



REPÚBLICA DE MOÇAMBIQUE

**LAUNCH OF THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S HIGH-LEVEL
PANEL ON UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM-WIDE COHERENCE IN THE AREAS OF
DEVELOPMENT, HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

Talking Points

by

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Madame President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentleman,

I would very much have liked to join you today for this important occasion, but prior national commitments have prevented me from making the journey to New York. I welcome the opportunity to share some of my thoughts on the Panel's Report and what we have learned in the intense process that the Panel has undertaken over the past months.

I was honoured that the Secretary-General asked me to Co-Chair this Panel with Prime Ministers Aziz and Stoltenberg, and it was a true privilege to have served with such an extraordinary group of experienced and eminent Panel Members, very diverse in their backgrounds and in the perspectives that they brought to our deliberations.

We have come a long way since we first met in April. Even though some of us were more familiar with the unique and intricate ways of the UN system, we were all faced with a steep learning curve, which finally led us to put forward the recommendations that you have before you today. We had intensive debates on how to ensure the challenge of a "more coherent" UN, but in general I was struck by the remarkable consensus that we achieved on the main principals underpinning our recommendations.

We were exposed to the system's flaws and complexities, but - more importantly - we came to appreciate the unique blend of assets that make the UN so valuable, assets that are often hidden from public view. We all agreed that these assets were being under-exploited, and that the current UN system is not as effective as it could be. It has, in essence, outgrown its original design. The UN needs to urgently overcome its fragmentation and deliver as one.

Particularly at the country level, where the UN's work is mostly keenly felt, the different parts of the UN family have to work together better than is the case today. Working together to ensure countries to own and drive their development processes. This does not mean that the work of UN organizations "disappears" in one large UN programme. In fact, referring to how we would like to see the UN family work together at country level, a participant in one of the Panel's many consultations made an interesting analogy - rather than resembling a stew, in which the ingredients are blended into one undistinguishable mass, we want the UN's work at country level to be a more unique and distinct dish, where you can still taste the various different individual ingredients.

One of the strengths of our Panel process has been the emphasis that we have placed on consulting widely. Within the very limited time that we had available, we undertook a focused consultative process to enrich the work of the Panel, but also to ensure the engagement and commitment of concerned stakeholders, a fundamental step to developing relevant and realistic recommendations. The intensive six-month consultative process, with broad participation from Member States, the UN system,

inter-governmental fora, international financial institutions, academia and civil society organizations, resulted in the development of the analytical base and options that we collectively considered.

One of the personal highlights of this process was the African regional consultation that I hosted and chaired in Maputo in May, with fellow Panel Members Ruth Jacoby and Robert Greenhill. The consultation aimed to enhance understanding among Panel Members of the expected role of the UN at country level, with information on good practices, as well as major challenges to UN's country-level coherence, so that we could integrate the views of practitioners from the Africa region into the overall deliberations of the Panel.

An exciting mix of participants – with civil society and government representatives from various African countries, as well as UN staff and donors - led to a very rich consultation, which greatly benefited the overall Panel process, providing us with unusually candid insights into the workings of the UN at country-level. The Africa consultation, and similar ones in other regions and on a variety of thematic issues, directly influenced the recommendations that the Panel is now putting forward.

It was clear to me during the Maputo consultations that there is a feeling that the UN is struggling to define its role. We have seen in Mozambique that as bilateral donors increasingly move into new aid modalities such as direct budget support, the UN Country Team risks being sidelined. As expressed in the Panel report, we want the UN to be a strategic player at the country level, supporting us in the preparation and implementation of our development strategy, and ultimately helping us to make progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the other internationally agreed development goals.

Despite very dedicated and committed UN staff, outdated systems and procedures seem to hamper the ability of UN Country Teams to fulfil such a role. As UN staff members pointed out in our consultation in Maputo, UN reform too often depends on the commitment of individuals. Our report contains a number of suggestions to make sure that reform will happen globally.

Ladies and gentleman, let me close by underscoring that during the Maputo consultations, Mozambicans from civil society as well as government paid tribute to the important role that the UN has played in the history of our country. Throughout sometimes challenging times, the UN has been a critical partner in our pursuit of peace and development, which we gratefully acknowledge.

As a Panel we recognize that a lot has been achieved in UN reform over the past years. However, as one participant in the Maputo consultation put it - some of the reform steps reflect good intentions, but implementation seems difficult. The Panel has tried to respond to her call to come up with “tools with teeth”, to make sure that good intentions turn into actual changes in the work of the UN System.

We now turn to Member States, the Secretary-General, organizations of the UN system, and other stakeholders to consider our recommendations - which we believe to be ambitious but realistic - in good faith. We need to pull together to make sure that the UN system lives up to, and exceeds, its vast potential.

Thank you for your kind attention!

New York, 09 November 2006