



Secretary-General's High-level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence
in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and the Environment

Summary Note
Video Conference for Co-Chairs
Friday 24th March

The Co-Chairs of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and the Environment, Prime Minister Diogo, Prime Minister Aziz and the representative of Prime Minister Stoltenberg met by video-conference. The purpose of the meeting was to review the preparations for the first full meeting of the Panel and its early work-plan. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Malloch-Brown, Chief of Staff for the UN Secretary-General. A list of participants is attached (Annex 1). Comments were provided by Chancellor Gordon Brown and are attached herewith (Annex 2).

Welcoming the participants, the chair conveyed the gratitude of the Secretary-General. He noted that two Panel members, Ms. Ruth Jacoby and Mr. Mohamed T. El-Ashry had agreed to devote a significant amount of time to helping drive the work of the Panel.

In his introductory remarks, Mr. Malloch-Brown said the impetus for the Panel's work is derived from the ambitious framework presented by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), coupled with the success over the past year in securing additional development financing, which has brought to the fore the question of whether the UN is organized well enough to deliver. In his remarks he highlighted: the fragmentation and governance of the UN system, financing and the need for predictability, and the fact that each of the three areas of the Panel's work - Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment - has unique problems.

Prime Minister Diogo stressed the need to equip the UN system to respond to the MDGs, the Johannesburg Summit and the Monterrey Consensus, focusing on the organization of the system at the country level, as well the importance of mainstreaming environment and disaster preparedness in development strategies.

Prime Minister Aziz stressed the need for the Panel to be far-reaching, courageous and innovative in its recommendations, using as a starting point the need to develop a clear objective followed by an analysis of how to reach that objective. He focused on duplication and fragmentation at the country level and competition for resources in the UN system, the UN's main comparative advantage with regard to its technical expertise, the need for the UN to be prepared for humanitarian emergencies, the role of UN as a provider of best practices, and the need to measure progress towards the MDGs.

The representative of Prime Minister Stoltenberg, H.E. Mr. Morten Wetland, State Secretary, stressed the need for the Panel to articulate a vision and define the scope of its

work, considering what the UN is best equipped to do. He focused on 'good donor-ship' and the need to analyze how financing was being used and measuring results.

Summary of discussion:

The following points were raised in the course of the discussion on the concept paper:

General:

- The high-level of expectation, importance of and the challenges associated with the Panel's work were stressed. The high-level of the panel meant that it could put forward far-reaching recommendations applicable to the whole UN system. The need to engage the Member States and create ownership of the Panel process and recommendations was stressed.
- The Panel should define a vision of what an efficient UN system is and how it should be equipped to achieve the internationally agreed development goals – and then work to define the implementation steps to achieve such a vision in the short, medium and long-term. The Panel should be stringent and clear in outlining what the objective is. The diagnosis and vision that the Panel will define should be conveyed in a manner that people can relate to.
- The Panel should think 'out of the box' and be ambitious in terms of the recommendations that it puts forward. It was not necessary to reinvent the wheel as there are many ideas and there has been progress on UN reform over the past years. The Panel would need to consider why past reform efforts have not gone far enough to achieve the required change.
- The concept paper was considered to be a good basis for discussion at the first meeting of the Panel, as it presents the main issues and concerns (financing, coherence and effectiveness, and governance). There was a need to identify which specific issues the Panel should concentrate on and clearly define the scope of the Panel's work.
- In this regard it was felt that the Panel should consider the broader development architecture, particularly taking into account the relationship between the UN system and the Bretton Woods Institutions, as well as the EC and bilaterals, considering an articulation of roles on the basis of respective comparative advantages.
- The importance of other aspects of the UN's work, beyond the delivery of aid was stressed, including the norm, standard and rule setting functions of the UN. The importance of the role of the UN system as a provider of best practices and in knowledge management was also underlined.
- The importance of the consultative process and research agenda was highlighted, ensuring the engagement of relevant stakeholders and civil society.

Capacity and structure of the UN system

- The current UN system is characterized by fragmentation, at all levels, which hampers effectiveness and efficiency. There has also been a proliferation of organizations, and the Panel should not shy away from considering whether parts of the system have outlived their usefulness or should be consolidated.
- There is a need to consider how the UN system works at the country-level, and how it is organized in a manner that maintains and takes advantage of the depth of expertise in the UN system, but deploys it in a much more effective manner.
- In many countries, the UN is represented by multiple individual agencies, which hampers effectiveness of the UN's assistance to countries, and compromises the efficient use of resources. The current system means that UN organizations are driven by their specific missions, rather than national development priorities, and often work in silos, independently of each other. It is also necessary to be clear about which organizations are parts of the UN system.
- During discussions on the Monterrey Consensus, a missing element had been structuring and equipping the UN system to respond. Similarly, the MDGs were very ambitious, but the UN system was not able to adequately respond to country needs.
- The importance of predictability in financing was highlighted, including the need for donors to move away from seizing on 'fashionable' issues, and the need for multi-year funding commitments to ensure predictability, in particular with respect to support to LDCs. Volatility in financing hampers planning in recipient countries.
- The concept of 'good donor-ship' was discussed, particularly in terms of ensuring stable and predictable financing and coherence.
- The Panel should look at financial flows, as well as the efficiency with which resources were being utilized by the UN system (for example the percentage devoted to overheads).
- The role of ECOSOC was discussed, including the need for it to have the ability to provide policy guidance and the possibility of undertaking more comprehensive and regular reviews of trends and perspectives with regard to financing.

Development

- The UN system needs to be structured in order to deliver on the MDGs, considering where the UN should focus and where and how it can perform better. The need for an integrated approach as a basis for achieving the MDGs was stressed. It was also pointed out that development goes beyond the MDGs, and the purpose of the MDGs

was to provide a focus and a framework. Some countries had in fact moved beyond the MDGs in some areas.

- It was stressed that UN is one of many players. In some countries the development partners get together to define and analyze the priorities, but there is no systematic approach to coordination.
- There is a need to track progress and to have a method of measuring results with regard to the MDGs, using the most current data, and thus allowing for the rapid identification of which areas require increased attention.

Humanitarian Assistance

- It was felt that the Panel should particularly address the 'transition' phase between disasters and development.
- The importance of disaster preparedness was stressed - adapting sustainable development policies (such as a water management) so that they take into account vulnerabilities to natural disasters.
- The need for the UN to have adequate stand-by resources, both financial and in terms of specific expertise was underlined, as there was no room for delay in emergency humanitarian situations.

Environment

- Environment is no longer a side issue and the challenge is mainstreaming, recognizing that it is a cross-cutting issue that is fundamental to development. There is a need for the necessary analysis in order to adapt institutions to ensure that they are robust and have the ability to promote sustainable development.
- There is a lack of coherence with regard to how environment is being handled by the UN system, and between the normative and operational aspects.

Organizational Matters:

- It was decided that the first meeting of the Panel would be held on 5-6 April at UN Headquarters in New York, preceded by a dinner on 4 April.
- The co-chairs discussed allocation of responsibilities for briefings by Panel members following the first meeting. A note outlining the proposed allocation of responsibilities is attached (Annex 3).
- There is a need to minimize meetings and use electronic communication as much as possible. There was also a need to draw up a strategic timetable for the Panel's work and consultations.

Annex 1

**Mr. Malloch Brown's meeting on the United Nations
System-wide Coherence Panel**

**Friday, 24 March 2006, 11:00 AM (NY time)
Deputy Secretary-General's conference room**

List of Participants

Videoconference:

H. E. Mrs. Luísa Dias Diogo (Prime Minister of Mozambique)
H. E. Mr. Shaukat Aziz (Prime Minister of Pakistan)
H.E. Mr. Morten Wetland, State Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister for H. E. Mr.
Jens Stoltenberg (Prime Minister of Norway)
Mr. Moustapha Soumaré (UNDP Res. Rep. in Rwanda)
Mr. Uday Abhyankar (Special Adviser to Mr. Lennart Bage)

From Headquarters:

Mr. Mark Malloch Brown
Mr. Kemal Dervis
Ms. Ruth Jacoby
Mr. Mohammed El-Ashry
Ms. Alicia Barcena
Mr. Adnan Amin
Mr. Paolo Galli
Mr. Koen Davidse
Ms. Maaïke Jansen

H.E. Mr. Munir Akram
(P.R. of Pakistan)

H.E. Mr. Filipe Chidumo
(P.R. of Mozambique)

H.E. Mr. Johan L. Løvald
(P.R. of Norway)

Annex 2

Rt. Hon. Gordon Brown, MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer of the United Kingdom submitted the following comments to the co-chairs:

These are essentially a set of questions that the Panel will need to consider, and which it would be useful if the Secretariat could develop options or answers;

1. How to consolidate UN funding and allocation arrangements, including the feasibility of some form of Treasury function or central fund for development activities.
2. How the UN works with other parts of the international architecture: i.e. the comparative advantage of UN in different contexts in the international development system, particularly in relation to conflict and fragile states.
3. What the UN's is achieving on MDG outcomes, particularly in health and education.
4. The future role of UN Specialised Agencies
5. How to fund and implement Panel recommendations (i.e. a Change Management Unit with UN HQ).

Annex 3

Proposal: Division of Responsibilities **Consultative Process after the Panel's 1st Meeting**

With respect to the consultative process after the first meeting of the Panel, the following division of tasks is put forward for the consideration of the co-chairs and Panel members:

CEB Retreat, 8 April, Madrid	General Assembly, 6 April, New York
1. H.E. Mr. Shaukat Aziz (co-chair)	1. H.E. Mrs. Luísa Dias Diogo (co-chair)
2. Rt. Hon. Gordon Brown, MP	2. Mr. Mohamed T. El-Ashry
3. Ms. Ruth Jacoby	3. Mr. Robert Greenhill
4. H.E. Mr. Benjamin W. Mkapa	4. H.E. Mr. Ricardo Lagos Escobar
5. Ms. Josette S. Shiner	5. Mr. Jean-Michel Severino
6. H.E. Mr. Jens Stoltenberg (co-chair)	6. Mr. Keizo Takemi

Intergovernmental briefings/consultations are also foreseen during the Spring Meetings of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on 24 April in New York; and during the ECOSOC High-Level Segment on 4 July (2.30-4.30pm) in Geneva.

The Spring Meetings of ECOSOC with the international financial and trade institutions have become forums to ensure proper follow-up to the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development. This year's meeting will be an important opportunity to build on some of the concrete development initiatives agreed upon at the 2005 World Summit. The Spring Meetings of ECOCOC will allow the Panel to interact with ministers of development cooperation, as well as the UN system. It is suggested that some Panel members participate, including:

- Mr. Mohamed T. El-Ashry
- Mr. Robert Greenhill
- Ms. Ruth Jacoby

The High-Level Segment of ECOSOC will afford the Panel the opportunity to interact with Heads of State and Government, Ministers and UN agencies. It is suggested that the co-chairs participate in this meeting, as well as a few other Panel members, according to their availability.

For other aspects of the consultative process, please refer to the proposal that was circulated on this issue.