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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**

**TRANSITION FROM RELIEF TO DEVELOPMENT:  
*Key Issues Related to Humanitarian and  
Recovery/Transition Programmes***

Rome, 19 May 2006

## **BACKGROUND**

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‘Transition’ refers to the period between the immediate aftermath of crisis and the restoration of pre-crisis conditions (recovery), or their improvement to a satisfactory level (development). Transitions are characterized by a shifting emphasis from life-saving to restoring livelihoods, achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs and by an increasing reliance on national ownership through national development strategies. The special nature of recovery programmes requires an understanding of complex issues:

- What are the differences and similarities between the phases and how do they relate to government capacity and ownership?
- How can the hand-off from the humanitarian phase to development best be handled and what institutional choices does the UN have to make in this regard?
- How can funding best be organized so that short term operational needs are met and long term development funding is available, should government capacity allow?

The aim of the consultation is to identify ways in which the UN system could be reformed in order to respond more effectively to these challenges.

In addition, ongoing issues in humanitarian reform will be discussed. While humanitarian coordination has evolved successfully, there remains room for improvement in terms of:

- better consolidated funding mechanisms and more predictable funding;
- clearer mandates for cross cutting issues in particular like shelter and IDPs;
- a better international approach to risk reduction.

## **OBJECTIVES**

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- To enhance the understanding among Panel Members of humanitarian and transition issues at country and Headquarters levels, including challenges and good practices;
- To exchange views and develop a shared understanding of the requirements for more effective planning, coordination and financing in the Transition phase
- To develop options and recommendations related to these issues, which would be put forward for discussion at upcoming deliberations of the Panel

## **PARTICIPANTS**

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- Members of the SG’s Panel on System-wide Coherence
- Representatives from Governments, NGO’s, World Bank, and Donors
- External specialists
- UN staff from Agencies, Funds and Programmes

## DISCUSSION TOPICS

### **PART 1: On-going issues in humanitarian reform**

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Continued progress is being made to strengthen the UN through improved coordination of various agencies and departments. Efforts towards greater coherence may be seen in the effort to clarify leadership and accountability in humanitarian response through the cluster leadership system. Early response is being helped by the Extended Central Emergency Response Fund. But there are remaining gaps and issues that need to be tackled, in particular with regard to gaps in mandates, funding and risk reduction.

#### ***1) The Cluster Approach and Mandates***

*Issues:*

*Have all issues been adequately covered by the cluster approach, including shelter and IDPs? How can we ensure additional capacity for response through the cluster system, rather than a complicating layer of coordination?*

The Cluster Lead Agency system, endorsed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee that meets to coordinate humanitarian issues within the UN system and with a few other key players, provides the framework for capacity development and more predictable response to areas in humanitarian assistance, such as water, sanitation and food.

The cluster system has great potential, but there remains the risk that issues that involve multiple players will constitute a gap. Examples are protection of the vulnerable and the particular needs of internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Another issue where coordination is a problem is shelter, in particular since recent crises (Pakistan) showed that many organizations are now partially dealing with it.

#### ***2) Humanitarian Funding: CAP and CERF***

*Issue:*

*How can funding and quality issues that remain with regard to the Consolidated Appeals Process best be resolved?*

An effective Consolidated Appeals Process provides an on-going coordination mechanism that effectively addresses programming for humanitarian and early recovery needs, in addition to what humanitarian agencies already spend on humanitarian assistance. In reality, CAPs are underfunded as well as unevenly funded. Some

country CAPs barely receive a third of the funding required while the most well-known crises are well-resourced. In spite of initiatives such as the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative, which for instance includes pilots with pooled funding in DRC and Sudan, structured and long term donor engagement is still lacking. A reason for that according to some is that in spite of improvements, CAPS may need further prioritization.

It is expected that recent decision on the Extended Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) will be very beneficial in supporting a quicker, more effective response to crises. But contributions to the CERF will not be sufficient to cover the gaps in the CAP funding. Furthermore there is a risk that CERF funding will not be additional and thus come at the expense of support to individual agency response funds.

A development related to transition is the hybrid CAP, that also addresses early recovery and not just immediate humanitarian assistance. The newly presented appeal for Pakistan follows that model. In other cases, it seems hybrid CAPs have not led to sufficient additionality in funding.

### **3. Risk reduction**

*Key issue:*

*How can the UN contribute to an overall risk reduction framework that clearly determines areas and levels of responsibility for the provision of support by different parts of the system for the implementation of risk reduction measures and processes? How can investment in, and financing of, risk reduction processes need to be increased and available on a more predictable and accessible basis than in the past?*

The majority of the world's population lives in areas affected by natural hazards. This upward trend is expected to continue given that growing numbers reside in expanding and unplanned urban concentrations in seismic, coastal and other unsafe areas, while there is a growing incidence and severity of weather related disasters. Increasing levels of risk and vulnerability are a critical area where greater coherence between humanitarian, development and environmental actions is required.

## **PART II: Post-Conflict and Post-Disaster Transition**

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It has been recognized that effective early recovery interventions must begin concurrently with humanitarian assistance. Currently, there is a lack of an effective system for immediate recovery. This is especially problematic in cases where there are weakened institutions on the part of the recipient Government.

## **1. Planning and Coordination System**

*Key issue:*

*Standardized procedures, a well-defined division of labor, and strengthened inter-agency coordination through the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator system, backed up by UN head quarters, are required for more a effective UN transition intervention. Who will lead the UN system and have lead capacity in this phase? How can this be achieved and how can ownership best be respected in this context?*

Currently, the architectures of relief and development assistance differ in many respects. Decisions are made based on different criteria, with survival paramount in the humanitarian phase and MDGs and national strategies in the development phase. A ‘gap’ exists between these phases, that must be bridged. There are however also similarities, including the presence of many the same agencies and a reliance on the RC system.

Effective processes and institutional capacity must be established, to which humanitarian actors in general and OCHA in particular may ‘hand over’ coordination and leadership. This system should integrate various transition initiatives and priorities, while ensuring that the focus remains on national capacity building. A start has been made with the increasingly standard joint needs assessments, jointly developed with the World Bank. Strategies in the end must be ‘owned’ by national authorities.

## **2. Transition funding**

*Key issue:*

*A more effective approach to addressing coherence and coordination in transition means the right funding instruments will have to be available at the right time. This is contingent upon strengthened collaboration between the UN and the World Bank, securing flexible funding in a situation of little capacity and scaling up of development funding where absorptive capacity exists. Based on the capacity of the Government, how can a clearer delineation be made between the needs in different phases? How does this impact the respective roles of the UN and the World Bank?*

While humanitarian assistance may constitute the most effective investment towards saving lives in the short run in (post) crises situations, in the longer term efforts have to be made to link to regular development processes, implementing a nationally owned strategy and achieving the MDGs. Well-timed, and targeted resources are required.

The nature of the assistance needed depends very much on the strength of national institutions as well as a clear division of labour between international partners. Transition activities of UN agencies, funds and programmes have been supported by

both internal UN-administered trust funds, and World Bank-administered funds. The World Bank administered Multi-Donor Trust Funds carry some constraints since they work with the Government budget, even though practical solutions have been found in cases. This procedure supports national ownership, and is applied to post-disaster countries where there is a functioning government. But for the earlier phase where immediate action may be needed, this modality may sometimes be less suited. This has led to thinking about separate trust funds for immediate flexible spending which in practice enables the UN's role in early recovery. An approach of multiple trust funds has however not always been popular with donors.

It has been suggested that a revised MDTF structure be considered: a more flexible fund could be established to cover activities related to technical assistance and early recovery (ie. Afghanistan 2002).

### ***3. Peace-building Commission***

*Key issue:*

*How can the newly established Peace Building Commission potentially contribute to coherence? How have and can integrated missions contributed, while respecting humanitarian and development imperatives?*

Efforts towards greater integration among the different development, humanitarian, political and security arms of the UN are exemplified by UN Integrated Missions for peace keeping and the establishment of the Peace-building Commission (PBC) and Peace-building Support Office (PBSO).

- Integrated missions deal with the political, security and humanitarian and development related aspects of a peace keeping and peace building process under one Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General.
- The newly established PBC is intended to bring all players together at the global level to help effectively support peace building processes at the country level. The Peace Building Support Office and the new Peace Building Support Fund can support the PBC in this approach, together with existing organizations that are dealing with this issue like the Department of Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO), UNDP's Bureau for Crisis prevention and Recovery (BCPR) and the World Bank.

## **The Way Forward: Key Issues summarised**

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1. Clusters: Have all issues been adequately covered by the cluster approach, including shelter and IDPs? How can we ensure additional capacity for response through the cluster system, rather than a complicating layer of coordination?
2. Humanitarian funding: How can funding and quality issues that remain with regard to the Consolidated Appeals Process best be resolved?
3. Risk reduction: How can the UN contribute to an overall risk reduction framework that clearly determines areas and levels of responsibility for the provision of support by different parts of the system for the implementation of risk reduction measures and processes? How can investment in, and financing of, risk reduction processes need to be increased and available on a more predictable and accessible basis than in the past?
4. Hand over/transition: Standardized procedures, a well-defined division of labor, and strengthened inter-agency coordination through the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator system, backed up by UN head quarters, are required for more a effective UN transition intervention. Who will lead the UN system and have lead capacity in this phase? How can this be achieved and how can ownership best be respected in this context?
5. Funding transition: A more effective approach to addressing coherence and coordination in transition means the right funding instruments will have to be available at the right time. This is contingent upon strengthened collaboration between the UN and the World Bank, securing flexible funding in a situation of little capacity and scaling up of development funding where absorptive capacity exists. Based on the capacity of the Government, how can a clearer delineation be made between the needs in different phases? How does this impact the respective roles of the UN and the World Bank?
6. PBC and coherence: How can the newly established Peace Building Commission potentially contribute to coherence? How have and can integrated missions contributed, while respecting humanitarian and development imperatives?