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Programme questions: evaluation

### Evaluation of United Nations support for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and Africa

#### Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

**“Misalignment between expectations, capacities and accountability arrangements hinders programmatic focus and attainment of results”**

#### *Summary*

The Office of Internal Oversight Services, at the request of the General Assembly, has assessed the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD).

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) finds that:

- The results frameworks mandated for and embedded in the budgets of both the Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD involve the expectation of contributions to change far beyond the realm of the respective programme managers’ influence. Resource and capacity constraints make it unrealistic to exert any detectable influence on, for example, the coordination of United Nations affairs in Africa. There are high expectations

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\* E/AC.51/2009/1.



with regard to these programmes even without an unambiguous agreement among the multiple stakeholders on what can be reasonably expected given the limited capacities available. A lack of programmatic focus and insufficient communication with stakeholders worsen the situation.

- The main achievement of the two programmes is their contribution to heightened policy attention to the special development needs of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and Africa at United Nations-convened global forums. There is an unclear division of labour between the programmes and other actors within the United Nations. As perceived by Member States and United Nations partners, and within the entities themselves, there are multiple interpretations of what their operational priorities should be.
- Considerable overlaps exist between the countries covered by the Office of the High Representative by United Nations support for NEPAD. Of the 53 African countries covered by the latter, 37 are also covered under one or more of the subprogrammes of the Office of the High Representative. Conversely, more than one third of the 90 countries covered by the Office of the High Representative are in Africa. The potential for synergy between the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, as small offices with overlapping mandates, has not been exploited.
- Misalignment between United Nations support for NEPAD budget and organizational structure has led to little coordination within the three subprogrammes. No single senior officer is responsible for the overall results of United Nations support for NEPAD. At the same time, the parallel arrangements of the Office of the High Representative and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs amid a fragmented structure in support of small island developing States need better coordination. These governance constraints have limited the effectiveness of United Nations support for NEPAD and the Office of the High Representative.

The five recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services include the recommendation that a review should be undertaken to translate the respective mandates into a narrower and more clearly defined programmatic focus and that revised (joint or individual) strategic frameworks be submitted for consideration by the General Assembly. Also, OIOS recommends that reviews be undertaken to combine administrative and advocacy functions of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the Office of the High Representative and that the three subprogrammes under United Nations support for NEPAD in any case be brought under the responsibility and oversight of one senior officer. Likewise, the programme of United Nations system support for NEPAD should formulate a proposal for the purpose of strengthening the support for the regional consultative mechanism for Africa. Lastly, the Office of the High Representative and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs should clarify their respective roles and develop a joint action plan to bring coherence and provide guidance to United Nations system efforts in support of small island developing States.

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## I. Introduction

1. At its sixty-first session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 61/235, in which it endorsed the decision of the Committee for Programme Coordination requesting the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) to conduct an in-depth evaluation of United Nations support for the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and Africa, for the consideration of the Committee at its forty-ninth session, in 2009.

2. The present final report incorporates comments received from the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and parts of the United Nations system supporting the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which are reflected in italics.

## II. Background

### A. Evaluation objective, scope and methodology

3. The OIOS evaluation focused on sections 10 and 11 of the budget of the United Nations and programmes 8 and 9 of the biennial programme plan for 2008-2009, corresponding to the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and United Nations support for NEPAD.<sup>1</sup>

4. The evaluation examines the strategic frameworks of the Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD, comprising the following subprogrammes and their operational objectives:<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> NEPAD is the vision and strategic framework adopted by African leaders at the 37th Summit of the Organization of African Unity (which preceded the African Union of today), held in Lusaka in July 2001 to address poverty and underdevelopment throughout the African continent. NEPAD reflects the priorities on meeting the special needs of Africa as set out in the Millennium Declaration, namely, (a) supporting the political and institutional structures of emerging democracies in Africa; (b) further building peacekeeping capacity, in cooperation with regional organizations; (c) taking special measures to address the challenges of poverty reduction and sustainable development by cancelling debt; (d) increasing official development assistance; (e) enhancing private capital flows and building capacity for trade; and (f) helping Africa to build its capacity to tackle the spread of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. The NEPAD secretariat, based in South Africa, coordinates the implementation of projects and programmes.

<sup>2</sup> A/62/6 (Sect. 10) and (Sect. 11). *The Office of the High Representative commented that changes have been proposed to its programme objectives for the biennium 2010-2011.*

Table 1  
**Result frameworks of the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and United Nations support for NEPAD**

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**Section 10. Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States**

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<i>Subprogramme</i>	<i>Objective</i>
1. Least developed countries	To improve the quality of the lives of people in the least developed countries by strengthening their ability to build a better future for themselves and to develop their countries
2. Landlocked developing countries	To ensure effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries
3. Small island developing States	To effectively advocate for and mobilize international support for the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

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**Section 11. United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development**

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<i>Subprogramme</i>	<i>Objective</i>
1. Coordination of global advocacy of and support for NEPAD (Office of the Special Adviser on Africa)	To strengthen international cooperation in support of NEPAD and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Africa
2. Regional coordination of and support for NEPAD (implemented by the Economic Commission for Africa)	To strengthen United Nations system-wide support for the implementation of NEPAD at the regional and subregional levels
3. Public information and awareness activities in support of NEPAD (implemented by the Department of Public Information)	To raise international awareness of the critical economic and social situation in Africa, as well as the efforts made by Africa and the international community to promote the economic recovery and sustainable development of the region in pursuit of the goals of NEPAD and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals

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5. Further to the Regulations Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2000/8), the objective of the evaluation was to assess, as systematically and objectively as possible, the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the respective programme activities in relation to their mandates, and to propose enhancement as appropriate.

6. To conduct the evaluation, OIOS utilized the following evaluation methods:

(a) Self-administered staff surveys of all staff members of the Office of the High Representative and parts of the United Nations system supporting NEPAD,<sup>3</sup> which were conducted from August to September 2008. The response rates were 43 per cent (7 out of 16) and 38 per cent (12 out of 32), respectively;

(b) Two separate self-administered stakeholder surveys, conducted from 25 August to 30 September 2008, covering all Member States, the Secretariat programmes and the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, and other partners such as the regional economic communities of Africa, the NEPAD secretariat and the African Union Commission. The response rates were 14 per cent (45 out of 321) for the Office of the High Representative and 4 per cent (14 out of 395) for parts of the United Nations system supporting NEPAD;

(c) A survey of 65 resident coordinators;<sup>4</sup>

(d) A total of 194 in-depth interviews with United Nations Secretariat staff members in New York, Geneva, the regional commissions and selected subregional centres, partner agencies and Member State representatives;

(e) Desk reviews of relevant internal and public documents, including analysis of the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) in respect of all 31 landlocked developing countries,<sup>5</sup> and programme data in the Integrated Monitoring and Documentation Information System and the electronic performance appraisal system;

(f) Direct observation of meetings of the regional consultative mechanism for Africa, the Pacific multi-country teams and the inter-agency consultative group on small island developing States, as well as the meetings and panel discussions in connection with the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action and the high-level meeting on Africa's development needs.

7. In addition, the current report incorporates select analysis and recommendations emanating from a separate OIOS audit report on the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa.<sup>6</sup> Specifically, under finding 8 (paras. 36 and 37), the current evaluation makes reference to the comparative analysis of the respective mandates of the Office of the High Representative and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in support of small island developing States. This evaluation also reiterates in paragraph 47

<sup>3</sup> These include staff of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the NEPAD Support Unit of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), which implements subprogramme 2, the Office of Programme Planning and Monitoring of ECA and the Africa Section of the Department of Public Information, which implements subprogramme 3.

<sup>4</sup> All 49 least developed countries are covered by this survey. Nineteen resident coordinators based in small island countries are also included in the survey. Fourteen responses were received, for a response rate of 22 per cent. Only United Nations member countries are included in this survey, based on the list of small island developing States posted on the website of the Office of the High Representative ([www.un.org/ohrlls](http://www.un.org/ohrlls)).

<sup>5</sup> Analysis was conducted of the latest versions of the common country assessments and UNDAFs available at [www.undg.org](http://www.undg.org) on 14 October 2008. No common country assessment was available for Burundi at the time of the analysis.

<sup>6</sup> AN2008/860/01, 27 January 2009.

recommendations 1 and 2 of the audits of the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, and makes five other recommendations.

8. In terms of limitations, OIOS noted the constraints posed by relatively low survey response rates, especially among stakeholders in United Nations support for NEPAD. In compensation, OIOS added a further series of interviews with Member State delegations from Africa, regional groups and partners.

## **B. Mandate, organization and resources of the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development**

9. The Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States was established by the General Assembly by its resolution 56/227, which also supplemented General Assembly resolution 55/279, endorsing the outcome of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, in accordance with the recommendations of the Secretary-General.<sup>7</sup> The key functions and objectives of the Office of the High Representative, corresponding to the internal division of subprogramme responsibilities, are advocating the mainstreaming of the following frameworks and monitoring and reporting on their implementation:<sup>8</sup>

- Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010<sup>9</sup>
- Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries<sup>10</sup>
- Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the Mauritius Strategy<sup>11</sup> for its further implementation

<sup>7</sup> A/56/645 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1 and 2.

<sup>8</sup> The monitoring and reporting mandate is applicable for the Brussels and Almaty Programmes of Action. Monitoring and reporting on the implementation on the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy are the responsibility of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs Small Island Developing States Unit (see paras. 36-37).

<sup>9</sup> Adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Brussels in 2001 and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 55/279. Its overarching goal is to make substantial progress towards halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and suffering from hunger by 2015 and promote the sustainable development of the least developed countries. The Programme of Action contains 30 international development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.

<sup>10</sup> Adopted by the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation, held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 25 to 29 August 2003.

<sup>11</sup> The International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, held in January 2005, adopted the Mauritius Declaration and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/CONF.207/11 and Corr.1). The Mauritius Strategy was endorsed by the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.

10. The mandate of United Nations support for NEPAD originated from General Assembly resolution 57/7, in which the Assembly called upon the United Nations system to align its own activities and to foster a coherent response at the national, regional and global levels to the New Partnership for Africa's Development. With its resolution 57/300, the Assembly decided moreover to create an internal United Nations structure to review and report on its own support and that of the international community, thus establishing the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa. At the same time, an additional Secretariat programme and budget section was established, comprising the Office of the Special Adviser as one subprogramme, another for the coordination of regional NEPAD support activities (administered by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)) and a third subprogramme comprising information activities (administered by the Department of Public Information). While the United Nations support for NEPAD budget section thus comprised three subprogrammes, the Office of the Special Adviser was mandated to provide overall coordination and leadership, with particular responsibility for coordinating the interdepartmental task force on African affairs.<sup>12</sup>

11. For the biennium 2008-2009, the Office of the High Representative has an estimated total of \$5.6 million in regular budgetary resources, comprising 11 posts at the Professional level and above and 4 posts at the General Service level. The Office of the High Representative also has \$1.1 million in extrabudgetary resources. United Nations support for NEPAD has a regular budget of \$11.2 million, comprising 22 posts at the Professional level and above and 11 General Service posts. Of the 33 posts, 21 are allocated to the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, 5 to ECA and 7 to the Department of Public Information. The extrabudgetary funding allocated to United Nations support for NEPAD, \$470,000, is used solely by the Office of the Special Adviser. The heads of both the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (the Special Adviser) and the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (the High Representative) are at the Under-Secretary-General level. As from January 2008, the Under-Secretary-General for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States has also been tasked with the responsibilities of the Special Adviser on Africa (see paras. 41-43).

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<sup>12</sup> A coordinating mechanism at the Headquarters level, established by the General Assembly in resolution 57/300.

Table 2  
**Budget estimates of the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development for 2006-2007 and 2008-2009**

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Programme	2006-2007				2008-2009			
	Regular budget	Extrabudgetary	Total	Posts	Regular budget	Extrabudgetary	Total	Posts
Office of the High Representative	5 052.7	2 849.4	<b>7 902.1</b>	15	5 569.4	1 120.5	<b>6 689.9</b>	15
United Nations support for NEPAD	10 803.1	745.3	<b>11 548.4</b>	32	11 186.3	470.0	<b>11 656.3</b>	33
Subprogramme 1 (Office of the Special Adviser on Africa)	7 070.3	745.3	<b>7 815.6</b>	21	7 360.1	470.0	<b>7 830.1</b>	21
Subprogramme 2 (ECA)	1 478.7	—	<b>1 478.7</b>	4	1 573.7	—	<b>1 573.7</b>	5
Subprogramme 3 (Department of Public Information)	2 254.1	—	<b>2 254.1</b>	7	2 252.5	—	<b>2 252.5</b>	7

Source: Data extracted from General Assembly document A/62/6 (Sect. 10) and (Sect. 11).

12. A diagram illustrating the relationship between the two programmes and their partner entities, as well as the multiple coordination mechanisms, is provided in the annex.

### III. Evaluation findings

#### A. Assessment of programme outcomes

***Finding 1:** United Nations support for NEPAD and the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States have brought increased global-level attention to the respective categories of countries in need. However, their advocacy has had little influence on the availability and programming of United Nations country-level resources.*

13. OIOS finds that United Nations support for NEPAD and the Office of the High Representative have helped bring a higher degree of visibility to the development needs of the countries forming their representative constituencies. Explicit emphasis on Africa and the importance of United Nations support for NEPAD has been highlighted in the Organization's biennial programme plan for the five consecutive bienniums since 2002. A majority of stakeholders interviewed by OIOS acknowledge positive effects emanating from some of the advocacy and activities of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, most notably the Special Adviser's active engagement in various South-South cooperation initiatives and African-led forums, including the high-level meeting on Africa's development needs. Likewise,

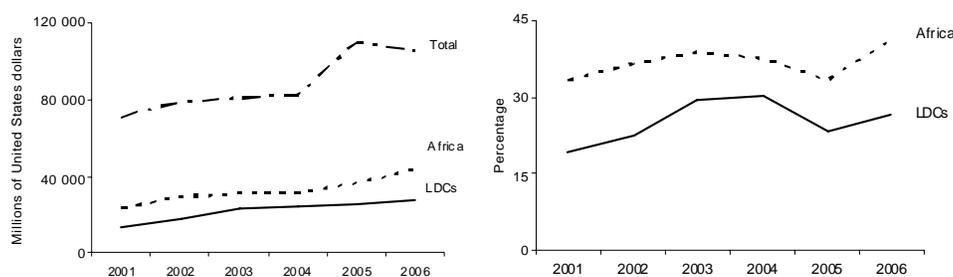
OIOS finds that the Office of the High Representative has contributed to the emerging consensus that the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States share special development needs and challenges unique to their respective groups. Interview data strongly confirm that the efforts of the Office of the High Representative should be directly credited with bringing the focus of the General Assembly onto the landlocked developing countries agenda in particular. Its efforts have, moreover, helped galvanize United Nations-system programme activities in the areas of transit transport and trade facilitation around one global framework, which were previously dispersed among separate regional and subregional initiatives. OIOS nevertheless notes that landlocked developing countries and small island developing States have yet to be recognized by the World Trade Organization in its negotiation of preferential trade considerations.

14. However, advocacy has not consistently influenced country-level programme planning of the United Nations country teams. Feedback received by OIOS illustrates that country-level programming did not always take guidance from the Brussels Programme of Action, which was adopted shortly after the Millennium Development Goals and was tailored to the special needs of least developed countries. Half of the country teams that responded to the resident coordinator survey found that the Brussels Programme of Action had not influenced national priorities and development plans, in contrast to the Millennium Development Goals. The Brussels Programme of Action was viewed by many as being in parallel to the Millennium Development Goals or as a follow-up mechanism. Similarly, for the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, the linkage between advocacy and guidance at the global level and the programmatic activities of United Nations entities in support of national Governments is missing. For example, none of the common country assessments or UNDAFs of the landlocked developing countries makes any reference to the Almaty Programme of Action. Only one common country assessment makes explicit reference to the country being landlocked and the associated special challenges, albeit without reference to the Almaty Programme of Action. Fewer than half of the 31 UNDAFs make such references, and even fewer have incorporated programme support corresponding to their special needs in the area of transit transport and trade facilitation.

15. OIOS notes that the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa were mandated to mobilize international support and resources for the benefit of their respective constituent countries. However, it is not possible to attribute the positive trend in resources available for least developed countries and Africa directly to the advocacy or fund-raising efforts of these two programmes. In this respect, OIOS notes that the nominal volume of total aid flow to both Africa and least developed countries registered significant increases over the past few years. The figures for 2006, \$43.4 billion for Africa and \$28 billion for least developed countries, were approximately double what they were in 2001. The share of total aid flows accounted for by allocation to Africa and least developed countries also increased during the same period. In addition, the total volume of annual United Nations expenditures increased from \$2.2 billion for Africa and \$2.5 billion for least developed countries in 2001 to \$5.6 billion and \$5.3 billion, respectively, by 2006. From 2001 to 2006 the percentage of United Nations-system expenditure devoted to operational activities in Africa increased from 31 per cent to 44 per cent and from 34 per cent to 42 per cent for least developed countries. OIOS

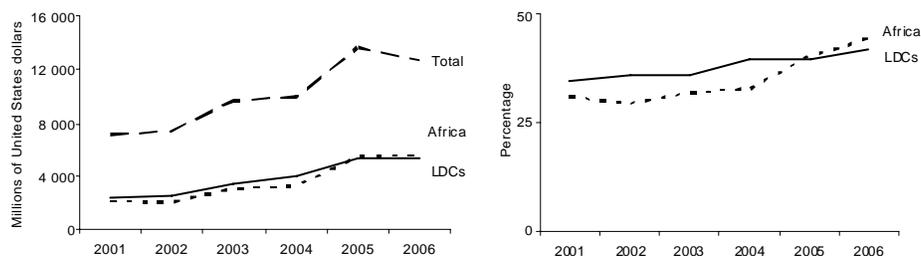
notes that the Office of the High Representative, apart from mobilizing international support and resources, has raised extrabudgetary funds for its own programme implementation, including to organize a series of meetings in preparation for the midterm reviews of the Brussels and Almaty Programmes of Action, and to provide support for increased participation of least developed country representatives in the annual substantive sessions of the Economic and Social Council. Although the latter was commended by the beneficiary countries, concerns were expressed by some Member States over how long this particular fund-raising initiative could be sustained.

**Figure I**  
**Total official development assistance to Africa and least developed countries**



*Source:* Data extracted from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development statistics database; official development assistance figures are total net disbursement from all donors in 2006 constant price.

**Figure II**  
**Total United Nations expenditure on Africa and least developed countries**



*Source:* Data extracted from documents A/63/71, A/62/74, A/61/77 and A/60/74. The figures for United Nations expenditures are in nominal term/current prices.

**Finding 2:** *Involvement with multiple coordinating mechanisms is event-driven and adds little value in enhancing system-wide coordinated actions.*

16. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States are both members of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs and of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG). OIOS notes that the Office of the Special Adviser and the Office of the High Representative are both very small actors with no operational activities and

hardly any influence on others. Interviews with the secretariats of the coordinating bodies show that the participation of the Office of the Special Adviser was limited to general briefings and sharing of information on events.

17. The Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs cluster on countries in special situations, convened by the Office of the High Representative, is active at the time of programme budget preparation. The General Assembly took note of advocacy strategy for further implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action<sup>13</sup> in its resolution 62/203, but it is yet to be supported by an operational plan, which the Office of the High Representative should have developed in consultation with other partners. The United Nations action plan for the further implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action during the period 2007-2010, which requests the resident coordinators and United Nations country teams to facilitate the United Nations-wide response to the conclusions of the midterm review at the country level, was recently endorsed by UNDG.<sup>14</sup> However, OIOS notes that no immediate actions are foreseen, as country teams need further clarification on the actions needed to move forward on the action plan.

18. The Office of the High Representative convenes two inter-agency consultative groups, on least developed country and landlocked developing country issues. OIOS notes that the influence of these two groups has been limited and that they have not been active in ongoing consultations either. Interviews with selected least developed country focal points of United Nations agencies confirm the lack of regular consultation. The inter-agency consultative group on landlocked developing country issues<sup>15</sup> has managed to maintain more frequent contacts with its members and hence played a positive role in the preparation process for the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action. It is, however, not found to be sufficiently consultative by some members.

19. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa has the mandate to convene and coordinate the interdepartmental task force on African affairs.<sup>16</sup> However, information made available to OIOS shows that meetings and related activities have been sporadic.<sup>17</sup> Interviews with some task force members show the lack of a shared vision in the group. OIOS takes note of the Secretary-General's conclusion that "there is a tendency ... to support a proliferation of Africa-related activities which creates incoherence and sub-optimal use of scarce resources".<sup>18</sup> The task force has not presented any solutions in response to the call at the policy level for rationalization and coordination. However, OIOS acknowledges the external factors that posed challenges to the coordination of United Nations entities to work with Africa in promoting and implementing NEPAD. They include progress by the

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<sup>13</sup> A/62/322.

<sup>14</sup> See [http://www.undg.org/docs/9486/Final-UNDG-Meeting-Report-24th-September-2008-1\\_JKP.doc](http://www.undg.org/docs/9486/Final-UNDG-Meeting-Report-24th-September-2008-1_JKP.doc).

<sup>15</sup> Members of the inter-agency consultative group on landlocked developing country issues and the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action include the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the World Bank.

<sup>16</sup> See resolution 57/300 and ST/SGB/2003/6.

<sup>17</sup> AN2008/860/01, paras. 61 and 62.

<sup>18</sup> A/63/130, para. 48.

African continent in developing national, subregional and regional coordination and programme implementation.

20. OIOS notes very limited involvement by the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser in regional-level coordination, though the Office of the Special Adviser does convene the advocacy and communication cluster of the regional coordination mechanism for Africa.<sup>19</sup> In Africa, ECA, in charge of subprogramme 2, is responsible for providing backstopping support to the regional coordination mechanism. The capacity of ECA to backstop the mechanism seems limited, with five staff members and a budget equivalent to 0.03 per cent of the total United Nations-system expenditure in Africa.<sup>20</sup> Capacity would be seriously inadequate should ECA seek a more proactive role in facilitating cluster coordination and interaction between clusters. In other regions, the regional coordination mechanism sometimes has a different format. For example, in Asia it is chaired by the regional commission and faces the challenge of establishing synergy with the regional directors' teams as utilized by United Nations funds and programmes. OIOS does not find that the Office of the High Representative has been involved in any of the regional coordination mechanisms. Collaboration with regional United Nations entities has been driven by the need to organize the midterm reviews of the Brussels and Almaty Programmes of Action. OIOS therefore concludes that the prospects seem remote for the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser to contribute at the regional level.

***Finding 3:*** *Support for the functioning of the intergovernmental bodies is not effective.*

21. OIOS finds that the Office of the High Representative faced serious challenge in effectively monitoring the implementation of the Programmes of Action.<sup>21</sup> The inter-agency consultative groups on least developed country and landlocked developing country issues (see para. 18) have not played a role in this respect. Although the Office of the High Representative, at the request of the Economic and Social Council<sup>22</sup> started in 2005 to produce the annual report on the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action in a new format and provided information on a series of indicators,<sup>23</sup> it highlighted this undertaking as challenging, as the Office did not have the necessary technical expertise and was relying on consultants for producing this recurrent output. A number of Member States express the view that through closer collaboration with Member States and partner agencies, the Office of the High Representative could make better use of the existing reporting mechanisms, such as the national Millennium Development Goal report process and

<sup>19</sup> The regional coordination mechanism consists of nine clusters, headed by ECA, the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the Department of Political Affairs and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization. It involves all United Nations agencies working in Africa.

<sup>20</sup> \$5.6 billion in 2006 (A/63/71).

<sup>21</sup> A/CONF.191/13, para. 93: "Follow-up, monitoring and review of the [Brussels] Programme of Action ... should involve all relevant stakeholders. They should be conducted in a coherent and mutually supportive manner. Consequently, well-functioning linkages should be built among different levels of follow-up."

<sup>22</sup> Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/65, para. 6.

<sup>23</sup> A/63/77 provided an analysis of 38 indicators and 2 initiatives to enhance transparency in extractive industries.

the inter-agency framework for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals. *The Office of the High Representative commented that this annual report was the only source where data related to all least developed countries in various aspects were categorized.* OIOS finds that one third of the indicators used in the Secretary-General's annual report on the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action are also Millennium Development Goal indicators, and the retabulation of data from different sources in itself does not provide additional analytical value.

22. The Office of the High Representative contact with and support for the three respective Coordination Bureaux are not considered sufficiently proactive, in particular as regards small island developing States and least developed countries, as shown by stakeholder interviews conducted by OIOS. Views have been expressed that such support appeared to lack dynamism and were very often tightly bound by the objective of producing draft documents on time. Nonetheless, OIOS acknowledges the recent improvement in this respect since the appointment of the new High Representative. *The Office of the High Representative commented that support for the intergovernmental processes and different coordination groups was the most positive contribution of the Office of the High Representative. Such support is reflected in several aspects, including (a) servicing the negotiations of the Second Committee, (b) organizing the first-ever United Nations conference devoted to landlocked developing countries and preparing the annual progress report on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, (c) assisting in organizing annual ministerial meetings of landlocked developing countries and least developed countries to agree on their coordinated position during General Assembly sessions and beyond and (d) organizing midterm reviews of the Brussels and Almaty Programmes of Action.*

23. Annual reports prepared by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa on United Nations and international support for NEPAD and on the causes of conflict in Africa have elicited a large number of recommendations of the General Assembly. The prevalent view of stakeholders is that it could be made more analytical and include proposed actions for easier follow-up. OIOS notes that data collection was limited to input from United Nations agencies. OIOS finds that the exercise did not capture the whole picture of international support for NEPAD and that the value added by the Office of the Special Adviser was minimal in building knowledge or providing information for evidence-based decision-making.

***Finding 4:*** *The public information subprogramme under United Nations support for NEPAD is not clearly linked to a strategy for the programme as a whole.*

24. Implementation of its public information mandate of United Nations support for NEPAD falls into three categories. The largest cluster of public information activity is *Africa Renewal*, a print magazine published quarterly by the Department of Public Information, which is also leveraged into various other print and online information products. Next, there is a more limited range of other information activities also produced by the Department of Public Information. Lastly, there are public information activities that are undertaken outside of the Department of Public Information-managed subprogramme. OIOS observes firstly that there appears to be little coordination among these clusters of information activity — each of them appears to operate in relative isolation. *The Department of Public Information commented that the three subprogrammes have collaborated on an ongoing basis over the years with the aim of achieving a greater focus and a clearer division of*

labour. Some common initiatives were identified and undertaken. Secondly, roughly 74 per cent of the resources under subprogramme 3 are devoted to *Africa Renewal*. The Department of Public Information commented that not all Department of Public Information involvement in non-magazine activities could be measured by resources under subprogramme 3. For some NEPAD- or Africa-related events, the Department drew on its broad range of services, including by utilizing the wide network of United Nations information centres. OIOS notes that weak coordination among the three subprogrammes was partially a result of the lack of a public-information strategy that could guide programme design and implementation of United Nations support for NEPAD in this aspect. OIOS stresses that such a public-information strategy for the programme as a whole is needed in order to ensure that coordination bears fruit and that the limited resources given to United Nations support for NEPAD are used more efficiently.

## B. Structure and strategic planning

25. In short, the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and United Nations support for NEPAD have helped sustain policy attention to the development requirements of the countries with special needs. However, in most mandated areas, programme achievements, including the organization of high-level events, are at the output level. OIOS finds that the underlying reasons for the absence of outcome fell into three categories: inherent tension between interpretations of mandate and limited capacities, misalignment of programme structures and weak strategic planning.

***Finding 5:*** *The Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD face inherent tension between high expectations and limited capacities.*

26. OIOS observes that there are disparate interpretations by stakeholders and programme staff of the broad mandates of the Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD. OIOS notes a wide spectrum of definitions and multiple expectations among staff, partners and constituent countries. Such varied interpretations have led to serious confusion about what the programmes' mandates mean, what the priorities of the programmes should be and what should be expected at the outcome level on the basis of sufficient support from available resources.

27. When it comes to advocacy for the benefit of the Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD constituent countries broadly, there are multiple aspirants — even within the United Nations system itself. For example, some stakeholders think that given the resources that the Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD command, it is only reasonable to expect that their advocacy efforts are focused on support for the intergovernmental debate. Others make a strong case that advocacy and fund-raising must be linked; advocacy without generating increased resource flows at some level is not needed. OIOS notes that the ambiguity as to what the Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD could advocate for, and to which audience, arises from the divergent views among Member States and United Nations partners. OIOS notes similar ambiguous views, and sometimes unrealistic expectations given the level of resources, regarding other aspects of the mandates of the two programmes.

28. Considering that the institutional context within which the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa are operating is extremely complex, OIOS emphasizes that the tension must be reconciled through concerted efforts by Member States and the two programmes to bring more clarity to what should be reasonably expected of the Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD. This will be an important step to enhance the relevance of the programmes. As illustrated in the annex, the majority of resources and activities of the United Nations common system in support of the countries with special needs and Africa are in the hands of the entities outside the Secretariat. There are multiple coordination mechanisms in the area of socio-economic issues and development.

***Finding 6: Sharpened programmatic focus and better formulated strategic frameworks are needed.***

29. OIOS is of the opinion that efforts to focus the existing resources on attainable achievements are imperative for the programmes' effectiveness. A stronger programmatic focus — or a clearly defined niche — will be required to leverage their delivery capacity. While a slight majority (55 per cent) of the responses to the stakeholder survey identify the strong mandate and political visibility as among the most important strengths of the Office of the High Representative, a larger majority of stakeholders are of the opinion that the Office of the High Representative has been unable to leverage such strength and bring coherence to partner agencies' efforts around selected programmatic areas.

30. Similar lack of clarity is recognized by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa in its "Advocacy and communication update" of December 2007, which clearly highlights the need for the Office of the Special Adviser to discuss and agree on the nature and substance of its advocacy role. OIOS notes that no such attempt has yet borne fruit in developing an advocacy strategy for the Office of the Special Adviser or United Nations support for NEPAD as a whole. Moreover, the lack of programmatic focus in advocacy has contributed to the ineffectiveness of the Office of the Special Adviser in securing the buy-in of other United Nations entities. Of the 23 initiatives proposed by the Office of the Special Adviser in its "Advocacy and communication update", 21 have not materialized.

31. OIOS finds that the two programmes' logical frameworks for the biennium 2008-2009 are not formulated in compliance with organizational requirements and guidelines pertaining to results-based budgeting. They consequently do not easily enable performance assessment or serve to guide programme planning. Programme objectives and expected accomplishments are too broad and unrealistic, given the level of resources. An example in this case is the subprogramme 1 objective of the Office of the High Representative — "to improve the quality of lives of people in the least developed countries by strengthening their ability to build a better future for themselves and to develop their countries".<sup>24</sup> Such an objective clearly does not help the programme to narrow down its focus in fulfilling its mandates. An analysis by OIOS shows that nearly half of the expected accomplishments do not closely reflect the overall programme objectives and invite subjective interpretations.

32. The indicators of achievement are not precise measurements of expected accomplishments. For example, increased numbers of joint activities are not

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<sup>24</sup> A/62/6 (Sect. 10).

indicative of any achievement or lack of achievement in improving coordination. OIOS analysis shows that more than 60 per cent of the indicators of achievement do not provide information on the extent to which the corresponding expected accomplishments have been achieved. In some instances, the selection of an inappropriate indicator of achievement contributes to the already confused understanding of what the programmes are mandated to achieve. For example, the Office of the High Representative listed the number of countries that provide more than 0.1 per cent of gross national income to least developed countries as one of its indicators of achievement for the biennium 2008-2009, implying that the Office of the High Representative will be expected to have an impact on flows of official development assistance.

33. Moreover, indicators of achievement do not reflect how significant the programmes' contributions to the intended achievement are. While this weakness is not unique to the Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD, OIOS notes that the percentages of weak indicators of achievement (80 per cent and 70 per cent respectively) are particularly high in this case. OIOS also notes duplicative indicators of achievement across the three subprogrammes of United Nations support for NEPAD, mirroring the lack of integrated result-oriented planning processes. OIOS emphasizes that sharpened programmatic focus and better-formulated strategic frameworks will help all stakeholders involved to reach an agreement on the appropriate niche for the Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD.

***Finding 7:** United Nations support for NEPAD budget and subprogramme structure are misaligned with the chain of accountability.*

34. OIOS notes that the position of Under-Secretary-General for the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa does not have de facto authority over two United Nations support for NEPAD subprogrammes, namely, those managed by ECA and the Department of Public Information. These subprogrammes function as entities subject to the planning, daily management and systems of accountability of their respective "hosts" rather than the Under-Secretary-General. It is the heads of the Department of Public Information and ECA who "control" these subprogrammes: establishing workplans, planning and reporting on posts and other resources, monitoring and evaluating operational activity, conducting performance reviews and exercising accountability for the managers and staff.

35. The current Under-Secretary-General for the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser has two separate compacts with the Secretary-General, one for the Office of the High Representative and one for subprogramme 1 of United Nations support for NEPAD, but not for the other subprogrammes of budget section 11. In the compact of the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information, subprogramme 3 is listed as one responsibility. Subprogramme 2, however, is not listed in the compact of the Under-Secretary-General for ECA. OIOS understands that this phenomenon precedes the current interim arrangement under which the Under-Secretary-General for the Office of the High Representative has also been designated head of the Office of the Special Adviser. Be this as it may, OIOS finds no senior official in charge of United Nations support for NEPAD as a whole, comprising a distinct United Nations Secretariat programme and budget section. OIOS also finds, further to multiple testimonials, that the head of the Office of the Special Adviser has been limited in his ability to exert influence over

subprogrammes 2 and 3, and that, at the operational level, there has been little coordination among the three subprogrammes.

**Finding 8:** *The parallel Office of the High Representative and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs arrangement, amid a fragmented structure in support of small island developing States, needs closer coordination.*

36. In respect of United Nations support for the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy, corresponding to the small island developing States arena, OIOS finds that there is a high degree of overlap in functions of the Office of the High Representative and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. At the time of the establishment of the Office of the High Representative through General Assembly resolution 56/227, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs Small Island Developing States Unit was already in existence further to resolution 49/122.

37. According to General Assembly resolution 59/311, the role of the Small Island Developing States Unit is to provide substantive support to intergovernmental and inter-agency processes related to the monitoring, review and coordination of the implementation of the Small Island Developing States programme and act as the focal point for Governments, the United Nations system and other relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The Office of the High Representative, on the other hand, will perform activities relating to advocacy and the mobilization of international support and resources on behalf of the small island developing States. OIOS finds that these roles have not been clearly distinguished in practice. A review of work programmes and outputs for the period between 2004 and 2007 reveals many items and activities that are very similar in nature. Also, stakeholders are unclear in their understanding of the respective responsibilities. OIOS acknowledges the efforts by the Office of the High Representative and the Small Island Developing States Unit to improve collaboration since the appointment of the new High Representative.

38. Moreover, the Office of the High Representative and the Small Island Developing States Unit operate within a larger, fragmented institutional set-up in support of the follow-up to the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) complements the work of the Small Island Developing States Unit with respect to formulating the vulnerability index and profile.<sup>25</sup> The United Nations Environment Programme is mandated to provide policy guidance and coordination in the field of environment<sup>26</sup> and has a programme on protecting sea resources involving island and coastal countries. The regional commissions are also specifically requested to coordinate the regional follow-up of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. The inter-agency consultative group convened by the Small Island Developing States Unit has not been able to bring coherence to the fragmented efforts.<sup>27</sup> Interviews with members of the inter-agency consultative group reveal that consultations occurring within the group seem to be limited to organizing the annual session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. There were many instances

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<sup>25</sup> The vulnerability index is a policy analysis tool designed to provide insights into the processes that might influence negatively the economic and sustainable development of countries.

<sup>26</sup> A/CONF.167/9, para 125.

<sup>27</sup> AN2008/860/1, paras. 20-21, provides an overview of the evolution of the inter-agency coordination since 2003.

in which feedback provided at the inter-agency consultative group was not followed up by the convener. Small island developing States have relied mostly on their own regional intergovernmental organizations, namely, the Pacific Islands Forum, the Caribbean Community and Indian Ocean Commission, or bilateral support. Stakeholders based at the regional or subregional level express the view that the advocacy by the Headquarters-based programmes — the Small Island Developing States Unit, the Office of the High Representative and UNCTAD — have not sufficiently conveyed messages unique to their respective regions, particularly as small island developing States are a diverse group with countries at different stages of development.

39. Interview data show that the support from the United Nations Secretariat programmes for the majority of small island developing States was coordinated through the subregional offices of the regional commissions, namely the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Pacific Operations Centre and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean Caribbean subregional office.<sup>28</sup> These offices lack sufficient capacity and need guidance in advocating mainstreaming of the Mauritius Strategy. In many cases, these offices are not engaging actively with United Nations country teams because of these limitations. As the United Nations funds and programmes have been relocating their regional programmes to the regional centres, the regional commissions face new challenges in ensuring the most efficient coordination of all United Nations entities at the regional level.

40. Considering the limited numbers of regular posts dedicated to small island developing States issues in those Secretariat programmes,<sup>29</sup> OIOS finds it important to align advocacy efforts with the analytical strength offered by others, including UNCTAD and the regional commissions, by way of strengthened coordination, including a joint workplan.

***Finding 9: Potential for synergy between the Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD, as small offices with overlapping mandates, has not been exploited.***

41. The Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD share mandates to sustain international support through advocacy, to service intergovernmental forums and to coordinate and mobilize system-wide follow-up to given policy frameworks. OIOS notes the considerable overlaps that exist between the countries that the Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD cover. Of the 53 African countries covered by the latter, 37 (70 per cent)

<sup>28</sup> In Africa, the Indian Ocean Commission plays the key role of coordination and participates in the informal consultative meetings hosted by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. A few other small island developing States of Africa are not members of any of the intergovernmental bodies.

<sup>29</sup> Interviews with different programmes show that only a few staff have been dedicated to programme activities for the benefits of small island developing States: Office of the High Representative (1 P-2, 1 D-1 part-time), the Small Island Developing States Unit (1 P-5, 1 L-4 and 1 P-2), UNCTAD (1 P-4), ESCAP (1 D-1 and 1 P-4), and ECLAC (1 P-5 part-time and 1 P-4). Support from staff at the General Service level is usually shared. *The Department of Economic and Social Affairs commented that the Small Island Developing States Unit has four Professional posts (1 P-5, 1 P-4, 1 P-2 and 1 L-4) and two General Service (1 G-6 and 1 G-4), two of which are currently vacant.* OIOS would like to further highlight that in some instances posts under small island developing States programmes as shown on paper are not used as intended.

are also covered under one or more of the Office of the High Representative programmes. Conversely, more than one third of the 90 countries that the Office of the High Representative covers are in Africa. The degree of overlap would be considerably greater if calculated in terms of population rather than number of countries.

42. The finding of OIOS is that few efforts have been made to exploit the substantial potential for coordination and synergy between the two offices in servicing their mandates. Further to the proposed revised estimates for 2008-2009,<sup>30</sup> the Secretary-General has proposed that a single Under-Secretary-General be placed in the leadership of the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (but not the other two United Nations support for NEPAD subprogrammes), thereby consolidating authority and responsibility in order to obtain a greater degree of coherence and coordination. A single Under-Secretary-General has in fact, with effect from 22 January 2008, been acting in charge of both. The advocacy and administrative functions of the offices, however, remain fully separate. OIOS finds that there are considerable economies of scale, e.g., pertaining to executive and front-office functions, potentially available from combining such functions of these two relatively small offices. Currently, the Office of the Special Adviser and the Office of the High Representative dedicate 29 and 20 per cent of their staff, respectively, to front-office functions.

43. Although the Secretary-General's proposal for an alignment of functions<sup>31</sup> did not meet with initial favour,<sup>32</sup> the view of OIOS is that it has merit, because there are objective prospects for efficiency gains. OIOS reiterates its earlier opinion that a concrete plan for combining the administrative and advocacy functions should be established and submitted to the General Assembly for its approval.

## IV. Conclusions

44. OIOS concludes that the two programmes, United Nations support for NEPAD and the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, have contributed to the increased awareness of the special development needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and Africa. This has, in particular, translated into more visibility for the respective programmes of action and for NEPAD within the agenda and deliberations of the United Nations itself — where there appears to be a stronger consensus on the particular needs of these country categories.

45. OIOS notes that the overall performance of the two programmes has to be viewed in the context of the systemic weaknesses of the United Nations planning and budgeting process, including the disconnection between expected accomplishments, outputs and resources. These weaknesses were extensively documented in the OIOS report on results-based management.<sup>33</sup> For these two

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<sup>30</sup> A/62/708.

<sup>31</sup> The Secretary-General's letter to Jean-Marie Ehouzou, Permanent Representative of Benin and Chairman of the African Group, 30 October 2007.

<sup>32</sup> In its resolution 63/260 the General Assembly decided not to abolish the post of Special Adviser on Africa.

<sup>33</sup> A/63/268.

programmes with serious resources constraints, the inherent tension must be reconciled with efforts by both Member States and the programmes themselves to ensure that the programme objectives are realistic given the available resources, and considered relevant by all beneficiary Member States.

46. The view of OIOS is that, in spite of the existing structural constraints facing the two programmes, efficiency and effectiveness could be improved significantly by immediate measures to delineate a clear programmatic focus. Formulating a better-quality logical framework and strengthening programme and human resources management should also be addressed. For the gaps in the programme and human resources management of these two programmes, the OIOS audit report on the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa — provides a comprehensive analysis. OIOS also stresses that a robust accountability chain needs to be established for the three subprogrammes of United Nations support for NEPAD. The potential for synergy between the Office of the High Representative and United Nations support for NEPAD, and between the Office of the High Representative and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs Small Island Developing States Unit, needs to be fully explored.

## V. Recommendations

47. While OIOS concludes that the misalignment between expectations, capacities and accountability arrangements hinders programmatic focus and attainment of results, it has identified a number of actions to address the situation. Before proceeding to the recommendations that emanate from the current evaluation, OIOS would like to reiterate its earlier recommendations (see also recommendations 1 and 2 of the OIOS audit of the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser):

(a) The Secretary-General should review the entire programmatic structure for both the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser in order to reduce the overlap and duplication in providing services for the targeted countries;

(b) The Secretary-General should submit the reformulated proposal to the General Assembly for prior approval in accordance with United Nations regulations.

### Recommendation 1

48. The Secretary-General should undertake a review of the subprogramme structure within United Nations support for NEPAD, with the aim of bringing three subprogrammes under the responsibility and oversight of one senior officer, for consideration by the General Assembly.

### Recommendation 2

49. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, ECA and the Department of Public Information should undertake a joint strategic planning exercise so as to translate the United Nations support for NEPAD mandate into a clearly defined programmatic focus for each of the three areas — advocacy, coordination and public information. *The Office of the Special Adviser informed OIOS that it has already*

*initiated discussions with ECA and the Department of Public Information on this issue.*

50. Strategies thus formulated should clarify the respective roles and define the different operational responsibilities of the three subprogrammes and be communicated to their partners and stakeholders. Such conclusions should form the basis for a revision of the strategic framework of programme 9/section 11, for consideration by the General Assembly.

### **Recommendation 3**

51. The programme of United Nations support for NEPAD (prog. 9/sect. 11) should consider formulating a proposal for the purpose of strengthening the backstopping support for the regional consultative mechanism, by way of (a) the provision of additional resources, (b) the reassignment of staffing resources within United Nations support for NEPAD or (c) secondment from other United Nations entities, for the consideration of the General Assembly.

### **Recommendation 4**

52. The Office of the High Representative should work in consultation with Member States and United Nations partners to translate the broad mandates into a clearly defined strategic focus. Taking into account the consultatively formulated strategic focus, the Office of the High Representative should revise its strategic framework to:

(a) Take into consideration the analytical capacity of other United Nations partners;

(b) Streamline and consolidate its inter-agency coordination efforts through fewer platforms;

(c) Establish regular contacts with the coordination bureaux of the constituent countries, including through providing backstopping support to the meetings of the coordination bodies;

(d) Ensure that subprogramme objectives are actionable;

(e) Formulate an external communication strategy that specifies how to ensure that the strategic focus of the Office of the High Representative is articulated clearly to external stakeholders and partners, and make wider use of modern information technology, in particular web-based teleconference facilities, to ensure more interactive dialogue.

### **Recommendation 5**

53. OIOS recommends that the Office of the High Representative and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs develop a joint action plan with the aim of bringing coherence and providing guidance to the United Nations system efforts in support of small island developing States. The joint action plan should clearly delineate the respective roles of the offices and facilitate effective communication regarding their different roles to their stakeholders. The action plan should also provide specific guidance on:

(a) How each subregion's needs will be met, based on a mapping of existing programmatic efforts;

(b) How the Office of the High Representative and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs Small Island Developing States Unit separately contribute to more coordinated United Nations-wide efforts;

(c) What support these offices will provide for regional programme efforts, in particular in terms of supporting the regional commissions in their regional coordination role.

54. *The Department of Economic and Social Affairs objected to this recommendation and commented that the mandates of the two offices have already been defined by the General Assembly in its resolution 59/311: the Department of Economic and Social Affairs dealing with monitoring, review and coordination of the implementation of small island developing States programmes and the Office of the High Representative with advocacy, mobilization of support and resources for small island developing States. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs confirmed that it would take necessary steps to revitalize the inter-agency consultative mechanism.* Recalling its earlier recommendation from the audit of the Office of the High Representative and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa,<sup>34</sup> OIOS takes note that the Office of the High Representative and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs have committed to collaborate at the time of programme budget preparation and through the yearly reviews by the Executive Committee for Economic and Social Affairs, two of which have been conducted to date. OIOS wishes to stress that the present recommendation went a step further than collaborative planning. Instead, it aims to rectify the situations whereby the stakeholders of the Office of the High Representative and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs Small Island Developing States Unit were not aware of the difference in the mandates and practices of the two offices and the questioning of duplication of efforts was common. The implementation of this recommendation would ensure that the resources provided to the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs are used effectively to achieve distinct objectives and synergy is built among the programme activities of various United Nations entities.

*(Signed)* Inga-Britt Ahlenius  
Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services  
2 April 2009

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<sup>34</sup> AN2008/806/01, recommendation 3.

## The Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the New Partnership for Africa's Development within a complex institutional set-up

