

**Operational Activities Segment of ECOSOC
16 July 2012, 3.00 – 4.30 p.m.
Special Presentation on the Independent Evaluation of
Delivering-as-One Summary Report**

Draft Talking Points for Ms. Liliam Flores, Chair of the EMG, Mr Istvan Posta (JIU) and Ms. Belen Sanz (UNEG), Members of the EMG

Proposed Talking Points

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Introduction (Liliam Flores)

- **As the Chair of the Evaluation Management Group (EMG), I have the honour to present the key findings, conclusions, recommendations, and lessons learned from the Independent Evaluation of *Delivering as One*. This will be a joint presentation together with two Members of the EMG, Mr. Istvan Posta (Joint Inspection Unit) and Ms Belen Sanz (United Nations Evaluation Group).**
- **The overall governance of the evaluation was entrusted to an EMG composed of independent evaluation experts from the five regions, from two pilot countries as well as from the JIU and the UNEG. The EMG was supported by two external advisers, who provided quality assurance. The actual evaluation was carried out by a team composed of evaluation consultants. The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) has been the secretariat to the evaluation.**
- **In preparation of the evaluation, it took a little more than six months, between January and June 2011, to establish the EMG, mobilize the resources and recruit the teams of consultants. The first step was then a three-month inception phase, between July and September 2011, during which the extensive documentation was reviewed, including the reports of the country-led evaluations, and the framework terms of reference were developed. Between October 2011 and January 2012, the evaluation team then visited all eight pilot countries, regional hubs as well as headquarters locations of UN organizations in Geneva, Rome, Vienna and New York. An extensive survey on funding and**

business practices in pilot countries was conducted between December 2011 and March 2012.

- **In New York, interviews were conducted with Missions of many Member States, including self-starter countries and countries not involved in the initiative. A draft report was circulated among stakeholders in April / May 2012 and their comments were taken into consideration, as appropriate, in the summary report and also in the main report. The summary report was presented at the Vth High-Level Conference on Delivering as One in Tirana (Albania) in June 2012. It has now been submitted to the President of the General Assembly accompanied by a request to the Secretary-General to provide a management response to the recommendations in accordance with Norms and Standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group.**
- **The evaluation focuses on the eight pilots as well as on systemic issues related to the Delivering as One initiative. The evaluation does not cover the self-starters, i.e. the 30 or so countries that also adopted the Delivering as One approach on a voluntary basis or the many countries that incorporated certain elements of Delivering as One in their United nations Development Assistance Frameworks.**
- **Before presenting the outcome of the evaluation today, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the interest and support that governments of many Member States have provided to this evaluation. Funding for the evaluation was received not only from traditional development partners, but also from one country of the Group of 77 as well as from from within the United Nations system. The evaluation team also had an opportunity to conduct interviews with representatives from many Member States in New York.**
- **The final summary report is available on the website of the President of the General Assembly. On that website, you will also find the draft of the comprehensive main report prepared by the evaluation team. The summary report will be available as an official document in all UN languages in the beginning of the month of August. It will also be made available as a printed**

publication with the main report attached on a CD-ROM. We expect the entire documentation to be available on the website and in print at the beginning of the month of September 2012, i.e. in good time for the preparation of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review)

Origins of Delivering as One and the logic of the analysis (Liliam Flores)

- From the onset, it was clear that national ownership and leadership and respect for the principle “No One Size Fits All” drove Delivering as One. Indeed, we quickly understood that the “Four Ones,” recommended by the High-Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence, included “One Programme”, “One Leader”, “One Budget”, and “One Office” were interpreted and applied differently in the eight pilot countries. We also noted that there were two other “Ones” that were developed, namely the “One Voice” and the “One Fund.”
- In addition, to evaluate the results of policies, programmes and plans, it is conventional to establish the situation, which preceded implementation. However, such baseline data were largely absent.
- Since there was no agreed common framework for implementing Delivering as One beyond broad definition of the Ones, it was first necessary by the evaluation to establish a basic model against which to assess its effects at the country and United Nations system levels. This was the theory of change model.
- The evaluation used a theory-of-change approach which was based on the understanding of which basic challenges DaO was to address both a pilot country and systemic levels. The understanding was that DaO was to achieve progress in terms of better outcomes and towards three intermediate states: 1) Enhanced national ownership, 2) UN Delivers better support to countries, and 3) Reduced transaction costs. The emphasis was nevertheless to detect common

traits and features of the DaO initiative and factors that are significant for the UN system as a whole.

- The main report includes extensive evidence and analysis in accordance with UNEG norms and standards, including the framework terms of reference, key evaluation questions, as well as the methodology and limitations.

Evaluation Findings- the Six “Ones” (Belen Sanz?)

- In the pilot countries, the One Programme strategy was implemented differently.
 - a) The joint programmes were uniformly adopted in the first generation of the One Programmes, but there is some divergence in the second generation. For example, some countries have moved from a United Nations development assistance framework (UNDAF) to a United Nations development assistance programme (UNDAP). This is an associated change from joint programmes to joint programming.
 - b) While much attention has gone into increasing government access to the mandates and resources of non-resident agencies, there has been a learning process in determining the right balance between strategic focus and inclusiveness;
 - c) Many results have been reported – in particular for cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, human rights and HIV/AIDS.
 - d) Pilot countries have invested considerable efforts in improve the monitoring and evaluation systems of the One Programmes. This has proven to be a highly complex endeavour that has not yet yielded satisfactory results.
- The One Leader strategy enabled United Nations country teams to work together in programming and resource allocation. In several pilots, there is the voluntary agreement of United Nations country team members to adhere to a

code of conduct governing the relationship between their individual organizational interests and those of the country team as a whole.

- a) While there have been notable attempts to clarify this issue through the Management and Accountability System, the evaluation found that vertical accountability within organizations still prevails over horizontal accountability at country level. This means that the resident coordinator is held accountable by the United Nations country teams and the entire United Nations system, but s/he does not exercise authority over members of the United Nations country team.
 - b) Although there have been advances in strengthening common ownership of the resident coordinator system in the pilot countries, assisted by the introduction of UNDP country directors, country team members and UN organizations still express reservations concerning the effectiveness of the “firewall” between the function of the resident coordinator representing the entire United Nations system and the function of UNDP resident representative.
- The One Voice strategy has been introduced at different stages in all of the pilots. Some countries interpret it as a sub-component of One Leader, while others consider it a completely distinct component. The One Voice essentially aims at articulating common positions on development issues, with specific organizations taking the lead based on their mandates and expertise. Some pilots have formalized joint communication teams, common websites, and a United Nations-wide identity, in addition to specific organizational “brands.”
 - a) Incorporating the One Voice provided greater coherence in advocacy and policy dialogue, increased visibility, and helped foster a United Nations identity and culture among staff.
 - b) However, there has been resistance in terms of the concept of dual logos on organization-specific outputs, as some organizations feared that their specific messages would be diluted.

- All pilots adopted the **One Budgetary Framework**, which was intended to ensure transparency of planned activities and results, identify resources and funding gaps, and enhance performance.
 - a) Joint resource mobilization for agreed results under the One Programme was a major innovation in all pilots.
 - b) While this strategy allows a United Nations country team to present all planned and costed programme activities in one place, it has not been applied in a consistent way across the pilot countries.
 - c) There are also variances in financial (and programme) reporting across countries, as there is insufficient use of a common management information system.

- The **One Fund strategy** is a common pool of supplementary resources used in some countries to raise additional funds for the One Programme, preferably both multi-annual and unearmarked. Overall, the One Fund has covered a broad range of organizations, whether large or small, resident or non-resident and therefore has become a catalyst for an inclusive approach to United Nations engagement. The Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office also administers the One Funds and the Expanded Funding Window to support countries adopting the Delivering as One approach.
 - a) As innovative mechanisms for unearmarked and predictable funding, these funds can facilitate responses to national needs and priorities, especially on cross-cutting issues. However, there are doubts about the sustainability of these new arrangements, since there is currently uncertainty about donor commitments.
 - b) The role of the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office as administrative agent of the One Funds introduced some uniformity in financial approaches.

- The **One Office strategy** was not implemented uniformly, even though all of the pilots pursued business simplification and harmonization measures. For

example, these efforts focused on procurement, staff recruitment, and information technology systems. Some pursued co-location of UN organizations.

- a) Some progress was made in the area of procurement with Long-Term Agreements. Common United Nations premises and harmonization of business practices, however, in areas such as financial and human resource management have proved more difficult. Attempts to achieve greater efficiency and reduce transaction costs through the One Office strategy have faced implementation challenges.
 - b) All United Nations country teams reported savings as a result of Delivering as One, but in relation to overall costs and programme values these are relatively modest. This finding takes into account the major staff time required to generate the reported savings. Due to differences in corporate financing and accounting terminologies and definitions among UN organizations, assessment of actual savings in transaction costs for the United Nations system due to Delivering as One remained elusive. There are no convincing examples of savings reinvested in programmes.
 - c) In several countries, perception surveys were conducted among stakeholders about changes in transaction costs related to specific business practices. The overall feedback has been that transaction costs for donors and national partners are perceived to be lower with Delivering as One.
- **In conclusion, the strategies of the One Programme, One Leader, One Budget, and One Fund all achieved a moderate level of progress, but the One Voice represented strong progress.**
 - A number of strengths were observed: (1) higher level participation from Non Resident Agencies (NRAs) to address country needs and improved coverage of cross-cutting issues through the One Programme; (2) strengthened collaboration with Government through the One Leader; (3) coherent communication through the One Voice; and (4) increased flexibility for Government through the One Fund.

- **These strengths, although challenged, were not overpowered by some observed weaknesses:** (1) M&E is not yet being able to capture additional development results from “jointness” or from participation in DaO; (2) Absence of full mutual accountability between RC and UNCT; and (3) the sustainability of One Fund levels, which is in question.

- It is also concluded that the One Office strategy made **little progress**, as far as business practices of the UN system were concerned. In spite of major efforts by UNCTs and staff and some notable progress and achievements, **the countervailing weaknesses were substantial**. Two main weaknesses were noted in the report: (1) “no harmonised rules and regulations”; and (2) that “no common measures of transaction costs were found.”

- It needs to be emphasized that the ratings refer to the performance of the UN system, not of pilot countries individually or collectively. We also need to be aware that Delivering as One faced major challenges in some cases, e.g. humanitarian crises and fiscal austerity among donors. The tremendous efforts of all stakeholders involved to make Delivering as One a success are fully acknowledged.

Progress towards the immediate outcomes (Istvan Posta?)

- Progress towards the three intermediate outcomes —enhanced national ownership, better delivery of United Nations system support to countries and reduced transaction costs—was also covered in the Independent Evaluation.

- Enhanced national ownership is an **area of strong progress**. This was evident from procedures involving governments in programming, planning and management as well as from the perceptions of government stakeholders.

- With regards to the United Nations system delivering better support to countries, it is clear that there have been many achievements. To date, strengths in support of Delivering as One have been sufficient to strike an even balance

with the many weaknesses also noted at this level. Therefore, this indicates a moderate level of progress.

- The long-term objective to which Delivering as One is expected contribute is that the pilot countries should be better able to address their national development goals. According to the Independent Evaluation reports, here has been little progress toward this objective. This is also to be expected, since such an objective could easily take decades to achieve. This outcome could be expected, especially when taking into account that the total UN development system is but one player amongst many in the pilot countries.
- There has been little progress in reducing transaction costs of the UN system, where substantial weaknesses have offset gains. There are also considerable challenges to measure transaction costs.

Progress against evaluation criteria (Istvan Posta?)

- Correspondingly, this same logic has also been applied to the four evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability). While relevance has achieved a strong progress rating, efficiency is ranked at little progress. Effectiveness and Sustainability are ranked at moderate progress.
- **Last but not least, please allow me to highlight that the fact that a growing number of countries have volunteered to become self-starters has been acknowledged. However, this fact had to remain outside the scope of this evaluation given the mandate to only evaluate the eight original pilot experiences.**

Recommendations (Istvan Posta?)

The Independent Evaluation report includes a total of 12 recommendations which are designed to (1) enhance national ownership/leadership; (2) support the United Nations system to deliver better support to programme countries; and (3)

strengthen simplification and harmonization of business practices [so as] to reduce transaction costs. Each area will be discussed briefly:

(1) *For Enhancing national ownership and leadership*

- **The basic principle of voluntary adoption of Delivering as One should be maintained.**
- **Strong national coordination mechanisms need to be consolidated and links between individual United Nations organizations and line ministries should be strengthened and expanded.** National ownership and leadership has supported focused programming in cross-cutting issues (human rights, gender equality and HIV/AIDS). There could be opportunities for cooperation in other areas with broad sectoral and thematic dimensions, e.g., economic development and the environment.

(2) *For Supporting the United Nations system to deliver better support to programme countries*

- **The UNDG should consider consolidation of functions under the UNDG at headquarters level required to address different dimensions of Delivering as One and strengthening of the functional firewall and mutual accountability across the UNDG. Consolidation of these functions would greatly enhance system-wide coherence and ensure that horizontal accountabilities at country and regional levels are matched at the systemic level. As part of this recommendation, the UNDG should further strengthen the horizontal accountability of resident coordinators and United Nations country teams.**
- **The UNDG should provide further guidance on joint planning and monitoring and evaluation systems that are part of the One Programme at country level.**
- **Mechanisms tasked with independent system-wide evaluation should periodically assess the performance of system-wide approaches such as Delivering as One.**
- **The UNDG should support the use of a common One Budgetary Framework. There is a need for a common management and accountability system.**

- Member States contributing to the non-core funding of the United Nations development system and other countries in a position to do so may wish to consider the One Fund and Expanded Funding Window mechanisms as attractive complements to traditional core and non-core funding for individual organizations. Intergovernmental oversight of these mechanisms may need to be strengthened.
- United Nations organizations, notably funds and programmes, may wish to increasingly make contributions to the One Funds from their existing core and non-core contributions.
- The UNDG should further clarify the role and added value of its regional teams concerning Delivering as One.

(3) *For Strengthening simplification and harmonization of business practices to reduce transaction costs*

- Member States may wish to strongly reiterate their calls for harmonizing business practices through different boards and governing bodies. Enterprise resource planning systems should become compatible.
- The High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) and the UNDG should further strengthen cooperation on Delivering as One.

Lessons Learned (Liliam Flores?)

- The Independent Evaluation report includes a total of 20 lessons learned which cover the future implications of Delivering as One.
- Overall, the Lessons Learned which cover the performance of Delivering as One at country and systemic levels highlight:
 - a) The importance of voluntary adoption of Delivering as One;
 - b) Delivering as One's appropriateness in both least developed and middle-income countries;
 - c) Delivering as One's barriers due to the governance structures, mandates and cultures of the different UN organisations (Delivering as *if* One); and

- d) **The fact that country teams in pilot countries, with the support of resident coordinators, are approaching the limits of what can be achieved by country level innovations to reduce transaction costs and increase efficiency. Indeed, so many high-level systemic elements have not been changed for Delivering as One, the marginal cost of enhanced country level coordination is therefore increasing.**
- **The Lessons Learned also highlight specific issues which may be of interest to senior management. Notably, these Lessons Learned draw attention to:**
 - a) **The lack of shared vision about the extent of integration (including coordination) and how it can best be achieved;**
 - b) **The lack of incentives in performance appraisal and career development of UN staff in support of Delivering as One, which has thus been a barrier to the horizontal accountability of resident coordinators and United Nations country teams; and**
 - c) **The fact that transaction costs tended to increase, but this cost increase may need to be considered as inevitable investment in reform that needs to be offset against valuable benefits in the future.**
 - **Finally, the Lessons Learned which may be addressed through intergovernmental decision-making (e.g., the QCPR) were also noted. They emphasize:**
 - a) **The fact that draft common country programme documents for funds and programmes, as distinct from the UNDAP documents, have to be approved by different executive boards, and this is a cumbersome process which could be remedied if joint board meetings of the funds and programmes could be endowed with the authority to approve common country programme documents.**
 - b) **That given the mandates, policies, regulations and practices among vertically organized United Nations system organizations are diverse, strengthening horizontal accountability at all levels within existing**

legislation may require a review of intergovernmental guidance and oversight of all aspects of Delivering as One.

- c) **Governing bodies of United Nations system organizations would need to considerably modify current accountability frameworks to allow resident coordinators to take full responsibility for resources under One Funds and to be accountable for One Programme results and One Fund spending.**
- d) **While the One Fund and the Expanded Funding Window represent a valuable complement to traditional core and non-core funding, there may be need for an intergovernmental oversight over these mechanisms.**
- e) **More vigorous intergovernmental leadership and decision-making is required to further reform in the area of simplification and harmonisation.**

Final Remarks (Liliam Flores)

- **We would like to thank you for giving us an opportunity to present the outcome of the Independent Evaluation. We sincerely hope that this will be a constructive input into your deliberations.**