United Nations A/66/859

General Assembly

Distr.: General
26 June 2012

Original: English

Sixty-sixth session
Agenda item 117
Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Independent evaluation of lessons learned from "Delivering as one"

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with paragraph 21 of General Assembly resolution 64/289 on system-wide coherence, the Secretary-General, after consultation with Member States, appointed nine experts to serve in their personal capacity as members of the Evaluation Management Group for the independent evaluation of lessons learned from the "Delivering as one" pilots.

The Secretary-General has the honour to present to Member States the report on the independent evaluation, as submitted by the Chair of the Evaluation Management Group to the President of the General Assembly on 12 June 2012.

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Letter dated 12 June 2012 from the Chair of the Evaluation Management Group to the President of the General Assembly transmitting the report on the independent evaluation of lessons learned from “Delivering as one”

In my capacity as elected Chair of the Evaluation Management Group for the independent evaluation of lessons learned from “Delivering as one”, appointed by the Secretary-General, I have the honour to present to you the final evaluation report.

Under the ad hoc arrangements for this evaluation endorsed by the General Assembly in paragraph 21 of its resolution 64/289, the evaluation report is to be submitted to the President of the Assembly during the sixty-sixth session.

In accordance with the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group, evaluation reports require an explicit response by the governing authorities and management addressed by their recommendations. I am therefore taking the liberty of also sharing the report with the Secretary-General.

I would like to thank you for kindly including information on the independent evaluation on your website, www.un.org/en/ga/president/66/. Given Member States’ strong interest in the evaluation, this communication tool has been very much appreciated.

I thank you once again for the support extended to the independent evaluation and assure you of my highest consideration.

(*Signed*) Liliam **Flores Ortega Rodríguez**
Chair of the Evaluation Management Group

Report on the independent evaluation of lessons learned from “Delivering as one”

Summary

The present report summarizes the outcome of the independent evaluation of lessons learned from “Delivering as one” conducted in 2011-2012 in accordance with the request of the General Assembly, contained in paragraph 139 of its resolution 62/208 and paragraph 21 of its resolution 64/289.

The report presents the background to “Delivering as one” (sect. I), the mandate, modality, purpose, objective, scope and methodology of the evaluation (sect. II), the configuration of “Delivering as one” (sect. III), findings (sect. IV), conclusions (sect. V), recommendations (sect. VI), lessons learned (sect. VII) and final remarks (sect. VIII).

This summary report is based on a full evaluation report prepared by a team of consultants, which contains extensive evidence and analysis in accordance with the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group.

I. Background to “Delivering as one”

1. The “Delivering as one” approach emerged from intergovernmental decision-making on the operational activities of the United Nations system for development. In resolutions on the triennial comprehensive policy review adopted in 2001, 2004 and 2007,[1] the General Assembly called for strengthening the system. “Delivering as one” involved pilot attempts to respond to those provisions.

2. The 2005 World Summit Outcome (see General Assembly resolution 60/1) contained suggestions on making the United Nations development system more coherent, effective and relevant. Member States recommended operational reforms aimed at strengthening the results of United Nations country activities through such measures as an enhanced role for the senior resident official, whether special representative, resident coordinator or humanitarian coordinator, and a common management, programming and monitoring framework.

3. In the World Summit Outcome, the General Assembly invited the Secretary-General to further strengthen the management and coordination of United Nations operational activities and to make proposals on more tightly managed entities in the fields of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment for consideration by Member States. In response, the Secretary-General appointed the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence, which issued its report, “Delivering as one”, in November 2006 (see A/61/583).

4. One of the key recommendations of the High-level Panel was that the United Nations system should “deliver as one” at country level. That would include the adoption of the “Four Ones”, namely One Leader, One Programme, One Budget and, where appropriate, One Office.

5. This proposal was conceptualized within the framework of enhanced progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals. The report also contained far-reaching proposals on new governance and funding arrangements at the central level to support a “delivering as one” approach.

6. Although Member States did not endorse most of the High-level Panel’s recommendations, the proposals catalysed the adoption of resolutions on system-wide coherence in 2008, 2009 and 2010 (resolutions 62/277, 63/311 and 64/289).

7. At the end of 2006, the Secretary-General formally announced that eight countries had volunteered to pilot the “Delivering as one” approach: Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay and Viet Nam. The Secretary-General requested the Chair of the United Nations Development Group to lead an effort with the Group’s executive heads to move forward with the “One United Nations” initiative on the basis of the interest expressed by programme countries.

8. The purpose of the pilots was to allow the United Nations system, in cooperation with host Governments and in support of national development goals, to develop approaches that would enhance coherence, efficiency and effectiveness at

[1] Resolutions 56/201, 59/250 and 62/208. As from 2012, the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities by the General Assembly was converted to a quadrennial exercise.

country level; reduce transaction costs for national partners; and test what works best in various country situations.

9. “Delivering as one” activities started in early 2007. Representatives of the Governments of the eight pilot countries, as well as of other countries that had voluntarily adopted “Delivering as one”, met in Maputo in 2008, in Kigali in 2009, in Hanoi in 2010 and in Montevideo in 2011 to exchange experiences and lessons learned and to consider the way forward.

10. In 2007, the United Nations Evaluation Group conducted evaluability assessments of the “Delivering as one” pilots. In 2010, seven of the eight pilot countries (Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay and Viet Nam) conducted extensive country-led evaluations.

II. The independent evaluation of “Delivering as one”

A. Mandate and modality of the evaluation

11. An independent evaluation of “Delivering as one” was originally mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/208 of 19 December 2007 on the triennial comprehensive policy review. The Assembly confirmed the mandate in paragraph 21 of its resolution 64/289 of 2 July 2010 on system-wide coherence.

12. By resolution 64/289, the Assembly endorsed the modality for the independent evaluation proposed by the Secretary-General. It entrusted oversight of the evaluation to a regionally balanced group of evaluation experts, the Evaluation Management Group, which was supported by a secretariat and a team of consultants. The members of the Evaluation Management Group are listed in the annex to the present report.

B. Purpose, objective and scope of the evaluation

13. The ultimate purpose of the independent evaluation is to inform the quadrennial comprehensive policy review on operational activities for development in late 2012, as well as other intergovernmental processes concerning system-wide coherence.

14. The overall objective of the evaluation is to assess the contribution and value added of “Delivering as one” and to draw lessons learned that are significant for the United Nations system. It aims for a synthetic evaluation of the lessons learned from the pilot experiences, and not a comparative assessment of performance across countries. In assessing the overall progress of “Delivering as one”, the evaluation has used the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

15. The evaluation covers the period from 2006 (the year before “Delivering as one” started) to 2011. It is mandated to assess (a) the voluntary “Delivering as one” initiatives in the eight pilot countries; (b) progress, processes and context, as well as lessons learned from the pilot experiences; and (c) remaining challenges to “Delivering as one”, along with systemic issues of United Nations reform related to or triggered by “Delivering as one” at the headquarters, regional and country levels.

16. The evaluation does not cover the so-called “self-starters”, additional countries that have chosen to adopt “Delivering as one” or elements of it. Nor does it consider countries that have adopted “reformed” United Nations development assistance frameworks. Furthermore, it does not evaluate the overall performance of the United Nations development system in individual pilot countries or across pilot countries.

C. Key evaluation questions

17. On the basis of framework terms of reference for the independent evaluation, the key evaluation questions have formed the basis of work:

- What were the original intentions of “Delivering as one”?
- Why did countries volunteer, and how can the intentions of “Delivering as one” be related to their country circumstances?
- What processes and resources have been put in place to operationalize “Delivering as one” at country, regional and global levels?
- What happened at country level, and how did the context influence how “Delivering as one” was implemented?
- What were the most significant changes (at country, regional and global levels) to which “Delivering as one” contributed, recognizing the intended objectives, and were there any unintended consequences? How and why did these changes and consequences come about?
- In what ways has the United Nations system (particularly the headquarters of United Nations system entities) supported and/or constrained “Delivering as one” implementation and results — or produced unintended consequences?
- What are the key lessons, based on positive contributions or challenges faced by the “Delivering as one” initiatives, that can be carried forward into the future work of the United Nations system?

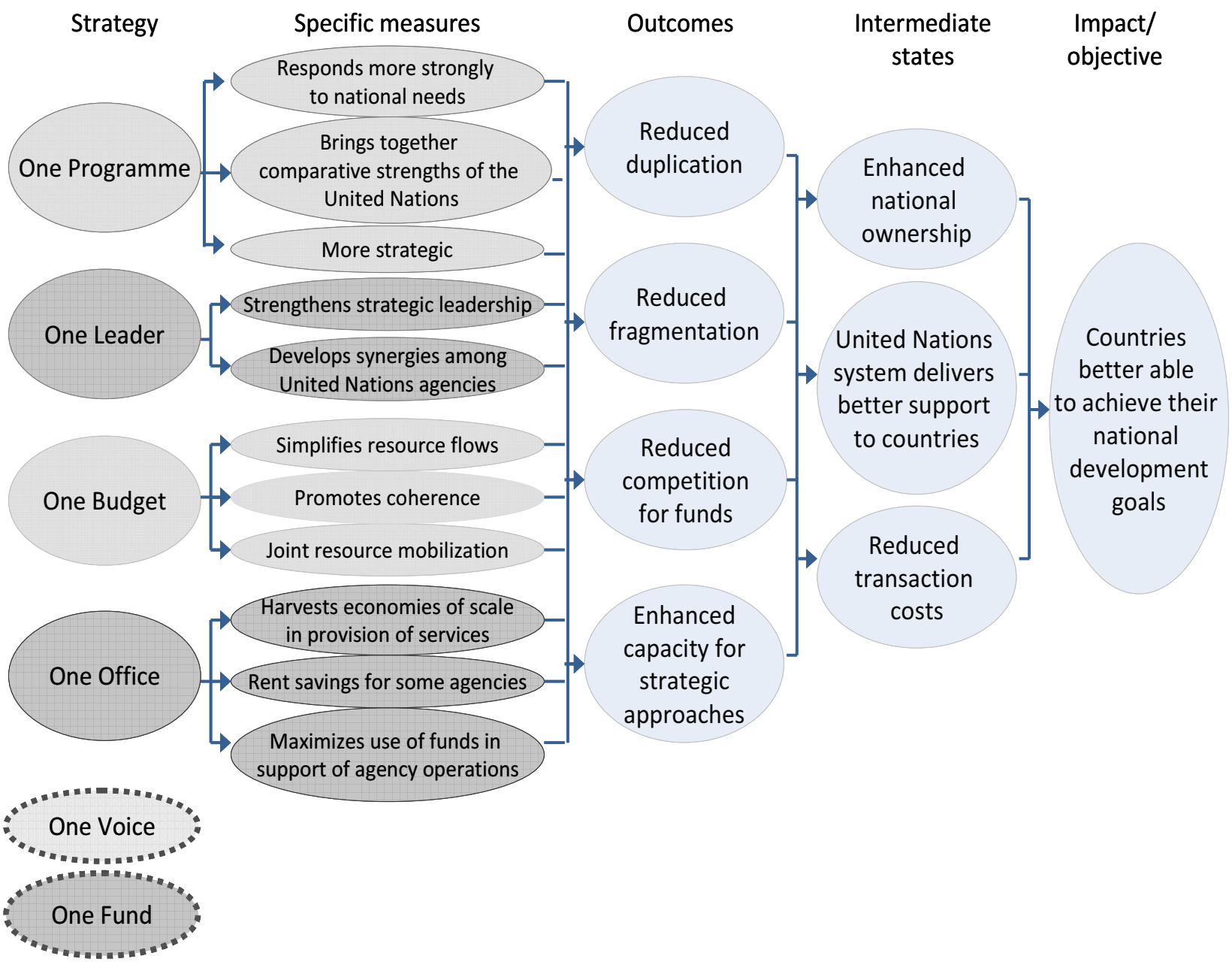
D. Approach based on a theory of change model

18. The report of the High-level Panel introduced the concept of the Four Ones: One Programme, One Leader, One Budgetary Framework and One Office. They represent the original framework for “Delivering as one”. The conceptual approach of the evaluation was based on the Four Ones.

19. However, it was realized that other strategies gained prominence during implementation: notably the concept of One Voice as distinct from the concept of One Leader, and One Fund as different from One Budgetary Framework (or One Budget). In practice, six Ones have been pursued in most pilot countries. This was acknowledged in the data collection and analysis of the evaluation.

20. Since there was no agreed common framework for implementing “Delivering as one” beyond the broad definition of the Ones, it was first necessary, for the purposes of the evaluation, to establish a basic model against which to assess its effects at the country and United Nations system levels: the theory of change model (see the figure below).

A generic theory of change for Delivering as One at country level



21. The model shows the pathway along which the pilot countries were intended to move in order to achieve the ultimate objective of being better able to address national development goals. The theory shows the different levels of measures and outcomes at country level to move towards the objective.

22. The application of the Four Ones and related measures was intended to contribute to four immediate outcomes: reduced duplication, reduced fragmentation, reduced competition for funds and enhanced capacity for strategic approaches.

23. These immediate outcomes would not in themselves deliver the ultimate objective of countries being better able to achieve their national development goals. Higher-level outcomes or intermediate states would be required as pathways towards the attainment of the objective.

24. Three intermediate states were identified: enhanced national ownership, better delivery of United Nations system support to countries and reduced transaction costs. If these are all adequately attained, they will strongly promote achievement of the objective, although they may not be sufficient for its attainment.

E. Methodology

25. During a three-month inception phase, a systematic review was done of secondary data sources, including (a) background documents on the United Nations system; (b) the country-led evaluations conducted in seven of the eight pilot countries,[2] which were subjected to a critical assessment as to their independence, credibility and usefulness for the independent evaluation; (c) documents related to the "Delivering as one" pilot in Pakistan; and (d) documents related to systemic issues arising from support to or triggered by "Delivering as one" initiatives at headquarters and regional levels.

26. During the six-month implementation phase, the theory of change approach outlined above formed the basis for the evaluation's overall methodology. It was a key element in generating guidelines for data collection at country and other levels and in analysing what was done, why and with what results, within and across countries. This process enabled data to be assembled and analysed to answer the key evaluation questions and assess the performance of "Delivering as one" against the evaluation criteria.

27. All eight pilot countries were visited for primary data collection from Governments, other national stakeholders, resident coordinator offices and United Nations country teams. Strong factual evidence was also obtained through a survey on funding and business practices completed by all pilot-country resident coordinator offices and United Nations country teams. Interviews with stakeholders took place at regional levels (Bangkok, Geneva and Panama) and at headquarters levels (Geneva, New York, Rome and Vienna) and with staff of the permanent missions of Member States in New York.

28. All data were verified and triangulated and subjected to further analysis drawing on the theory of change to develop conclusions, recommendations and

[2] Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay and Viet Nam.

lessons learned about the eight pilots and their interaction with other parts of the United Nations system.

29. The present summary report is based on a full evaluation report containing extensive evidence from all sources. The full report includes detailed country information sheets validated by resident coordinator offices and United Nations country teams in the pilot countries.

F. Stakeholder consultations

30. Pilot countries and other Member States as well as members of the United Nations Development Group, the High-level Committee on Management, the High-level Committee on Programmes and the United Nations Evaluation Group provided extensive comments considered in the finalization of both reports. Nonetheless, the views expressed in both reports are those of the Evaluation Management Group, based on evidence collected by a team of consultants.

G. Limitations

31. The diversity of approaches in implementing "Delivering as one" challenged the independent evaluation. Extremely diverse country contexts made it difficult to generalize findings and conclusions.

32. Evaluating the results of policies, programmes and plans normally requires accurately establishing the situation before their implementation. Baseline data were largely absent, however.

33. Information on programme results and business practices was in most cases not readily available. Aggregation of data and triangulation of information from different sources were handicapped by inconsistencies in parameters and practices of programme management, diversity in monitoring and evaluation, differences in budgetary frameworks and uneven and incomplete management information systems, particularly with regard to financial information.

34. The Development Group only introduced a methodology to measure transaction costs in October 2010. The methodology has not been widely applied by United Nations country teams. Data measuring transaction costs were therefore very limited.

III. Configuration of "Delivering as one"

A. Pilot-country level

35. According to current World Bank classifications, two of the eight pilot countries are upper-middle-income countries (Albania and Uruguay), three are low-middle-income countries (Cape Verde, Pakistan and Viet Nam) and three are low-income countries (Mozambique, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania). The income status of the countries partly explains the significant differences between them in terms of levels of official development assistance, United Nations development assistance and support through the "Delivering as one" initiative.

36. All pilot countries followed the One Programme, One Leader, One Budgetary Framework and One Fund strategies. Most pilots also added the One Voice strategy as an approach distinct from the One Leader. The One Office component was intended to promote co-location of United Nations offices, along with common procedures to reduce transaction costs.

37. The One Programme strategy was implemented differently in the pilot countries. One major strategic development concerned joint programmes. While these were uniformly adopted in the first generation of One Programmes (with many differences in management and implementation), some divergence began to appear in the second generation. Some countries moved from a United Nations development assistance framework to a United Nations development assistance programme, usually with an associated change from joint programmes to joint programming. Other divergences arose in overall oversight and management, including in the formal engagement of Governments in programme planning and resource allocation, the use of thematic coordination groups and the commissioning of country-led evaluations.

38. The One Leader strategy enabled United Nations country teams to work together in programming and resource allocation. Although the resident coordinator position is present in the great majority of countries served by the United Nations system, it has gained greater prominence in the “Delivering as one” countries. Associated with this development in several pilots is the voluntary agreement of United Nations country team members to adhere to a code of conduct governing the relationship between their individual organizational interests and those of the country team as a whole. The appointment of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) country directors has strengthened the firewall between the resident coordinator and the UNDP resident representative.

39. One Voice, although not formally part of “Delivering as one”, has been introduced at different stages in all pilots. Some countries interpret it as a subcomponent of One Leader, while others consider it a completely distinct component. All countries consider common policy positions as part of the One Voice strategy. Other elements are still under development in some countries — for example, the formalization of joint communication teams and common websites.

40. All countries adopted the One Budgetary Framework, intended to ensure transparency of planned activities and results, identify resources and funding gaps and enhance performance. Joint resource mobilization for agreed results under the One Programme was a major innovation in all pilots.

41. The One Fund became a catalyst for an inclusive approach to United Nations engagement, encompassing a broader range of organizations, whether large or small, resident or non-resident. The One Fund is a common pool of supplementary resources used in some countries to raise additional funds for the One Programme, preferably both multi-year and unearmarked. The size of the One Fund varies substantially, with significant implications for the One Programme. It has given Governments increased flexibility to use United Nations assistance in innovative areas not addressed under previous development assistance frameworks.

42. Fifteen donors[3] supported the One Fund and the Expanded Funding Window with a total of US$ 585 million between 2008 and 2011. Five donors covered 83 per cent of all commitments: Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom.

43. The allocation of funds to organizations was based on agreements on the roles and responsibilities of each participant in the One Programme, funding needs and performance of the programmes concerned. In most pilots, the One Programme aligned itself strongly to the previous United Nations development assistance framework and reflected the predominance of funds and programmes. Across all the pilots, the funds and programmes received 67 per cent of resources, compared with 29 per cent for specialized agencies and 4 per cent for non-resident agencies.

44. The One Office strategy was not implemented uniformly, although all pilots pursued business simplification and harmonization measures. The concept focused on areas such as procurement, recruitment and information technology systems.

B. Systemic levels

45. The launch of "Delivering as one" in 2007 took place in the midst of larger reforms as a follow-up to the 2005 World Summit. At that time, many United Nations organizations were undertaking their own major structural and policy reforms, which were influenced by broader reform processes and concepts and promoted a spirit of system-wide coherence. These efforts were mutually reinforcing and synergistic, as individual organizations sought to align internal reforms with system-wide coherence. At the same time, individual United Nations organizations intensified their participation in inter-agency mechanisms, mainly through the United Nations Development Group.

46. While specific to the contexts of individual organizations, reform processes had some common elements. They included the introduction of results-based management principles at all levels, a trend towards decentralization, reinforcement of capacities at the regional and country levels, the development of medium-term strategic plans and simplification and harmonization of business practices.

47. The "Delivering as one" pilots contributed to reform both at the higher levels of the system (notably the Development Group) and within individual United Nations entities. In 2008, the management and accountability system was created by the Development Group. Building on previous inter-agency agreements, it offers a more cohesive and robust management system for the United Nations. It seeks to balance the principle of mutual accountability between the resident coordinator and the United Nations country team (horizontal accountability) with the direct

[3] Australia, Austria, Canada, the European Union, Finland, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. This figure counts the Government of Sweden and the Swedish International Development Cooperation as one donor, and the Government of Switzerland and the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development as one donor, even though they are shown by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office Gateway as separate accounts. The funding total does not take into account resources for the Development Operations Coordination Office and some specialized agencies, and the additional support of some donors that seconded professional staff on a time-limited basis to some of the resident coordinator offices (as in Viet Nam).

responsibility and accountability of individual representatives towards their respective organizations (vertical accountability).

48. The management and accountability system has been accompanied by a range of guidance tools for resident coordinator and country team appraisal, resident coordinator job descriptions and terms of reference, codes of conduct templates and reporting formats. An action plan has been developed to implement the system.

49. The "Delivering as one" initiative also fed into efforts to simplify and harmonize business practices and reduce transaction costs. Business practices and common services became a major focus for work at the inter-agency level, notably through the Development Group's Joint Funding and Business Operations Network and the High-level Committee on Management. The Development Group and the High-level Committee on Management jointly developed important guidelines and tools in such areas as information and communications technology, common services and procurement and the management of multi-partner trust funds.

IV. Findings[4]

A. One Programme

50. The One Programme has been at the core of efforts to respond to country needs and priorities in all "Delivering as one" pilots. It has posed challenges in defining the right balance between strategic focus and inclusiveness, however. Much attention has gone to increasing access by the pilot countries to the mandates and resources of non-resident agencies.

51. In the beginning of "Delivering as one", the joint programme was the preferred modality. Interventions were conceived and developed by groups of organizations. In some cases, they were existing programmes that were retrofitted to "Delivering as one". This first-generation approach has increasingly been replaced by joint programming based on an assessment of areas in which United Nations support could best respond to national needs and priorities and with a focus on the joint results to which the United Nations system could best contribute. Second-generation joint programming has in many cases brought about improved relationships with donor programmes and activities. An emerging approach is for joint programming to be incorporated into a United Nations development assistance plan rather than a United Nations development assistance framework.

52. Many results have been reported in annual reports and evaluations of projects and programmes implemented under the first-generation version of One Programme, in particular for cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, human rights and HIV/AIDS. However, it is extremely difficult to establish an evidence-based argument that these results are significantly different from those of earlier non-"Delivering as one" programmes.

[4] This section of the report is a summary of extensive evidence presented in a separate full evaluation report prepared by consultants. Additional findings that are relevant to the different levels of analysis of the theory of change can be found in section V (conclusions).

53. Pilot countries invested considerable efforts in improving the monitoring and evaluation systems of the One Programme. This proved a highly complex endeavour that has not yet yielded satisfactory results.

54. As pilot countries progressed towards joint programming documents, funds and programmes had to develop separate common country programme documents covering only their activities. This was required so that their individual executive boards could approve these documents. Specialized agencies are not affected by this issue, since they do not require approval of their operational activities by their governing bodies.

B. One Budgetary Framework

55. The One Budgetary Framework is a major innovation which allows a United Nations country team to present all planned and costed programme activities in one place, together with the available and expected funding sources, including the One Fund. It has not been applied in a consistent way across the pilot countries.

C. One Fund

56. Several donor countries have actively supported the "Delivering as one" initiative. Apart from contributing to the One Fund, they have provided country-level assistance to resident coordinator offices through funding or staff secondments. Donors have also aided coordination structures at the global or regional level, such as the Development Operations Coordination Office and Development Group regional teams.

57. Additional financial resources from the One Fund as well as from the Expanded Funding Window and the Millennium Development Goal Fund have proved crucial in motivating more organizations to work together. As innovative mechanisms for unearmarked and predictable funding, these funds can facilitate responses to national needs and priorities, especially on cross-cutting issues. There are doubts about the sustainability of these new arrangements, however, since there is currently uncertainty about donor commitments.

58. The role of the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office as administrative agent of the One Fund helped to introduce some uniformity in financial approaches. The Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office also administers the Millennium Development Goal Fund and the Expanded Funding Window for countries adopting the "Delivering as one" approach.

D. One Leader

59. The pilot countries have sought an enhanced leadership role for the resident coordinator and increased mutual accountability between the resident coordinator and members of the United Nations country team. Despite notable attempts of the United Nations Development Group to clarify this issue through the management and accountability system, vertical accountability within organizations still prevails over horizontal accountability at country level. While the resident coordinators are

held accountable by the country teams and the entire United Nations system, they do not exercise authority over the members of the country teams.

60. Although there have been advances in strengthening common ownership of the resident coordinator system in the pilot countries, assisted by the introduction of UNDP country directors, country team members still express reservations concerning the effectiveness of the firewall between the resident coordinator for the entire United Nations system and the UNDP resident representative.

E. One Voice

61. Incorporating One Voice provided greater coherence in advocacy and policy dialogue, increased visibility, and helped foster a United Nations identity and culture among staff. It aims to advance a unified United Nations position on specific policy and cross-cutting issues. Other elements of the approach have included joint communication teams, common websites and attempts to adopt a United Nations-wide identity, in addition to specific organizational "brands". Some parts of this last aspect have encountered resistance, notably in terms of the concept of dual logos on organization-specific outputs, as some organizations feared dilution of their specific messages.

F. One Office

62. The pilot countries have shown that it is possible to achieve efficiency gains by expanding common services and simplifying business practices, particularly in such areas as procurement, information and communications technology and staff recruitment. Common United Nations premises and harmonization of business practices in areas such as financial and human resource management have proved more difficult.

63. Attempts to innovate to achieve greater efficiency and reduce transaction costs through the One Office strategy have faced implementation challenges. All United Nations country teams reported savings as a result of "Delivering as one", but in relation to overall costs and programme values these are relatively modest, particularly if seen in the context of the major staff time required to generate them. National and international mid-level staff played a critical role. Overall, the "Delivering as one" approach has led to substantial cost increases in required human and financial resources.

64. Owing to differences in corporate financing and accounting terminologies and definitions, consolidation of organization-specific financial reports was not possible. For this reason, assessment of actual savings in transaction costs for the United Nations system thanks to "Delivering as one" remained elusive. There are no examples of savings reinvested in programmes. In several countries, perception surveys were conducted among stakeholders about changes in transaction costs related to specific business practices. The overall feedback has been that transaction costs for donors and national partners are perceived to be lower with "Delivering as one".

65. "Delivering as one" has not resulted in consolidated management information. Key data still need to be compiled manually on an ad hoc basis from a variety of

sources. This presents major challenges in the accountability of the pilots to the United Nations system.

G. Support from headquarters and from the regional level

66. Resident coordinators and country teams in the pilot countries perceive support from headquarters and the inter-agency system as insufficient. They observe in particular that systemic support has not been timely in addressing issues on which countries must make decisions. High-level stakeholders, on the other hand, cite the large number of "Delivering as one" guidelines, often issued on the basis of specific missions to pilot countries, as well as substantial training programmes to support the reform.

67. Support to the pilot countries by regional offices and the Development Group regional teams did not go significantly beyond that provided to other countries. The different geographical locations of the regional offices of organizations and of the regional teams presented a challenge to coordinated and coherent regional support. The teams' functions and capacities are still evolving, with some hubs having greater operational and technical support structures than others, but all will require additional time and resources, and consistent engagement of all organizations, to become effective.

68. The relationship between the regional teams and the United Nations regional commissions has also needed clarification to ensure effective complementarities and synergies. The commissions have two functions. They are intergovernmental forums for regional policymaking and standard-setting. They also carry out regional technical cooperation programmes as requested, and provide some limited country-level support on regional and cross-border issues as non-resident agencies. They potentially complement the regional teams, which are mainly structures for internal management, oversight and support of United Nations organizations at the country level.

V. Conclusions

69. Building on the preceding findings, evaluative conclusions concerning "Delivering as one" can be drawn against the theory of change model described in section II above. This assessment refers to the different levels of progress in terms of the strategies (the Ones), the outcomes, the intermediate states and the objective of "Delivering as one". A final assessment considers evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability).

70. Conclusions related to each of the levels of progress seek to identify strengths and weaknesses, consider the relative importance of different elements and the relationships between them, and present a systematic analysis. Each element is rated on a five-point scale presented in table 1. All rating scales require evaluators' judgements, based on evidence and findings. Each rating was triangulated in a number of ways, including: comparison of findings on each element to assess relative progress; assessment of each element according to an overall set of criteria; and comparison of assessments by different members of the evaluation team.

Table 1
Rating scales of progress and performance

Rating of progress/performance	*Characteristics*
Very strong	Several significant positive factors, with no negative factors
Strong	Several significant positive factors with minor negative factors, or some (less significant) positive factors but no negatives
Moderate	Positive factors somewhat outweigh negative factors
Little (“weak” for evaluation criteria)	Negative factors somewhat outweigh positive factors
Very little (“very weak” for evaluation criteria)	Negative factors strongly outweigh positive factors

71. The ratings endeavour to present a fair and transparent assessment of the outcomes of “Delivering as one” processes at different levels. These processes are largely internal to the United Nations system and its efforts to better support programme countries in their pursuit of national development goals. Ratings do not imply any judgement on the performance of pilot countries as a whole or individually. At the same time, the tremendous commitment and hard work of United Nations staff to make “Delivering as one” work are fully recognized. It should also be acknowledged that in some cases, “Delivering as one” had to deal with adverse external conditions, e.g., humanitarian crises, the need for fiscal austerity among development partners and political changes that negatively affected continuity.

A. Conclusions on the strategies

72. Table 2 gives an overview of progress made by the Four Ones and the two additional strategies of One Voice and One Fund, placed in the context of the challenges the pilots sought to address.

73. On the basis of the evidence collected in the evaluation, it is concluded that One Programme, One Leader, One Budget and One Fund all achieved moderate levels of progress. They have a number of strengths, as well as countervailing weaknesses. The One Voice strategy achieved a high level of progress, with several strengths and few weaknesses.

74. The One Office strategy made little progress. Despite major efforts by United Nations country teams and staff, and some notable achievements, the countervailing weaknesses were substantial. They showed the limits of reforms at the country level without necessary reforms at the United Nations system level.

Table 2
Level of progress of the strategies (the six Ones)

Strategy	*Achievements*	*Challenges*	*Assessment of progress*
One Programme	Coverage of cross-cutting issues improved Programmes have delivered results More coherent programmes Larger assistance programmes Non-resident agencies able to participate at higher level according to country need Learning experience; second-generation instances of One Programme better designed Trend from joint programmes to joint programming Lowered transaction costs for Governments	First One programmes largely retrofitted from existing programmes Some joint programmes have too many partners and outcomes to manage High number of small-scale activities High transaction costs for United Nations country team Monitoring and evaluation not yet able to capture additional development results from “jointness” or participation in “Delivering as one”	**Moderate** The shift to joint programming has been a promising learning experience resulting in examples of One Programme that effectively address cross-cutting issues Challenges remain in finding a balance between focus and inclusiveness and in monitoring and evaluation of results
One Leader	Increased coherence among organizations Helped United Nations country teams coordinate One Programme Strengthened collaboration with Governments Resident coordinator offices provided human and other resources to assist resident and non-resident agencies Better delineation of functions of resident coordinator and UNDP resident representative (firewall)	Organizations remain accountable to own governing bodies Little horizontal accountability in United Nations country team Unequal accountability between resident coordinator and United Nations country team	**Moderate** Resident coordinator function has been strengthened, but still lacks authority, as vertical accountability prevails over horizontal accountability The firewall does not completely resolve the issue of a potential conflict of interest between the two functions

Strategy	*Achievements*	*Challenges*	*Assessment of progress*
One Voice	One Voice improved coherence of communications within and outside the United Nations country team, especially with Governments Organizations gained external profile through critical mass Helped generate internal "buy-in" to "Delivering as one" Supported advocacy on normative issues	Insufficient human and financial resources in some pilots	**Strong** Concerted communication on issues of concern based on mandates and expertise of United Nations entities is widely seen as a major step forward
One Budget (One Budgetary Framework)	Increased transparency of resource requirements for entire United Nations system at country level, including resources to be channelled though One Fund	Use of one Budgetary Framework across pilot countries still uneven	**Moderate** One Budgetary Framework offers the possibility of fully costing all planned development activities of the United Nations system Uneven use in different countries poses challenges to aggregation of data and reporting
One Fund	Increased flexibility for Government and United Nations country team, since funds were "lightly" earmarked or unearmarked Enabled non-resident agencies and agencies with limited presence to participate Increased Government flexibility to use United Nations assistance in innovative areas, through financial support for participation of non-resident agencies and agencies with limited presence In some countries, the One Fund has financed some costs of United Nations reform processes	Overall, One Programme still heavily reliant on non-core funds Proportion of the One Programme that is funded varies widely among pilot countries, especially for second-generation instances of One Programme Size of the One Fund varies between countries, with significant effects on extent to which One Programme can be innovative Sustainability of One Fund levels in question, since some major funders have indicated withdrawal	**Moderate** Innovative funding instrument with potential to complement traditional core and non-core funding Still not used to its potential, as funding still partially earmarked Highly dependent on support from very few donors

Strategy	*Achievements*	*Challenges*	*Assessment of progress*
One Office	Progress in common services Economies of scale Improved services	No harmonized rules and regulations Common measures of transaction costs not used No consolidated cost data for assessment of savings Operational costs remain high Staff time to generate savings very high Only a few instances of common premises	**Little** A few business practices have been simplified, but more ambitious reforms aiming at harmonization of management systems have not advanced much

B. Progress towards the immediate outcomes

75. Table 3 gives an overview of progress towards the four immediate outcomes mentioned in paragraph 22 above.

76. Progress towards reduced competition for funds and enhanced capacity for strategic approaches has been moderate, with notable achievements as well as some weaknesses. There has been relatively little progress towards reduced fragmentation and duplication.

Table 3
Level of progress of the (immediate) outcomes

Outcome	*Achievements*	*Challenges*	*Assessment of progress*
Enhanced capacity for strategic approaches	Inclusion of broader range of organizations enables more strategic approach related to stated country needs First-generation versions of One Programme coordinated with Governments Second-generation versions of One Programme jointly planned by organizations and Governments One Voice ensures better communication among agencies and with Governments, facilitating more strategic approaches	First-generation versions of One Programme largely retrofitted projects, not originally planned on the basis of “Delivering as one” principles Desire to maximize inclusion of agencies and partners sometimes reduced strategic dimensions	**Moderate** Second-generation joint programming allows for strategic and inclusive contribution of the United Nations system, notably on cross-cutting issues Finding the right balance between focus and inclusiveness is still a challenge

Outcome	*Achievements*	*Challenges*	*Assessment of progress*
Reduced competition for funds	Improved programme coherence has reduced competition for funds One Fund has helped non-resident and smaller agencies compete for place in programmes Governments report less "lobbying" for projects of individual organizations	Reservations remain as to whether "firewall" sufficiently protects against potential conflict of interest of One Leader in relation to resource mobilization Most programmes still highly dependent on organizational non-core funding	**Moderate** Resource mobilization is better coordinated, but smaller organizations still find it difficult to have access to funding
Reduced duplication	Joint procurement procedures Common information, communication and technology systems Common recruitment systems Joint programming introduced to reduce duplication	Inadequate headquarters support Incompatible regulations and procedures prevent some desired reforms Duplicate reporting required by governing bodies and boards Overall gains to date modest compared with scale of United Nations operations in countries	**Little** Measures that have produced efficiency gains have remained relatively limited owing to the continued existence of management and reporting requirements in organizations
Reduced fragmentation	Long-term supplier agreements More coherent programmes Joint programming introduced to reduce fragmentation	Slow decisions from headquarters Some joint programmes fragmented by excessive number of organizations and partners Programmes fragmented by excessive number of outputs or outcomes Accountability structures fragmented	**Little** Joint activities remain relatively marginal as compared to activities of multiple individual organizations, each of which have their own mandates and programming and management practices

C. Progress towards the intermediate states

77. Progress towards the three intermediate states — enhanced national ownership, better delivery of United Nations system support to countries and reduced transaction costs — is analysed in table 4.

78. Enhanced national ownership is an area of strong progress, as evidenced by the procedures adopted to involve Governments in programming, planning and management and confirmed by the perceptions of Government stakeholders.

79. With regard to the United Nations system delivering better support to countries, it is clear that there have been many achievements, particularly through lessons learned in the first generation of One Programme and incorporated into the second. Improvements in programming processes are not proof that programmes will deliver stronger results, however. This can only be evaluated as the programmes are delivered. To date, strengths in support under "Delivering as one" have been sufficient to strike an even balance with the many weaknesses also noted at this level. This indicates a moderate level of progress.

80. There has been little progress in reducing transaction costs, where substantial weaknesses have offset gains. While national partners and donors reported that "Delivering as one" in their perception had reduced their cost in dealing with the United Nations, staff noted that "Delivering as one" was time-consuming and costly. There are also considerable challenges to measuring transaction costs. Some of the transaction costs of "Delivering as one" may have to be considered as investments whose benefits will accrue over a longer period of time for the United Nations system as a whole.

Table 4
Level of progress towards the intermediate states

Intermediate state	*Achievements*	*Challenges*	*Assessment of progress*
Enhanced national ownership	Governments report stronger ownership of their United Nations programme Governments were more widely consulted under the first generation of One Programme than before "Delivering as one" In the second generation, Governments have been closely involved in planning processes and will play a major role in management Central coordinating ministries are chief Government drivers and beneficiaries of "Delivering as one" Some line ministries made new partners, particularly through the catalysing effects of the One Fund on non-resident agencies	The tripartite alliance between Governments, the United Nations system and donors needs to be strongly maintained if "Delivering as one" is to progress, but it is not clear that all key donors or other countries will be able to maintain or increase current funding	**Strong** Pilot countries have expressed strong commitment to "Delivering as one" and demonstrated increased national ownership and leadership

Intermediate state	*Achievements*	*Challenges*	*Assessment of progress*
	"Delivering as one" has been built on a strong tripartite alliance between Governments, the United Nations system and donors		
Better delivery of United Nations system support to countries	First generation of One Programme responded to country priorities largely by retrofitting planned activities into a modified framework One Programme produced results in the first generation, particularly on cross-cutting issues Second-generation versions of One Programme conceived and planned with Governments have aimed for strong strategic focus, often with little or no emphasis on joint programmes Some countries have concluded, on the basis of the first One Programme, that it will be more strategic and effective to have joint programming rather than joint programmes The One Budgetary Framework has been an important innovation, allowing United Nations country teams to present all planned and costed programme activities in one place, together with available and expected funding resources, including from the One Fund Additional resources from the One Fund have enabled a broader range of organizations to collaborate Several donor countries have supported pilots through the	First-generation One Programme faced challenges in balancing inclusiveness with strategic focus, particularly with regard to joint programmes Joint programmes and One Programme as a whole had numerous and complex outcomes difficult for monitoring and evaluation systems to address Little firm evidence of the difference between "Delivering as one" results based on One Programme and "normal" United Nations business approaches Although second-generation versions of One Programme have more developed monitoring and evaluation systems, it is not clear that there will be enough monitoring and evaluation specialists and field monitoring to make them effective Although Governments and United Nations country teams have been able to rationalize their programming processes with the funds and programmes through the preparation of common country programme documents, executive boards have approved these separately Accountabilities between resident coordinators and	**Moderate** "Delivering as one" particularly useful as an integrated package of reform strategies, many parts of which require deeper reform at the systemic level

Intermediate state	*Achievements*	*Challenges*	*Assessment of progress*
	One Fund, as well as by directly funding the resident coordinator's office, by seconding staff or by supporting the Development Operations Coordination Office and the United Nations Development Group regional teams Pilot countries have sought to enhance leadership of the resident coordinator and mutual accountability with United Nations country teams, such as through codes of conduct Common ownership of the resident coordinator system has been strengthened, assisted in particular by appointment of UNDP country directors One Voice, implemented in most pilots, has provided greater coherence in advocacy and policy dialogue as well as increased visibility and a stronger United Nations identity and culture among staffs National and international mid-level staff have played a critical role in innovations in programming and operations Most United Nations organizations have become more active in system-wide coherence efforts during "Delivering as one", usually as one element of engagement in wider United Nations reform processes	United Nations country teams not yet reciprocal; resident coordinators are assessed by the United Nations country team, but not the reverse Reservations remain concerning effectiveness of the resident coordinator/ resident representative firewall Realization of the "Delivering as one" concept is challenged by the predominance of organization-specific accountability at all levels Support provided to pilot countries by organizations' regional offices and United Nations Development Group regional teams was little more than that provided to other countries	

Intermediate state	*Achievements*	*Challenges*	*Assessment of progress*
	Most United Nations entities have made special efforts to support the country pilots and broader "Delivering as one" processes The Development Group and other high-level bodies have provided significant support to "Delivering as one" and broader system-wide coherence efforts, with the pilots providing important inputs into system-wide reform		
Reduced transaction costs	Some efficiency gains for United Nations country teams through expansion of common business practices Governments note reduced transaction costs, reduced mission duplication and fewer in-country meetings Some donors report reduced transaction costs through fewer in-country meetings Headquarters of entities of the United Nations system have issued substantial guidance	Processes to generate reduced transaction costs among United Nations entities have been time-consuming and costly Resident coordinators and United Nations country teams report insufficient support from headquarters to meet their needs in a timely fashion "Delivering as one" has not resulted in consolidated management information; it is difficult to gain an accurate aggregate picture of the effects on finances and business practices	**Little** During the pilot phase, transaction costs in the United Nations were not reduced and even increased Benefits of "Delivering as one" may accrue in the future and for the United Nations system as a whole

D. Progress towards the overall objective of "Delivering as one"

81. The long-term objective or impact to which "Delivering as one" is expected to contribute is that countries should be better able to achieve their national development goals, including commitments to the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals. There has been little progress towards this objective for the following reasons.

82. The expectation of the evaluability assessments of the United Nations Evaluation Group in 2008 and the country-led evaluations in 2010 that development results would be evident by the time of the independent evaluation has proved unrealistic, since complex development changes can easily take decades. This is

particularly true when considering that the total United Nations development system is one player among many in the countries concerned.

83. The pilots had to discover and respond to challenges restricting development. In this context, the One Programme, a critical element of the results chain, was a substantial and difficult learning exercise in all pilot countries.

84. It is claimed that the second-generation versions of One Programme in preparation or recently started will be far better than the first. Their contributions to countries' ability to achieve their national development goals may only become evident some years in the future.

E. Conclusions on the performance of "Delivering as one" against evaluation criteria

Reference

85. The dimension of relevance relates to the extent to which pilot country Governments have been able, through enhanced ownership, to ensure that their own needs and priorities are driving United Nations programming. It also relates to the coherence of their dealings with the United Nations system. In both regards, performance has been strong.

Effectiveness

86. The effectiveness of "Delivering as one" relates primarily to the contribution made to the delivery of better support to countries and development processes and results, including on cross-cutting issues, e.g., gender equality. Effectiveness corresponds closely to the intermediate state of the United Nations system delivering better support to countries. Progress has been moderate.

Efficiency

87. Efficiency corresponds closely to the intermediate state of reduced transaction costs. Despite some achievements in specific areas, progress has lagged owing to the limited mandates of country offices to change procedures and incompatible systems across organizations. Time-consuming processes were required to achieve any change, while support from higher levels of the system was often considered inadequate by United Nations country teams. Coherent and consolidated management information systems were largely absent. In short, the efficiency of "Delivering as one" has been weak.

Sustainability

88. The framework terms of reference for the independent evaluation indicate that the sustainability of "Delivering as one" should be assessed in terms of the probability of its continuing over time and the likelihood of long-term benefits, both for pilot countries and the United Nations system. Sustainability is a combination of the extent to which "Delivering as one" is relevant, efficient and effective and has gained sufficient support at all levels in all relevant systems to ensure its continuation, along with its continuing financial viability.

89. The level of support for "Delivering as one" within the pilot countries, the United Nations system and among certain Member States is assessed as strong. A

growing number of countries have volunteered to become self-starters. Many other programme countries have not yet volunteered to take this step, however; others remain opposed to “Delivering as one”. At the end of December 2011, the cut-off point for evaluation findings, the financial sustainability of “Delivering as one” was in considerable doubt, since key donors had indicated their intention to reduce or discontinue funding for it. On balance, the likelihood of sustaining “Delivering as one” is moderate.

VI. Recommendations

A. Enhancing national ownership and leadership

Recommendation 1

90. **The basic principle of voluntary adoption of “Delivering as one” should be maintained.** Since the beginning, this principle has guided initiatives in the pilot countries as well as the self-starters. Stakeholders acknowledge beneficial effects on national ownership and leadership. Individual programme countries should be free to choose an approach to partnership with the United Nations system that most suits their national needs, priorities and planning modalities as well as the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals.

Recommendation 2

91. **Strong national coordination mechanisms need to be consolidated and links between individual United Nations organizations and line ministries should be strengthened and expanded.** The “Delivering as one” experiences provide good practices that other programme countries could use to ensure national ownership and leadership and make programming as focused as possible, notably on cross-cutting issues such as human rights, gender equality and HIV/AIDS. At the same time, there could be new opportunities for cooperation in other areas with broad sectoral and thematic dimensions, e.g., economic development and the environment.

B. United Nations system to deliver better support to programme countries

Recommendation 3

92. **The United Nations Development Group should consider the consolidation of functions under the Development Group at headquarters level required to address different dimensions of “Delivering as one” and strengthening of the functional firewall and mutual accountability across the Development Group.** These dimensions are part of an interlinked package: programme guidance, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting; innovative funding mechanisms (Expanded Funding Window, One Fund); administration and oversight of the resident coordinator system; and simplification and harmonization of business practices. Consolidation of these functions would greatly enhance system-wide coherence and ensure that horizontal accountabilities at country and regional levels are matched at the systemic level.

Recommendation 4

93. **The United Nations Development Group should provide further guidance on joint planning and monitoring and evaluation systems that are part of the One Programme at country level.** Both national and United Nations system planning and monitoring and evaluation capacities at country level should be further strengthened. Results achieved with the One Programme, especially on cross-cutting issues, e.g., human rights, gender equality and HIV/AIDS, could then be more robustly monitored and evaluated, including through joint and country-led evaluations, in order to assess the contribution of the United Nations system to progress in development. This will also contribute to more consistent reporting on programme results and use of funding, including across countries. Common programme and monitoring and evaluation formats would favour more consistent and transparent reporting, strengthening United Nations system accountability.

Recommendation 5

94. **Mechanisms tasked with independent system-wide evaluation should periodically assess the performance of system-wide approaches such as "Delivering as one".** There is also a need for strengthening system-wide monitoring and evaluation capacities in programme countries and among United Nations field staff.

Recommendation 6

95. **The United Nations Development Group should support the use of a common One Budgetary Framework.** It costs all planned interventions of the United Nations system in a country (in principle as One Programme) and reflects available and expected funding resources, including under the One Fund. It would be useful for the One Programme and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. One format for planning favours one format for financial reporting, which allows for better comparability and aggregation of financial information for the United Nations development system.

Recommendation 7

96. **Member States contributing to the non-core funding of the United Nations development system may wish to consider the One Fund and Expanded Funding Window mechanisms as attractive complements to traditional core and non-core funding for individual organizations.** One Fund and Expanded Funding Window resources should in principle not be earmarked. In the interest of ensuring the sustainability of existing pilots and potentially wider promotion of "Delivering as one", there should be more stable, multi-year commitments from a larger number of Member States with the capacity to contribute. Intergovernmental oversight of these mechanisms may need to be strengthened.

Recommendation 8

97. **United Nations entities, notably funds and programmes, may wish to increasingly make contributions to the One Fund from their existing core and non-core contributions.** This would demonstrate their commitment to "Delivering as one" and have a positive effect on donor support to the "Delivering as one" funding mechanisms.

Recommendation 9

98. **The United Nations Development Group should further strengthen the horizontal accountability of resident coordinators and United Nations country teams.** This may involve strengthening the coordination function over resource mobilization and allocation mechanisms for the One Fund either through the resident coordinator or through a co-chairing arrangement between the resident coordinator and the Government. Resident coordinators should also, on behalf of the United Nations country team, directly report to the inter-organizational setup recommended in paragraph 92 above on results achieved under the One Programme.

Recommendation 10

99. **The United Nations Development Group should further clarify the role and added value of its regional teams concerning "Delivering as one".** United Nations entities need to harmonize their respective policies and procedures concerning decentralization; agree on co-location of regional offices, as appropriate; and define horizontal accountability at this level.

C. Simplification and harmonization of business practices to reduce transaction costs

Recommendation 11

100. **Member States may wish to strongly reiterate their calls for harmonizing business practices through different boards and governing bodies.** This should happen for human resources management, financial management and common support services, and will require concerted action among the headquarters of United Nations organizations. Enterprise resource planning systems should be compatible.

Recommendation 12

101. **The High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group should further strengthen cooperation on "Delivering as one".** More far-reaching harmonization of business practices, notably in financial management, accounting standards and human resources rules and regulations, should result in efficiency gains and reduced transaction costs. Particular attention should be given to harmonizing management information systems to be used by United Nations country teams. This would enhance United Nations system accountability and transparency in achieving results and efficiently using resources. It may involve further harmonization of the definition and classification of costs within the United Nations system.

VII. Lessons learned

A. Lessons from the performance of "Delivering as one" at country and systemic levels

Lesson 1

102. Voluntary adoption of "Delivering as one" by national Governments of pilot countries has greatly contributed to their ownership and leadership of the reform process. National ownership is not only a matter of principle. It has proven to be a practical precondition to success of the initiatives.

Lesson 2

103. The "Delivering as one" pilot process has shown that the United Nations system can respond to the specific contexts of very different countries, including least developed and middle-income countries.

Lesson 3

104. "Delivering as one" has helped pilot countries gain greater access to the range of development expertise and resources in the United Nations system.

Lesson 4

105. "Delivering as one" could be more accurately described as "Delivering *as if* one", given the fact that each United Nations entity has its own governance structure, mandate and culture. Individual organizations remain the primary units of account for performance and management. There are limits to what can be achieved with voluntary coordination at country level among very diverse existing systems.

Lesson 5

106. The One Programme strategy allows the United Nations system to more adequately address cross-cutting issues (such as human rights, gender equality and HIV/AIDS) and also support Governments on multidisciplinary development concerns such as economic development and the environment.

Lesson 6

107. The "Delivering as one" experience has shown that effectively promoting gender equality and women's empowerment requires full management commitment, adequate staff incentives and monitoring of results.

Lesson 7

108. While other United Nations reform initiatives have focused on specific aspects of programming, funding, management and accountability, "Delivering as one" is unique in considering all these aspects in the interlinked original four Ones along with One Voice and One Fund.

Lesson 8

109. The One Budgetary Framework approach has fostered Government leadership and close interaction among Governments, donors and United Nations entities throughout the resource management cycle.

Lesson 9

110. The One Fund modality has ensured better alignment with and more flexible responses to national priorities. There is some potential to reduce donors' preference for earmarked funding.

Lesson 10

111. United Nations country teams in pilot countries, with the support of resident coordinators, are approaching the limits of what can be achieved by country-level innovations to reduce transaction costs and increase efficiency. Since so many high-level systemic elements have not been changed for "Delivering as one", the marginal cost of enhanced country-level coordination is increasing.

B. Lessons of interest to senior management of the United Nations system within existing intergovernmental mandates

Lesson 11

112. There is a lack of clarity and shared vision among United Nations entities and stakeholders concerning the desirable extent of integration and how it can best be achieved, including how coordination is perceived and approaches to enhancing it.

Lesson 12

113. The United Nations staff currently lacks incentives in performance appraisal and career development for maintaining sufficient motivation around "Delivering as one". Challenges also remain in the development of shared monitoring and evaluation systems. The horizontal accountability of resident coordinators and United Nations country teams for results achieved under the One Programme has remained weak. This has implications for the measurement of performance, which remains primarily vertical, i.e., within organizations.

Lesson 13

114. While ensuring better alignment to programme country systems, new approaches to planning, budgeting and reporting to management have often posed challenges at the corporate level, where efficiency is characteristically achieved through standardization. The emergence of so many localized solutions is an unintentional and undesirable side effect of the notion that "one size does not fit all".

Lesson 14

115. It has been demonstrated in the pilot countries that transferring resources and authority for managing and allocating some unearmarked funds to the country level has allowed for a better and more flexible response to programme country needs and priorities.

Lesson 15

116. “Delivering as one” introduced many innovations that required additional staff and financial resources. It was observed that during the pilot phase transaction costs were not reduced, but rather tended to increase. The cost increase may need to be considered as an inevitable investment in reform that will yield valuable benefits in the future for the United Nations system as a whole.

C. Matters to be addressed through intergovernmental decision-making processes such as the quadrennial comprehensive policy review

Lesson 16

117. The need to draft common country programme documents for funds and programmes, as distinct from United Nations development assistance programme documents, and to have them approved by different executive boards is a cumbersome process. Joint board meetings of the funds and programmes could be endowed with the authority to approve common country programme documents.

Lesson 17

118. Mandates, policies, regulations and practices among vertically organized United Nations system entities are diverse. Strengthening horizontal accountability at all levels within existing legislation may require a review of intergovernmental guidance and oversight of all aspects of “Delivering as one”. This process might include assessing the relationships between the Economic and Social Council and executive boards of the funds and programmes, as well as between the Council and specialized and non-resident agencies not accountable to the General Assembly.

Lesson 18

119. The current resident coordinator system poses serious limitations to resident coordinators’ abilities to oversee and exercise line authority over activities under “Delivering as one” and to ensure overall transparency and accountability. Governing bodies of United Nations system entities would need to considerably modify current accountability frameworks to allow resident coordinators to take full responsibility for resources under the One Fund and to be accountable for One Programme results.

Lesson 19

120. Funding is a major driver of organizational change. The One Fund has proven to be an important incentive for organizations to work together. It is not limited to the mandates of United Nations entities and is less earmarked and more predictable than other forms of non-core funding. These characteristics make it a valuable addition to traditional core and non-core funding. However, there is currently no intergovernmental oversight over the One Fund.

Lesson 20

121. Despite comprehensive guidance through triennial comprehensive policy review resolutions, simplification and harmonization of business practices at the United Nations system level has been relatively slow. It is urgent for

intergovernmental leadership and decision-making to insist more vigorously on further reform in this area. This should encompass human resource rules and procedures, financial management and reporting, procurement and information technology.

VIII. Final remarks

122. “Delivering as one” has shown in practical ways how national ownership and leadership in the operational activities of the United Nations system can be strengthened. The initiatives consisted of an integrated package of reforms expressed through the six Ones, which demonstrated the ability of the system to help produce strategic results, especially on cross-cutting issues such as human rights, gender equality and HIV/AIDS. The reform package responded to needs and priorities of individual programme countries in meeting their national development results.

123. However, challenges remain in planning, monitoring and evaluation and reporting under the One Programme. There is room for improvement in strengthening the horizontal accountability and transparency of the United Nations system at country level for the achievement of results as well as for the efficient use of resources. The One Fund has proven to be an innovative mechanism representing a useful complement to existing organization-specific funding. It also increases the quality of non-core funding. During the pilot phase, “Delivering as one” has not met the expectation that transaction costs would be lowered. Challenges also remain in the area of simplification and harmonization of business practices. These require more vigorous systemic changes at headquarters level.

124. “Delivering as one” has been a real-world testing ground for an ambitious agenda for a more coherent and effective United Nations system at the country level, the principles of which were announced in the 2005 World Summit Outcome. However, while its efforts at reform are mostly positively assessed, bolder measures may be required to put the United Nations on a more comprehensive track of reform, including rationalization of the number of United Nations entities; reform of mandates, governance structures and funding modalities; and a new definition of the range of development expertise expected from the United Nations system. Lessons learned from “Delivering as one” will greatly enrich debates in this direction, notably through a concerted vision of reform emanating from Member States.

Annex

Members of the Evaluation Management Group for the independent evaluation of lessons learned from “Delivering as one”

Liliam Flores Ortega Rodríguez (Mexico), elected Chair of the Evaluation Management Group, Researcher at the Centre of Studies of Public Finance of the Chamber of Deputies of Mexico

Ole Winckler Andersen (Denmark), Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Management Group, Head of Evaluation Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark

Gonzalo Pérez del Castillo (Uruguay), Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Management Group, senior consultant

Zhaoying Chen (China), Professor, Deputy Director-General of the National Centre for Science and Technology Evaluation of China

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Aare Järvan (Estonia), Economic Adviser to the Prime Minister of Estonia

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