



United Nations System  
Chief Executives Board  
for Coordination

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Introductory remarks on the Annual Overview Report of the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2008/2009

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Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

It is a pleasure for me to introduce the annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) for 2008-2009 (E/2009/67). The report provides an overview of the major developments in inter-agency cooperation within the framework of the CEB during the period covering its session in October 2008 and its session in April 2009. I will also use this opportunity to share the most recent work of CEB in response to the global financial and economic crisis.

Building on intergovernmental mandates and an important set of internal reforms in the prior year, CEB responded to the demands placed on the United Nations system across a range of issues in a timely and integrated manner. The three pillars of CEB – the High-level Committee on Programmes (HLCP), the High-level Committee on Management (HLCM) and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) – worked closely together to strengthen coordination across the system on Programmatic, Administrative and Operational issues. All three Committees welcomed new leadership in 2009, with the Director-General of the ILO, Mr. Juan Somavia as Chair of HLCP, the Executive Director of WFP, Ms. Josette Sheeran, as Chair of HLCM, and the Administrator of UNDP, Ms. Helen Clark, as chair of UNDG.

During the past year, the global community suffered multiple financial, economic and social crises, the consequences of which were compounded by vulnerability due to the earlier food and energy crises. The HLCP Chair was tasked by CEB in October 2008 to lead a detailed and multi-sectoral review of the challenges facing the international community and possible UN system responses, with a view to developing a coherent and comprehensive strategy for action. Based on this effort and the outcome of the HLCP session in February 2009, Mr. Somavia submitted an Issues Paper to CEB, identifying key priority areas for its attention.

In the analysis, two important principles emerged: one, the responses to the crisis needed to be coordinated internationally. Second, they had to address the fundamental imbalances in the global economy, including market failures as well as the development, food, education, health, employment, shelter, social and environmental gaps that preceded the crisis. In other words, the task was to respond to the crisis while paving the way for a more sustainable economy.

CEB, in its Communiqué of 5 April 2009, endorsed the nine initiatives recommended to it by HLCP. These are:

1. **Additional financing for the most vulnerable**
2. **Food Security**
3. **Trade**
4. **A Green Economy Initiative**
5. **A Global Jobs Pact**
6. **A Social Protection Floor**
7. **Humanitarian, Security and Social Stability**
8. **Technology and Innovation**
9. **Monitoring and Analysis**

These nine initiatives are built upon a commitment by the UN system's leaders to deliver as one in assisting countries and the global community to confront the crisis, accelerate recovery and build a fair and inclusive globalization allowing for sustainable economic, social and

environmental development for all, while facing the future in a spirit of conviction of the need for transformational change.

Each of the initiatives is being led by one or more CEB member organizations with the relevant competence, with the voluntary participation of others who are contributing from their various perspectives. The Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations is leading the development of the Global Impact and Vulnerability Alert system which, as you know, had been requested by the G-20, and falls under the ninth CEB initiative

Earlier this week, Mr. Somavia convened a meeting of the leaders of the nine initiatives who, along with the cooperating agencies, have prepared their initial frameworks for action. These frameworks highlight the steps that must be taken on an urgent basis to hold fast to our commitments to those who depend on us, and to the future of our planet. They address the linkages between policy prescriptions at the global level and implementation based on country needs and priorities. They also clearly distinguish between the measures that must be taken now and those aimed at sustained human security over the long run. The meeting this week served to chart out a common framework for implementing the initiatives, in particular at the operational level, and to agree on a light reporting system to keep track of progress made and to ensure unity of purpose across the initiatives. All these initiatives will require support and the necessary resources.

Under the leadership of the UN Secretary-General, CEB and HLCP efforts launched early in 2007 in response to the global challenge of climate change took more concrete shape during the reporting period, with the United Nations system intensifying its efforts at a coordinated and effective delivery. With the original programmatic work at the headquarters level completed, emphasis shifted to delivering results at the regional and country levels.

In addition, the Board reviewed progress made towards mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in the policies and strategies in the United Nations system. Given the growing frequency and severity of natural disasters in recent years, CEB agreed on the need to consider disaster risk reduction as a cross-cutting issue at all levels

Given the regional dimension of these and other global challenges, HLCP focused on how best to articulate the linkage between its own global policy analysis function and the policy analytical functions of the Regional Coordination Mechanism. HLCP invited the regional commissions, as conveners of the Regional Coordination Mechanisms, to bring to the deliberations of the mechanism global issues that HLCP wished to pursue at the regional level and to bring emerging interregional issues that merited consideration at the global level to the attention of HLCP.

Turning to operational activities, CEB endorsed the management and accountability framework for the United Nations development and resident coordinator system, including a functional firewall for the resident coordinator system. The agreement established a vision to guide the creation of a better-managed and more efficient United Nations development system and outlined how accountability and management can be exercised effectively by the different actors at all levels of the UN development system. The reporting period also saw a shift in the focus of the eight delivering as-one pilot countries, from a focus on processes to working on implementation and achieving tangible results. The pilots have continued to maintain the central principle of national ownership and alignment with national priorities. Collaborative efforts were undertaken by the United Nations development system on aid effectiveness and the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus in Doha.

In an increasingly difficult operating environment, the Board expressed serious concerns over the increased safety and security risks faced by United Nations personnel in many parts of the world. At the request of the Secretary-General, a process of preparing actionable recommendations and options for a more effective United Nations system-wide security management system was initiated. In a statement that was released following the CEB spring session 2009, executive heads committed to adopting a shift in culture and mindset, from a “when to leave” to a “how to stay” approach.

The Board actively pursued the development of a plan of action for the harmonization of business practices in the United Nations system. The plan proposes initiatives in key areas covering all major management functions of organizations of the United Nations system and builds on the premise that, within a system structured around a variety of mandates, increased coherence in the working modalities of the member organizations will contribute significantly to their ability to deliver better programmatic results. The plan was developed with a view to finding and agreeing on system-wide solutions to issues that have emerged, in many cases, at the country level. As moving forward with the plan of action is contingent upon the availability of extrabudgetary resources, a funding proposal for the plan of action was circulated to potential donors in October 2008. A first contribution of approximately US\$ 270,000 has been received through the generous support of the Government of New Zealand, to fund a project on developing a common framework to deal with suspect vendors. The CEB Secretariat is planning to enhance the transparency on the plan of action by providing Member States with updated information.

Turning to management issues, HLCCM, under the auspices of the CEB, identified a common conceptual framework for introducing capital budgeting in the organizations of the United Nations system. Important steps were also taken towards greater system-wide knowledge sharing. A pilot project among several organizations successfully demonstrated the feasibility of a joint United Nations system staff directory which is now moving into production. In the area of human resources progress was made on a number of issues, including the finalization of a policy statement on staff with disabilities, the introduction of a questionnaire for the exit interviews of staff members leaving an organization and the launch of a review of the mandatory age of retirement. The CEB secretariat also took over responsibility for the development of a dual career and staff mobility programme to support staff and their families during their relocation to new duty stations. The reporting period, furthermore, marked the first year of existence of the Procurement Network of HLCCM. The emphasis of the Network will be on the harmonization of processes and practices in support of field offices, with a particular focus on the project offices in delivering-as-one pilot countries. Important progress also was made in the further development of the United Nations Global Marketplace website, which is used by more than 2,500 United

Nations procurement practitioners and host information on approximately 13,000 potential suppliers.

Finally, the reporting period saw a closer collaboration between CEB and the Joint Inspection Unit. A comprehensive CEB-led exercise assisted in the identification of relevant topics for the Unit's programme of work. CEB also worked closely with the Unit in the preparation of several of its reports, acting as both an expert subject-matter adviser and a facilitator of input from organizations on the content of the report. These initiatives, in addition to an increase in informal communication, measurably improved the collaboration between the two inter-agency bodies, to the benefit of the entire United Nations system.

CEB and its member organizations, in moving towards a more effective and coherent United Nations system, will continue to be guided by the mandates provided by Member States. I would like to underscore that the Board recognizes that coherence in the work of the United Nations system needs constant monitoring, to ensure the optimal use of resources for the benefit of the world's most vulnerable populations. Thank you.

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