

## **2010 ECOSOC Substantive Session Operational Activities Segment**

### **Informal Summary of the dialogue on the special presentation on the “Outcome of the High-level tripartite conference on Delivering as One: lessons learned from country-led evaluations and the way forward” 9 July 2010**

This segment gave delegates an opportunity to learn from the experiences of countries engaging in the Delivering as One (DaO) approach drawing from the ongoing work on country-led evaluations. A senior representative from the Government of Viet Nam gave a presentation on the outcome of the High-level Tripartite Conference hosted by the Government of Viet Nam mid June, complemented by views from the senior representative of the Government of Tanzania. These were followed by an inter-active dialogue with the delegates.

#### **Mr. Ho Quang Minh, Director General, Foreign Economic Relation Department, Minister of Planning and Investment, Viet Nam**

Mr. Minh presented the results of the High-Level Tripartite Conference on Delivering as One, in Ha based on the findings of Country-Led Evaluations (CLEs) conducted in pilot countries. These are summarised in the ‘Statement of Outcome and Way Forward’, highlights of which are below:

1. CLEs highlight early signs of impact of DaO in terms of development results. Findings from DaO implementation point to strengthened relevance, coherence and comparative advantages of the the UN Development System in support of country priorities.
2. The UN reform and MDG agendas need to include a coherent strategy encompassing Middle-Income Countries.
3. To accelerate implementation of the 2007 TCPR, the conference reaffirms the Kigali statement, and acknowledges that DaO is ensuring greater coherence, improved strategic focus, simplified country-level programming and greater aid effectiveness.
4. UN Member States should promote the DaO approach across programme countries based on the principles of national leadership and ownership. The Conference requests the Secretary-General to consult with pilot programme countries to develop guidelines, benchmarks and results to be achieved in the implementation of principles of national ownership and ‘no one size fits all’.
5. The Conference highlights the critical importance of ensuring timely, predictable, unearmarked and multi-year funding through One Funds. One Funds are a ‘bed-rock for achieving relevance, coherence, and more strategic focus of the UN system at the country level’. Member States and the Secretary-General should examine modalities for their set up and sustainable operation in Programme Countries. There is a declining trend in ODA, but donors need to provide such funding to ensure the sustainability of the DaO approach.
6. The Conference calls for the long overdue streamlining of reporting of programme results, avoiding duplicate reporting to governments, donors etc.
7. The Conference calls for full empowerment of the UN Resident Coordinators and for the UN System to equip Resident Coordinators with the level of authority matching the responsibilities placed on them.

8. There are critical changes in rules and procedures at HQ that should be made in areas such as Finance and Human Resources.
9. The Conference welcomes the call for an Independent Evaluation (TCPR Resolutions 62/208 and 63/311) while reiterating the importance of national ownership and leadership in this process.
10. The content of the Ha Noi Conference should be duly considered and reflected in support of the ongoing UN reform process and forthcoming QCPR.

Mr Minh concluded by outlining the following trends as indicators of success:

- increasing number of programme countries voluntarily adopting DaO;
- DaO pursued with rigor by all parties at country and central levels;
- tangible results achieved in pilot countries being applied system-wide;
- the content of DaO intergovernmental meetings finding resonance in the system-wide debate on UN reform.

**Dr. Servacius B Likwelile, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, Tanzania**

Dr. Likwelile gave his assessment of the key lessons and challenges on the DaO initiative for each of its four pillars.

**1. On the “One UN Programme”**

Based on the preliminary findings of the CLEs, the One Programmes have been found to be fully aligned to national goals providing a substantial response to national priorities and addressing critical gaps. Other factors that have contributed to better programmes include:

- joint programming
- mutual accountability
- empowered Country Management Team
- effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms
- performance based funding

However, ensuring strategic focus in areas of clear UN comparative advantage and effective application of the division of labor has proved challenging.

**2. On the “One Fund”**

The One Fund mechanism has facilitated the UN’s improved programming and brought about better management for results, as well as enhancing its compliance with the principles of mutual accountability. This mechanism further provided space to governments and UNCTs to effectively prioritize programming on the basis of national needs in a more coherent manner.

Coordinated mobilization of resources through the One Fund has reduced competition, and therefore fragmentation, among UN agencies. The One Fund governance structure has enabled governments to lead the decision-making process. The increased use of national systems has further contributed to national ownership.

### 3. Empowered Leader and Country Team: speaking with one voice

The One Leader policy is critical to strengthening the coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of the UN at the country-level. Without effective leadership the UN Resident Coordinator and system-wide ownership of the Resident Coordinator system, incentives for better coordination remain limited. Furthermore, the empowered Resident Coordinator needs to be supported by a Country Team with increased authority appropriated delegated by Headquarters in order to allow for decentralized, effective and timely decision-making, coupled with formalized accountability structures among agencies and the country team.

### 4. On the “One Office”

Improved harmonization of business practices is improving delivery by the UN system. The UN system at country level is working hard to integrate and cluster appropriate services. The preliminary findings of a number of CLEs showed that harmonized procurement is reducing parallel processes and subsequent transaction costs, improving coordination across the UN system and providing value for money through joint purchasing. Practical solutions like One ICT are crucial for the realization of DaO principles, but in some areas (notably finance and HR) harmonization requires critical changes to take place in rules and procedures at Headquarters.

### The way forward

Mr Likwelile proceeded to provide his assessment of what the next steps should be.

- The pilots and self-starters will continue to champion the reforms and pursue further challenges. There is no going back to business as before.
- All pilots agree that to further improve UN programme coherence, it is advisable to develop UN Development Action Plans and Common Country Programmes from the outset, in lieu of agency-specific plans. Tanzania will present a common country programme action plan
- UN agencies need to simplify reporting requirements by substituting agency specific reporting with a single report.
- Donors’ enthusiasm and belief in the DaO process will be maintained only if they see evidence of the UN’s own commitment to the process, and a tangible demonstration of the UN’s comparative advantage in programme implementation.
- UN agencies need to allow and support the rapid reprofiling of the agencies’ human resources profiles, to meet new challenges and increased expectations.
- The Tanzania CLE has so far found that DaO progress depends on engagement, strategies and resources. Commitment, leadership and political will is paramount .

### **Interactive dialogue:**

Delegates noted the positive contributions of DaO to coherence while noting the challenges they face. The need for cooperation and coordination among agencies and among donors at country level to reduce costs and improve development outcomes was stressed.

Some delegates considered DaO a ‘high-value’ initiative and encouraged funding support by donor countries.

Several delegates asked questions of the role and needed reforms at headquarters level in supporting change at country-level. This links with calls made in other parts of the operational activities segment for greater coherence and clarity in messages and guidance from UNHQ to country teams.

Most statements and questions came from donor countries. These questions and their respective answers were as follows:

- On what can be done at headquarters to support processes at the center (including by inter-governmental bodies), the following was mentioned:
  - Support for adequate, multi-year predictable funding
  - There is need for increased delegation of authority at the country level and for ensuring quality of delegated capacity by the UN system
  - Messages from UNHQ should be clear and coherent. At the end of the piloting, common guidelines on benchmarks for pursuit of DaO in the future are needed.
  - There is need to streamline reporting requirements to avoid multiple duplicative reporting
  - Clear guidelines are useful, although not with a one-size-fits-all bias.
  - On aid management, delegations asked whether the DaO approach has been aligned with (national) systems of aid management. It was noted that the DaO approach encourages alignment, coordination and integration with country systems. In Tanzania DaO has complemented systems that were already developed.
- Regarding the evolution of the division of labor and comparative advantage, and its relationship with governments’ responsibilities for prioritizing, it was noted that:
  - Division of labour is broadly framed by the aid management system in Tanzania. The comparative advantage changes over time, so flexible arrangements are sensible.
  - In Viet Nam, UN’s comparative advantage now rests in its capacity as a collective entity, not with single entities.

It was pointed out that every country has a choice to adopt DaO or not, and that a choice in that direction should be realistic and as easy as possible.

Contributors stressed the importance of the evaluation process. There were calls for the independent evaluation to be accelerated so that recommendations can be drawn up and carried forward.