

**HIGHLIGHTS OF PRESS BRIEFING BY JENS STOLTENBERG,
PRIME MINISTER OF NORWAY AND CO-CHAIR OF HIGH LEVEL PANEL
ON UN SYSTEM-SIDE COHERENCE**

Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of Norway and Co-Chair of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment, briefed journalists on the panel's second meeting, which began yesterday, 1 June 2006 and will continue until tomorrow in Geneva. The deliberations of the panel been "extremely fruitful", said Mr. Stoltenberg.

The panel's main goal was to make the United Nations "a better and stronger tool" in the effort to implement the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As strong believers in the United Nations, the panel members were all in favour of reform of the Organization since a better functioning United Nations would make it easier to mobilize political and financial support for the Organization.

Providing an overview of the issues discussed during the meeting, Mr. Stoltenberg said that the panel had considered proposals for structural reform intended to improve the coherence and governance of the United Nations system, as well as coordination between its funds, programmes and specialized agencies, both at the headquarters and country levels. Mr. Stoltenberg mentioned as an example that it was not obviously the right approach to have 20 different United Nations bodies dealing with the issue of clean water, as was currently the case. Similarly, with too many agencies operating in the same countries, there was a risk of unnecessarily high overhead costs, too little coordination and, ultimately, not enough impact of the combined efforts. In Ghana, for instance, there were 14 United Nations agencies present, many operating on very small budgets.

The panel was also discussing different mechanisms for raising more predictable funding for United Nations activities, as well as business practices that would help the Organization to improve efficiency, such as mechanisms for monitoring and measuring the effectiveness of different strategies in the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals.

Asked about specific difficulties or obstacles that the panel might be facing, or specific proposals that it was likely to make, Mr. Stoltenberg said that it was too soon to make any pronouncements in that regard as the panel had not yet arrived at any conclusions. The right time for that would be in September 2006, when the panel's report was due to be submitted.

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