

**Statement by Helen Clark**

**Chair of the United Nations Development Group**

**On the Occasion of the Informal Session of the Inter-governmental consultations on**

**System-wide Coherence**

**11am, 8 June 2009, New York**

**Co-chairs for the System-wide Coherence for the inter-governmental process of the General Assembly,**

**Distinguished delegates,**

**Colleagues and Friends,**

**I am pleased to join you today as the Chair of the United Nations Development Group to brief you on the UN development system's efforts to increase its coherence, effectiveness and efficiency, particularly through the "Delivering as One" pilots.**

**I would like to thank the Co-chairs H.E. Mr. Kaire Munionganda Mbuende, the Permanent Representative of Namibia, and H.E. Mr. Juan Antonio Yáñez-Barnuevo, the Permanent Representative of Spain, for the important leadership role they are playing in the inter-governmental process of the General Assembly.**

**I would also like to thank their predecessors, H.E Mr. Augustine Mahiga, the Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, and H.E. Mr. Paul Kavanagh, the Permanent Representative of Ireland, for their strong support to system-wide coherence efforts last year.**

**As I noted in my remarks to the UNDP Executive Board two weeks ago, as Chair of the UN Development Group I am committed to working constructively with all our partners in the UN family, and also to building strong relationships with the largest possible range of stakeholders in development – civil society, donors, the IFIs, and all other partners. Of course, our most important partnerships must be with the governments and peoples of the countries in which we work.**

**The global recession is a challenging time for the work of the UN development system, but it is also an opportunity to look at fresh ways of doing things, and to innovate.**

**UNDG members have heard the calls of Member States for a more coherent, effective, and efficient UN development system.**

**Such a system can better support national partners to address the many challenges they face. We clearly cannot be effective working as a disparate set of agencies. We need a coherent programming and operational approach which can maximize the development impact of our support to Governments.**

**In the last two years, we have increasingly come together as a system : together we are determined to deliver better results, more efficiently and effectively, in support of nationally-led and demand-driven development programmes. Across the specialized**

**agencies, funds, and programmes, we are implementing measures to improve our collaboration.**

**This is especially important at this time given the many significant challenges developing countries are facing. The impact of the global economic crisis on the world's poor, the climate change challenge, and recent experiences of high food and fuel prices make it more important than ever that we work together.**

**What have the pilot countries achieved and what are some of the challenges**

**I recently had the opportunity to meet with the Resident Coordinators and Resident Representatives from the eight**

**“Delivering as One” Pilot countries. One cannot fail to be impressed with the progress that the governments and UN Country Teams of these countries have made in delivering as one.**

**I also recognize the important efforts of numerous governments and UN Country Teams around the world which are working, on their own initiative, to improve the UN’s ability to respond and deliver more coherently to national priorities.**

**My remarks today will draw primarily on the 2008 Stocktaking Reports prepared jointly by the national governments of the pilot countries and the UN Country Teams.**

**Preparing a joint annual assessment by the national governments and the UN Country Teams is in itself an important development.**

**It allows for a collective and transparent assessment of what is working, what more needs to be done, and where the challenges lie. Yet, while we recognize the importance and value of these Reports, we also recognize that we will only have more conclusive findings on the work and results of the Pilots once a formal evaluation of them has taken place.**

**The following are some of the important results that the pilot countries are reporting :**

**First, national leadership and ownership, recognising the central role of the host governments, is at the heart of the reform process in the pilot countries. This was noted as an important achievement in the development of the programmes in 2007.**

**Governments in these countries increasingly provide specific guidance to the UN development system on the support it can give to national development priorities, in line with the UN's comparative advantage.**

**It is also being reported that there is more involvement of line ministries in the planning and implementation of the UN's development assistance at the country level. In some countries, there is also increased engagement of other national partners, including of civil society.**

**It follows, secondly, that the work of the UN Country Teams in the pilot countries has shown increased alignment with national**

**priorities and development strategies, as called for in the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Reviews. Greater emphasis has been placed on the strengthening of national capacities and the increased use of national systems and procedures. Institutional arrangements have been established to promote greater coherence across the development assistance provided by donors to the country. Transaction costs for the governments appear to have been reduced.**

**Third, as expected, the experience of the Pilots is rich and varied, reflecting the very different country contexts and development needs. The UN system is learning a lot from the lessons learned and the challenges faced. For example, many of the pilot countries have reported that common budgetary frameworks and**

**country funds have significantly improved the transparency of the UN. They enhance inter-agency collaboration and facilitate greater coherence in monitoring and financial reporting obligations. We have also seen the UN Country Teams strengthen their ability to deliver results through the more integrated approach to programming and operations.**

**Fourth, the pilot country stocktaking has shown that having a pooled “One Fund” mechanism helps to harmonize resource mobilization and reporting among UN organizations on the ground, and reduces the transaction costs which would have been associated with a more fragmented funding model.**

**Fifth, the enhanced role of the UN Resident Co-ordinator through the strategic positioning of the UN in the pilot countries, and of a strengthened and more accountable UN Country Team, has been very important in responding coherently to national development priorities. At the request of national partners, UN Country Teams have come together more effectively to provide policy advice on a range of important concerns, such as climate change, the food crisis and the global economic crisis. Non-Resident Agencies are playing an increasingly important role in the pilot countries, showing that the “delivering as one” approach enables the UN to leverage the expertise and mandates of its wider family in support of national development priorities.**

**Sixth, in 2008 many of the pilot countries embarked on and made important progress in harmonizing and simplifying business practices, across the areas of procurement, information and communications technologies, and human resources. This should also enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of UN Country Team operations.**

**While the 2008 Stocktaking Reports highlight much which is positive, it also identifies some challenges to be addressed for the reform process to progress further. Accelerating the harmonization of business practices is one of those challenges. That also requires continuing reform at the global level of our agencies, even as quick-win solutions are being tested by the pilot countries. Business practice issues which need system-wide**

**agreement and implementation are being taken forward by the High Level Committee on Management of the Chief Executives Board.**

**Another challenge is to respond to the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review call to identify and measure transaction costs and efficiencies. This is an important area for further UNDG work.**

**Funding predictability remains a major issue. The Pilots have put in place elements considered important for reform, including a more integrated and strategic programme; one budgetary framework and one fund; and systems to ensure better reporting of results. Yet, in many of the pilots there are still insufficient resources in the “One Funds”; in others, the funding has been**

**earmarked, leading to reduced flexibility to implement the overall programme as foreseen and to deliver the results that are expected.**

**A further challenge is the call from the pilot countries for the development of a single results report. That would capture the totality of the UN development system's results in a country on an annual basis, and reduce the reporting burden which currently exists. Further streamlining of the common country programming is also being sought.**

**In all these areas, the UNDG is working closely with countries to identify what further simplification and harmonization can be**

**undertaken consistent with the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review.**

**Within the UNDG and through the inter-governmental process we will continue to gather the initial lessons and experiences emerging from the Pilots, so as to improve the UN's response to national development plans and priorities. We are placing great priority on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review's call for the UN to be more effective, coherent and efficient.**

### **Evaluation**

**Let me turn to the important question of evaluation of the pilot experience. The Evaluability Study conducted by the UN Evaluation Group last year has provided important guidance to**

**the pilot countries in preparations for future evaluations. In accordance with the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review, and in response to the desire of national governments, nationally led evaluations may be undertaken. The UNDG will draw upon the advice of the UN Evaluation Group and support those countries which wish to conduct country-level evaluations in advance of the independent evaluation.**

**To learn as much as possible from the pilot countries' experiences, and to assess the impact of the many innovations at the country level, we also need to move ahead to prepare for the independent evaluation of the countries as called for in the 2007 Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review.**

## **Conclusion**

**In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Governments of the pilot countries for leading the “delivering as one” process in their countries, and for encouraging the UN development system to perform to the best of its ability in becoming more coherent, effective and efficient.**

**The pilots are an important achievement for UN reform. They represent a bottom-up approach which is driven and owned by the national governments involved. As a result, we are starting to see important results from a UN development system which is**

**working better together to support the governments and people  
we serve.**

**It is imperative that we all continue to support the pilots, and  
ensure their success. I am committed to that.**

**Thank you.**