

**Informal briefing for delegations on the Expert Group Meeting to support the
advancement of the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda
28 February 2012**

Summary

1. The briefing opened with remarks by Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, DESA (see attached text), and Mr. Olav Kjørven, Assistant Secretary-General and Head, Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP. Both officials addressed the purposes of the three-day Expert Group Meeting (EGM) and its findings so far, as well as the role of the UN System Task Team in supporting the Member State-led consultations on formulating a post-2015 UN Development Agenda. With reference to the Rio+20 process, Mr. Sha also underscored the need to work toward one UN development agenda post-2015, with sustainable development at its centre.
2. Two external experts provided overviews of their papers prepared for the EGM. Professor Deepak Nayyar addressed the purposes of a global development agenda, particularly as a point of reference for policy setting at all levels. The goals should be both generalized and contextualized, serving as global objectives that allow sufficient space for differentiation in national conditions and priorities. They should be seen as global norms, not ceilings; as illustrative, not exhaustive. He also reviewed some conceptual problems with the MDG framework and ways to address them, such as lack of attention to processes for reaching the goals and asymmetry in the global partnership for development, with performance criteria for developing countries and delivery criteria for developed countries.
3. Mr. Jan Vandermoortele focused on two essential ingredients in the post-2015 process: time and leadership. He urged all to “hasten slowly” and allow sufficient time for consultation, reflection and consensus building. He stressed the need for leadership to preserve the core strengths of the MDGs as clear, concise, measurable and evidence-based global objectives. He identified three risks: (i) an overloading agenda, with too many goals and targets; (ii) an imbalanced agenda, if the goals became too driven by particular groups of stakeholders; and (iii) a prescriptive agenda, which could lead to reduced national policy space and undermine the core purpose of global agenda-setting. He underscored the unique capacity of the United Nations as a whole to help avoid these risks and provide the only legitimate platform for formulating the agenda.
4. An interactive discussion with delegates and other participants ensued, moderated by Mr. Rob Vos, Director, Division for Development Policy and Analysis, DESA, and Mr. Selim Jahan, Head, Poverty Practice, UNDP. Ten delegations addressed the panel: Brazil, Algeria, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the United States, Cuba, Germany, the European Union, Australia, Ireland, Norway, and Pakistan. Comments were also made by representatives of the IMF and UNCTAD and by another external expert. The following summarizes the key messages conveyed.
5. Member States, the Task Team and external experts were of the same view on the need for an **open and inclusive consultation process**, engaging all stakeholders (Algeria, United States, Cuba, Ireland, Germany). The importance of national level consultations, engaging people directly, was also stressed (United States, Germany). Algeria pointed to the number of important meetings taking place, which was challenging the **capacities of LDCs**

to participate and take positions, including on post-2015, and asked the Secretariat to take this reality into account.

6. More clarity was sought on the **timing and stages of the consultation process** between now and 2015 (United States). The panelists recommended to ‘hasten slowly’ and not rush to reach agreement (Germany supported this view). One Member State stressed the need for sufficient lead time for governments, UN system and others to reflect the new agenda in strategies and work plans (Pakistan). Another inquired about the role of the 2013 special event (Ireland). The importance of other processes feeding into the post-2015 discussions was also stressed.

7. Member States shared the view of the Secretary-General on the need to work towards **one UN development agenda post 2015**, with sustainable development at its centre. More clarity was sought on *how* to do this (IMF, Germany). It was suggested by the panel that this could depend particularly on the **Rio+20 outcome**.

8. Support was expressed for a **post-2015 agenda that builds on the MDG framework**(EU, Norway), **and keeps the focus on human development**(United States, IMF, EU), **while addressing the emerging challenges**, such as sustainable development (IMF, Germany, EU), continuing conflict (EU, Australia), human rights, inequalities (Cuba, EU, Norway), and demographic pressures. EU also stressed inclusive growth, governance, food security and nutrition. Pakistan stressed economic growth, infrastructure and industrialization.

9. A number of questions focused on the **balancing act between global agenda setting and national target setting**, including the need for flexibility at the national level (Cuba, Germany, EU) and attention to **particular country situations**. Brazil stressed the need to look beyond aid, while also favoring “affirmative action” for LDCs. EU emphasized the targeting of the most vulnerable groups and the poorest countries. Australia highlighted the challenges confronting fragile and conflict-affected states and asked whether the Task Team would recommend that the post-2015 agenda integrate the peacebuilding and statebuilding goals of the g7+. Cuba supported the call by the panel and IMF for a global partnership engaging all countries, yet noted that the agenda realistically would still have to address the persistent division between donor and recipient countries.

10. Delegations agreed with the panel on the need for **clear, concise, measurable and time-bound goals** (Brazil, United States, IMF, Germany, EU). Brazil suggested to focus on goals, while the United States suggested that both goals and means could be considered in the agenda without being overly prescriptive. Germany asked what should be the level of political ambition. The panel stressed the need for balance between ambition and realism.

11. One Member State asked whether the Task Team would also consider the implications of the post-2015 agenda for **UN reform**, in terms of monitoring, evaluation and accountability mechanisms, as well as coherent support for implementation (Norway).

12. Member States welcomed the **work of the Task Team** in lending support to the consultation process. More clarity was sought on the Task Team’s work moving forward, including in relation to the High-level Panel on Post-2015 that the Secretary-General will establish after Rio+20 (United States, Germany, EU). The panel stressed the interim nature of the Task Team’s forthcoming report to the Secretary-General and committed to further briefings and **continuous dialogue with delegations**.