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INTERACTIVE EXPERT PANEL

**Linkages between implementation of the Platform for Action and
achievement of the MDGs**

**“Delivering as One” on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
(case study)***

Submitted by

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* The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations

Framing: This presentation is focused on how Delivering as One principles impact the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and MDGs in Albania.

It is our experience that a more coherent UN programming delivers better support to national development priorities. Of particular interest for this panel, a more coherent UN programming is also more effective in supporting the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, as a means for achieving the MDGs.

Principles of Delivering as One

- In January 2007 - Government of Albania came forward to be one of eight countries to pilot UN efforts to deliver as One UN.
- Core to the Delivering as One is significantly strengthened national ownership; improved integrated planning and programming of the UN (One UN Programme; One Budgetary Framework; and the One Fund); harmonized business practices and common services;
- All under the leadership of the Government of Albania; an empowered UNCT and Resident Coordinator (One Leader);
- In the One Programme – Gender is one of two areas the Government of Albania requested strengthened programming and coordination and requested increased presence of UNIFEM in the country to take the lead;
- Government of Albania and UNCT are supporting the advancement of gender equality in Albania using a two-pronged approach:
 - I) Integrating gender throughout priority programmes developed under the One UN,
 - II) Implementing the first Joint Programme on Gender Equality (JPGE) of the UN Country Team in Albania (2008-2010).
- Some findings from recent stakeholder discussions on One UN and on Joint Programme:
 - i) In a recent perception survey, the UN's work on Gender Equality was considered to be one of the areas which most successfully show the positive impact of improved coordinated and harmonised approach, with significantly strengthen government and civil society ownership.
 - ii) Stakeholders interviewed unanimously stated that the most important aspect of JPGE was the synergy created between implementing partner organisations.
 - iii) Collaboration between actors has also improved as they understood each other's responsibilities better, which resulted in a better coordination of the work among agencies.
 - iv) The improved synergy was resulting in smarter and more strategic support by the UN towards gender equality and DV – and this has resulted in improving coordination and collaboration between line ministries; and raising the dialogue among national and local authorities about GE and DV;

Gender in the One UN Programme

- It is important to note that in Albania, as a potential pre-accession country, while international standards and norms have guided the revision of legal frameworks, with the exception of the CEDAW, the primary “gender equality” influences remain those standards and norms emerging from EU and the Council of Europe.
- The UN has worked to ensure that the majority of Critical Areas of Concern under the Beijing PFA and the MDGs do not fall off the table, however.
- In 2006-2007, the UN worked in a coordinated manner to support the adoption of the National Strategy on Gender Equality (NSGE) and Eradication of Domestic Violence (2007-2010) – the first strategy of its kind in the country.
- The Beijing Platform for Action and CEDAW were the framing documents of the National Strategy. The Action Plan under the NSGE closely align with the Beijing PFA’s Critical Areas of Concern;
- Under Delivering as One, the UNCT’s first Joint Programme on Gender was developed – its primary goal, supporting implementation of the NSGE and the Eradication of Domestic Violence;
- Specific Outcomes:
 - i) National Government has capacity to more effectively monitor and implement the NSGE-DV; (*strengthening Institutional Mechanisms to implement; Statistics and Monitoring; and Integrating Gender into core legal frameworks around Family Law; Social Protection; Labour; implementation of GEL and DV law*)
 - ii) Improved public sector response to women’s needs and priorities at the local level (*ensuring women’s access to services, particularly in the areas of services for women victims of violence; and through using GRB methodologies, ensuring gender priorities are integrated into local level policies and budgeting processes*);
 - iii) Women participating in the accountability processes which impact the advancement of gender equality (*women and decision-making*);
 - iv) Improved coordination of external support to government and civil society in advancing gender equality;
- The building block of UN Reform in the Delivering as One (DaO) Pilots is increased National Ownership
 - i) Priority Setting - The Government of Albania and the UNCT jointly identified which of the national priorities the UN could best address, based on the UN’s existing technical expertise and specific experiences/partnerships in the country.
 - i. There are instances where what the government articulates as a “priority” does not agree with the UNCT’s evaluation in this regards. The established mechanisms under the DaO allow for a transparent and open dialogue on this, and if the UN can prove expertise in the issue, the Government has been ready to listen;
 - ii. Decision-making within the One UN Programme – including funding allocation – is jointly made by Government and UN;

- iii. This holds true within the Joint Programme, which is governed by the Steering Committee – a body co-chaired by the UN RC and the Deputy Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities;
 - iv. Role of CSOs – what cannot and should not be forgotten in the DaO Pilots or broader UN reform is that National Ownership is not limited to government. It is essential that CSOs be heard and be strongly incorporated. The One UN Programme has five pillars – one is dedicated to Participation of citizens in the decision-making processes which shape their lives.
- The UN and the Ministry of Labour play a mutually supporting role – many of you in the room are aware that a key challenge to integrating gender equality issues into key policy processes is often that the Gender Equality Mechanism is not given the proper resources by their government to do the task. The Joint Programme works with the Ministry to address this issue and to support them in the role of establishing the mechanisms and systems so as to improve government coordination in this regard;
 - This above point is central to the successful implementation of both the Beijing PFA and the national targets under the MDGs. And as such, is set as a main outcome of the Joint Programme;

Evidenced-based policy making:

- Under the One UN Programme, the UN has significantly strengthened the support it has provided to improving Evidenced-based Policy making. Through support to the Labour Force Survey; LSMS; Demographic and Health Survey; National Census; the country's first Domestic Violence Survey; and now the country's first Time Use Survey; and the development of the country's first Harmonised Indicators on Gender Equality;
- Through the improved coordination under the One UN Programme; and through the mutually supportive work of UNFPA and UNIFEM under the Joint Programme; the UN has significantly strengthened the availability of sex-disaggregated statistics and Government capacity for analysis of this data in a manner that supports the integration of gender into core policies;
- To give an example – the development of the Harmonised Indicators on Gender Equality.
 - Firstly, the process of developing the Indicators was as important as the Indicators themselves. Central to their development was the strengthening of the Institutional Mechanisms on Gender (Directorate's role as a coordinator; capacity of Gender Focal Points in line Ministries and Institutions; Strengthened linkages between GFPs and Departments of Statistics in the Ministries and INSTAT)
 - We were not re-inventing the wheel – We supported an inter-ministerial body to look at the existing statistical processes – including the National MDG Process – and see how these supported the monitoring of the implementation of the NSGE-DV and relevant legislation; and monitoring International Obligations towards Gender Equality (including CEDAW,

EU Directives; Council of Europe standards and norms; MDGs; and Beijing PFA);

- Simultaneous to this, UNDP was supporting the government to review and revise the National MDGs. Through the DaO mechanism of a strengthened Programme Working Group on Governance – with a clear annual work plan and budget in place – the UN worked together with Government to:
 - bring gender experts from CSO and the Gender Equality Mechanism to the table on these discussions;
 - resulting that in MDGs 1, 2, 3 and 4, core indicators were revised to include sex disaggregation; and to include NEW and STRENGTHENED Targets on the advancement of women;
- It is important to note that having in place a strengthen GEM and inter-ministerial process already working improved Monitoring of status of women clearly resulted in New targets regarding DV and budgeting in this area; and strengthened, gender-aware indicators on Poverty;

Coordination in raising women’s voices to hold decision-makers to account (MDG 3 and Beijing PFA on women and decision-making

- National MDGs: Under MDG 3, one of four Targets is focused on Improved participation in decision making: for both local and national; and both appointed and elected;
- One of the greatest successes to date of the One UN’s work on gender has been around “women in decision-making”.

ii) Example of Impact of Improved Coordination:

- a. Women and Elections: From the Mid-Term Evaluation, the findings show that one key area where improved coordination and speaking with One Voice resulted in clear impact on the ground is around the coordinated work of UNIFEM, UNDP and UNICEF on the National Elections (2009). Specifically, this coordination contributed towards:
 - i) Albania’s first quota in the Electoral Code (2008);
 - ii) Number of women MPs elected in National Elections in June more than doubles that of the previous Parliament (from 7% in 2005 up to 16.4% in 2009);
 - iii) women are equaling men in regions monitored by partner NPOs in number of votes cast - in Albania, like the rest of the Balkans, Family voting remains a concern;
 - iv) Youth and grassroots NPOs are working together to mobilize discourse at the local and national level on women as decision-makers.

- v) Most expansive and in-depth media coverage of gender equality and women's engagement in elections since collapse of communism;
 - vi) The 3 agencies are now coordinating a similar outreach and capacity support grassroots campaign in the lead up to the Local Elections in 2011;
- iii) What aspects of the DaO supported this result? Speaking with One Voice at the Leadership level – around the quota, heads of agencies and the RC worked closely with UNIFEM to support advocacy efforts with decision-makers and media around the need for a quota in the Electoral Code;
 - iv) One Voice among the agencies – similar advocacy messages; with grassroots women and Youth Parliaments;

Coordination in Violence Against Women (VAW)

- The DoA approach is also in line with what works to address VAW. We know that coordinated, cross-cutting, multi-agency and multi-sectoral responses are required to prevent violence, protect those who become victims and hold perpetrators to account (UN SG's *In-depth study on All Forms of Violence against Women* 2006: 103).
- Again as stated before, with the revision to the National MDGs, supported by UNDP as the lead agency, the UN supported CSOs and the GEM to add a specific target on ensuring a 50% increase in financial resources allocated to combat VAW;
- Core to improved coordination on GE and VAW is a clear division of Labour within the UNCT, which results in improved division of labour and coordination among national partners, particularly in the area of VAW:
 - As the findings of stakeholders consultations have shown, the work on gender equality is considered one of the strongest examples of the DaO principles at work.
 - In part, this is because the DaO experience has forced the UNCT to look at who does what on Gender Equality – and to stay at the table and have the difficult conversations of who does what;
 - In Albania, this clear division has resulted in a strategically inclusive programme on gender – building on the strengths and assets of each participating agency;

To illustrate how the four agencies work together in implementing the JP we would provide an example related to local response of authorities towards VAW.

- Under the JP, UNDP and UNICEF committed to support four municipalities in building referral and coordinated response systems;
- In a process facilitated by UNIFEM, the UN reviewed the findings of a UNDP assessment of local authorities' response to VAW, together with the UNICEF approach to similar issues regarding child abuse, through their previous experience in the country in establishing Child Protection Units.

- The UN noted the commonalities of these approaches and assessments and in an open discussion process agreed on the main principles and features that the CCR strategic platform should take. The decisions were incorporated into the draft platform, which was further discussed both among UNDP and UNICEF.
- In addition, the consultation process of the draft platform with the local authorities' representatives of the four municipalities was organised jointly by UNDP and UNICEF.
- As a result, the platform now serves as orientation and work-plan for four municipalities, one of which will focus on expanding the work of the Child Protection Unit to better address the needs of women victims of violence; The whole implementation process is a coordination and learning process.
- Once piloted, the Government, with UN assistance, will look towards instituting this "platform" into Government protocols on community responses to VAW;

Resourcing the UN's work in support of the Beijing PFA and Gender Targets in the MDGs

- You run the risk – in gender equality – of the "hierarchy of national priorities", as often – particularly in times of crisis – gender and human rights issues fall off the table;
- One Voice around importance of gender and DV, as core aspects of Social Inclusion and eventual integration into the EU, has helped mitigate the risk of gender falling off the table.
- National Leadership in DaO on allocation. Ultimately, for any gender work to be sustainable, the national partners must be serious in resource allocation – and the JEC is a strong mechanism for the government to show its coordination towards gender equality and Domestic Violence;
- The nature of the One UN Programme and the DaO Pilot helps prevent this – as this is a clearly articulated, integrated development assistance programme which strongly centers gender equality as a core principle. And the UNCT's commitment and the Government's commitment towards EU integration – have resulted in the following:
 - Approximately 26% of the total allocation to the One UN Programme has gone to the Joint Programme on Gender.

Accountability:

- The DaO Pilots have – through improved accountability tools such as the Gender Score Card; 180 peer review; and the working principles of the UNCT, strengthened Heads of Agencies' accountability and leadership towards Gender Equality;
- As a DaO Pilot country, the UNCT in Albania has seen firsthand the important impact a strengthened lead agency working on gender equality can have on advancing national priorities. From the perspective of the Government, to have one agency to approach and who ensures improved coordination on technical and financial support, has been essential;
- It can be envisaged that going forward, in the context of the UN reform, including the establishment of a new composite entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women, the DaO model will be extended to many more countries.