Introduction

Drawing on 134 annual UN country team reports, this synthesis provides an overview of the UN follow-up to the 2005 World Summit Outcome as well as the broader follow-up to the 2004 Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR) and the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. It aims to show through concrete examples how UN reform translates into actual improvements of the UN's operational activities on the ground, and ultimately into greater development impact at country level. The report focuses on the work UN Country Teams (UNCTs) are doing together in the coordination of operational development activities and does not therefore include all aspects of the work done at country level by each organization or agency.

At the heart of this year's report are two concepts: coherence and capacity. The coherence imperative requires UN country teams to harness their normative and analytic expertise, their advocacy, and their operational and coordination capabilities to be more than the sum of their parts. Capacity is the common denominator uniting the initiatives and approaches described in this report. First of all, supporting national capacity development is a major objective of UN development cooperation as called for by member states. Second, simplifying and harmonizing UN systems frees capacities within the UN and of national partners, thereby allowing UN agencies and governments to re-focus cooperation from administration

to substance. Finally, appropriate capacity of UN country teams is the precondition for providing support to national partners.

In their work on supporting national capacity development, UN country teams are guided by the 2004 TCPR and the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document:

Recognizes that capacity development and ownership of national development strategies are essential for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and calls upon United Nations Organizations to provide further support to the efforts of developing countries to establish and/or maintain effective national institutions and to support the implementation and, as necessary, the devising of national strategies for capacity building.

— Para 26, General Assembly Resolution 59/250, December 2005

To ensure that the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies support efforts of developing countries through the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, enhancing their support for capacity building

— Par 22 (f), World Summit Outcome Document, September 2005

With this in mind, the UNDG agreed in 2006 on a UNDG Position Statement on Capacity Development, which challenges UNCTs to "articulate capacity development as the central thrust of the UN's country level activities" and "lays out a new framework for the UN's work at country level to enhance its contribution to national capacity development."

The year 2006 also saw a continuing strong focus on harmonization and alignment with national systems and strategies in a concerted effort to increase aid and, ultimately, development effectiveness. The Paris Declaration Monitoring Survey conducted under the leadership of 34 governments provided a glance into UN country team efforts to support national partners in enhancing aid effectiveness and promoting mutual accountability.

This report consists of six chapters, each dedicated to a key area of joint UN country team action. The chapters contain a brief introduction, summaries of major activities and results, lessons learned, and recommendations from UN country teams. Country examples are highlighted throughout the report and in the Country Experience Annex.

Chapter 1, Support to the National Development Process: Achieving the MDGs, shows how UNCTs are undertaking a wide range of activities in support of the MDGs and other international development goals supporting the elaboration, implementation, and monitoring of national development plans and poverty reduction strategies. It also shows how UN country teams in dialogue with national partners prepared UN Development Assistance Frameworks, the collective response of the UN system to national priorities.

Chapter 2, National Capacity for Development Effectiveness, illustrates how UNCTs have come together to support capacity development of national partners and worked with other development partners to enhance aid effectiveness and move towards

implementation of the Paris Declaration and increased mutual accountability.

Chapter 3, Efforts on HIV/AIDS, Gender Equality, and Human Rights, highlights how UNCTs have worked towards two important MDGs — the reversal of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the achievement of gender equality — and are basing their cooperation on a human rights-based approach.

Chapter 4, Greater Operational Coherence, Coordination, and Harmonization, looks at how the UN system has worked to simplify and harmonize programming at the country level through joint programmes, common services and premises, and joint offices.

Chapter 5, Strengthening the Resident Coordinator System, discusses efforts to improve the governance and accountability framework for the Resident Coordinator system as well as examines the resources and staff available.

Chapter 6, Coordination in Post-Conflict Situations and Post-Natural Disasters, describes how UN country teams have worked to ensure coordination and to support needs assessment and transition strategies in crisis and post-conflict situations.

Conclusion, summarizes the findings of each chapter, pointing at some of the future challenges for UN reform at the country level. It particularly focuses on the issues highlighted by UN country teams and their recommendations to address their main challenges.

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