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**Secretary-General's High-level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence  
in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and the Environment**

**REGIONAL CONSULTATION  
WITH COUNTRY-LEVEL PRACTITIONERS**

*- Africa -*

Mozambique, 8-9 May 2006

## **BACKGROUND**

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The 2005 World Summit recognised that the United Nations system, because of its unique mandate, legitimacy and composition, could add value to the development process by, amongst other things, helping to generate political consensus and momentum around key objectives, acting as a broker in negotiations between development partners, enhancing mutual accountability, and supporting governments in the fulfilment of international commitments. It was also recognised that ambitious reforms would be necessary in order to enable the UN to fulfil this task effectively in a variety of different contexts. Most importantly, it was recognised a repositioning of the UN system at country level, to enable it to respond more effectively to the challenges of the new development environment, would have to be accompanied by profound reforms of the coordination, planning, and management and oversight mechanisms. The responsibility to implement the ambitious reform package at country level rests with the UN Country Teams.

The aim of the present consultation is to identify the challenges faced at country level in the new aid environment and to propose ways in which the UN system could be reformed in order to be optimally equipped and positioned to respond to some of these challenges.

## **OBJECTIVES**

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- Enhanced understanding among Panel Members of the expected role of the UN at country level;
- Information on good practices as well as major challenges to UN's country level coherence;
- Integrate the views of practitioners from the Africa region into upcoming deliberations of the panel.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

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- Members of the SG's Panel on System-wide Coherence
- From Mozambique, Botswana, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Tanzania:
  - *Government officials in charge of planning and aid coordination*
  - *Resident Coordinators and UN Country Team members*
  - *Staff of bi- and multilateral donors*
- Representatives from civil society organizations (Mozambique)
- UN staff from regional offices

## **POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:**

### **The UN at country level**

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- What is the perception of the role of the UN in development in your country?
- What do people appreciate most about the UN (or a particular agency)?
- What are the UN's major activities in your country?
- In which development breakthroughs or processes in the history of your country has the UN had a decisive role?
- What is the particular value-added of the UN Country Team (or individual agencies) as compared to the rest of the development community?
- How is the National Development Strategy prepared and how can the UN help enhance national ownership and alignment?
- Are the MDGs and Internationally Agreed Development Goals integrated in the National Development strategy?
- What should the UN's role be with respect to IFIs?
- What role should the UN play with respect to NGOs?
- In which area should the UN get more engaged? And in which of its current areas of intervention should it work better together with others or even withdraw?

### **UN Support to national priorities and plans**

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- UN Support to national planning processes (such as PRSPs), as well as new aid modalities (such as budget support and sector-wide approaches) - does the UN have adequate expertise, capacity and credibility to fulfill its role in this environment?
- How can the UN leverage the "scaling up" of country level action for MDG's, over and above the actions by the UN themselves?
- Does your country benefit from support of the entire UN System, including specialized agencies without country presence?

### **One UN Country Team or many UN agencies?**

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#### ***Programme***

- What are the challenges for the UN country-level coherence on policy issues in general, as well as in sector dialogue?
- How does the Country Team operate (leadership by the RC, decision-making mechanisms, theme groups etc.)? What are incentives and obstacles to strengthened inter-agency cooperation?
- How can we reduce overlap between agencies and standardize joint

- programming? (compliance with the Common Country Programme)
- Lessons learned from the UN common country programming process – national ownership and more coherent support to national processes through the “UN Development Assistance Framework” (UNDAF)? How is the UNDAF perceived in your country?
  - Is the UN’s programme focused, building on complementarities between agencies and prioritizing areas in which the UN has a comparative advantage, or do agencies work in “silos”?
  - How is the work of the UN Country Team funded? What is the impact on coherence or programmatic orientation of the UN’s work?
  - Does extrabudgetary financing from donors at the country level affect UN coherence? How do we reduce competition for funding between agencies at country level?

***Operational***

- What good practices are in place to harmonize administrative and operational work among UN agencies (e.g. common services, UN Houses), and what are obstacles to further rationalization in this area?

**The way forward**

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- What support might be needed, and which obstacles would need to be overcome, to help UN Country Teams to work in a more coherent and coordinated manner (e.g. under one programme, with one clear leader, a more unified work plan and budget etc.)?
- Which changes at the Headquarters level could improve coherence at country level?

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