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Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its forty-fifth session on the evaluation of linkages between Headquarters and field activities: a review of best practices for poverty eradication in the framework of the United Nations Millennium Declaration

Summary

The present report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) is submitted in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its twenty-second session to review the implementation of its recommendations three years after taking decisions on an evaluation. OIOS finds that of the 11 recommendations from the evaluation of linkages between Headquarters and field activities, 8 have been implemented and 3 are in progress.

Progress has been made on enhancing collaboration among inter-agency coordinating bodies. According to the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) is now working within the context of CEB in support of operational activities. OIOS notes, however, that the Secretary-General did not establish a working group to review the roles and responsibilities of the inter-agency coordinating bodies on common policy issues on the eradication of poverty and hunger.

* E/AC.51/2008/1.



On knowledge management networks, OIOS notes that a structured, facilitated and strategic approach to system-wide knowledge management networks around issues of poverty eradication has not yet been introduced. Progress has been made in establishing institutional mechanisms for informing country offices about the poverty-related work of non-resident agencies. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the five regional economic commissions are now working with United Nations country teams in their respective regions. In addition, regional commissions have agreed to a cooperation framework with the United Nations Development Programme to enable them to participate and contribute more actively in the work of country offices. The reform of business practices endorsed by CEB has also facilitated the establishment of an effective framework for promoting cohesion in the context of “Delivering as one” at the country level and facilitates closer alignment of normative and operational work.

The United Nations System Staff College provides coordination training to United Nations country teams and its website is the training website for UNDG. OIOS also notes that coordination and collaboration at the country level are further encouraged by the incorporation of these elements into their individual performance appraisal and incentive systems. This, however, is not the case at Headquarters, although the secondment and movement of staff between Headquarters and field offices is now widely encouraged in the context of the Inter-agency Mobility Accord.

With regard to the resident coordinator system, OIOS notes that this has been strengthened and was considered one of the key aspects for the realization of the United Nations reforms towards “Delivering as one” at the country level. An accountability framework for resident coordinators was developed under the auspices of the UNDG task team on resident coordinator issues and is now fully operational. According to UNDG, there have been significant improvements in the selection and training of resident coordinators, which have led to a more balanced representation across all United Nations agencies.

I. Introduction

1. At its forty-fifth session in 2005, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the evaluation of linkages between Headquarters and field activities: a review of best practices for poverty eradication in the framework of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (E/AC.51/2005/2). The Committee endorsed all 11 recommendations contained in the report (see A/60/16, para. 135-139). The evaluation was undertaken in the context of the reform measures laid out by the former Secretary-General in 1997 and 2002, calling for greater coherence within the United Nations development system, improved coordination and clarification of institutional roles.

2. The present report is a triennial review of the aforementioned recommendations and describes the extent to which they have been implemented by those United Nations entities with lead responsibility for their implementation. Of the five entities to which recommendations were addressed, one reviewed the draft report and did not have any comments and the remaining four did not provide comments.

3. This triennial review was based on the following methods: (a) analysis of information provided by the respective entity with lead responsibility for implementing each recommendation, a process which is monitored twice a year by OIOS through the issue track database; (b) review of relevant documents and reports obtained from the respective entities; (c) interviews with programme managers of the respective entities; (d) interviews with other key sources to verify and validate status of implementation; and (e) review of resident coordinator annual reports from the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) website. OIOS based its review on responses received from entities as tracked every six months from the time the thematic evaluation report was issued.¹

II. Findings

4. In summary, OIOS finds that of the 11 endorsed recommendations, 8 have been fully implemented and 3 are in progress.

A. Inter-agency coordination

Recommendation 1: enhance collaboration among inter-agency coordinating bodies

The Secretary-General should appoint a working group to consider the respective roles, responsibilities and contributions of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), UNDG and the Executive Committee for Economic and Social Affairs, as well as practical measures to enhance their coordination and collaboration in regard to common policy issues that are of relevance to poverty eradication, with a view to bringing the United Nations system closer together analytically and

¹ All entities except the Executive Office of the Secretary-General provided responses during the OIOS recommendations tracking process.

operationally. OIOS notes with satisfaction the invitation extended by the Chairman of UNDG to the Chairman of the High-level Committee on Programmes of CEB to participate in meetings of the Group's Executive Committee, as well as the establishment of a task force to review the implications of General Assembly resolution 29/250 with a view to identifying concrete ways for the Committee and the Group to complement each other's work.

The Committee for Programme and Coordination further recommended that the Secretary-General consider appropriate and balanced representation in the working group and, in this context, take steps to enhance inter-agency coordination to fight hunger in the framework of the Millennium Declaration.

5. In October 2006, CEB initiated a review of its functions and structures (see CEB/2006/2). The review was undertaken by a group led by the Directors-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), and included the Chairmen of the High-level Committee on Programmes, the High-level Committee on Management and UNDG. The process was concluded at the fall session of 2007 when the Executive Heads endorsed the group's recommendations that CEB should have three pillars: management and administration; programme and policy coherence; and operational activities. They further agreed that UNDG should operate within the framework of CEB, to consolidate system-wide ownership of the effort to strengthen coherence and effectiveness of operational work at the country level by integrating it in the wider policy and normative context. OIOS acknowledges the progress made by CEB to better define its functions and further streamline its structures with those of the UNDG. OIOS notes, however, that the Committee for Programme and Coordination had specifically recommended the establishment of a working group to consider the roles and functions of CEB, UNDG and the Executive Committee of Economic and Social Affairs. No evidence of the establishment of such a working group was obtained.

6. OIOS also notes that similar recommendations on enhancing coordination of inter-agency coordinating bodies were made in the report of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence (see A/61/583). In a report on the follow-up to these recommendations (A/61/836, para. 21), the Secretary-General had undertaken to give due consideration to the proposal to establish an independent task force to further eliminate duplication within the United Nations system.

7. OIOS considers this recommendation in progress. The Secretary-General has not established a working group to consider the respective roles of the inter-agency coordination bodies in order to enhance their coordination and collaboration, specifically on the eradication of poverty and hunger.

B. Information sharing

Recommendation 2: introduce a more structured, facilitated and strategic approach to system-wide knowledge management networks

Knowledge management networks should be effectively utilized to enhance the sharing of information and expertise in the United Nations. Two ways of achieving this are to broaden membership of existing networks and to create

new system-wide communities of practices around poverty eradication issues. In particular, participation in the poverty network currently administered by UNDP should be open to all staff engaged in poverty work in the United Nations system. Information shared through networks must be prioritized to safeguard users from information overload. This could involve the consolidation of existing networks, as well as the creation of a continuum of users linked through overlapping memberships. OIOS considers that UNDG, in consultation with UNDP and CEB, is in the best position to take the lead in steering this process. The current work of the Board and the Information and Communication Technology Network on developing a vision for system-wide knowledge-sharing should be considered in this effort.

8. In order to support the development of global knowledge-sharing and networking among United Nations agencies on the Millennium Development Goals, UNDG is promoting the development of a policy network that will bring together the expertise of the United Nations system and partners to support countries in implementing Millennium Development Goals-based national development strategies (see E/2007/5). UNDG established a network of United Nations-system colleagues on knowledge-networking, in which several United Nations agencies participate. Several global networks have been established in the areas of human rights (HuriTalk), the Millennium Development Goals Network (MDGNet) and EvalNet, which is a network of the United Nations Evaluation Group.² OIOS notes, however, that only the Coordination Practice Network (CPN), with a membership of 1,400 comprising 25 United Nations agencies, is hosted and actually driven by UNDG. OIOS also notes another initiative of the United Nations country team in India known as Solution Exchange.³ An initial assessment of Solution Exchange was undertaken in 2007 and, based on the findings from that assessment, UNDG is now in the process of replicating it in other countries.

9. In late 2004, a Knowledge Management Working Group chaired by the United Nations Population Fund was established with a mandate to pilot a knowledge management approach so as to improve performance and effectiveness at the country level. In its report on the tenth session, the High-level Committee on Management referred to the Working Group as part of ongoing efforts to develop a system-wide knowledge management strategy in response to the request of the High-level Committee on Programmes made by the latter, at its eighth session (see CEB/2005/HLCM/R.19). OIOS notes, however, that the Working Group stopped functioning in 2006 and did not develop the strategic framework necessary to guide operationalization of knowledge management in the United Nations system. However, it has recently started meeting under the leadership of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and plans to deliver its first report by the second quarter

² The United Nations Human Rights Policy Network (HuriTalk) facilitates dialogue on human rights in a development context, has over 1,200 members from more than 12 United Nations entities and is hosted by the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre. The Millennium Development Goals Knowledge Network (MDGNet) is led and hosted by UNDP, and includes over 1,900 members, representing over 130 countries, 25 United Nations entities and more than 600 representatives of Governments, civil society groups, donors, academia, research institutes and the private sector. EvalNet has a membership of 43 agencies.

³ Solution Exchange is an initiative of the United Nations country team in India that offers communities of development practitioners a United Nations-sponsored space where they can provide and benefit from each other's solutions to their day-to-day challenges.

of 2008. A recommendation for the establishment of a United Nations system-wide knowledge management strategy was also made in the OIOS report on the thematic evaluation of knowledge management networks in pursuit of the goals of the Millennium Declaration (E/AC.51/2006/2) and OIOS continues to track its progress.

10. OIOS considers this recommendation in progress. UNDG and CEB should continue efforts to introduce a more structured and strategic approach to system-wide knowledge management networks.

Recommendation 3: better inform country offices about the work of Secretariat entities with little or no country presence

(a) UNDG, in consultation with the High-level Committee on Programmes of CEB (which gives regular consideration to keeping country-level offices informed and to promoting the flow of information between Headquarters and regional offices as part of its work programme), should determine how country teams can be better informed about the activities of non-resident agencies whose expertise and comparative advantage are relevant to national poverty eradication priorities, and how to increase collaboration between country teams and these agencies, including through inter-agency partnerships and through work on joint projects and programmes. UNDG should also consider how country teams can be more proactive in involving the regional commissions and other regional entities in the preparation of common country assessments and United Nations development assistance frameworks.

11. The Executive Committee of UNDG established a task team on non-resident agencies to review and make recommendations on improving the participation of entities without country representation in the processes of the United Nations country teams. From October 2005 to March 2006, the team was chaired by the United Nations Environment Programme and has since been chaired by the Regional Commissions New York Office. The team presented its first report in March 2006, in which it identified five key obstacles that hampered effective participation of non-resident agencies in the work of country teams and prevented resident agency access to non-resident agency knowledge and expertise.⁴ It recommended a list of short- and medium-term measures that could help remove these obstacles, including: (a) designating focal points in the resident coordinator's office, resident agencies and non-resident agencies' offices; (b) increasing the human and financial resources of non-resident agencies; (c) exchanging information between resident and non-resident agencies; and (d) obtaining United Nations country team membership for non-resident agencies to facilitate their participation in the common country assessment, United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and poverty reduction strategy paper processes.

12. In March 2007, following the decision to finance dedicated capacity for outreach to non-resident agencies, UNDP provided funding for the establishment of a non-resident agency coordination analyst in 14 pilot countries — comprising the 8 "One-UN" pilots and 6 others that were scheduled to develop their UNDAF in

⁴ The obstacles were identified as (lack of) capacity, commitment, consistency, communication and coordination (report of the UNDG Working Group on Non-Resident Agencies: Enhancing the participation of non-resident agencies in United Nations country-level development activities).

2007.⁵ The primary function of the coordination analysts, as stated in the terms of reference for this position, is to provide support for the inclusion and equal participation of non-resident United Nations agencies and other entities during the One-UN process, notably in the development of the One Programme, ensuring that the products reflect the full normative and analytical expertise available within the United Nations system. OIOS notes that an assessment of this initiative is scheduled for the first quarter of 2008.

13. The OIOS review of resident coordinator annual reports revealed that representatives and other staff of non-resident specialized agencies were regular members of United Nations country teams.⁶ For example, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development currently participates in collaboration with other United Nations agencies (resident and non-resident) in all eight One-UN pilot countries. Resident coordinators also note in their reports that attempts are increasingly being made to involve non-resident agencies in common country assessment and UNDAF processes, but the level of their participation is not always sufficient or satisfactory.

14. OIOS also reviewed an assessment presented by the task team on non-resident agencies on the “Delivering as one” pilots. That report acknowledges that there is increased visibility of non-resident agencies at the country level and that linkages between normative and operational work have therefore been strengthened. However, the report also notes that much of the progress is due to individual agency and resident coordinator initiatives, not to actual institutional mechanisms. Some specialized agencies have their own planning frameworks that may not be coordinated with the common country assessment and UNDAF, which constrains their contribution and engagement as non-resident agencies.⁷ These agencies have expressed a preference for a cluster approach in which only agencies working in the same sector can collaborate on joint programmes.⁸ This would place the lead coordinating roles with technically competent entities rather than with the resident coordinator. In its efforts to address this issue, UNDG and the task team on non-resident agencies are creating a non-resident agency section in the UNDG website where non-resident agency information, resources and tools will be made available to coordination analysts and country teams.

15. OIOS considers this recommendation implemented.

⁵ The 14 pilot countries are Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay and Vietnam (“Delivering as one” pilots); Afghanistan, Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Ecuador, Niger and Nigeria (UNDAF pilots).

⁶ For example, in the 2006 annual report, the Resident Coordinator for Albania reported that the World Health Organization, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund were members of the United Nations country team, with the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Fund for Agricultural Development having expressed interest in joining the One-UN programme in Albania; <http://www.undg.org/rcar>.

⁷ For example, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) uses the national medium-term priority framework; ILO has decent work country programmes; and the World Health Organization uses the country cooperation strategy.

⁸ For example, in Cape Verde, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Trade Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and FAO are collaborating in the trade and productive sector under the lead of UNCTAD and FAO logistical support.

(b) The Department of Economic and Social Affairs should determine practical ways of informing country offices about its poverty-related activities, including through strategic field missions and periodic news bulletins targeted to country teams.

16. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs collaborates with the regional commissions to complement their expertise in support of United Nations country teams. Through its Division for Social Policy Development, the Department is a member of the Network on Poverty Reduction of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development — Development Assistance Committee. This division also actively participates in the UNDP PovNet and MDGNet. For example, in February 2007, the Department launched the MDGNet e-discussion, “Strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger”, in a joint initiative with the UNDP Bureau for Development Policy.⁹ In collaboration with regional commissions, the Department holds regional social policy initiatives to support poverty reduction and social inclusion. In this regard, a ministerial meeting of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in November 2006.¹⁰ The Department also participated in regional meetings of Ministers of Social Development in Argentina and Uruguay (February 2006), Kenya (January 2007) and France (October 2007). In the Arab region, it developed and executed a three-year programme on Arab youth and the Millennium Development Goals, jointly with UNDP and United Nations country teams.

17. With regard to strategic field visits, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs noted that they were demand-driven initiatives that were conducted in response to specific requests by Member States and United Nations country teams. Examples of such strategic field visits include (a) a coordinated effort by several Department divisions and UNDP to support the development of a national development strategy by the Government of Bolivia in the areas of pro-poor macroeconomics, natural resource management and rural and social development (March-May 2006), (b) support to the UNDAF process in Ecuador (September 2007), (c) support to the formulation of a national strategy on ageing and disability at the request of the Government of Armenia, and (d) support to the development of a family policy in the Maldives, in coordination with UNDP and UNICEF.¹¹

18. Furthermore, as the secretariat for the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has been

⁹ Summary report of a four-week-long moderated e-discussion conducted in preparation for the Economic and Social Council annual ministerial substantive review to assess the goals and targets agreed at major United Nations conferences and summits over the past 15 years which constitute the United Nations Development Agenda; <http://www.un.org/ecosoc/newfunct/AMRediscussionsummary.pdf>.

¹⁰ Meeting of Ministers of Social Development of SADC: Johannesburg Declaration in Support of an African Regional Policy; and document (with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs), “Towards an African regional policy”, November 2008.

¹¹ The UNICEF Regional Office South Asia (ROSA) also reported on its cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to conceptualize child rights-oriented social policies. Specific Department outputs included advisory services to Nepal’s Planning Commission, conceptual work, participation in political consultations and co-drafting of a post-conflict employment and social strategy for Nepal.

systematically participating in the work of UNDG in order to promote the integration of indigenous issues in operational activities. As a result, the common country assessment/UNDAF guidelines now contain references to indigenous issues and a UNDG task team was established in 2006 to develop the UNDG guidelines on indigenous peoples' issues for United Nations country teams. In addition, a resource kit on indigenous issues is being developed by the Department in cooperation with other agencies and will be used in capacity development at the field level as of 2008.

19. Since 2006, following an assessment of its traditional hard-copy news bulletins, whose dissemination was not always punctual owing in part to funding problems and delays in translations, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has now switched to more practical electronic bulletins and newsletters, such as "Youth Flash", "Message Stick" on indigenous issues and the "UN Network on Ageing" newsletter. These publications are widely subscribed to by United Nations country teams. For example, the newsletter on ageing has 70 United Nations country team subscribers. The Department also distributes its youth newsletter to relevant focal points in the various specialized agencies, funds and programmes, who in turn forward them to their country offices. In June 2007, a new product, entitled "Policy notes for national development strategies", was approved in English, but owing to financial constraints, translation into other official languages will not be completed until 2008. This product will be evaluated after a four-year time frame.¹² Since 2005, the Department has also been issuing working papers to stimulate debate on topical issues. Sixty-two papers have been published to date, all with a central focus on equitable development for poverty reduction. According to the Department, these papers enjoy high international repute and are widely quoted by such development institutions as the UNDP International Poverty Centre.

20. OIOS considers this recommendation implemented.

Recommendation 4: establish mechanisms for the regular exchange of information between the regional commissions and country offices

The regional commissions should enhance their capacity to inform systematically and work together with country offices on areas of mutual interest in regard to poverty eradication activities and establish clear guidelines on how this exchange would work. This can include, on a regular basis, publication of newsletters, electronic bulletins, briefings with country teams in their respective regions and/or participation in the common country assessment and UNDAF processes. The regional commissions should also consider how to strengthen their websites as platforms for the exchange of regional best practices and lessons learned. The Regional Commissions New York Office should serve as a focal point in this regard.

21. In fulfilling their roles as outlined at the World Summit Outcome, the regional commissions established the regional consultations mechanism in their respective

¹² These are series of Department of Economic and Social Affairs online publications covering six policy areas — macroeconomics and growth, finance, State-owned enterprise reform, investment and technology, social policy and trade. The aim is to provide policymakers with options to standard solutions for preparing national development strategies, as called for at the Millennium Summit.

regions to promote coherence at the regional level.¹³ The Deputy Secretary-General chaired the last two mechanisms convened by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in 2007, and is expected to chair the upcoming mechanisms in other regions. In its resolution 2006/14, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to encourage the specialized agencies, programmes and funds to seek, within their decentralization and regionalization efforts, synergies and complementarities with each other and the regional commissions. The regional commissions have now signed a cooperation framework with UNDP, outlining their areas of cooperation and highlighting their convening power at the regional level.¹⁴ In addition, some regional commissions have signed a bilateral memorandum of understanding with respective regional bureaux of UNDP to elaborate specific areas and modalities of cooperation in their respective regions. OIOS also notes that UNDG established a regional Peer Support Group, which mandates the regional directors of UNDG agencies and the Executive Secretary of the relevant regional commission, in consultation with designated representatives of other agencies that do not have regional directors, to nominate staff to serve on the Peer Support Group for the duration of the preparation of the common country assessment and UNDAF process.

22. Furthermore, regional director teams have been established in all regions, with membership and full participation of key regional specialized agencies. In addition, all regional commissions are urging their regional advisers to include regional and subregional or cross-boundary issues in the country processes. For example, in ECA, many programmes and funds have established a Liaison Officer post at the Commission and jointly produce a common newsletter for the region, and ECLAC is intensifying its cooperation with selected United Nations country teams through its subregional office in Mexico. In February 2008, the Regional Commissions New York Office launched its revamped website that provides a corporate window for the five regional commissions, featuring global activities, dialogues and presentations by the Executive Secretaries. OIOS further notes that the New York Office is the current chair of the UNDG task team on non-resident agencies.

23. OIOS considers this recommendation implemented.

Recommendation 5: review management and administrative procedures in order to foster effective linkages

The High-level Committee on Management of CEB should assume the leadership in establishing guidelines for Secretariat departments to review their management and administrative procedures so as to ensure that they do not hamper linkages between Headquarters and field offices. On a broader

¹³ For example, to fulfil its role of regional coordinator of United Nations support to the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the Economic Commission for Africa coordinates the regional consultations mechanism, whose aims are to improve coordination among the United Nations agencies working in Africa.

¹⁴ In article VI, sect. II, para. 8, of the cooperation framework, it is stated that in line with General Assembly resolution 59/250, areas of joint priority collaboration may include facilitation by the United Nations resident coordinators of the involvement of the regional commissions, as non-resident agencies, in analytical and planning exercises by United Nations country teams, including participation in the regional Peer Support Groups, and in common country assessment/UNDAF processes based on country context and national development priorities.

level, the review should examine linkage structures to make certain that communication is clear and consistent in the Headquarters/field transmission line. At the working level, the review should include an assessment of work planning processes, reporting lines, budget protocols and personnel practices.

24. At its eleventh session in March 2006, the High-level Committee on Management expressed the view that management reforms should focus on achieving greater impact throughout the system, including streamlining of the Secretariat's structure, simplifying personnel and financial rules and regulations, and adopting a universal knowledge management system (see CEB/2006/3). To facilitate wider participation and the exchange of information, a section of the Committee website has been specifically dedicated to management reforms. At its twelfth session in October 2006, the Committee endorsed a plan to implement a new enterprise resource planning system for the Secretariat. A working group was established to analyse the needs of the Organization and to evaluate options, taking into account the experiences of UNDP and UNICEF, which had already concluded contracts with PeopleSoft/Oracle and Systems Application and Products, respectively. The Committee resolved that the management reforms should streamline recruitment systems and harmonize conditions of service, further noting that "unlike in the past, when operations had been headquarters-focused and generally stable, the United Nations today employs a large number of staff in the field" (CEB/2006/5, para. 41).

25. At its thirteenth session in April 2007, the High-level Committee on Management endorsed the plan presented by its Human Resources Network, outlining the possible content and modalities of a system-wide response to the recommendations of the "Delivering as one" report made by the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence (see CEB/2007/3). The plan grouped the recommendations into six broad subject areas: (a) cross-cutting general management; (b) accountability and oversight; (c) data warehouses; (d) human resources management; (e) financial management; and (f) knowledge-sharing. The Finance and Budget Network also reported on such relevant issues as system-wide adoption of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards. Following endorsement of the plan of action for the harmonization and reform of business practices by CEB at its April 2007 session, a steering group was established to develop a detailed plan of action, guided by the two fundamental principles of achieving efficiencies and promoting the concept of "Delivering as one" at the country level. OIOS notes the opportunity within this plan to address issues of Headquarters and field management and administrative linkages.

26. Addressing the second regular session of 2007 of CEB, the Secretary-General underlined the importance of effective, transparent and harmonized administrative and management procedures, noting that that had been one of his priorities since assuming office (see CEB/2007/2). The Board endorsed the plan of action for the harmonization and reform of business practices proposed by the High-level Committee on Management with a view to having some of the proposals completed within a period of eight months, while the more complex ones would be completed in two to three years. The Board further agreed that the financing of the plan would be arranged through extrabudgetary funding and would not initially be charged to the budgets of any United Nations-system organization.

27. OIOS considers this recommendation implemented. While there are no specific guidelines for review of management and administrative procedures by Secretariat departments, OIOS considers that the plan of action for the harmonization and reform of business practices adequately addresses the recommendation.

C. Management practices

Recommendation 6: establish system-wide training on common coordination methods and tools and on thematic poverty issues

(a) The High-level Committee on Management of CEB, in consultation with the United Nations System Staff College, should assume the leadership in promoting system-wide training that addresses the methods and tools through which to achieve effective coordination, taking into account the needs of inter-agency collaboration and communication. The training offered by the Staff College, as well as the coordination training for country teams and regional staff currently conducted by the Office of UNDG, can be considered for system-wide training and particularly encompass both Headquarters and field staff. The training should disseminate common protocols for meetings and teleconferences in order to enhance their effectiveness as linkage tools.

28. In September 2006, the High-level Committee on Management endorsed the business plan of the United Nations System Staff College. The plan outlines the role of the Staff College as the centre for system-wide training on coordination and collaboration.¹⁵ The College states that it takes its cues from the various policy documents of CEB and its high-level committees, pronouncements of the Secretary-General, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and ad hoc reports. OIOS notes that the College structure is conducive to system-wide training in coordination. For example, its Programmes Department has four strategic programmes: (a) leadership and management; (b) peace and security; (c) development cooperation; and (d) United Nations-system learning and training services. Two objectives of the leadership and management programme are to enhance inter-agency cohesion and coordination, and to promote increased mobility and learning across the system. Furthermore, the learning and training services programme incorporates inter-agency learning tools, such as the online United Nations system induction programme, “Welcome to the United Nations”, and provides a platform for networking and the exchange of good practice. OIOS notes, however, that it was unable to conclude that College training programmes incorporated common protocols for meetings and teleconferences, as suggested in the recommendation.

29. OIOS also notes that UNDG hosts a coordination practice network on its website. The network allows United Nations-system staff with an interest in United Nations coordination to share their good practices and experiences, launch new ideas and increase their knowledge about how to implement the United Nations reform agenda. A key function of the network is to provide Organization policymakers with practical experiences and ideas for improvement and to test and

¹⁵ The objective of the United Nations System Staff College is to provide management development with a view to strengthening collaboration within the system in areas of common organizational responsibility, increasing operational effectiveness and developing a more cohesive system-wide management culture.

validate new reform policies. The network workspace provides users with three basic services: (a) a discussion archive that includes all network discussions with summaries and individual messages; (b) good practices and lessons learned, offering detailed descriptions of valuable experiences from member contributions; and (c) a coordination expert roster that constitutes a listing of people with experience in coordination to allow members one-on-one advice on specific issues. OIOS notes that this is an effective and practical training platform for system-wide coordination that also complements and strengthens the formal training offered by the United Nations System Staff College.

30. OIOS considers this recommendation implemented. While there are no specific training modules on common protocols for meetings and teleconferences, OIOS considers that the system-wide training on coordination and collaboration offered by the United Nations System Staff College adequately addresses the recommendation.

(b) System-wide training on thematic issues of relevance to poverty eradication should also be explored with a view to involving both Headquarters and field staff in order to exchange best practices and enhance awareness of how their work fits into the overall poverty eradication activities of the United Nations system.

31. In its resolution 2006/14 on the review of progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 59/250, the Economic and Social Council stressed the need for a systematic and the comprehensive capacity-building effort to support the preparation and implementation of national development strategies, which should benefit from strengthened linkages between the normative work of the United Nations system and its operational activities. In close consultation with the High-level Committee on Programmes, UNDG established a working group on capacity development. The working group developed a position statement which sets out the framework and key roles of United Nations country teams, tools and resources, including a matrix of optional roles for the country teams to undertake during the national planning cycle.¹⁶

32. In February 2007 the working group on capacity development published a template of United Nations-system capacity-development tools that contribute to poverty eradication and the common country assessment/UNDAF, including gender mainstreaming and human rights-based approaches. The document provides an overview of capacity-development tools used by different United Nations agencies that could be adopted in other agencies and United Nations country teams. The template includes a number of capacity-development tools, guidelines, guidance notes, training manuals, briefing notes and handbooks. The common country assessment and UNDAF guidelines have been revised and now highlight capacity development as one of the basic principles of United Nations programming at the country level. OIOS also notes that the United Nations System Staff College runs train-the-trainer courses that are attended by staff from Headquarters and field offices, including on the common country assessment, UNDAF and poverty reduction strategy papers. Selected staff are then invited to conduct training for country teams, further providing an opportunity for exchange of awareness of their different roles and functions.

¹⁶ "Enhancing the UN's contribution to national capacity development", October 2006.

33. OIOS considers this recommendation implemented.

Recommendation 7: incorporate coordination and collaboration in performance appraisals and incentives

The High-level Committee on Management of CEB should encourage and coordinate efforts by Secretariat departments to systematically and consistently incorporate the job elements of coordination and collaboration for all staff, beyond the more general managerial competences of “building partnerships” and “communication”, into individual performance appraisal systems, including by establishing common indicators of success. Incentives for working on joint activities should also be explored.

34. At the retreat held on 15 July 2005, the Executive Committee of UNDG agreed to develop a system for the mutual, reciprocal appraisal of resident coordinator and country team members’ performance against their agreed workplan. UNDG launched globally a pilot programme for a Web-based, reciprocal 180-degree assessment tool for resident coordinators and United Nations country team members, which was implemented in 2007. This system allows resident coordinators and country team members to receive at the end of the year a single final rating that reflects the different roles that they play. Executive Committee agency representatives are also formally rated on their contribution to the country team, within their agency’s performance appraisal system. Teams of regional directors in each region also work together on a regular basis to provide guidance and supervision to their field staff. They meet once a year to review the performance of the resident coordinator and members of the country team, using the 180-degree performance appraisal tool to assess their performance against their planned UNDAF results. OIOS notes that the tool has great potential for ensuring that job elements of coordination and collaboration are integrated into individual performance appraisal at the country level.

35. OIOS was unable to conclude that coordination and collaboration are incorporated into the performance appraisal system of United Nations Secretariat departments. The guidelines for the Performance Appraisal System (PAS) do not contain any reference to “inter-agency coordination” in the performance appraisal criteria (see ST/AI/1999/14).

36. OIOS considers this recommendation in progress. OIOS encourages Secretariat programmes to continue to seek ways of incorporating elements of coordination and collaboration into individual staff performance appraisal systems at the Headquarters level.

Recommendation 8: encourage staff secondments between Headquarters and field offices

The High-level Committee on Management of CEB, in consultation with UNDG, should promote staff secondments between Headquarters and field offices to encourage learning and an appreciation of their complementary roles and functions. OIOS notes that, in April 2004, CEB approved a policy statement on staff mobility, in which it stated that the executive heads would actively promote inter-agency mobility.

37. At its July 2005 meeting, the Human Resources Network of the High-level Committee on Management established an ad hoc working group to finalize the Inter-Organization Mobility Accord for consideration and endorsement. In October 2005 at its tenth session, the Committee considered the final version of the Accord and approved it for immediate issuance by the United Nations system (see CEB/2005/5, paras. 55-57, and annex V). Thirty-two agencies signed the Accord, which is available on the CEB website (<http://hr.unsystemceb.org>). A year into its implementation, the Joint Inspection Unit undertook an evaluation of the Accord and recommended that the Secretary-General should resolve the challenges of staff mobility and report to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session (see JIU/REP/2006/7). As part of its response, the Committee, at its fourteenth session, approved the plan of action on the harmonization and reform of business practices. The plan sets out a strategy for harmonizing staff regulations and rules in order to obtain greater cohesion across the United Nations system, eliminate the impediments to staff mobility between organizations of the United Nations common system and reduce competition for high-quality staff among the United Nations-system organizations. In addition, a framework for the harmonization and coordination of staff mobility and well-being is being finalized under the purview of the Human Resources Network. Under this initiative, mandatory staff mobility has been introduced in the Secretariat of the United Nations. In January 2007, the Secretary-General met with heads of funds and programmes to discuss the need to ensure staff mobility between the funds and programmes and the Secretariat as a way to give real meaning to the concept of a truly mobile, multifunctional staff, serving one United Nations family, system-wide.

38. OIOS considers this recommendation implemented.

D. Resident coordinator system

Recommendation 9: further strengthen the capacity of the resident coordinator system as a linkage tool

OIOS fully supports the recent efforts of UNDG to strengthen the resident coordinator system and enhance the capacity of the offices of the resident coordinators to effectively bring about coordination and cohesion in the various activities of the United Nations system at the country level. OIOS takes note of General Assembly resolution 59/250, in which the Assembly urged the broader United Nations system to provide further financial, technical and organizational support to the resident coordinator system. In its efforts to strengthen the resident coordinator system, UNDG should pay particular attention to the capacity of the resident coordinator system to link effectively with Headquarters offices and report to CEB on the progress made in that regard.

39. In the World Summit Outcome, the General Assembly expressed support for (a) strengthening linkages between the normative work of the United Nations and its operational activities, and (b) implementing reforms aimed at better performing United Nations country presence with a strengthened role for the senior resident official, including appropriate authority, resources and accountability, and a common management, programming and monitoring framework (see General Assembly resolution 60/1). In follow-up to the World Summit Outcome, the

Secretary-General tasked undg to take the lead in implementing the resolution (see A/60/430, para. 40). Through the undg Support Group, an inter-agency working group on resident coordinator issues was formed and tasked to prepare an accountability framework for resident coordinators and United Nations country teams. A comprehensive accountability framework is now in place and includes a new performance appraisal system for resident coordinators and country teams that rates their performance against a common workplan.

40. OIOS notes that considerable progress has been made in strengthening the functions of the resident coordinator system. The selection process and training of resident coordinators was improved by a competency assessment administered by an external company and an incentive system was developed in order to attract the best qualified candidates. This resulted in broader representation of United Nations agencies and more equitable gender balance in the appointment of resident coordinators.¹⁷ OIOS further notes that by 2006, UNDP had appointed 28 country directors to run its own affairs so that the resident coordinators could concentrate on the tasks of wider representation and leadership of the United Nations system in the country. Since 2006, resident coordinators have been introduced to a new training module to enhance their familiarity with the mandates and programming approaches of United Nations agencies. One national or international coordination officer is now established in the resident coordinators' office and there is an agreement to assign one National Officer dedicated to enhanced support to non-resident agencies in all United Nations country teams.

41. OIOS considers this recommendation implemented.

III. Conclusion

42. OIOS notes that many of the issues addressed in the recommendations of the OIOS report on the evaluation of Headquarters and field linkages have been addressed in the broader framework of initiatives taken to enhance United Nations coordination, in particular in relation to recommendations made by the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence.

43. While OIOS acknowledges the progress that has been made towards streamlining the functions of CEB and undg, more is needed to achieve greater system coherence and improved coordination, including greater clarification of institutional roles and responsibilities to eliminate overlap and duplication of effort. This should include involvement of the Executive Committee for Economic and Social Affairs. undg has taken adequate steps to institutionalize mechanisms for facilitating the participation and contribution of United Nations agencies without country presence into the operational activities of United Nations country teams. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the regional economic commissions, in particular, have effectively made their expertise available to country teams by contributing to the common country assessment, UNDAF and the poverty reduction strategy paper processes.

44. With regard to management practices in administration and human resources, OIOS notes that the training offered by the United Nations System Staff College

¹⁷ In 2007, of the 134 resident coordinators, 31 per cent were non-UNDP, 32 per cent were female and 49 per cent were from the South.

incorporates administrative tools that are needed to foster effective linkages between Headquarters and field activities. The issue of staff secondments between Headquarters and field offices has also been addressed in the wider framework of the Inter-agency Mobility Accord and steps have been taken to strengthen the resident coordinator system as a linkage tool. However, the issue of incorporating coordination and collaboration in the performance appraisal and incentive systems warrants further attention.

45. OIOS notes that three recommendations are still in progress and encourages the following actions to be taken in order to address the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination: (a) the Secretary-General should establish a working group to review the respective roles, responsibilities and contributions of CEB, UNDG and the Executive Committee of Economic and Social Affairs in order to enhance their coordination and collaboration in regard to common policy issues of relevance to the eradication of poverty and hunger; (b) UNDG should work in consultation with UNDP and CEB to introduce a structured and strategic approach to system-wide knowledge management networks; and (c) CEB should encourage and coordinate efforts by Secretariat departments to incorporate job elements of coordination and collaboration into individual performance appraisal systems at the Headquarters level.

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