



DAILY BRIEF COMPENDIUM

UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board First regular session 2004 New York, 23 to 30 January 2004

Tuesday, 27 January 2004

1. The president of the Executive Board welcomed all delegations to the first regular session 2004;
2. He expressed thanks to the Bureau of the Board, the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Director of UNFPA and confirmed that one of his goals would be to work to improve reporting on the activities of UNDP and UNFPA;
3. The president also reaffirmed the importance of UNDP and UNFPA in implementing and reaching the aims of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and called upon delegations to use the Executive Board as a forum for presenting solid ideas in order to assist developing countries in building national strategies;
4. The president called upon members of the Board to adopt a mechanism for assisting UNDP in reporting on multi-year financing over the next four years;
5. The president articulated the need for Executive Board delegations to restore and resume the activities of UNOPS and provide support for the new UNOPS Executive Director. He also suggested providing strategic advice, an operational framework and preparing priorities and policies in light of the multi-year funding framework (MYFF);
6. With regard to UNFPA, the president called on the Executive Board to provide strategic guidance on the multi-year funding framework, 2004-2007, and the intercountry programme, 2004-2007. He noted that during 2004 the Board would also consider a midterm review of the UNFPA Technical Advisory Programme;
7. The president concluded his statement by pledging to actively participate in Board activities and encouraged all delegations to develop the work of the Board and reinforce continued dialog with the president;
8. The Executive Board adopted the provisional agenda (DP/2004/L.1 and Corr.1) for the first regular session 2004 as presented by the Secretariat;

UNFPA segment

9. In her overview statement, the Executive Director, noted that the year 2004 had special significance for UNFPA. It was the mid-point in the implementation of the 20-year Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). It was also the year in which the Fund would expand its work of putting theory into practice to see if the transition process yielded the expected results. She underscored three keys for success in building a more effective UNFPA, namely, implementing the Fund's new strategic direction; strengthening operational effectiveness; and having the right staff in the right place at the right time.
10. The Executive Director highlighted the Fund's involvement in poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) processes and sector-wide approaches (SWAPs), and noted the ways in which UNFPA was helping its country offices to strengthen the content of PRSPs. She stressed the importance of advancing the ICPD agenda and clearly linking it with the achievement of the MDGs. She said UNFPA was as an active partner in the

Secretary-General's reform process and would continue to make the ICPD Programme of Action visible in the evolving United Nations development agenda. She highlighted some of the activities associated with the tenth anniversary of the ICPD, including most notably the field inquiry conducted by UNFPA, and thanked Sweden and Switzerland for their generous support for the field inquiry and other activities related to the tenth anniversary of ICPD.

11. The Executive Director was encouraged by the increase in the number of countries that had pledged support to UNFPA in 2003: an all-time high of 147 contributing countries, but expressed concern that while the Fund's regular resources had increased in 2003, there had been a decline in funding for population and reproductive health as a whole.

UNFPA Multi-year funding framework, 2004-2007

12. In introducing the report on the UNFPA multi-year funding framework, 2004-2007, the Executive Director noted that the MYFF was the Fund's medium-term strategic plan and main policy document and aimed to increase the Fund's effectiveness in helping countries to implement the ICPD Programme of Action and achieve the MDGs.
13. During the discussion that followed, numerous delegations took the floor to express their strong support for the MYFF, 2004-2007. Delegations appreciated the clear linkages with the MDGs, PRSPs and SWAps. They welcomed the increased emphasis on policy development. Delegations agreed with the three results areas: reproductive health; population and development; and gender. In addition, delegations, inter alia:
 - Appreciated the focus on national capacity development;
 - Appreciated the focus on a rights-based approach to programming, including taking into account different cultural contexts;
 - Welcomed the emphasis on promoting and strengthening partnerships;
 - Appreciated the clarity and simplified structure of the MYFF document and welcomed the participatory approach used in developing the MYFF;
 - Commended the focus on gender;
 - Noted that the MYFF should be an essential part of a resource mobilization strategy;
 - Urged donors to increase their contributions to the Fund, particularly with regard to regular resources;
 - Appreciated the Fund's contribution to poverty reduction identified in the MYFF;
 - Stressed the need to avoid conditionality and a narrow menu of activities;
 - Appreciated the alignment of the MYFF with the biennial support budget;
 - Urged UNFPA to continue focusing on results-based management.
14. It was noted that the delegate from Tunisia was putting together a draft decision on the MYFF.

Country programmes and related matters

15. The Executive Board approved the country programme documents for Benin, the Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Lesotho, Niger, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Cuba and Ecuador.
16. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) introduced the UNFPA intercountry programme, 2004-2007, and the review of the UNFPA intercountry programme, 2000-2003.
17. During the discussion, delegations expressed support for the intercountry programme, 2004-2007. They were pleased to note that it would produce replicable experiences that would enable UNFPA to build partnerships and support the implementation of national strategies to promote the ICPD agenda. Several delegations emphasized the importance of South-South cooperation and encouraged UNFPA to continue support for this area. Delegations welcomed the focus on national capacity-building. Some delegations expressed an interest in future reporting on the linkages between the intercountry programme and the country programmes. Delegations were pleased to note that a detailed monitoring and evaluation plan would be developed.
18. It was noted that the delegate from the Republic of the Congo was putting together a draft decision on the intercountry programme.

Thursday, 29 January 2004

UNDP segment

19. The president of the Executive Board welcomed delegations and informed them that, as a result of the previous day's closing of the Secretariat due to snow, the agenda for the Board had been compressed into two days. He encouraged delegations to keep interventions short and, with that, turned the floor over to the Administrator of UNDP for his statement;

Administrator's statement

20. The Administrator opened his presentation to the Executive Board by remembering UNDP staff members who had died while serving the organization and reaffirmed a commitment to taking the necessary steps to protect staff in the field;
21. The Administrator outlined the launch of the Atlas (Peoplesoft) system in all offices globally, and thanked UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS staff for its implementation; he also outlined the benefits, including a simplification of procedures, streamlined programme management and enhanced partnerships;
22. The Administrator stressed that the MDGs were at the heart of the global development agenda and emphasized an immediate need to ramp up efforts to meet the 2015 goals;
23. To better measure the progress of UNDP in meeting the MDGs, the Administrator outlined five key test areas: a balanced PRSP-MDG relationship; a clear definition of UNDP product lines in capacity development; addressing crisis and post-conflict countries; private-sector partnerships and; strengthening the roles and capacities of the Resident Coordinator system. The Administrator also linked the success of capacity development to the agenda of simplification and harmonization. Delegations were invited to comment;
24. All delegations expressed thanks for the Administrator's detailed remarks and many seconded the important issues he outlined. Several delegations did request a hard copy of the Administrator's address to the Executive Board, in order to allow more tightly-focused deliberations;
25. Many delegations felt that the Administrator correctly identified the MDGs as a critical focus area for UNDP; several delegations repeated calls for ramping up efforts to achieve the 2015 target; they also called for continued work on private-sector partnerships, arguing that UNDP has a unique role to play as networker, liaison and coordinator in development activities;
26. Several delegations were pleased with the vision of the Administrator in his efforts to continue internal reform at UNDP. One delegation expressed concern that resistance to change may still exist within the organization and, considering this, called upon the organization to acquire the necessary political competence to continue its transition from a field-based to a knowledge-based organization;
27. Various delegations highlighted challenges facing UNDP and asked the organization to be vigilant in monitoring these. One delegation felt that, in the context of its efforts to regionalize, UNDP should avoid developing different approaches in different regions. Another delegation suggested that, considering the shift by some countries from relief assistance to development assistance, UNDP should develop more transition-related programmes. Some delegations expressed a need for UNDP to continue resource mobilization efforts for countries in crisis and continued needs assessments and conferences;
28. A number of delegations took note of the continued efforts of UNDP to streamline and harmonize the Resident Coordinator system and many delegations credited their UNDP representatives with excellence in communication, creative thinking and effective interaction within their countries. The Administrator was invited to respond;
29. He reassured the Executive Board that regionalization efforts by UNDP were not jeopardizing centralized management; he stressed that efforts of the United Nations Development Group was a continuing and critical issue for UNDP and the entire United Nations system; he recognized the need to promote the positive work of UNDP in wider circles based on its product lines and noted that the days of a 'piecemeal approach' to development were over;

30. The president closed deliberations on the statement by the Administrator and opened up the session on agenda item 3, the multi-year funding framework, 2004-2007 (DP/2004/4). The Associate Administrator of UNDP addressed the Executive Board;

UNDP Multi-year funding framework

31. He outlined the need for a more coherent United Nations development effort at both global and country office levels and identified how UNDP, with the MYFF formula, is in a position to adequately handle the demands it faces. The Associate Administrator also outlined five key strategic goals to be pursued including: reduction of human poverty; fostering democratic governance; managing energy and environment, supporting crisis prevention and recovery and responding to HIV/AIDS;
32. He confirmed that the MYFF was designed to improved organizational effectiveness and is seen by UNDP as a key instrument for strategic management, monitoring and accountability; he also emphasized the MYFF as a means of assessing programme achievements and internal performance and partnering;
33. The Associate Administrator highlighted the mechanisms UNDP will use to report to the Executive Board on its progress and results under the MYFF using a series of results oriented annual reports (ROARs); he called upon the Executive Board to endorse the broad conceptual approach and framework of the MYFF 2004-2007 and welcomed continued dialog with Board members to refine the strategy proposed. Executive Board members were invited to comment;
34. All delegations thanked the Associate Administrator for a highly detailed presentation to the Executive Board. Several delegates expressed the need for a 'other resources' line in the ROAR and asked for further clarification in this regard; several delegations were puzzled by the elimination of the requirement to report on thematic trust funds, as they felt this was important. Many delegations saw the MYFF as a 'work in progress' and stressed a need to have a framework that was flexible enough to accommodate an ever-changing development environment. A number of delegates asked to see more of a focus on gender mainstreaming to ensure UNDP continues to feature gender equality prominently;
35. Some delegations stressed the importance of aligning the MYFF with the objectives of the MDGs. Many agreed that the MYFF provided strategic direction for UNDP and acted as a 'roadmap' for the organization. Several delegations expressed concern that the MYFF, while comprehensive, was highly technical and because of this, was difficult to follow. Others felt that performance indicators outlined in the MYFF lacked concreteness and would need to be further developed. One delegation suggested that future MYFF documents be harmonized between organizations. Numerous delegates praised the MYFF as a cutting edge document but noted that it should continue to be fine-tuned. The Associate Administrator was invited to respond;
36. The Associate Administrator took note of the praise for the MYFF but acknowledged the need to address its highly technical nature, the need to harmonize various MYFF documents, as well as the need to link it with the MDGs. He reaffirmed that gender mainstreaming was key to UNDP. With the conclusion of the Associate Administrator's response, the president closed agenda item 3 and opened agenda item 4. The president invited the Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM);

UNIFEM Multi-year funding framework

37. The Executive Director of UNIFEM outlined the organization's innovative and catalytic mandate. She highlighted progress on achieving goals from the MYFF, 2000-2003 and informed the Executive Board on the continuing efforts of UNIFEM to bring gender perspective to the United Nations reform process. The objectives and goals for the MYFF, 2004-2007 were detailed for the Board and a specific look at resources growth, as outlined in the integrated resources framework (IRF), was highlighted. The Executive Board was invited to comment;
38. Many delegations expressed support for the strong work of UNIFEM and noted the link between its ongoing efforts and Security Council resolution 1325, the Beijing platform for action, conference on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) and the MDGs. One delegation pointed out that UNIFEM draws its mandate from the Executive Board, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. Numerous delegations expressed full support for the focus areas of UNIFEM as outlined in the

MYFF and many of these countries, both developing and developed, called upon member states to continue to support UNIFEM by giving it the resources it requires to carry out its work. One delegation asked for a better balance of core and non-core funding, while several others felt the focus areas were slightly broad and requested that the organization sharpen them;

39. A number of delegates called upon UNIFEM to expand the extent to which it partners with international and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector and other United Nations agencies to expand the reach of its activities and its funding base. A couple of delegations suggested that UNIFEM was the agency of 'now and the future' and that it continue working to positively impact human rights for women as well as strengthen global gender equality and gender mainstreaming. Almost all delegations expressed full support for the UNIFEM MYFF. The Executive Director was invited to respond;
40. The Executive Director thanked the Board for its support and confirmed that UNIFEM would continue to focus on strategic and effective partnerships. She also stressed its role as catalyst and innovator, which will help continue strengthening the grounds for women's empowerment. She also acknowledged that partnerships, including those with the private sector, must grow and with it, an expansion of the resource base;
41. The Executive Director also touched upon men, and their increasing leadership involvement to help move the organization's work forward. She talked about women and war and the efforts of UNIFEM to bring their knowledge to the forefront, especially when drafting peace plans. The Executive Director concluded by adding that UNIFEM is working to bring about a transformational agenda.
42. The president concluded the session on agenda item 4 and adjourned deliberations for the day.

Friday, 30 January 2004

43. The president of the Executive Board welcomed delegations to the final day of the first regular session for 2004. He briefly outlined the agenda and turned the floor over to the Executive Director of UNOPS for his presentation on the implementation of the 2003 budget and change management process;

UNOPS

44. The Executive Director summarized the financial performance for UNOPS in 2003 and noted that the organization is carrying forward an operating balance of \$16.6 million into 2004. In addition to summarizing medium-term business strategy for the Board, the Executive Director explained the process of re-organization and decentralizing UNOPS operations, the expected benefits of ERP (Atlas) and the MCC-endorsed creation of a Director of Support Services post at the D2 level. He wrapped up his presentation with clear expectations for UNOPS performance in 2004 and outlining the reports he will present to the Board at the annual session in June;
45. All delegations thanked the Executive Director for his presentation, welcomed the positive financial figures for 2003, reiterated support for UNOPS in its ongoing efforts at change management and appreciated the new spirit of enterprise in the organization. Many delegations expressed cautious optimism about the future of UNOPS but wanted continued dialog on the expansion of the business mandate. One delegation expressed reservations regarding UNOPS working directly for independent countries while another wondered about the positives and negatives of working with regional banks;
46. For the upcoming annual session in June, numerous delegations requested more accurate financial figures and estimates. One delegation called on UNOPS to define its expanded mandate and mission, explain the modalities for a new fee setting mechanism, outline fee proposals that ensure exact cost recovery for project execution, draw up a new outline for organizational structures and provide further information on the role of the new Director of Support Services. The Executive Director addressed some queries raised during deliberations and closed by assuring the Board that requests for more information at the annual session would be fully complied with;

UNDP country programmes

47. The president introduced agenda item 5, reiterating to delegations that approval of country programme documents take place each January on a no-objections basis unless at least five Board members submit

critiques in writing ahead of time. The country programme documents were approved by Executive Board members without objection;

48. With regard to the extension of a country cooperation framework for the democratic people's republic of North Korea (DPRK), three delegations requested that UNDP improve its monitoring skills. They also requested that detailed reports be submitted to the Executive Board on an ongoing basis. The one year extension of all country cooperation frameworks (CCFs) presented to the Board were approved;
49. The report of the assessment mission to Myanmar was presented to the Executive Board and followed up by a brief presentation from the UNDP Resident Coordinator. All delegations took note of the situation in Myanmar and encouraged UNDP to continue to work to stimulate a positive environment for change. Several delegations expressed interest in the strategic resource framework (SRF). One delegation encouraged UNDP to work to establish a favorable legal environment and work with NGOs on the ground. Another delegation suggested that activities in the country, whether through international or private voluntary organizations, take place only after consultation with the National League for Democracy. The Executive Board took note of the report of the assessment mission to Myanmar;
50. With regard to the one-year extension of the second cooperation framework for technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC), one delegation, unclear as to the goals of the framework, asked for a more concrete paper to be tabled at the annual session in June. The Board approved the one-year extension;

Evaluation

51. The president invited the Director of the UNDP Evaluation Office to open the presentation on management response to the assessment of the MDG reports. In her address, the Director made four main recommendations for UNDP including: positioning the MDGs to generate maximum debate and public action; clarifying and strengthening the role of the United Nations Resident Coordinator to enable long-term advocacy, dissemination and strategic MDG planning; a strong partnership approach between government, international financial institutions and the United Nations system, and; a systematic and strategic assessment of capacity needs to ensure a coordinated approach to capacity development. The Associate Administrator also addressed the Board;
52. He highlighted points of a rapid assessment conducted by the Evaluation Office on the first set of MDG reports and outlined steps being taken by UNDP to address seven challenges presented by the assessment team. Those challenges, including closer collaboration between monitoring and campaigning, building greater statistical capacity and encouraging mutual accountability and global cooperation are also being discussed on the MDGNet knowledge network. He summarized by saying UNDP will continue to encourage the preparation of MDG reports, work to improve statistics and enhance statistical literacy and also incorporate key information from the MDGs into the Secretary General's report in 2005. Delegations were invited to comment;
53. Many delegates welcomed the report as a catalyst for bringing about improvements and tracking progress on the MDGs. Several delegations felt that a pragmatic approach should be taken as countries have varying resources and varying reporting capacities in preparing the reports. Other delegations expressed a need to avoid duplication and wanted a stronger MDG- PRSP link. One delegation asked for UNDP to report on ways of improving statistics, to be tabled at the annual session in June. The Evaluation Office Director and Associate Administrator were permitted to address queries raised during deliberations;

Economic and Social Council

54. The president introduced the agenda item pertaining to the report to the Economic and Social Council;

UNDP

55. The Associate Administrator briefed the Board on highlights from the UNDP report. This included the upward trend in both core and non-core UNDP resources. He also touched upon continued action to improve management performance at Headquarters and in the field. In that light, he highlighted simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures, cost savings realized from shared services, improvements made to the Resident Coordinator system, continued efforts at gender balance in the organization as well as the critical provision of short-term support to countries emerging from conflict;

56. One delegation expressed concern with non-core funds growing faster than core funds and wanted assurance that this was not problematic. Several delegations asked that, where possible, UNDP continue to push for alignment with PRSPs and continue strengthening the Resident Coordinator function among United Nations agencies. Another delegation asked for clarification regarding an increase in local currency variations and also asked whether the 38 per cent of core resources allotted to poverty reduction will hold for the future. The Associate Administrator addressed questions;

UNFPA

57. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) introduced the UNFPA report to the Economic and Social Council prepared in conformity with a joint format agreed by UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF. During the discussion, comments from delegations included the following:

58. UNFPA needs increased core resources to assist developing countries in meeting the Millennium Development Goals;

59. UNFPA is to be commended for its work in gender mainstreaming, including male involvement, as well as for using a culturally sensitive approach to programming;

60. UNFPA should further strengthen results-based management;

61. All the United Nations funds and programmes are encouraged to provide inputs to the TCPR process;

62. The joint meeting of the Executive Boards should have decision-making authority and this issue should be looked at in the context of the TCPR;

63. The president then introduced agenda item 7, recommendations of the Board of Auditors;

Board of Auditors

UNDP

64. The Associate Administrator gave a brief introduction to DP/2004/11, and outlined steps taken to implement recommendations by the Board of Auditors. Those actions include: all payroll bank reconciliations from the United Nations Account Group received and reviewed; 99 country offices with access to internet banking with remaining offices to be added after completion of the Peoplesoft (Atlas) system; all advances provided to governments as National Execution operating funds reconciled and; the closing of 90 per cent of inactive trust funds at UNV, with no significant lingering balances in the remaining 10 per cent;

UNOPS

65. The Executive Director of UNOPS updated the Board on current activities based on recommendations by the auditors, including a strategic advisory team for business acquisition to develop a medium-term strategy for UNOPS business, a strategic advisory team to address issues of cost recovery and improving methodology for a more transparent system for the calculation of the cost of UNOPS services. He also touched upon the implementation of Atlas (Peoplesoft) and anticipated opportunities for improving control and efficiency in resource management, better tracking tools for projects and improved reporting capacity;

66. Several delegations requested further information from UNDP on the National Execution expenditures mentioned in the report. These same delegations also appealed to UNDP to provide insight into the fraud prevention strategy as well as results from a study into end of service benefits. The Assistant Administrator for UNDP Bureau of Management, who had joined the Associate Administrator on the podium, addressed queries raised during deliberations;

UNFPA

67. The Deputy Executive Director (Management) introduced the UNFPA report entitled Follow-up to the Report of the United Nations Board of Auditors for 2000-2001: Status of Implementation of Recommendations.
68. During the discussion, delegations stressed the importance of speedy follow-up to the recommendations of the Board of Auditors and underscored that the funds provided by donors should be fully accounted for and utilized for the specific purposes for which they were meant. Delegations asked if the UNFPA service-level agreements with UNDP had been concluded and also inquired about the status of the fraud prevention plan.
69. The Deputy Executive Director noted that all pending service-level agreements with UNDP had been agreed and signed in 2003. The Director, Division for Oversight Services, stated that a three-agency effort was under way with regard to developing a fraud prevention strategy. The strategy would be finalized in the first quarter of 2004.
70. The president then introduced agenda item 9, the follow-up to UNAIDS programme coordinating board (PCB) meeting;
71. The Group Leader for the UNDP HIV/AIDS Group provided the Executive Board with an update on activities. This involved a discussion surrounding leadership and capacity development to address HIV/AIDS, development planning, implementation and HIV/AIDS responses as well as advocacy and communication to address HIV/AIDS. The Chief of the HIV/AIDS Branch, UNFPA, introduced the report entitled UNFPA Response: Implementing the UNAIDS PCB Recommendations. The Deputy Executive Director, UNAIDS, underscored the significance of the discussion taking place in the Executive Board and indicated that the last year was filled with challenges revolving around expanding access to treatment while focusing on prevention, sharpening advocacy and action plans, mitigating the impact of AIDS on women and girls and educating governments on the impact of HIV/AIDS;
72. During the discussion, comments from delegations included the following:
73. Coordination is vital in addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic and country-level coordination among the UNAIDS co-sponsors should be strengthened;
74. The Executive Board's regular consideration of the response of UNDP and UNFPA to PCB recommendations will help to ensure a strong, coordinated and coherent United Nations response to HIV/AIDS;
75. Given the feminization of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the promotion of women's reproductive health and rights and ensuring access to reproductive health services is essential;
76. Future reports from UNDP and UNFPA should be more analytical and include an examination of how the UNAIDS co-sponsors complement and support each other; how UNAIDS contributes to the work of UNDP and UNFPA in the area of HIV/AIDS; and how the work of the PCB feeds into the work of the two organizations and vice versa;
77. At the annual session of the Executive Board, UNDP and UNFPA should provide additional information on concrete follow-up to the PCB recommendations, including what specific measures could be taken to improve coordination with and strengthen support to the UNAIDS Country Coordinators;
78. Delegations were also interested in knowing how UNAIDS contributed to the design of UNDP and UNFPA programmes; and what UNFPA was doing to scale-up national HIV-prevention strategies, including with regard to ensuring condom security within the poverty reduction strategy and other planning processes;
79. The President opened up the last item on the agenda (item 1) pertaining to organizational matters. The Executive Board adopted all tabled decisions (posted on Executive Board secretariat at www.undp.org/execbrd). The president concluded by thanking delegations and formally adjourned the first regular session for 2004.