

# **Synthesis Report of the 1998 Resident Coordinator Annual Reports**

Prepared by the  
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## **1. Executive Summary**

By the end of May 1999, 125 1998 Resident Coordinator Annual Reports were received at headquarters, providing a comprehensive picture of the country level situations of United Nations development operations. This executive summary highlights the general findings of the reports.

### ***UN Reform Efforts***

An overview of the reports reveals strong activity in the area of United Nations reform, particularly the response to the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and the 18-country United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) pilot phase, the designation of United Nations Houses, and advances in common services. Another element that was not a specific reform activity, but can be seen as a beneficial by-product of encouraging collaboration and information sharing, is the significant number of country teams who created quality websites in the last year.

Resident Coordinators repeatedly requested the collection and distribution of examples of United Nations reform initiatives and shared learning experiences. Such information will be prepared on an ongoing basis and will appear on the United Nations Development Group website. The RC Annual Reports are a key source of information for identifying country examples.

### ***United Nations Conference Follow-up***

Twenty-five country teams reported working closely with national governments and other development partners to carry out a situation analysis on conference follow-up progress. Other country teams report considerable support to national governments to further the goals of the global conferences. The areas most often cited for support included poverty eradication, furthering the 20/20 initiative, and the increasing inclusion of NGOs and civil society in these activities. Gender mainstreaming and human rights-related issues were also mentioned as part of conference follow-up. The CCA and UNDAF processes were seen as helpful by a number of countries in coordinating and planning for integrated conference follow-up activities.

### ***Globalization***

Globalization and the impact of the Asian financial crises was mentioned in more than half of the Annual Reports as having an impact at country level. Countries directly affected by the financial crises reported economic, social and political changes and challenges, such as increased unemployment, social tensions, migration and reductions in public spending. Countries indirectly affected by the crises discussed the ripple effect from the crises, such as a decline in exports to the affected countries, a decline in foreign investment and tourism, and migration trends. United Nations responses to the crises and its implications included: monitoring the impact of the crisis on societies and individuals; assisting countries to carry out the necessary structural and institutional reforms; strengthening or building basic social services, job opportunities and social safety nets for the least fortunate; and forging closer links between the World Bank and the United Nations.

### ***CCA and UNDAF***

In 1998, 75 country teams were engaged at some level in the preparation or planning of a Common Country Assessment (CCA), or which 16 countries completed the process. It should be noted that at this time only provisional guidelines for the CCA existed as part of the UNDAF. This shows a remarkable effort by many Resident Coordinators and country teams to engage in a country-driven exercise without formal headquarters guidance. Some of the by-products to emerge from these efforts were: team building; creation of a common database and common indicators; development of a common analysis of national development issues to serve as the foundation for future programming; and involvement of key development partners. Not surprisingly, the CCA is a high priority in the 1999 workplans of many country teams.

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) was presented in the Annual Reports as a major element of country level collaboration. As envisioned, the UNDAF functioned as a tool for promoting goal-oriented collaboration, programmatic coherence and mutual reinforcement. Some of the outcomes of the process included: forging new partnerships; the remolding of theme groups; and the use of retreats to form consensus building. Already some country teams have adopted programming mechanism in light of UNDAF.

### ***Relations with the Bretton Woods Institutions***

Increased cooperation was reported between the United Nations and Bretton Woods Institutions, especially the World Bank. It is becoming well recognized that a strategic partnership between development entities is required if the goals of global conferences are to be achieved, particularly in the fight against poverty. Cooperation between the institutions took a variety of forms in 1998, such as: the organization by the United Nations, World Bank and national governments of national consultative meetings to examine the underlying causes of the Asian financial crisis; mutual financing of household surveys and collaborative analysis of the results; a joint evaluation of China's poverty reduction programme with a view to map out a new strategy together. Again, the CCA and UNDAF emerged as effective tools for furthering collaboration among development partners. Reports mentioned the World Bank sign-off on a number of completed UNDAFs, as well as the pilot exercise in Viet Nam and Mali that explored a possible interface between the UNDAF and the World Bank's County Assistance Strategy.

### ***Special Development Situations***

A number of issues unique to the (currently) 51 countries in special development situations were highlighted in the reports. These include: a clear advantage to Resident Coordinators holding three positions – Resident Coordinators, Resident Representative and Humanitarian Coordinator – as the added authority is needed to carryout activities in difficult situations; the cost of leaving an RC post vacant for an extended period of time can be high; temporary or ad interim appointments cannot ensure policy continuity; it is worth reinstating the practice of handovers between the departing and the incoming RC in countries in special development situations.

The special challenges facing a crisis country can prove to be an effective forcing ground for the development of the country team concept. Crisis, resource constraints, security concerns and adversity tend to bring the United Nations system together, as well as create a breeding ground for innovation. At the same time, a number of challenges facing RCs and country teams need to

be explored further, such as the decline in assistance once humanitarian activities trail off, and the juggling of multiple frameworks that are applicable to special development situations.

### ***Theme Groups and Inter-Agency Task Forces***

More than 600 Theme Groups or Inter-Agency Task Forces (IATFs) are mentioned in the 125 reports. 300 are UN Theme Groups (115 for HIV/AIDS), 273 are IATFs or Working Groups, and 28 carry other names. The reports highlight three areas of considerable importance to the creation of these groups since 1996: the founding of UNAIDS and its advocacy for UN Theme Groups on HIV/AIDS; the ACC action plan for the coordinated and integrated follow-up to major United Nations conferences; and the Secretary-General's programme for reform. These developments have also given groups a purpose beyond that of traditional information sharing.

### ***Headquarters Support***

Of the 114 reports which included a chapter on headquarters support, 40 (35%) only mention support from DGO, UNDG and UNDG Sub-groups. In most of the remaining cases where support from funds, programmes and specialized agencies are mentioned, information on the nature and value of the support is lacking.

Three areas where support was frequently mentioned and appreciated are: financial support, information, and personal attention. A need for support was expressed in the following areas: mitigating information/documentation overload; a decrease in country level reporting requirements; joint training; knowledge networking; more support to reach United Nations reform goals; increased harmonization and standardization; support for the implementation of guidelines; and increased financial and management support

### ***Use of SRC Funds***

Total SRC funds for 1998 were \$14,582,000. Of the allocations issued, \$11,550,000 was expended, \$489,000 represent commitments from contractual obligations entered into in 1998, and the balance was carried forward to 1999. The extensive use of these resources indicate that their availability is well appreciated by the Resident Coordinators and that the objectives and focus of these funds are understood and respected. Many of the reports, however, do not provide specific evidence of the nature of activities and their impact.

Resources have primarily been used for: aid coordination and inter-agency partnerships; follow-up activities to global conferences; public information and advocacy; and direct and indirect support of the Secretary-General's reform agenda. In very few cases were funds used for activities that fell outside the prescribed guidelines.

### ***Training***

An overview of the training issues raised in Annual Reports suggests a need to enhance training support for the implementation of reform activities. Team building, a priority flagged by a number of reports, is been addressed through a variety of means. For example, many RCs and country teams organized retreats focusing on topics such as strategic visioning, drafting CSN/CCAs, the United Nations Special Initiative for Africa, and preparing the Annual Report and the 1999 workplan. Participants felt that retreats which focused on an issue provided positive gains for building teams, improving cooperation, and addressing common concerns.

A number of workshops also furthered team building and improved collaboration. Training workshops on strategy, coordination, and CCA and UNDAF were organized by many country teams. Methodologies such as *Future Search* were used for strategic visioning and planning. Some countries invited government counterparts and the local development community to participate in the workshops. This was found to increase support for United Nations reform initiatives at the country level.

Overall, many reports encouraged more training at the country level, particularly joint training. There is still a sense from many field offices that there is insufficient knowledge of United Nations reform and reform tools at the country level, especially among national staff.

### ***Common Premises and Services***

Common premises were designated in 26 countries as United Nations Houses in 1998, bringing the total number of United Nations Houses up from four to 30 by the end of the reporting period. Common premises were either donated by host governments, constructed by the United Nations system, or leased from the commercial sector. In general, United Nations Houses have been reported to produce cost-savings through the sharing of facilities and services, however some country teams indicated concerns related to the operation of United Nations Houses (e.g. excessive maintenance costs and lack of space). The establishment of new United Nations Houses was achieved only in two countries in 1998, yet findings show a considerable pipeline of potential United Nations Houses where relocation to new premises is expected to take place in 1999. Where the prospects of creating a United Nations House were not considered immediate, country teams report efforts to create virtual United Nations Houses by introducing country-based intranets.

Management Committees for Common Premises and Services are functioning in a large number of countries to develop and oversee the implementation of cost-effective, high-quality and timely common services. In several instances, joint ownership of such initiatives was successfully promoted by rotating the chair of the committee. Many reports, however, imply that there remains considerable scope for further development of common services, including improving the understanding and commitment to the initiative. Overall, country teams appear cautiously optimistic about the benefits of the United Nations House programme and plan to invest further resources, particularly in common services.

## **2. Methodology**

The annual reporting of Resident Coordinators (RC) for 1998 began with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Administrator's October 1998 letter requesting RCs to prepare their 1998 Annual Reports. English, French and Spanish versions of modified report guidelines were sent with the letter. These were developed as a result of a comprehensive review of the 1997 reporting exercise and were finalized in close consultation with Administrative Coordination Committee (ACC) members represented in Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ), who endorsed the modified guidelines in their September 1998 meeting.

For the first time, reports were placed on the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) website, making them available for review and feedback by United Nations system agencies and all RCs. The procedure gave agencies outside New York the opportunity to participate in a "virtual review group" and contribute their comments to headquarters-based RC Report Review Groups.

The website allowed reports to be posted as soon as they were received. Also available was a schedule of meetings of the seven established RC Report Review Groups: Africa I (East and South), Africa II (West and Central), Arab States, Asia and Pacific, Europe and CIS, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Countries in Special Circumstances.

Thirty-nine RC Report Review Group meetings were held between 5 March and 2 June 1999, where between two and five annual reports were reviewed per session. Chaired by Development Group Office (DGO) staff, the composition of the seven review groups varied (as did attendance) and consisted of participants from UNDG Executive Committee members – UNDP, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Food Program (WFP) – and other partners such as the joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Department of Public Affairs (DPA), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP), Regional Commissions and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). As in the previous year, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) actively participated in the review of the 1998 reports by transmitting observations prior to the scheduled review meetings.

Meeting notes were drafted by DGO and, after being endorsed by all review participants, formed the basis for a letter from the Director of DGO to each RC.

In spite of the additional workload, the review meetings were widely appreciated by participants as an excellent opportunity to meet United Nations system colleagues in an inter-agency environment which mirrors that of country teams. They valued undertaking a joint annual review of the work of the United Nations in over 130 countries and entering into a professional dialogue with Resident Coordinators and country teams in those countries.

As the final step of the Annual Report cycle, DGO issued final allocations of UNDP's funds for the Support of the Resident Coordinator (SRC). Funds were released to RCs in support of their 1999 workplan.

### **3.1 Compliance and Timeliness**

As in 1997, response to the 1998 RC Annual Report was excellent. With dispensations for People's Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone due to the acute crisis situation in these countries, a total of 127 reports were expected. By the end of May 1999, 125 reports were received – a 98% compliance rate.

However, even though there was a small improvement in the timely receipt of the reports by DGO, 91 reports (73%) were received *after* the deadline of 31 January 1999. This lateness is disappointing and delayed the work of review groups, the dispatch of substantive feedback to RCs and country teams and, quite importantly, the finalization of 1999 SRC allotments.

Receipt of the reports for 1997 (in 1998) and 1998 (in 1999) is compared in the following chart.

<b><u>Report</u></b>	<b><u>Reports received</u></b>					
	<b><u>Year</u></b>	<b><u>Before Deadline</u></b>	<b><u>During February</u></b>	<b><u>During March</u></b>	<b><u>During April</u></b>	<b><u>During May</u></b>
<b>1997</b>	<b>19 (15%)</b>	<b>67 (52%)</b>	<b>26 (20%)</b>	<b>9 (7%)</b>	<b>7 (5%)</b>	<b>128</b>
<b>1998</b>	<b>34 (27%)</b>	<b>54 (43%)</b>	<b>23 (18%)</b>	<b>12 (10%)</b>	<b>2 (2%)</b>	<b>125</b>

Reasons given for late submission were similar to those of the previous year: departure of the RC prior to report completion, conflicting workload due to year-end closing of financial accounts or other reporting requirements, and the holiday season in the southern hemisphere.

Given that the RC Annual Report is the only periodic report to be prepared by the RC/country team, that guidelines for the preparation of the report change very little, that the deadline for report submission is well known, and that there was no Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review input to be prepared, DGO expected more timely compliance.

Review of the reports shows a need to make mandatory the preparation of written briefing or hand-over notes by a departing RC on the status of the RC system in the country. This will help the RC ad interim and the country team to continue implementing the established workplan and also to provide the RC a.i. or the newly arriving RC and the country team with a solid information basis for the report.

### **3.2 Quality and Contents**

Review groups were unanimous in finding that, in general, the quality of the 1998 RC Annual Reports is superior to the 1997 exercise. Reports were found excellent where the RC and country team saw the task as an opportunity to respond to an intellectual challenge rather than merely to comply with an administrative requirement.

Similarly, review groups noted a strong correlation between the high quality of an Annual Report and the good functioning of the country team, the support of an RC Unit of higher level professional staff, strong leadership of the RC, and practical collaborative experience of country teams acquired in the preparation of CCA and UNDAF.

However, there are still numerous areas in which improvements are needed. Overall, reports were less useful when they were very short, thus not providing the expected information, or when they were voluminous and a challenge to readers' patience and stamina, burying important information under that which the guidelines do not require.

Report quality was negatively affected when there was a long gap between a departing and newly assigned RC. This is particularly true when the departure of the RC fell in the period of report preparation and the RC seemingly did not prepare a hand-over or briefing report for the RC a.i. and the country team.

The method of report preparation affected quality and content relevance. In many cases the information provided in Chapter 2.1 did not give clear guidance on how the report was prepared or if it was a collaborative process. Review groups strongly encourage a cooperative approach to the preparation of the report, as is done in countries where the process starts with the sharing of the guidelines among all country team members and is followed by, and often also ends with, a country team retreat. Review groups strongly discourage a process in which the report is drafted by an outside consultant, a staff member of one of the country team member agencies, or the RC/RC a.i. alone and is then finalized after obtaining country team members comments by correspondence.

There was excellent compliance with the guidelines in regard to report format and structure. In the few cases (other than in countries in special situations) in which RCs choose not to follow the outline described in the guidelines, reports were of the same quality as those that followed the guidelines. Several reports distinguished themselves by very attractive presentations while still following the format given in the guidelines.

Nevertheless, reports continue to be weak in several areas:

- Chapter 1.1: Most reports were very well prepared in this chapter and provide succinct descriptions and analyses of the recent political and socio-economic developments in the country. However, they are often silent about implications and consequences of such developments for United Nations system development assistance and a joint United Nations strategic vision to respond to these developments.

- Chapter 1.2: Many reports provide complete and recent information on Official Development Assistance (ODA) to the country, even though there are cases in which sections such as the breakdown of United Nations system ODA is missing or where figures for World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) disbursements are wrongly shown in the table. However, in all too many cases the tables are all that is provided. No information is given on developments compared to prior years and analytical comments are missing on the significance of the figures, the relative importance of ODA provided to the country from the various sources, and the consequences that management of large government cost-sharing funds by a United Nations system partner might have on United Nations system ODA and country team cooperation.
- Chapter 1.3: The number of reports which focus on examples of real collaborative programmes and/or activities appears larger than for 1997. However, too many reports still use this chapter to collate long descriptions of individual United Nations agency projects and activities.
- Chapter 1.4: Progress made in the implementation of the Secretary-General's Programme for Reform continues to be very encouraging. Several reform elements will be reviewed later in this report. The growing number of United Nations country websites, both existing and under preparation, stands out as notable.
- Chapter 2.2: Many reports are still too general and unspecific in this chapter, making little or no reference to the 1997 RC Workplan. The work of the country team is also not self-critically analyzed against the benchmarks of expected results.
- Chapters 2.4 and 2.5: For both chapters the guidelines ask that financial tables (on the use of SRC funds and the following year workplan) should be complemented by explanatory narratives. Contrary to this request many reports still submit the tables without any narrative or, where given, the comments and additional information provided are not clear or specific. This makes it difficult for DGO to substantively account for the prior year's expenditures and assign SRC funds for the following year's workplan.

Furthermore, in spite of the explanation provided in the guidelines, confusion remains in some offices as to the meaning of "undisbursed commitments" as compared to "unspent allotment". Such misunderstandings often cause delays in finalizing SRC funds.

### **3.3 Shared Learning: Country Examples**

Resident Coordinators repeatedly requested the compilation and distribution of examples of United Nations reform initiatives. The distribution of legislation, guidelines, and other documents on United Nations reform to country offices, and information on the practice and application of these documents in terms of *shared learning*, was considered useful.

The Annual Reports are a rich source of information. All parts of the report, both in terms of content and form, are relevant for identifying country examples. The focus, however, is primarily on the collaborative aspects of country assessment, programming, and support to the Resident Coordinator System (RCS). Thus, chapter 1.3. *Highlight of United Nations assistance in support of national objectives and priorities*, and chapter 1.4. *Progress report on actions taken at the country level towards the implementation of the Secretary-General's Programme for Reform*, are of particular interest.

Depending on the country specific situation, there are different ways to implement reforms. What works in one country does not necessarily work in another. As there is no ranking or analysis by which countries are considered more or less successful in implementing reform initiatives, the term *country examples* has been preferred to the term *best practices*. The purpose of compiling examples is simply to highlight ideas that may be of interest for the country teams to consider in their reform efforts. The examples may also be useful for other target groups and activities, such as training modules at the Staff College and advocacy work of United Nations agencies.

The quality of the report is not decisive for the identification of country examples. The Annual Reports serves more as a guide and overview to further research and identification of examples.

DGO has compiled examples from the Annual Reports and other sources and will present them on a DGO website according to the following categories: UNDAF, CCA, training, common premises and services, linkages between relief and development, globalization, Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF), follow-up to global conferences, United Nations Fund for International Partnership (UNFIP), United Nations Information Centres (UNIC), and collaborative programmes and communication. New categories and examples will be included as the reform process progresses.

## **4.1 Integrated Conference Follow-up**

A large number of Annual Reports address activities related to the integrated and coordinated follow-up to the major United Nations global conferences. Others report on conference follow-up by individual agencies. Many reports, however, do not make any particular mention of the integrated implementation and follow-up to conferences, and report more on normal operational activities of the United Nations system, which relate to cross-cutting issues of integrated and coordinated conference follow-up. DGO has prepared a stand-alone synthesis report on "Country Level Integrated and Coordinated Implementation and Follow-up to Major United Nations Conferences and Summits", based on 1998 Resident Coordinator Annual Reports. This report was circulated to CCPOQ and all RCs in May 1998.

### **4.1.1 Implementation of Cross-cutting Conferences Issues**

Through the Resident Coordinator system, considerable support was provided to national authorities for the implementation of cross-cutting issues of conference goals, particularly poverty eradication, the 20/20 initiative, and the involvement of civil society.

In most cases these cross-cutting issues, in particular poverty eradication and involvement of civil society, have become the essential elements of the mandates and approaches adopted by most United Nations organizations. Although some Annual Reports do not make specific reference to cross-cutting conference goals in the section on *Highlights of United Nations Assistance in Support of National Development Objectives and Priorities*, the inclusion of work in the above mentioned areas in other parts of the report indicates that these issues have been the mainstream work of the United Nations system.

In terms of **poverty eradication**, the Resident Coordinator system plays a number of roles:

- Bringing together national authorities, donors, civil society, and the United Nations system to review and formulate national poverty policies and strategies, including direct support to national governments for the formulation of poverty strategies in the post-conflict recovery phase;
- Providing technical support for the implementation of poverty-related programmes and projects through poverty theme groups.

Regarding the **20/20 initiative**, the United Nations system, led by UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, has made significant progress in 1998 in many countries. For example:

- Progress was reported in some 20 countries in assessing national budgets and ODA allocated to basic social services, one of the Social Summit's conference goals. The assessment has spurred a debate on social policy and national priorities, and in some cases has facilitated setting targets for future spending;
- The 20/20 compact provides a tool for closer collaboration between the United Nations system and government ministries as well as other development actors such as the World Bank and civil society;
- The 20/20 compact provides a tool for advocacy and awareness of social issues at the national and international levels (e.g. Consultative Group meetings);
- Although there is no detailed information in the Annual Reports as to what extent new and additional resources have so far been mobilized, the endorsement of the 20/20 initiative by governments and advocacy around the 20/20 compact may lead to new and additional resources for the country.

Regarding **civil society**, the examples given demonstrate a range of entry points for working with civil society in the context of follow-up to the conferences. They include:

- Identifying NGOs and civil society partners to be involved in local dialogue on various dimensions of development and in the implementation of development activities related to conference goals;
- Examining the capacity of various NGOs and the strengthening of their capacities;
- Involving representatives of civil society in a theme group/task force.

#### ***4.1.2 Country level Conference Follow-up***

##### **Situation Analysis and Policy Dialogue on Global Conference Follow-up**

In 1998, at least 25 country teams cooperated with governments and other actors to carry out a situation analysis on progress made in the implementation of global programmes and platforms for action. This includes identifying ways and institutional frameworks for implementation either 1) through policy dialogue in terms of congruence of national policies and priorities with policy commitments in the conference outcomes, or 2) through support to coordinated implementation by national authorities within the existing institutional frameworks. Important findings include:

- While the country has on the whole kept commitments made at various international conferences, there is a lack of a framework and mechanism to assist the country in implementing and monitoring implementation. In this context, some country teams have supported coordination among national agencies and ministries and capacity building in the follow-up to global conferences. This includes preparing national handbooks on the global agenda and national responses to assist the country in its follow-up and reporting;
- Country teams in some countries furthered implementation of the global agenda through policy dialogue, involving implementing agencies, all relevant parts of the government, Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs), the United Nations regional commissions, donors, representatives of civil society, NGOs, and the private sector.

## **Development of Conference Indicators as Part of the CCA**

Over sixty countries are presently developing a CCA and at least ten countries mentioned in their Annual Reports that global conference follow-up was used as the entry point for the preparation of the CCA. Among the conclusions are:

- Several United Nations country teams have established a common data base in close collaboration with national authorities and institutions. The database is accessible to the various parties beyond the United Nations system for the preparation of the CCA and for monitoring and reporting on the implementation global conference goals;
- Efforts to gather and disseminate data disaggregated by sex, and gender-sensitive studies were also reported;
- There are a few examples of the World Bank's active participation in the CCA exercise.

## **Thematic Groups on Cross-cutting Conference Themes**

In almost all countries, thematic groups or inter-agency task forces on operational and cross-cutting issues were established in one or more conference goal areas, such as poverty eradication and sustainable livelihoods, gender, environment, governance, and HIV/AIDS. A detailed analysis of theme groups is available in Section 4.6 of this report.

## **Mainstreaming Gender and Integrated Support to Human Rights-related Issues**

Gender mainstreaming and human rights issues cut across many conference goals and, like poverty eradication, have been adopted by the United Nations system as part of the foundation of its operational activities. Efforts by country teams to assist countries to mainstream gender as part of conference follow-up took different forms, including:

- The establishment of theme groups on gender in over fifty countries;
- The development of gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation tools;
- The development of a Gender Empowerment Measure and a Gender Development Index as advocacy tools for policy dialogue;
- Strengthening the capacity of CSOs and of national machinery for the advancement of women.

The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1998 was an occasion for many country teams to initiate activities which go beyond one-off events or campaigns. Although not many specific achievements were reported in terms of contribution to the ratification of human right treaties, many joint United Nations-government activities were undertaken, including the following:

- Reports by the governments on progress made in their respective adherence to human rights conventions have been published;

- Memoranda of understanding have been signed between the United Nations system and the government to reaffirm a joint effort;
- Support to the existing national institutions for human rights have been provided by the United Nations system;
- A year-long and Caribbean-wide inter-agency campaign on women's rights as well as capacity building on the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was carried out.

#### ***4.1.3 Utilization of Collaborative Programming Processes/Frameworks***

Of the eighteen UNDAF pilot countries, at least ten have reported using the UNDAF, and in one case the Country Strategy Note (CSN) either directly or indirectly as a platform for integrated and coordinated follow-up to conference, conventions and declarations. Some specific observations include:

- Cross-sectoral thematic groups encompassing all the areas relating to conference themes, such as poverty eradication, education, health, food security, environment and gender, have been established to prepare the UNDAF as well as conference follow-up;
- One Annual Report mentioned that the UNDAF provided a framework for a strong rights-based approach to poverty alleviation – a major cross-cutting issue of conferences – in United Nations programmes;
- In a few countries, a number of issue papers on follow-up to major global conferences were prepared as part of the UNDAF process;
- In some countries, the UNDAF contributed to team-building among United Nations agency staff and also resulted in the build-up of a real country team for United Nations activities, including conference follow-up;
- In some countries, although not included in the UNDAF pilot phase, collaborative programme activities were undertaken in many areas of the global conferences, for example, poverty eradication, social services, good governance and environment regeneration.

#### ***4.1.4 The Use of Materials Produced by the ACC Inter-Agency Task Forces***

Of all the Annual Reports received, only 24 made references to the ACC Inter-Agency Task Forces (IATFs). Overall, the response is mixed and inconclusive. The materials were usually referred to as “ACC materials/documents on follow-up to global conferences”, and in very few cases are individual documents mentioned by title. Comments about the documents include:

- They were very useful in improving the quality and results of the country team's field coordination efforts;
- Material on poverty was of assistance in gaining a better understanding of where each agency can bring its expertise to bear in support of poverty eradication;
- The documentation of the Basic Social Services for All (BSSA) had served and would serve in the future for inter-agency planning and promotion;

- The documentation of the BSSA was particularly appreciated for the design and development of the CCA document.

A number of Resident Coordinators suggested ways to improve the ACC materials. For example:

- While the ACC documents provide issues-based compilations of global conference recommendations, methodological frameworks/models for country specific requirements for reporting on both conference follow-up and convention ratification need further attention;
- The publication and distribution of materials by the ACC IATFs, such as the BSSA, while valued as a potential input for country level substantive initiatives, needs to be pursued in a highly selective, realistic and demand-driven manner;
- The ACC IATFs directives were difficult to apply because of a lack of operational tools and readily available expertise.

#### ***4.1.5 1999 Workplan of the Resident Coordinator System on Integrated Conference Follow-up***

Some country teams that prepared special reports on conference follow-up made strategic plans for future support for conference follow-up. However, most Annual Reports indicate plans for conference follow-up activities mainly for the use of SRC funds. This section of the report could be improved by including more strategic planning for an integrated support to be provided to the country on conference follow-up, which in many cases may not require financial resources.

## **4.2 Challenges of Globalization**

### **4.2.1 Background**

Globalization and the impact of the financial crises and their contagion was a major focus of the United Nations in 1998. The challenges posed by globalization, and in particular the fall-out from the financial crises, were addressed at a number of national, regional and international fora. The ACC, at its meeting in October 1998, tasked UNDG to prepare an action plan for United Nations country teams on this topic, drawing on the experiences of colleagues in the field.

A matrix was compiled of the country team responses to this action plan, based on feedback given in the Annual Reports. This summary highlights the findings of 109 reports, of which 63 countries mentioned the impact of the financial crisis and globalization.

It is clear from the review that many countries have been affected by the crisis and that many country teams are responding actively, especially in Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe and the CIS. As requested in the Terms of Reference for the preparation of the Annual Reports, a brief economic analysis of the country's situation is provided in Part 1 of each report. More often than not, however, in those countries where the United Nations is taking action, the organization's activities are focused on the social dimensions of the crisis.

As can be expected, some reports do not mention the crisis. This is partly because they are faced with even greater challenges – mainly in Africa (also Bosnia, Haiti). Other reports only refer to the crisis as being part of a number of factors, such as natural or man-made disasters, affecting the country's development – for example Zimbabwe (conflict in Democratic Republic of the Congo), and Panama (El Nino).

### **4.2.2 Findings: How have countries been affected?**

For those countries directly affected by the financial crisis, their reports highlight a number of consequences, including: an increase in unemployment, particularly in urban areas; an increase in poverty, and “new poor”; social tensions; migration; decline in GDP; reductions in public spending, including in social sectors; an increase in inflation; a rise in interest rates.

For countries indirectly affected, the reports mention the impact in terms of the following: decline in exports and fall in commodity/exports prices; decline in foreign investment and concessionary financing; increase in trade deficit; population movement/migration; capital flight; decline in tourism. (In two cases – Latvia and Poland – the crisis was seen to have mildly positive aspects in terms of slowing down overheating economies).

### **4.2.3 Findings: How is the United Nations responding at country level?**

The ACC statement, reflected in the UNDG action plan, highlights four areas for United Nations response:

- Monitor the impact of the crisis on societies and individuals;
- Assist individual countries carry out the necessary structural and institutional reforms;
- Help strengthen or build basic social services, livelihood opportunities and safety nets for the least fortunate;
- Forge closer links between the World Bank and the UN.

The following examples group the responses highlighted in the Annual Reports into the four above mentioned areas. It should be noted that in several cases countries are carrying out activities in one or more areas but in the interests of space, countries are only cited once.

- **Monitor the impact of the crisis on societies and individuals.** Country teams have collaborated among themselves, with local institutions, think tanks and government to analyze the impact of the crisis at a national and local level, and on specific sectors of society. In many countries this analysis is feeding into United Nations and government policy and planning instruments (CCA, UNDAF, national Human Development Reports (HDR), poverty eradication plans, and work on the 20/20 concept). Some examples are – Peru, Vietnam, Burkina Faso, Malawi, Niger (with the World Bank), Yemen, Zambia on 20/20; Azerbaijan, national HDR; UNDP/ILO/World Bank Social Assessment on Poverty in Latvia, and on gender and employment in Mauritius; the Gambia on National Poverty Eradication Programme; building national capacity on social statistics in Gabon (with the World Bank/ILO), and in Ukraine (with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe). The Zimbabwe country team is working with civil society through a Poverty Reduction Forum. India may set up an Inter-Agency Working Group on Sustainable Livelihoods in the context of crisis.
- **Assist individual countries carry out the necessary structural and institutional reforms.** Based on analysis and at the invitation of government, the United Nations is providing a forum for policy dialogue. This includes organizing conferences, seminars and publications, as well as specific policy discussions and advocacy with government institutions and other development actors. Examples are – Argentina, Chile, Kyrgyzstan, Eastern Caribbean States, Lao PDR, Moldova, South Africa, Swaziland, Uruguay.
- **Help strengthen or build basic social services, livelihood opportunities and safety nets for the least fortunate.** The United Nations is providing advice to government, particularly in social policy, including social safety nets, and is re-orientating and stepping up existing activities in most countries on social services, poverty eradication and employment creation. Examples are – Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines, Korea, Brazil, Mongolia, Belarus, Russian Federation, Cambodia, Pakistan, Uzbekistan.
- **Forge closer links between the World Bank and the UN.** The United Nations is collaborating with the Bretton Woods Institutions in the context of globalization and the financial crisis. Some examples include: China on administrative reforms; Panama on Living Standards Survey; Poverty Alleviation Framework in Sri Lanka, Uganda and Peru; the Macro Economic Policy Framework in Cote D'Ivoire; and in Sao Tome UNDP/WB financed a National Long Term Perspective Study, Horizon 2025. (*See also*

*joint activities mentioned above in Latvia, Mauritius, Gabon, Niger and Section 4.5: Relations with the BWIs in this report.)*

#### **4.2.4 Conclusions and Lessons Learned: What could the United Nations do differently?**

- **Share information on a regional level** (suggested by Thailand). In addition, the United Nations could consider how it can (use electronic means to) better share information between HQ and country offices, and within agencies at HQ.
- **Speak out on debt issues** (highlighted by Sierra Leone and Bulgaria).
- **Analysis-action gap.** The United Nations should consider how it can better support country teams to make the linkages between macro-economic analysis and operational activities, particularly in the social sector. Currently this linkage is weak to non-existent, with the result that United Nations country teams do not have ready access to United Nations policy thinking on the larger issues of globalization (trade, debt, etc.) and their implications for individual countries.
- **Low budget-high leverage.** In many countries the resources of the United Nations are limited compared with other development actors. However, the United Nations can have a major impact at relatively little cost by intervening upstream – either by providing a space for policy dialogue, through an advocacy/advisory role with government and civil society, or through facilitating capacity building. In particular, the United Nations can play an important role in building local capacity to increase the absorptive capacity of government to deliver services to the most vulnerable groups, including social protection and/or safety nets. As has been noted elsewhere, even when resources are available, there are cases where they are not reaching target groups because of the government’s lack of capacity to deliver the necessary services.

### **4.3 Common Country Assessment (CCA) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)**

#### **A. Common Country Assessment**

##### **4.3.1 Overview**

The 1998 Annual Reports reveal a considerable and noteworthy effort – the undertaking by the majority of country teams of a CCA, often as the first stage of the UNDAF.

Out of 129 programme countries, 75 countries (60%) were involved during 1998 in the CCA exercise, either by completing the exercise or because they were in the process of completing or planning a CCA for 1999. Sixteen countries finalized a CCA document and 59 countries are currently elaborating a CCA. In addition, ten countries plan to carry out a CCA exercise in 1999. In brief, three countries out of four are today engaged in a CCA.

The above figures reveal a remarkable effort by most country teams, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, to engage in a country-driven and country specific exercise with little formal guidance from headquarters. Although the UNDAF provisional guidelines included a section on the CCA, the CCA guidelines were only finalized and sent to country offices in April 1999.

These efforts led to a significant increase in the workload of field staff and progress was sometimes difficult. However, most of the country teams completed the exercise. Their sustained commitment can be explained by the benefits derived from the CCA process:

- Build-up of team spirit, United Nations internal coherency and cross fertilization;
- Creation of a common data base and common indicators, as a solid basis for the coordinated follow-up of global conferences and better advocacy of the UN's role and values;
- Development of a common analysis of national development issues that will serve as the foundation for future programming and UNDAF;
- Involvement of key development partners, the government, civil society, the World Bank.

These country-led efforts generated heterogeneous CCA documents and results. Improvements are still needed, but already significant lessons can be drawn from the country teams, for example:

- Importance of the full involvement of governments;
- Interest in a "UN Retreat" for team-building;
- Use of external consultancy work only as specialized input to the country team effort;
- Importance of the role played by a RC Support Unit to facilitate the work, including liaising with thematic groups or other consultative process;
- Importance of a common data base.

### REGIONAL SNAPSHOT ON CCA

REGIONS	TOTAL	CCA completed	CCA ongoing	CCA planned for 1999	not involved	% OF COUNTRIES INVOLVED IN CCA	
						within the region	in all regions
AFRICA	44	8	25	4	7	89%	44%
ARAB STATES	16	1	9	0	6	63%	12%
ASIA	24	1	9	3	11	54%	15%
EUROPE/CIS	21	2	4	2	18	38%	9%
LATIN AMERICA	24	4	12	1	7	71%	20%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>(85) 100%</b>

Source: 1998 Resident Coordinator Annual Reports

#### **Quick interpretation of the figures:**

Out of 129 "programme" countries 85 (66%) are directly involved in the CCA exercise, e.g., they either completed a CCA or are doing one or plan to do one. Sixteen CCAs have been completed and 69 countries are currently engaged in the elaboration of a first CCA (more than one out of two countries). These figures reflect a remarkable effort by country teams, all over the world, to engage in this country-led and country-driven exercise.

Africa is fully involved in the CCA exercise as the leading region since 37 out of 44 countries are directly involved in a CCA. This indicates that 43% of 85 countries in the world involved in the CCA are from this region, including 21 LDCs and many countries in special development situation.

The second region most prominently engaged in CCA is Latin America and the Caribbean where 17 out of a 24 countries are involved (71%). As of today four CCAs have been completed (Argentina, Colombia, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay) and 13 countries are presently engaged in a CCA process. One UNDAF pilot country and three countries who are part of the "UNDAF roll-out" list are engaged in the CCA.

The Arab and Asia region are also well engaged in the CCA exercise ( 63% and 54% respectively of their total number of countries). Europe and the CIS is less engaged than other regions (13 countries out of a total of 21 countries are not yet involved).

### **4.3.2 CCA: A regional view**

#### Africa

CCA saw widespread application in Africa – 37 out of 44 African countries were involved in the CCA, including 21 Least Developed Countries (LDCs). This achievement is remarkable given the sometimes difficult conditions under which country teams operated in 1998. Such momentum was in part due to the UNDAF pilot phase but extended beyond the group of pilot countries.

The CCAs were developed through a fully participatory process involving all United Nations agencies represented at country level. However, the participation of non-resident agencies remained limited and participation from governments varied from country to country. CCAs helped to identify priority areas for the United Nations system as well as helped country teams prepare for the UNDAF. The ground work on basic social and economic data often paved the way to place selected critical issues on the national development agenda, to facilitate national policy dialogue, to inspire national legislation or action plans, and to better support the coordination of international assistance. In the context of the follow-up to international conferences, issues of poverty eradication, advancement of women, food security, HIV/AIDS, and good governance figured prominently in the CCA exercises. In countries in difficult or crisis situations, the CCA was a useful tool for attempting to link the humanitarian and developmental dimensions of United Nations assistance.

#### Arab States

In the Arab region, Morocco as an UNDAF pilot country completed a CCA in 1998. However nine countries in the region are in the process of carrying out the CCA exercise, including three of the four LDCs (Djibouti, Sudan, Yemen).

In this region much emphasis has been placed on development indicators and a common database as a basis for the proactive follow-up to global conferences, with an emphasis on social issues. For example, Lebanon has developed a website on conference follow-up.

#### Asia

One CCA was finalized in 1998 in the Asia and Pacific region (Cambodia) as a stepping stone for the preparation of an UNDAF. Thailand was in the last stages of finalizing their CCA at the end of the year. These countries are not part of the UNDAF pilot countries. Of the three UNDAF pilot countries in the region – India, the Philippines and Viet Nam – UNDAFs were produced by the country teams in the Philippines and in Viet Nam, however without a prior CCA exercise. Viet Nam, which plans to prepare a CCA in 1999, suggested that the CCA would replace the UNDP Advisory Note.

In the majority of Asia and Pacific countries the preparation of a CCA was underway or under discussion, emphasizing follow-up to global United Nations conferences as an important aspect.

Where applicable, the Annual Reports note the usefulness of headquarters support in the CCA process.

In Bangladesh and Pakistan Future Search workshops were held in November 1998 to further the CCA and UNDAF process. The country team in India plans to organize a future workshop in February 1999.

### *Latin America and the Caribbean*

Latin America and the Caribbean is the region second most heavily involved in the CCA exercise (after Africa). Based on the annual reports, 17 out of 24 countries in the region are currently doing a CCA. Four countries – Argentina, Colombia, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay – have finalized a CCA. Only Colombia, whose report emphasizes the rights-based approach, is an UNDAF pilot country. Guatemala, the other UNDAF country, is planning to carry out a CCA in 1999. Peru, Suriname and Venezuela have advanced drafts which should be finalized in 1999.

### *Europe and the CIS*

The implementation of the CCA exercise in the Europe and the CIS region has been limited in 1998 relative to other regions in the world. However, initial steps have been taken by a few countries to assess the United Nations system contribution to the country as a basis to launch the CCA exercise. Several Europe and the CIS countries have reported that the limited presence of the United Nations system in the field and of programmable resources constrains the implementation of the CCA and UNDAF. It should be noted that according to the Resident Coordinators Annual Workplan for 1999, an increased number of country teams are now planning to, or are in the midst of, preparing CCAs.

### ***4.3.3 CCA: Moving Forward***

There are clear trends that emerge from the reports about the way country teams regard the CCA in 1999:

- The CCA is a high priority in the 1999 workplans of many country teams, often in conjunction with the future implementation of an UNDAF.
- Based on their previous experience and with the support of the new CCA guidelines, many country teams are revisiting key aspects of the exercise in order to achieve a more consistent and high quality process and product. This includes a participatory process involving the government, other key national actors and non-resident United Nations agencies. Also evident is the consolidation of the CCA database or the proactive use of CCA for improving advocacy on critical cross-cutting issues and strengthened policy dialogue with national authorities.

- Many country teams have contacted DGO to request information and feedback on their CCA. They are particularly interested to learn from each other's experience and receive feedback on lessons learned and benefit from good practices developed in other countries.
- United Nations country teams now know that they should achieve tangible and sustainable results, inter alia, through the preparation of the UNDAF.

In sum, a high quality CCA has become the common target for 1999.

#### **CCA /UNDAF linkage**

*The strategic link between the CCA and the UNDAF has been widely perceived by country teams, as shown in numerous Annual Reports. Many country teams reporting on a CCA initiative in 1998, while not being part of the UNDAF pilot phase, still presented it as a first step towards a future UNDAF. In the UNDAF pilot phase, 14 of the 18 pilot countries undertook the formulation of the CCA even if it was presented to them as optional. Three of the four remaining countries (Philippines, Viet Nam, Malawi) have re-evaluated their approach and intend to complete a CCA in preparation of their next cycle. The assessment of the pilot phase has recognised the importance of the CCA as the first stage of the UNDAF process to build partnerships and identify the key priority areas on which the United Nations system would focus in the UNDAF. It is now made explicit, in the CCA and UNDAF guidelines that an UNDAF should be formulated on the basis of a quality CCA.*

### **B. United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)**

#### **4.3.4 Introduction**

1998 was a year of maturation for the United Nations Development Assistance Framework as a tool for promoting goal-oriented collaboration, programmatic coherence and mutual reinforcement. Following the initiation of the UNDAF pilot phase in 1997 the first UNDAF documents were produced in 1998. Lessons on the implementation of this new tool and its implications were identified as the exercises progressed in the UNDAF pilot countries (*see list in annex*), notably through an independent assessment of the pilot phase<sup>1</sup>. These, with the policy guidance provided in the General Assembly resolution 53/192, formed the basis for the revision of the UNDAF guidelines and shaped the modalities for the gradual extension of the UNDAF exercise to other countries, approved in April 1999.

<sup>1</sup> For further information on the assessment of the UNDAF pilot phase, please consult the following reports:

- UNDAF Assessment Report (UNDG Assessment Team)
- External Inputs for the development of the UNDAF (Report of the High-level Team of Experts)
- Report of the Princeton Workshop

The synthesis presented here is solely based on the 1998 Annual Reports of the Resident Coordinators, not on the UNDAF documents produced in the field. It therefore addresses only superficially the substantive aspects raised in most UNDAFs.

#### **4.3.5 Overview**

It is in this context that country teams described the progress of UNDAF at the country level in the 1998 Annual Reports. Many other country teams expressed interest in the exercise in their Annual Report and some, anticipating the roll-out<sup>2</sup>, even integrated an UNDAF exercise into their 1999 workplan. However, the only substantial reports on the subject came from the pilot countries. There were wide disparities in progress among those countries during 1998. While Mozambique already indicated its plan to conduct a “thematic assessment of the value added of UNDAF” in the country after its completion in January 1998, Namibia and Turkey were still in the early stages of CCA formulation. These disparities, to be expected from any pilot phase, also reflect the country-driven nature of the UNDAF. Some delays and difficulties also resulted from the rotation of country team members, creating additional work for those remaining and delays in acclimating new team members (Romania, Malawi, Senegal).

Irrespective of its advancement, the UNDAF exercise in all pilot countries was presented in the Annual Reports as a major element of United Nations collaboration at the country level. Besides the time and workload involved, the exercise had many implications on other aspects of United Nations coordination and programme activities, pursued to various degrees by the country teams.

#### **4.3.6 Timing**

Most pilot country UNDAFs were formulated at mid-cycle of approved country programmes. Country teams indicated that to some extent this timing affected the development of a common response, often limiting a strategic and holistic United Nations response to the sum total of existing and approved programmes. The response to this challenge varied: some decided to complete an “interim” UNDAF, covering the remaining period of their current cycle, while conscious of its limitations (Mozambique, Ghana, Morocco, South Africa). Others decided to seize the opportunity to entirely re-think the positioning of the United Nations system in their country and maximise the opportunity to define a strategic focus (India, for example did so through a Future Search conference)<sup>3</sup>.

#### **4.3.7 Partnerships**

The pilot phase showed varying degrees of government involvement. The General Assembly’s subsequent discussions and guidance resulted in CCA and UNDAF Guidelines with very clear language on the critical role of the government during the CCA and UNDAF processes, ultimately leading to governments’ “full ownership through the agreement to the finalised framework” of the UNDAF.

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<sup>2</sup> The UNDG-approved UNDAF roll-out plan was shared by the UNDP Administrator with all Resident Coordinators at the beginning of June 1999.

<sup>3</sup> One of the most important lessons learned from the 18 pilots was the recognition that (i) the formulation of an UNDAF needs to precede individual agencies’ programme formulation and that (ii) for an optimal United Nations’ response and impact, all United Nations’ organizations’ programme cycles need to be harmonized (same starting year and same duration), a policy now actively pursued by the UNDG.

All United Nations agencies represented at the country level generally participated in the UNDAF exercise. Most pilot countries pointed out the necessity of integrating the Specialized Agencies in the UNDAF process, describing the negative effect of inconsistent messages received from headquarters, and emphasizing the contribution made by the agencies to the process. Some reports mentioned a fruitful collaboration with non-resident organizations: IFAD in Morocco; United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), International Labor Organization (ILO) and United Nations Volunteers (UNV) in Mali.

The participation of the Bretton Woods Institutions in the process was only alluded to, often just to mention that representatives of the World Bank and the IMF signed the UNDAF document<sup>4</sup> or were informed of the process (Madagascar). Mali and Viet Nam, selected for a study on the interface between the UNDAF and the World Bank's Country Assistance Strategy (CAS), reported varying experiences.

The value of wide participation in the UNDAF (and CCA) exercise was recognized during the pilot phase. In addition to the wealth of knowledge that can be tapped through a participatory process, strategic partnerships can be forged not only among the United Nations system partners, including the Bretton Woods Institutions, but foremost with relevant government entities, civil society, NGOs, the private sector, and other multilateral and bilateral development partners. Systematic and extensive consultations at headquarters with all member organizations of the United Nations system, including the World Bank, have now contributed to a wide endorsement of the revised guidelines and the commitment of ACC members to participate in the exercise.

#### **4.3.8 *Rights-based Approach***

Although the substance of the UNDAFs formulated in the pilot countries was not presented in the RC reports, it is worth noticing that a number of them mentioned a rights-based approach as underlining the process (Mali, Mozambique, South Africa, Morocco, Malawi, Colombia). Romania, most notably, organised with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the first joint training programme on the human rights dimension of development for the United Nations system in the field. South Africa also held an orientation session on rights-based programming for heads of agencies and senior staff with facilitators from OHCHR and UNDP. Malawi established a human rights theme group as a follow-up to the thrust of UNDAF, in order to advocate and collectively promote human rights, aimed at strengthening government's ability to realize its international commitments, as well as enhance coordination of United Nations agencies' human rights and rights-based activities.

#### **4.3.9 *Integration of Collaborative Processes at the Country level***

The UNDAF exercise contributed significantly to the improvement of coherence and the promotion of synergies, favouring operation-oriented collaboration (Mali, Kenya, Madagascar, Senegal, India). In this sense, the UNDAF process contributed to the enhancement of the Resident Coordinator system in the pilot countries, fostering teamwork and focusing its various components at the country level towards the realization of a common goal (Zimbabwe). The

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<sup>4</sup> Out of 12 UNDAFs received to-date, 7 have been co-signed by the World Bank (*see Annex*).

UNDAF exercise offered a process to share, discuss and decide, in consultation with its partners, on the most effective contribution the United Nations system could make in response to the country's priorities and needs, as well as the best strategy to deliver it. The UNDAF was the instrument to articulate the country team's conclusions. Romania, however, pointed out the heavy workload that the exercise represented for a small country team, and that the same time and attention might not be expected from the government in countries where the resources of the United Nations system are limited.

In most countries the UNDAF exercise had an effect on existing coordinating mechanisms at the country level, which were revisited to operationalise the spirit of United Nations reform: "one gain already demonstrated is increased administrative efficiency and reduced costs through economies of scale and harmonised programme modalities" (India).

- One of the most obvious effects mentioned in the Annual Reports is the remolding of theme groups in light of the new, common strategic orientation emerging from the UNDAF process. However, few country teams translated a new strategic focus into a more manageable number of theme groups.
- Quite often (India, Mali, Philippines, Morocco, Turkey, Kenya, Ghana), the work of the theme groups is coordinated by a Steering Committee or UNDAF Task Force, initially created to advance the UNDAF but whose existence will be prolonged to ensure coordinated progress and synergies between theme groups. The Zimbabwe country team, in this regard, stated: "the importance of establishing mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the reforms cannot be understated" (*see also section 4.6 Theme Groups*).
- The trend towards a comprehensive and integrated use of existing and new mechanisms to pursue common priorities is sometimes noticeable. The preparation of the RC report in India, for example, was combined with an UNDAF brainstorming exercise to discuss both thematic and procedural issues regarding the future of UNDAF and the United Nations system in India, and the results of the discussions served as common inputs for both purposes.
- A number of country teams used retreats to forge consensus around the process or specific issues at various times of the UNDAF exercise. After completion of a draft report some organized a retreat as a validation mechanism. Others held retreats at the outset of the process, to reach an early agreement on the objectives and strategies to be pursued (Morocco, India, Viet Nam). A number of countries held both (Kenya, Senegal, Zimbabwe, Philippines).

Reporting on the interface between the UNDAF and other, wider coordination mechanisms was limited. Ghana and Mali will build on successful experiences with sector-wide approaches to establish linkages with its UNDAF exercise. In Senegal, the United Nations system presented for the first time a common statement to the April 1998 Consultative Group. No mention was made of the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF), introduced by the World Bank in January 1999.

#### **4.3.10 Follow-up and Impact**

Although the timeframe did not allow the country teams to report on the actual implementation of UNDAF, some initiatives were already reported to affect downstream activities of the RCS and how the country team planned to follow-up on their achievements.

Some country teams have already adapted programming mechanisms in light of UNDAF. In Ghana, for example, it was decided that the review of country programmes or activities, especially in common thematic areas, be done collaboratively. The Mid-Term Review (MTR) of UNICEF's country programme was thus undertaken in such a spirit, as is planned for UNFPA's programme. In South Africa, UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA agreed with the government to undertake a joint MTR, focusing on a rights-based approach to development, and HIV/AIDS as a priority challenge and area-based collaboration with local government. In Madagascar, the formulation of the country programmes of UNDP, UNFPA, WFP and UNICEF's MTR were realised in light of the strategies elaborated in UNDAF.

Country teams have also taken initiatives to advance collaboration at the programme/project levels. In the Philippines, the Resident Coordinator reports that "...most collaboration prior to 1997 was done in parallel or through information exchanges. In 1998, with the consensus achieved on collaboration through the UNDAF process, the country team is now moving collaboration into the arena of collaborative programming." In Mali, three joint programmes will serve as pilots for the implementation of UNDAF. In India, experience previously gained through a parallel project on primary education will be analysed and used as input for the UNDAF process.

Suggestions for rationalizing programming processes between and within organizations, in light of UNDAF, were common. The streamlining of programming procedures, which UNDP initiated by making its Advisory Note optional, is a necessary measure to reduce the burden on government authorities and country teams. This will require active follow-up and strong continued commitment by the United Nations system.

It is too early to measure the impact of UNDAF on development activities and no report attempted to do so. It is however expected that data and information generated from future Annual Reports will be much more substantive and thus, inter alia, ensure appropriate inputs for the impact evaluation required by the General Assembly.

**Annex: UNDAF Pilot Countries**

	<i>Countries</i>	<i>CSN status</i>	<i>CCA</i>	<i>UNDAF</i>	<i>UNDAFs signed by World Bank</i>
<i>AFRICA</i>	Ghana	<i>Completed by Government</i>	✓	✓	Yes **
	Kenya	<i>Completed by Government</i>	✓	✓	Yes **
	Madagascar <i>LDC</i>	<i>Preliminary draft prepared</i>	✓	✓	No
	Malawi <i>LDC</i>	<i>Preliminary draft prepared</i>	-	✓	Yes **
	Mali * <i>LDC</i>	<i>Completed by Government</i>		✓	Yes
	Mozambique <i>LDC</i>	<i>Completed by Government</i>	✓	✓	No
	Namibia	<i>Completed by Government</i>	✓		
	Senegal	<i>Completed by Government</i>	✓	✓	Yes **
	South Africa	<i>Process at initial stage</i>			
	Zimbabwe	<i>A greed work programme</i>	✓	✓	Yes
<i>ASIA</i>	India	<i>Government does not intend to pursue a CSN</i>			
	Philippines	<i>Completed by Government</i>	-	✓	No
	Viet Nam *	<i>Completed by Government</i>	-	✓	Yes
<i>ARAB ST.</i>	Morocco	<i>Completed by Government</i>	✓	✓	-
<i>LATIN</i>	Colombia	<i>Final draft being reviewed by Government</i>	✓		
<i>AMERIC A</i>	Guatemala	<i>Completed by Government</i>			
<i>EUROPE &amp; CIS</i>	Romania	<i>Process at initial stage</i>	✓	✓	No
	Turkey	<i>Completed by Government</i>			

\* : UNDAF-CAS interface pilot

\*\* : UNDAF final document was also co-signed by the IMF

*Abbreviations:* CAS: Country Assistance Strategy (*World Bank*)

CCA: Common Country Assessment

CDF: Comprehensive Development Framework (*World Bank*)

CIS: Commonwealth of Independent States

CSN: country strategy note

LDC: least developed country

UNDAF: United Nations Development Assistance Framework

9/6/99

## **4.4 Relationship with the Bretton Woods Institutions**

### **4.4.1 Introduction**

The support that the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWI) have given to cooperative country level initiatives, as well as a number of developments that have taken place during the last year, have clearly enhanced the frequency and quality of country level cooperation and collaboration.

While major advances have been achieved in country level cooperation between individual United Nations organizations and the BWI, this section of the report will focus primarily on the progress made in strengthening UN-BWI relations system-wide.

### **4.2.2 Globalization and the Asian Financial Crisis**

The Asian financial crisis and the international community's increasing emphasis on globalization and its adverse effects on the poor have reinforced the view that a strategic partnership between development entities is required if the goals of the last decade's global conferences are to be achieved, particularly the fight against poverty.

At the ACC meeting in October 1998, the executive heads of all the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies, as well as the World Bank and the IMF, committed themselves to a united effort to tackle development challenges arising from globalization and the adverse effects of the financial crisis.

In follow-up to this commitment, the UNDG prepared an action plan presenting options for country teams to support governments in their response to globalization and the financial crisis. The Action Plan included a recommendation to explore linkages with Bretton Woods Institutions in the context of financial crisis responses. Country teams were to report on these activities in the Annual Reports.

A review of approximately 100 reports for 1998 shows that the Asian financial crisis has been a powerful catalyst for enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and the BWI at the country level. Such increased cooperation has primarily taken the form of upstream interventions such as joint monitoring of the impact of the financial crisis and joint policy advice to the government. From a substantive point of view, cooperation between the United Nations system and the BWI focuses predominantly on poverty eradication and the social sectors. (*See also section 4.2.3. in Challenges of Globalization.*)

In a number of countries (for instance in Thailand, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan), United Nations country teams, in cooperation with governments, the BWI and other development partners, organized national consultative meetings to examine the underlying causes of the crisis and the impact on human development, share information and identify areas for collaboration.

In Viet Nam and in Panama, the United Nations and the World Bank co-financed living standard surveys and are collaborating in analyzing the survey data together. Furthermore, in Viet Nam the country team established an inter-agency working group on social safety nets, of which the World Bank is a member. Building on previous work (such as the 1997 World Bank discussion paper “Poverty, Social Services and Safety Nets in Viet Nam”) an initial investigation was undertaken to study the effect of the regional crisis on Viet Nam’s existing social safety nets.

In China, on the request of the Leading Group on Poverty Reduction of the State Council, the United Nations and the World Bank are jointly evaluating the effectiveness of China’s poverty reduction programme with a view to map out a new strategy for future interventions. In Latvia, the United Nations and the World Bank completed the first phase of a Social Assessment of Poverty, which will be used as an input into the government’s efforts to develop a National Poverty Alleviation Strategy. In Sri Lanka, the United Nations and the World Bank cooperated in supporting the preparation of a National Poverty Alleviation Framework by the government.

In Mauritius and the Seychelles, the United Nations and the World Bank are undertaking a joint study to evaluate policies and strategies to provide better jobs for women in the context of globalization.

In addition to such upstream activities, the United Nations and the World Bank are also starting to cooperate in more downstream areas. An example of this is the case of Malaysia where the United Nations is currently executing World Bank Rapid Disbursement Loans.

Finally, globalization, its effects on the poorest, and the Asian financial crisis have also provided a main impetus for the recent introduction of the World Bank’s Comprehensive Development Framework initiative. Although, not yet included in the 1998 Annual Reports, the CDF will present further opportunities for enhancing country level cooperation between development partners.

#### ***4.4.3 Post-conflict recovery and reconstruction***

The World Bank, through its Post-Conflict Credits and Grants, increasingly provides crucial complementary support to United Nations humanitarian and recovery interventions. In Angola, missions from both the World Bank and the IMF met with United Nations agencies to develop a peace-friendly structural adjustment programme. In Tajikistan, United Nations agencies and the World Bank are co-financing the implementation of a Post-Conflict Emergency Rehabilitation Programme. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, United Nations agencies and the World Bank play complementary roles in developing government capacity and support for the implementation of de-mining. Together they are co-financing the de-mining teams.

#### ***4.4.4 Reform Efforts and their Implications for Country level Cooperation***

The reform efforts underway in the United Nations, the World Bank and, to a somewhat lesser extent the IMF, continue to enhance opportunities for strengthened cooperation at the country level. The changing development context continues to be a catalyst for development

organizations to refocus their activities and emphasize more collaborative and complementary approaches to development. In addition, the introduction of new programming and management instruments enhances opportunities for country level staff to engage in collaborative and cooperative activities.

### CCA and UNDAF

The introduction of the CCA and UNDAF increases the extent and effectiveness of UN-BWI collaboration at the country level. The UNDAF pilot exercise showed extensive participation by the World Bank. Of the 12 finalized UNDAF documents received, seven have been co-signed by the World Bank representative as a member of the United Nations country team. Three of the UNDAFs were also co-signed by the local IMF representative.

Based on this and subsequent General Assembly encouragement to enhance BWI involvement in the UNDAF and CCA process, the CCA and UNDAF guidelines now stress the importance of BWI involvement. Collaboration in this respect should take place at the country level determined by country conditions and take into account the need for flexibility. The CCA in particular offers a unique opportunity for entering into a collective country-based process, with full participation by the government, to review and analyze the national development situation and identify key issues as a basis for advocacy, policy dialogue and development operations.

Further, as part of the UNDAF pilot exercise, efforts were made in two countries (Viet Nam and Mali) to explore developing an effective interface between the UNDAF and the World Bank's Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) exercises. The initial outcome of the UNDAF-CAS pilot indicates that the UNDAF and CAS are separate but complementary processes and products that can benefit from the contributions of the World Bank and United Nations system, respectively. In addition, the outcome of the pilot suggests that where there is a close, on-going relationship at the country level, the basic differences between the two instruments can be resolved without headquarters involvement or an elaborate overhaul of existing programming instruments.

The United Nations and the World Bank have agreed to undertake a joint review of the Viet Nam and Mali experience to determine which issues need to be addressed in order to build an effective interface between the two instruments. Furthermore, the joint review should identify substantive issues arising from the pilots that could be further explored.

### Thematic groups

The use of thematic groups is increasingly being adopted by the United Nations system in an effort to provide more coherence and complementarity to United Nations activities. A review of the 1998 Annual Reports shows that in the vast majority of countries where the World Bank is resident, the World Bank is an active participant in one or more of the thematic groups established by the United Nations system. The IMF, which has an office in only a limited number of countries, participates in United Nations thematic groups in only a few countries.

As one of the co-sponsors of UNAIDS, the World Bank participates in almost all HIV/AIDS thematic groups, which are established in more than 125 countries. In addition to HIV/AIDS, World Bank participation is primarily focused on poverty eradication issues.

#### **4.4.5 Aid Coordination**

The United Nations and the World Bank also frequently cooperate in the area of aid coordination. In most programme countries, the United Nations (usually through the Resident Coordinator) and the World Bank, or increasingly more often the two together, convene meetings with donor and national government representatives to exchange information on current and planned programmes and to discuss critical policy issues. In some countries which use the Consultative Group mechanism, the Resident Coordinator chairs regular meetings of locally represented donors, while the World Bank convenes the Consultative Group itself. An interesting new development is the informal Mid-term Consultative Group meetings. In Viet Nam, such a Mid-term Consultative Group was held in June 1998 during which the United Nations, the World Bank, together with government authorities, organized half-day field trips to visit existing and proposed development projects, meet the beneficiaries first hand, and discuss the proposals. The United Nations and the World Bank also cooperated on the preparation of Issues Notes for the review meeting, representing the general views and concerns of the entire donor community on various development issues.

#### **4.4.6 Poverty Eradication**

The increasing convergence of the United Nations system and the BWI on development policies is proving to substantially increase the instances and intensity of country level cooperation between the two. In this context poverty eradication is the main rallying point where development partners come together, coordinate their actions, and develop joint programmes.

## **4.5 Countries in Special Development Situations**

The RC Annual Report currently represents the only formal document that the United Nations system produces on all its programmes in a given country. As countries in special development situations involve a wider range of partners, including those primarily concerned with political, humanitarian and human rights issues, the report serves both as a record of coordination and a means of promoting it.

### ***4.5.1 Comments on the 1998 Reports***

UNDP currently identifies 51 countries in special development situations, of which 23 are covered by the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) process, and 26 countries (or regions) have Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, Personal Representatives or Special Envoys. The following observations, both substantive and procedural, are derived from the readers' group.

#### *Timeliness*

Reports were received on time and in good order even from countries where the team was operating from outside the country (e.g. Afghanistan and Somalia), or where only the Resident Coordinator a.i. was present (e.g. Guinea Bissau). Where the crisis was much too recent for the team to regroup, no report was received. In the future, provision could be made for the preparation of a shorter "emergency report" in such exceptional cases, which would at least fulfill the requirements for allocation of the following year's SRC funding.

#### *Take-up*

Reports are reviewed at headquarters by a Readers' Group. Participants were asked to respond to the report in the same participatory spirit in which it was written. In the case of reports from countries in special development situations, the Readers' Group has encouraged regular participation from OCHA, DPA, UNHCR, OHCHR, and the World Bank, in addition to the usual members of the Readers' Group – UNDG members and Specialized Agencies.

#### *The three-hat advantage*

It is clear from the reports that the Resident Coordinators find it advantageous to wear three hats (Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Representative). The three functions are mutually reinforcing *vis-à-vis* government and donors in situations where the Resident Coordinator needs all the influence he or she can muster.

#### *Delay in filling RC vacancies, ad interim appointments, and the issue of handover*

First, the cost of leaving an RC post vacant in a crisis country for an extended period of time can be high. Second, the reports make it clear that temporary or ad interim appointments cannot

ensure policy continuity. Third, it is worth reinstating the practice of handovers between the departing and the incoming RC in countries in special development situations.

### *The country team concept*

The special challenges facing the country team in a crisis country can prove to be an effective forcing ground for the development of the country team concept. Crisis, resource constraints, security concerns and adversity tend to bring the United Nations system together.

### *Special circumstances as a promoter of innovation*

The experience of countries in special circumstances is rich and varied. **Bosnia** has 18 inter-agency task forces and theme groups functioning in the country, none exclusively for the United Nations system. **Afghanistan** is the only country so far to put a strategic framework into effect. The RC's report is an impressive account of the interest taken by the international community in programming and delivery in Afghanistan. Such interest has engendered an environment for intense collaboration among the different stakeholders.

The **Burundi** team is working closely with the government to cope with a bleak assistance environment. Its innovations in linking peace and development through a policy of constructive engagement, pushing forward from emergency through such means as extended humanitarian assistance and direct community assistance, are worth noting.

Similarly, there is **Rwanda's** experiment in bridging the reintegration gap through field-based, inter-agency coordination, known as the Joint Reintegration Programming Unit (JRPU). In Tajikistan, the RC/HC is also the Deputy SRSG, and in that capacity is closely involved in promoting the role of the United Nations in the peace process, while supporting sustainable human development, and in fact linking the two processes.

In short, country teams in special circumstances are experiencing new challenges and experimenting with new and innovative modes of collaboration.

### *The funding gap*

The prospect of a precipitous decline in assistance once humanitarian activities trail off is a reality that most country teams face in crisis countries. The RCs do not have a ready-made answer to the problem of transitional funding; this provides an incentive in some cases for imaginative innovation. The fact that many crisis countries have unpopular or unrepresentative governments seriously diminishes the chances for ensuring a smooth transition from crisis to development (e.g. Burundi, Liberia).

### *Towards a comprehensive approach to crisis*

A number of country teams are struggling to coordinate a response to country situations that fluctuate between crisis and development (Rwanda, Sri Lanka), or where the prospects of going back into crisis are as great as moving forward towards sustainable development (the two

Congos). It is difficult in these situations to adhere to a single strategic or programming framework. The country teams have usually tried to adapt the guidelines from headquarters to the particular country situation. On the one hand, a large number have to follow the CAP; but they are at the same time looking forward to applying the CCA to the particular country situation, and eventually moving forward to an adaptation of the UNDAF. In some cases, such an adaptation (relying on a CCA for fundamental analysis, and preparing for both the CAP at the emergency and UNDAF at the development end) has been termed an “assistance strategy” (Rwanda, Burundi). In the case of Somalia, the main programming instrument used is the CAP, which has been elaborated into a tool for initial developmental programming.

#### *Guidelines and coordination frameworks*

The main tools for coordination, namely the Strategic Framework, the CAP and UNDAF, have all been adopted by country teams in a positive spirit of cooperation. Where one framework predominates, the basic rules of application are well understood (e.g. CAP in a crisis, UNDAF in development situations). But very few country teams have a clear understanding of how the strategic framework, the CAP and UNDAF relate to each other. This is hardly surprising, since the relationship has not been clarified at headquarters either. There are an increasing number of country teams with CAP, CCA and UNDAF and the Round Table process. By the time the current year’s reports are written, the CDF will be added to this list.

#### *Security concerns*

Countries in crisis have major security concerns which are usually underplayed in the RC reports, probably because the format of the report does not directly address this important topic.

#### **4.5.2 Approach and Format**

The Annual Report should present a vision of the United Nations’ assistance strategy for the country in question. If this is not there, then the rest of the information, however well-presented, is rendered almost meaningless. The need to emphasize the strategic vision is applicable to reports from all countries. What is distinctive about countries in special development situations is the broad range of concerns that must be brought together, including but not limited to development issues. In most countries in crisis, humanitarian assistance from the United Nations system exceeds development assistance, and the challenge is in finding a way to respond to the current crisis while laying the foundations for a future that is more peaceful, and where sustainable development is rendered possible.

Despite its distinctiveness, it is not suggested that the reporting format for countries in special development situations should be any different from the one for “normal” countries. In preparing the report, however, the particular circumstances of the country should be kept in view. Mr. Speth’s letter of 16 October 1998 made this clear: “If you are serving a country in special circumstances and are entrusted with the functions of Humanitarian Coordinator, I suggest that your Annual Report reflect these circumstances. While still in principle following the enclosed outline for the 1998 Annual Report, you may feel free to modify it in places where you and the

country team think that your reporting could do greater justice to the work of the United Nations system under the prevailing circumstances.”

### **4.5.3 Conclusion**

It was said at the beginning that the RC Annual Report is both a record of coordination and a means of promoting it. The report should be more than a *post facto* record of coordination. It should also be forward looking and outward looking and should itself come to be seen as a means of promoting and clarifying the objectives of the Resident Coordinator system.

## **4.6 Theme Groups and Inter-Agency Task Forces.**

### **4.6.1 Background**

In order to reflect the outcome of the 1998 ECOSOC debate on the issue of integrated follow-up to United Nations conferences and of the importance of the operation of thematic groups for collaborative planning and programme implementation, the guidelines for the preparation of the 1998 Annual Report included a new chapter in which RCs and country teams were to provide information on composition and output of Theme Groups and/or Inter-Agency Task Forces.

In its September 1998 meeting the CCPOQ Working Group on the Resident Coordinator System endorsed this modification in the hope that 1998 Annual Reports would provide "more information on the achievements and the goals of the thematic groups and their results in terms of collaborative programmes"<sup>5</sup>.

### **4.6.2 Terminology**

As mentioned above, the Annual Reports were to provide information on "Composition and Output of Theme Groups and /or Inter-Agency Task Forces" and RCs reported on such groups using these names. This usually meant that the groups and task forces were either exclusively composed of United Nations system staff or included representatives of the World Bank, national government and/or NGOs. However, with a more expanded membership of the groups, such as bilateral donors and multilateral donors, the names given to these groups are usually different, i.e. Sectoral Working Groups, Sectoral Coordination Committees/Groups and Donor/Lender Working Groups (sectoral).

### **4.6.3 Statistics**

In 125 reports received by May 1999, 601 groups are mentioned. Of these some 300 groups are United Nations Theme Groups (115 for HIV/AIDS), 273 are Inter-Agency Task Forces or Inter-Agency Working Groups, and 28 carry other names.

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<sup>5</sup> ACC/1998/POQ/CRP.25 Add.2, 23 September 1998.

**UNITED NATIONS Theme Groups and Inter-Agency Task Forces**

<b><u>Theme / Focus of Groups</u></b>	<b><u>Number</u></b>
<b>UNITED NATIONS Theme Group on HIV/AIDS</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>Gender, Gender &amp; Development, Women &amp; Development</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Rural Development &amp; Food Security</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Health (often Health &amp; Nutrition)</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Operations (or Administrative) Working Group</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Education</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Poverty Elimination (or Alleviation)</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Environment</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Governance</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Disaster Management Team</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Public Information, Media, Advocacy</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Human Rights</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Social Services (Preparation of 20/20 BSS Studies)</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Programme Coordination Working Group</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Children, Youth, Adolescents</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Employment &amp; Sustainable Livelihood</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Humanitarian Coordination, Relief &amp; Rehabilitation</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Agriculture &amp; Natural Resources</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Integrated Area Development</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Statistics, Joint Database</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Water &amp; Sanitation</b>	<b>7</b>

<b>Population &amp; Development</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Security</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>CCA/UNDAF Preparation</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Capacity Building, Human Resource Development</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Refugee Emergency &amp; Migration</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Drug Control Issues</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Reproductive Health</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Communications</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Private Sector</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Micro Finance</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>De-mining</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Inter Agency (Staff) Training</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Infrastructure</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Sustainable Human Development</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Industry, Industrial Restructuring</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Adolescent Health</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Economic Reform</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Peace Building</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Demobilization</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>National Execution</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>UNSI</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>573</b>

Of the 125 countries which provided an Annual Report, only four did either not mention theme groups or noted the absence of theme groups or IATFs due to the low presence of United Nations system organizations in the country.

In 21 countries only one theme group is operational and in all cases it is the United Nations Theme Group for HIV/AIDS: seven in Africa (i.e. in 17% of all countries in Africa), four in Asia (17%) and ten in Europe and the CIS (50%).

In the remaining 104 countries (including all of the Latin America and Caribbean countries and the Arab States region) two or more groups are operational in each country. Africa shows the highest number of Theme Groups or Inter-Agency Task Forces, averaging 5.6 groups per country, followed by Asia with 5.5 groups per country, Arab States with 4.4, the Latin America and Caribbean with 4.3 and Europe and the CIS with 3.4 groups per country.

#### **4.6.4 Observations**

Mechanisms of information sharing and, to an extent, coordination of planning and delivery of ODA, Emergency/Disaster Relief and Humanitarian Assistance, existed among United Nations system organizations and between multilateral and bilateral donors well before 1996<sup>6</sup>.

However, a global review of the various groups/committees suggests that three developments since 1996 are of considerable importance to establish Theme Groups/IATF for a new purpose beyond that of information sharing and greater effectiveness:

- The creation of *UNAIDS* in January 1996, and its advocacy for the establishment of United Nations Theme Groups on HIV/AIDS as the standard form of collaboration in affected countries, lead to the systematic formation of an impressive network of now 112 Theme Groups on HIV/AIDS. Excellent guidance provided by UNAIDS on a wide range of aspects of the Theme Groups' operation such as vision, workplanning, management, monitoring and evaluation, as well as resource mobilization made United Nations Theme Groups on HIV/AIDS in many countries the models for the functioning of theme groups in general.<sup>7</sup>
- The *ACC action plan for the coordinated and integrated follow-up to major United Nations conferences* lead in late 1995 to the establishment of three headquarters level Inter-Agency Task Forces for Basic Social Services for All, Full Employment and Sustainable Livelihoods for All and Enabling Environment for People-Centered Sustainable Development. This covers a wide array of conference themes and sub-themes, with the Empowerment and Advancement of Women to be treated as a cross-cutting issue and to be taken into account in the work of all groups and sub-groups.
- Lending his full support to the ACC initiative, Mr. Speth, then in his capacity of Special Coordinator for Economic and Social Development, sent two "Direct Line" Memoranda in October 1995 and February 1996, urging Resident Coordinators "to establish United Nations

<sup>6</sup> Donor/Lender Groups in Jamaica existed for several years prior to 1996.

<sup>7</sup> The UNAIDS resource Guide for Theme Groups is an excellent example of "best practices" for the support to Theme Groups.

Theme Groups at the country level that can both benefit from the inter-agency taskforces now beginning to operate at the global level and respond well to priorities set at the country level."

- Significantly, the ACC initiative, in order to achieve a coordinated and effective follow-up to global conferences, stressed the need for "a strong shift to a new type of coordination – not 'general coordination' for exchanging information about what each part of the system has done or is planning to do but 'goal-oriented collaboration' for maximizing the application of the comparative advantages of the respective agencies and organizations of the United Nations system to act in concert at the country level."<sup>8</sup>
- Thus, many of the Theme Groups and IATFs (other than those for HIV/AIDS) were formed and started their operation in 1996 and 1997 as a country level response and contribution to this initiative.
- *The Secretary General's Programme for United Nations Reform*, launched mid-1997, mandated the newly established United Nations Development Group to develop the UNDAF as a strategic framework.
- The Provisional Guidelines for Formulation of UNDAF recommended the formation or utilization of existing Theme Groups. This was to 1) facilitate the development of a common database, 2) play a substantive role in the identification of programmatic policy themes for the UNDAF, and 3) implement activities and monitoring of the key components of UNDAF. As a result, Theme Groups or Inter-Agency Working Groups were formed in late 1997 or during 1998 in most of the 18 pilot countries.

The reports show an ever increasing importance of United Nations Theme Groups or Inter-Agency Task Forces/Working Groups for a collaborative planning of programmes and activities and their implementation. However, they are also important fora for United Nations system staff below the level of agency head to meet systematically, often for the first time for a professional purpose rather than in a social environment, work jointly towards the achievement of common goals, and in the process develop a sense of unity and purpose as a United Nations team.

Concrete outputs and achievements of groups or IATFs reported in the Annual Reports vary and depend on a number of factors, i.e. the age of the group, the frequency of its meetings, clarity of objectives and focus, energetic leadership, presence, a well structured and detailed workplan, and the resources available to the group (funds, support staff, equipment, etc.).

The more recently formed groups may have only been able to define their Terms of Reference and develop a workplan. By comparison, older groups, in particular United Nations Theme Groups on HIV/AIDS, often reach a stage when they are backstopping and monitoring the ongoing implementation of jointly developed and funded project activities.

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<sup>8</sup> See Document: "UN system Approach to Providing Development Assistance for the Integrated Follow-up to Major United Nations Conferences", February 1996.

Other examples of concrete achievements entirely produced or contributed to by Theme Groups and /or Inter-Agency Task Forces/Working Groups are:

- Sectoral and/or Inter-sectoral Assessments completed and strategies for collaborative United Nations support developed and endorsed by country team.
- Completed CCA or UNDAF.
- Basic Social Sector Study (20/20) completed and document published.
- Sectoral/Thematic Action Plans for United Nations system developed and agreed upon.
- Joint Programme and Project Review Process established.
- Jointly developed and funded Area/Community Based Projects operational.
- Joint monitoring and evaluation of ongoing programmes and projects.
- Joint Public Awareness Campaigns conducted on issues such as violence against (and trafficking of) women and children, human rights and drug abuse.
- Joint public information activities undertaken for events such as:
  - ◆ United Nations Day
  - ◆ World Population Day
  - ◆ International Women's Day
  - ◆ Poverty Eradication Week
  - ◆ World AIDS Day
  - ◆ 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights
  - ◆ World Environment Day
- Joint United Nations Publications such as United Nations Newsletter prepared and distributed.
- Jointly developed and managed a United Nations website.
- Directories prepared of stakeholders and partners to the United Nations system.
- Jointly developed Security and/or Emergency/Disaster Preparedness and Response Plans.
- Common Premises (United Nations House).
- Common services functional in areas of telecommunications, travel services, vehicle operations and maintenance, and information technology/management support.
- Harmonized salary structure for national consultants and administrative staff.
- Joint training and awareness building activities for United Nations staff held on issues such as gender/women & development, HIV/AIDS, drug abuse and human rights.

## **4.7 Headquarters Support**

### **4.7.1 Background**

Of the Annual Reports received, eleven did not provide input to chapter 2.3 *Appraisal of Headquarters' Support*. However, of the 114 reports which included a chapter on headquarters support, 40 (35%) only mention support from DGO, UNDG and UNDG Sub-groups. In most of the remaining cases where support from funds, programmes and specialized agencies is mentioned, information on the nature and value of the support is lacking. Finally, while the report guidelines suggest that two pages be used for this chapter, most of the reports offer less than one page on the subject.

### **4.7.2 Financial and Backstopping Support**

Three areas of support were frequently mentioned by Resident Coordinators and country teams:

- **Financial Support:** Many reports state that SRC funds and the guidelines for their flexible use make a significant difference in country level work as they are the only funds regularly available to finance concrete coordination and other activities planned in the Annual Workplans. Resident Coordinators stress that without these funds they would not be able to move forward with the United Nations Programme of Reform.
- **Information:** In a situation where many RCs speak of “information overload” they single out the information and documentation they receive from DGO as informative and useful. Observing that country teams members do not seem to receive UNDG and reform related information from their headquarters, RCs find that distributing the documentation from DGO to all country team members has been particularly useful and important for maintaining an equal level of information within the team. Specific products often mentioned as useful are: Guidelines such as the CCA/UNDAF Guidelines and Guidelines for the Administrative Management of the RCS; minutes of meetings (ExCom, UNDG, Support Group and Sub-groups); feedback/comments on the 1997 RC Annual Reports including the synthesis report on the 1997 Annual Report exercise and the modified guidelines for the preparation of the Annual Reports; workshops reports such as the Guatemala workshop; briefing notes on the status of matters related to United Nations Reform and the RCS; information on good practices (Zimbabwe and Guatemala); ACC and CCPOQ guidelines and other documents.
- **Personal Attention:** RCs very much appreciate the system of geographical focal points in DGO and that they know whom to address and to ask for support. They also report that they receive responses, attention and service from the focal points in DGO very quickly and in a proactive and personalized fashion. Having met the Director of DGO as part of a larger (regional or sub-regional) meeting and having been visited by DGO Associate Directors was repeatedly noted as useful and productive. Equally, several RCs stress that they appreciated the personal attention and high professional standard of the DGO staff they met during their visits to New York.

With the exception of one country team, which calls its dealings with the UNDG Sub-group on Common Premises and Services “extremely painful”, and another country team, noting that "support from headquarters on common premises have been rather disappointing", all other countries mention the support they received from this sub-group with appreciation. The Sub-group on Programme Policies was also positively recognized.

### ***4.7.3 Other Proposed Support***

RCs express a need for further support in the following areas:

#### *Information/Documentation*

- The flow of information/documents from headquarters to Resident Coordinators and country teams is often called "an information overflow" and "uncoordinated". It was suggested that the situation be analyzed from the perspective of a country office and ways to streamline the flow of information/documentation be developed.
- Documents are often felt to be too lengthy or voluminous, and summaries or a short synthesis of the documents would be preferred. Furthermore, whenever information is to be presented to audiences outside the country team, practical tools such as Power Point presentations should accompany the documentation.
- Documents should be made available in the working United Nations language of the country and should be transmitted through electronic channels.

#### *Reporting*

- RCs feel that their reporting requirements are excessive and need to be better coordinated between the various headquarters offices that request information. To provide headquarters with a better understanding of field activities, a review should be undertaken of the monitoring and reporting framework of the RCS at the country level.
- Further attention should be paid to methodological frameworks/models for country specific requirements for reporting on both conference follow-up and convention ratification.
- It is suggested that the deadline for the submission of the RC Annual Report be set later in the year, e.g. April 30, in view of the closing of accounts by 30 March and absences of key country team members during the southern hemisphere summer vacation period.

#### *Training*

- Joint training of country teams should be a priority. As it is difficult to assemble country teams from several countries, a system of *in situ* training by travelling training seminars should be considered.
- DGO should undertake a results-based management training programme for country teams.

- Introduction/roll-out of any major policy, procedure or process should be supported by training, not only for country team members at the level of heads of agencies, but also at the level of programme or administrative staff of all agencies in the country team.

#### Knowledge net

- The development and maintenance of United Nations system-wide websites at the country level should be encouraged and the required support for website management should be provided by headquarters.
- By linking websites at country level, information would be widely available and would spread horizontally.
- Headquarters could play an important role in facilitating the development of regional knowledge networks and exchange of experiences between neighboring countries.
- The DGO home page should be continuously updated and further developed.
- UNDG could play a more proactive role in extracting and disseminating "lessons learned" and "best practices". (A similar suggestion is for DGO to establish a regular publication or circular letters of "Best Practices and Lessons Learned".)

#### United Nations reform

- There is interest in the development and articulation of an incentive system for all United Nations agencies and government partners to achieve the goals of United Nations Reform. An incentive program would cover both programming and operational/administrative areas. It might include the use of indicative targets, retention of a proportion of budgetary savings, the publication of success stories and ranking country office performance.
- The Programme for Reform should develop clear strategies for regional issues and operations, including greater cooperation between regional and country levels. In Asia there are several issues which have regional impact such as the social impact of the economic crisis and trafficking in women and children.
- Headquarters could offer guidance about the actions expected at the country level other than those in the of the RCS Workplan.

#### Harmonization and standardization

Increased harmonization and standardization is called for in a large number of annual reports. The following programmatic and administrative areas were mentioned:

- Full support for harmonization of programme cycles and their synchronization with national development plans.
- Quick decision on standardized and harmonized rules, regulations and procedures for project formulation and approval, budgeting and financial management.
- Guidelines on how other United Nations agencies should proceed with harmonizing their programme cycles, e.g. WFP, ILO, UNESCO.
- The harmonization of rules, regulations and procedures at headquarters should receive urgent attention. While this is a tremendous task, some areas such as personnel, finance

and administration should receive first priority. Once the policies and procedures in these areas are harmonized, United Nations agencies at the country level can start operating common units to deal with personnel, finance and administration services. This will result in more efficiency and a reduction in staff costs.

- Harmonization of policies and procedures should be accompanied by the introduction of a common computer software system, be it for database, accounting or other operations.
- Facilitate inter-agency transfers to ensure that staff can move smoothly from one United Nations agency to another.
- Establish a standardized global filing system for RCS.

#### *Support for the implementation of guidelines*

- It is hoped that the UNDAF pilot processes will lead to the development of assistance facilities or “windows” available to staff from all agencies in all countries. Such services would take into account inter-agency needs at country level and would include support for, inter alia, staff training and appropriate training material; inter-agency programme formulation; common website representation and databases; and the development of common services.
- A lack of operational tools and readily available expertise has generated difficulty in applying the directives of the ACC Inter-Agency Task Forces.
- ACC materials have been useful, but the priorities set forth in these materials are not always followed up by explicit implementation directives by respective agencies.

#### *Increased Financial and Management Support:*

- Provision should be made for full-time staff within the RC’s office, with administrative and substantive responsibilities, to facilitate inter-agency coordination activities.
- The provision of certain posts, such as public affairs officer and EDP expert, should routinely come from the Resident Coordinator budget;
- More capacity for operational support from DGO for assisting RCs in "trouble shooting" would be appreciated.
- One country team and an Inter-Agency Support Unit stress the need for enhanced backstopping for Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWGs) and the UNDAF Task Force and sub-groups. Can SRC funds rise to this challenge with continuity and predictability?
- Discussion should be initiated within each agency and in inter-agency fora about field representatives receiving funds matching the SRC funds for substantive, inter-agency field initiatives.

#### ***4.7.4 Usefulness of ACC-IATF materials***

The 1998 Annual Report guidelines invited RCs to comment on the use of the materials produced and distributed by ACC Inter-Agency Task Forces (IATF), such as the Basic Social Service for All (BSSA) Task Force, to assist country teams in integrated follow-up to global conferences and collaborative programming.

For several reasons, an analysis of the Annual Reports received does not provide a conclusive answer to this question. Only 24 reports (20%) mentioned ACC materials. When mentioned, they are referred to as "ACC materials/documents on follow-up to global conferences" and in only very few cases are individual documents named.

One report mentions the receipt of the material; 16 call the material useful; and six stress the need to make the documents more useful. Of those who found the materials useful, most did not give specifics as to why they found them useful or for what purpose. However, seven RCs specified the usefulness of the ACC material. Their comments include:

- The documents were useful in the preparation of the UNDAF and the Sectoral Investment Plans for Education and Health.
- The CCA exercise benefited from the documents and guidelines produced by DGO and the ACC IATF. Particularly helpful was the compendium of social issues from the global conferences and the various CCPOQ policy documents received.
- In preparing the proposal for thematic groups, to the United Nations Global Agenda, the Resident Coordinator office benefited greatly from the Guidelines from the IATF on the implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action and the ACC Task Force on Basic Social Services for All.
- The information on the network on Rural Development and Food Security was used to create a Thematic Group on Rural Development and Food Security in July 1998.
- "Basic Social Service for All" was particularly appreciated for guiding the design and development of the "draft CCA document".
- The materials produced by the ACC IATF gave us the basic reference documents for our own assessment of the Kyrgyz Government follow-up to the BSSA.
- The outputs of the ACC IATFs will be utilized by the country team and national partners for a project analyzing how the national institutional machinery for follow-up, monitoring and reporting could be strengthened and rationalized.

Finally, there is a group of six RCs who feel that the usefulness of the ACC material needs to be improved, even though some also see certain merits in what is now distributed:

- While ACC documents provided issues-based compilations of global conference recommendations, methodological frameworks/models for country specific requirements for reporting on both conference follow-up and convention ratification need further attention. The role of the United Nations system in supporting governments with compliance to such reporting requirements would also be a useful support service from headquarters.
- In these circumstances (of increasing volume of messages and requests for information) the publication and distribution of materials by the ACC Task Forces, while valued as a potential input for country level substantive initiatives, needs to be pursued in a highly selective, realistic and demand-driven manner. It is only to the extent that the country team endorses an initiative and has the time and staff resources to draw on substantive publications that they will be put to full use.
- In the case of integrated follow-up to global conferences in Columbia, it is required to systematizing information 1) to allow a systematic follow-up by the country team and 2)

to complement commitments made by the country during these conferences in order to define where the integrated cooperation of the United Nations system.

- In Belarus, use of ACC documents as important tools for local governmental and non-governmental institutions was quite limited in the CIS region because the documents were produced exclusively in English.
- In Georgia, ACC documentation was not found very relevant to national level needs. This is partly related to the peculiar circumstances that have prevailed in the country, on the one hand, and the generic thrust of such documents, on the other. The difficulty of applying the directives of the ACC Inter-Agency Task Forces has also resulted from the lack of operational tools and readily available expertise that are often necessary.
- In Turkey, ACC materials have been useful, but it appears that the priorities set forth in these materials are not always followed up by explicit implementation directives by respective agencies. Agencies are following up on global conferences at the country level and it appears that there is room for more significant assistance from the BSSA.

#### **4.8 Use of Support of the Resident Coordinator (SRC) Funds**

Uses of Support of the Resident Coordinator (SRC) Funds are specified in Chapter 9 of the UNDP Programming Manual. While this summary is not intended to repeat such information, it is important to highlight that these resources are intended to be a powerful and flexible tool that allows Resident Coordinators to respond quickly and effectively to opportunities for United Nations system collaboration. Their use should clearly correspond and contribute to more coherent and better coordinated operational activities, as well as be innovative, with catalytic effect on joint United Nations system activities. The following analysis demonstrates that these resources have mostly been used in line with the stated objectives. Mention will be made of some departures from the prescribed guidelines to help better focus and leverage the use of these resources.

Total SRC funds for 1998 were \$14,582,000 of which \$582,000 was provided by the Swiss government. Allocations were issued in two installments: \$65,000 in January 1998, equal for all countries, to enable Resident Coordinators to immediately start the implementation of the 1998 RC system work plan, and a final allocation in June 1998, the amounts of which were determined after review of the 1998 RC system work plans in the 1997 Annual Reports.

Of the allocations issued, \$11,550,000 was disbursed, \$489,000 represent commitments from contractual obligations entered into in 1998, and the balance was carried forward to 1999. This resulted in an 83% delivery rate, a welcome increase over 70% in 1997. The extensive use of these resources indicate that their availability is well appreciated by the Resident Coordinators and that the objectives and focus of these funds are understood and respected.

Resources have primarily been used in the categories below. The two first categories represent, by far, the highest level of utilization.

- Aid coordination and inter-agency partnerships
- Follow-up activities to global conferences
- Public information, advocacy
- Direct and indirect support of the Secretary-General's Reform Agenda

Many reports, while mentioning types of activities, lack specificity. However, the reports contain enough information to provide a reasonable appreciation of the areas of focus in each category. Thus this analysis should be viewed as an indication of the use of resources, not as a precise qualitative or quantitative analysis. Each activity undertaken by the Resident Coordinators required relatively modest funding so that resources could support multiple activities.

In matters of aid coordination and inter-agency partnerships, several items stand out. Among them are activities intended to support internal coordination and programming, such as the organization of aid coordination for specific sectors or themes, rather than general coordination activities, and providing support to enhance their outcome. For example, one country undertook a vulnerability analysis to provide data on aid distribution, overlapping assistance and areas without coverage in order to better target funds. Numerous activities in the areas of CCA preparation were also undertaken, including the establishment of databases in several countries.

Another activity is the collection and analysis of socio-economic indicators. This includes the preparation of an inventory of donors and their social development activities. One country engaged an advisor to help prepare for a joint United Nations system presentation to a consultative Group Meeting (CG). Several countries have undertaken reviews and activities to help identify more effective operational cooperation frameworks.

A favorite activity involved the identification of ways and means to help ensure that non-resident agencies become involved with, participate in and contribute to important programming and planning processes. Developing partnerships with various stakeholders was another area targeted for the use of SRC funds.

The second major category of resource use focussed on global conference follow-up activities. Foremost in this category are activities intended to advance and promote the objectives of Women in Development. "Empowerment of Women in Sustainable Development" and "Gender Mainstreaming" are among the most commonly used expressions used in the reports. The activities aimed at these objectives include roundtable discussions, seminars, emphasis on cross-sectoral activities in the development process, and training. One country undertook a study of gender sensitivity in the media. The outcome of this study had been an orientation seminar conducted for media personnel.

Other activities in this category include HIV/AIDS awareness seminars, development of strategy to address HIV/AIDS issues in tourist areas, and integrated HIV/AIDS programming. Still other activities include the development of approaches to food emergencies, contingency plans for mitigation of weather-related phenomena, and management of water resources. Other areas involve the preparation of discussion papers to raise awareness of social development issues, in both normal conditions and in periods of economic and social transition.

Activities related to human rights figured prominently in the 1998 work agenda. The celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights has provided ample opportunities for imaginative activities. Many RCs provided background documentation and undertook advocacy initiatives. One country engaged in several commemorative events, including the publication of a children's version of the Declaration. Such initiatives succeeded in attracting sizeable support from a bilateral donor.

In matters of public information, numerous activities have been cited. Some examples follow: a CD-ROM with basic and essential information on the country for United Nations newcomers; brochures on United Nations system activities and areas of cooperation; commemoration of significant events such as the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights and World Food Day; enhancing inter-agency networks; issuance of United Nations Directory, issuance of a United Nations calendar.

Additionally, numerous references have been made to common premises initiatives as well as to reviews and studies of the potential for and identification of common services.

In a very limited number of cases the use of the resources did not appear, a-priori, as falling strictly within the guidelines, such as the purchase of equipment, cameras, projectors and similar

items for public information or a vehicle to support coordination efforts. It could be argued by the respective offices that these expenditures were in direct support of relevant, priority activities, which are in conformity with the guidelines. To avoid misunderstandings, corrective action was taken by 1) reminding the respective RCs of the funds' purposes; 2) reiterating in communications to all RCs that the use of these resources should be governed by the relevant guidelines. Such matters will be kept under constant review, including more specific ad-hoc reports from some offices.

## **4.9. Training**

### **4.9.1 Background**

The 1998 RC Annual Reports highlighted a number of training issues. These responses led to an examination of how training support for country teams to implement United Nations reform could be enhanced. Areas where country teams suggest a need for internal capacity building are identified. Additionally, delivery of training support is examined, whether through the United Nations Staff College, United Nations system headquarters or locally identified resources.

### **4.9.2 Training in 1998**

Team building, a priority flagged by a number of United Nations country teams, has been addressed through a variety of means. Many country teams organized retreats focusing on topics such as strategic visioning, drafting CSN/CCAs, the United Nations Special Initiative for Africa, and preparing the Annual Report and the 1999 Workplan. Participants felt that retreats that focused on an issue provided positive gains for building teams, improving cooperation, and addressing common concerns.

These retreats were organized locally and in many cases organizers requested and received inputs from the Staff College and United Nations headquarters, including DGO. The logistical support provided by the Staff College, including the recruitment of facilitators to lead team building and forward-planning exercise, was welcomed.

A number of workshops also furthered team building skills. A Management and Leadership Training workshop, organized locally for United Nations staff, was based on a model elaborated by UNDP and other agencies and contributed to the improvement of United Nations organizational culture and dialogues between United Nations staff members. The Staff College in Turin organized a workshop on Management of Field Coordination, with follow-up workshops organized locally. One country team that participated in this workshop commented that the event and subsequent workshops improved collaboration and increased a sense of shared responsibilities and commitment among professional United Nations staff. However, not all countries could attend the Turin workshops due to in-country circumstances.

Training workshops on strategy, coordination, CCA and UNDAF have been organized by many United Nations country teams. Methodologies such as *Future Search* have been used for strategic visioning and planning. Some countries invited the participation of government counterparts and the local development community. Government participation was useful for providing opportunities to encourage understanding of and support for the United Nations reform initiatives, programming procedures and approaches, and the United Nations system's effort to coordinate and harmonize. Country teams that included development partners in the workshop on United Nations reform felt that these stakeholders came away with a better understanding of United Nations functions and some of the tools for coordination, including the CCA, UNDAF, and CSN.

Other 1998 training workshops and retreats organized by country teams, or in which country team members participated, addressed joint national execution, emergency preparedness, disaster relief and management, and security. Additional workshops on substantive issues include gender mainstreaming and the right to development. Additionally, several country teams locally organized HIV/AIDS sensitization workshops and language and computer skills building courses for United Nations staff.

#### ***4.9.3 Conclusions and Recommendations***

Country teams offered several conclusions and recommendations about training to support the United Nations reform initiatives. The importance of joint training was emphasized to reinforce a common understanding of key issues and tools, such as the CCA and UNDAF. Some country teams are in the process of preparing common training plans. Others feel that there is still insufficient staff knowledge of the United Nations reform and reform tools, particularly among their national staff. To address this issue, actions suggested by the country team include a series of workshops and training materials on United Nations reform and familiarization of tools and processes for the smooth functioning and implementation of initiatives by the country team. Some country teams also plan to prepare briefing packages on the Resident Coordinator system.

Several country teams, particularly those in special development situations, found it difficult to attend the regional, Turin-based training workshops, resulting in postponement of such workshops. As such, recommendation was made to consider offering more training at the field. Many country teams commented positively on the participation of UNDG staff from headquarters involved in the United Nations reform initiatives. Participation of government counterparts in the process was considered useful to encourage buy-in of the government counterpart in the United Nations reform initiatives. Some country teams plan to conduct workshops on CCA with their government counterpart to ensure their participation in the process.

#### ***4.9.4 Training Support in 1999***

Reviewing the 1999 Annual Workplans, training and retreats planned by country teams fall into six main categories: 1) CCA and UNDAF; 2) team building and coordination; 3) United Nations reform; 4) thematic issues (gender, human rights, HIV/AIDS, monitoring and evaluation, security, emergency preparedness, media); 5) administrative management guidelines; and 6) language and computer skills. Many United Nations countries have expressed intentions to seek support from the United Nations Staff College for facilitation of the CCA and UNDAF process, as well as team building.

In response, the Working Group on Training, including the Staff College, is working to improve the effectiveness of training support. Much of the planned training focuses on the CCA and the UNDAF, and the Working Group on Training is giving priority to support this process. This does not preclude provision of support to other areas where the country team needs capacity building. However, training for language and computer skills building should be managed locally.

It is felt that team building should be tackled through country teams getting together to discuss and tackle the CSN, CCA, and UNDAF and thematic issues. The Staff College will play a key role in providing training to strengthen the Resident Coordinator system and is committed to offering more training at the country and sub-regional level, based on the needs expressed. The Working Group on Training also intends to work with United Nations system organizations including the specialized agencies to mobilized system-wide resources to address country team training needs.

## **4.10 Common Premises and Services**

### **4.10.1 Introduction**

This chapter on common premises and services at the country level presents the findings of a review of 35 1998 Resident Coordinator Annual Reports in Africa<sup>9</sup>, the Arab States<sup>10</sup>, the Asia and Pacific region<sup>11</sup>, Europe and CIS<sup>12</sup>, and Latin America and the Caribbean<sup>13</sup>, where either a United Nations House was designated and/or a common premises mission of the UNDG Sub-group on Common Premises and Services was fielded in 1998.

### **4.10.2 United Nations Houses**

In 1998 common premises in 26 countries were designated by the Secretary-General as United Nations Houses, bringing the total number of United Nations Houses up from four to 30 by the end of the reporting period. The majority of these 26 reports mention the establishment and designation of the United Nations House as an important development in the implementation of the programme for reform at the country level. They also report that inauguration ceremonies have been organized with media involvement (often on the occasion of the United Nations Day), and that United Nations House designation has been reflected in the placement of a plaque on the building and in official communications.

In most of these cases the United Nations House criteria were already met. In the remaining cases, United Nations Houses were established by way of United Nations organizations joining others in existing premises or the participating United Nations organizations relocating to new premises. United Nations Houses have either been donated by host governments, constructed by the United Nations system, or leased from the commercial sector. In general, United Nations Houses have been reported to produce cost-savings through the sharing of facilities (e.g. reception, conference room, reference unit, learning resource centre, and cafeteria) and services (e.g. registry, transportation and travel services, telephone services, security services, and gardening services). However, further details were not provided. On the other hand, some country teams have indicated concerns related to the operation of United Nations Houses (e.g. excessive maintenance costs and lack of space), and are seeking the advice of the UNDG Sub-group on Common Premises and Services on how to improve the situation.

Common premises missions were undertaken by the UNDG Sub-group on Common Premises and Services to 16 countries to evaluate options for establishing United Nations Houses and/or to evaluate existing common premises arrangements. The establishment of new United Nations Houses was achieved only in two countries in 1998. However, the findings show a considerable pipeline of potential United Nations Houses where relocation to new premises is expected to take place in 1999. Where mentioned in the reports, support from the UNDP Sub-group on Common

<sup>9</sup> Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Madagascar, Mauritius, Sao Tomé & Príncipe and Swaziland.

<sup>10</sup> Algeria, Lebanon, Libya and United Arab Emirates.

<sup>11</sup> Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, Papua New Guinea and Samoa.

<sup>12</sup> Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Poland and Turkmenistan.

<sup>13</sup> Costa Rica, Honduras and Mexico.

Premises and Services in 1998 was, except for two exceptions, appreciated and found to be professional, thorough and timely.

The physical closeness of United Nations organizations in common premises and United Nations Houses is considered to provide more opportunities and a solid basis for increased collaborative programming, to further team-spirit, and to project a better public understanding and awareness of the image of a unified United Nations system. Where the prospects of creating a United Nations House were not considered immediate, country teams report efforts to create virtual United Nations Houses by way of introducing country-based intranets.

#### ***4.10.3 Common Services***

Common services are an integral aspect of the programme for reform and the United Nations House concept. For this purpose, Management Committees for Common Premises and Services<sup>14</sup> were functioning in a large number of countries to develop and oversee the implementation of cost-effective, high-quality and timely common services. In several instances, joint ownership of such initiatives was successfully promoted by rotating the chair of the committee. A number of country teams report the application of a common services agreement (or memorandum of understanding) and common services account. Many reports, however, imply that there remains considerable scope for further development of common services, including improving the understanding and commitment to common services, and envisage further efforts in their 1999 workplans. When referred to, the CCPOQ guidelines on administrative management of Resident Coordinator system were considered a useful tool.

#### ***4.10.4 Conclusions***

In the 35 reports under review, mention was made of common premises and services under the headings of actions taken towards the implementation of the programme for reform, inter-agency task forces, self-appraisal of the country team and appraisal of headquarters' support. On the whole, country teams appear cautiously optimistic about the benefits of the United Nations House programme, and plan to invest further resources, in particular in the area of common services. Headquarters' support in terms of guidance, information exchange and funding, remains crucial for facilitating common premises and services initiatives at the country level.

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<sup>14</sup> Also called Operations Management Group, Inter-Agency Administrative Group, United Nations House Committee or Sous-Comité Administration.

## **5. Recommendations**

Recommendations for the overall process of preparation of the Annual Reports will be covered in this section. Recommendations for thematic issues are reflected in the individual chapters.

- In order to promote the RC Annual Reports as a management tool for RCs/country teams and United Nations system partners, as well as to encourage the preparation of candid reports, the distinction between part one being public and part two being internal to the United Nations should be abandoned and the entire report should be treated as an internal report.
- Report guidelines should remain unchanged for 1999, with the exception of adding human rights as an issue to be covered in relevant chapters.
- The primary foci of the Annual Report are: 1) collaborative planning and implementation of development assistance activities, and 2) implementation of the Secretary-General's Programme for United Nations Reform. Should country teams decide that broader information be provided to the public for outreach and advocacy purposes, it may do so through publications like a United Nations booklet or periodic United Nations brochures. Such material could document the accomplishments of the United Nations family as a whole and give individual agencies the opportunity to account for their activities in the country. Examples of this approach, often supported by SRC funds, exist in many countries.
- Given the various constraints encountered by country teams at year's end, consideration may be given to move the deadline for report submission to the end of February.
- The preparation of hand-over or briefing notes in the form of a draft Annual Report should be made mandatory for all Resident Coordinators before they transfer to a duty station in another country. This would facilitate the continuation of Resident Coordinator system activities and the preparation of the Annual Report by the RC a.i. or new RC and the country team.
- Given that future Annual Reports should be placed on a website and made accessible to all United Nations system agencies, reports should be transmitted in electronic form (i.e. by e-mail or diskette) to DGO for posting.