings of the study add significant value to analytical preparations for the 2012 QCPR of the GA.

12. Management and reporting arrangements

The consultant will work under the supervision of Kristinn Sv. Helgason, Deputy Chief, Development Cooperation Policy Branch, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, UNDESA (helgason@un.org; tel: (212) 963-8418) and in close partnership with Huanyu Liu (liuh@un.org; tel: (917) 367-2902 who serves as the focal point for the preparation of the study.

The consultant will also be supported by the other DESA consultant who prepared the preliminary note to facilitate discussions in the February 2012 meeting.