

2 March 1999

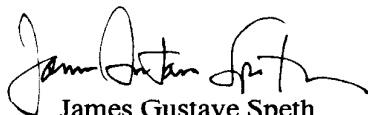
Dear Colleague,

We are pleased to share with you the attached Note, which provides common definitions for programming processes and products. The common terminology presented here is intended to ensure a consistent approach to programme development by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) organisations, as well as in our relationships with other development partners – government, bilateral donors, other United Nations agencies, civil society organizations, etc. – who should be encouraged to use these definitions when participating in collaborative efforts.

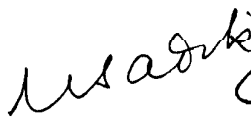
The Note complements the work of the UNDG in other areas, most particularly in the establishment of the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). More generally, it will facilitate further harmonization of operational policies and procedures. The Note is descriptive in nature and does not suggest that a particular process, or product, is preferable to another. It is left to you and the country team to assess which one(s) would allow for the most substantial impact in the particular conditions of your programme country, for the specific objectives you and your country team aim to achieve together.

We encourage you to exchange examples of good practice with other country teams and with your colleagues at Headquarters.

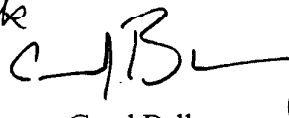
With kind regards,



James Gustave Speth  
Administrator  
UNDP



Nafis Sadik  
Executive Director  
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Carol Bellamy  
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Catherine Bertini  
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**TO ALL UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT COORDINATORS**

***DEFINITIONS OF  
PROCESSES AND PRODUCTS FOR ENHANCING UNDG  
PROGRAMME COLLABORATION***

**INTRODUCTION**

The present Note intends to clarify terminology used by UNDG member organisations related to programming. Specifically, this Note tries to clarify and provide common definitions of terms such as “programming” and “programming products” (documents). It reflects discussions and direction provided by various General Assembly and ECOSOC resolutions and complement the work under way within the UNDG, on CCA and UNDAF.

While a common terminology for programme processes and products will contribute to foster a common sense of purpose among collaborating agencies, it will also promote a common language with UN partners, especially governments of programme countries. Such processes and products are not meant to be prescriptive: country teams should use them as they see appropriate and manageable in the local context.

The options outlined below can be used to develop programming initiatives consequent on either an UNDAF exercise or other collaborative initiatives that may be already underway.

## **PROGRAMMING PROCESSES**

### **Programming**

Process undertaken by the UN agencies of assessment and analysis, objective setting, strategy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, identification of targeted beneficiaries and allocation of resources, in support of national development. The process includes national authorities, and, as appropriate, representatives of the civil society and of the international community. It responds to the development priorities of the country, the global agenda defined by the UN Conferences and conventions as well as to the mandates of the UN agencies.

In line with General Assembly resolutions on operational activities, and specifically given the increasing utilization of CCAs and UNDAFs, UNDG agencies at the country level are expected to systematically undertake programming in a **collaborative** way, in order to enhance the coherence of the UN system as a whole, benefit from synergies and heighten the effectiveness of individual contributions. In this context, programming includes the following options, defined by the extent of common activities:

#### **A - Agency Programming**

Programming process specific to a given UN entity which consults with relevant UN and other partners. This process responds to a specific need identified through a collaborative assessment process, when this UN entity has the mandate and recognised expertise and know-how in the area concerned. Agency programming is chosen when it is recognised that the quality, cost effectiveness, sustainability and institutional setting of a specific programme will be better assured through this modality.

#### **B - Parallel Programming**

Programming process through which two or more UN entities design separate programmes, but these contribute to the achievement of a common objective identified through a collaborative assessment process, within a concerted timeframe.

#### **C - Joint Programming**

UN entities would jointly carry out assessments of problems, design interventions consisting of shared objectives, actions, timeframes, resource requirements and clear delineation of responsibilities.

## **PROGRAMME PRODUCTS<sup>1</sup>**

Recognizing that a range of different products are already used at the country level, a common lexicon will provide the terminology for the use of these products. Country teams will thus have a menu of options, enabling them to address complex development issues in an optimal manner.

The modalities through which the UN agencies may wish to come together, within the context of approved country programmes and signed agreements, to carry out programme activities will determine the type of programme to be implemented; the following options have been identified for possible use by UN country teams:

### **Agency programme/project**

Programme/project resulting from a formulation process specific to one agency, addressing a need identified through a collaborative assessment and strategic programme development process. Rational, objectives, activities and outputs are described in one document, which includes a budget necessary to achieve the objectives. Such programmes and projects should nevertheless be responsive to the strategic objectives of the UNDAF and the document should provide clear statements to that effect.

### **Parallel programmes/projects**

Programmes/projects of two or more organisations deriving from a common problem identification, as well as a shared overall strategy for concerted action. Activities are reflected by each agency in self-reliant/comprehensive documents which complement each other, with specific reference to one another. The monitoring and evaluation of parallel programmes is done jointly by the participating agencies.

### **Joint programme/project**

Programme/project of two or more agencies resulting from a joint programming process. Within the context of approved agency country programmes and signed agreements, the programme is outlined in a single document, which describes the linkages between and responsibilities of all participating agencies.

One or more of the following funding mechanisms may be adopted:

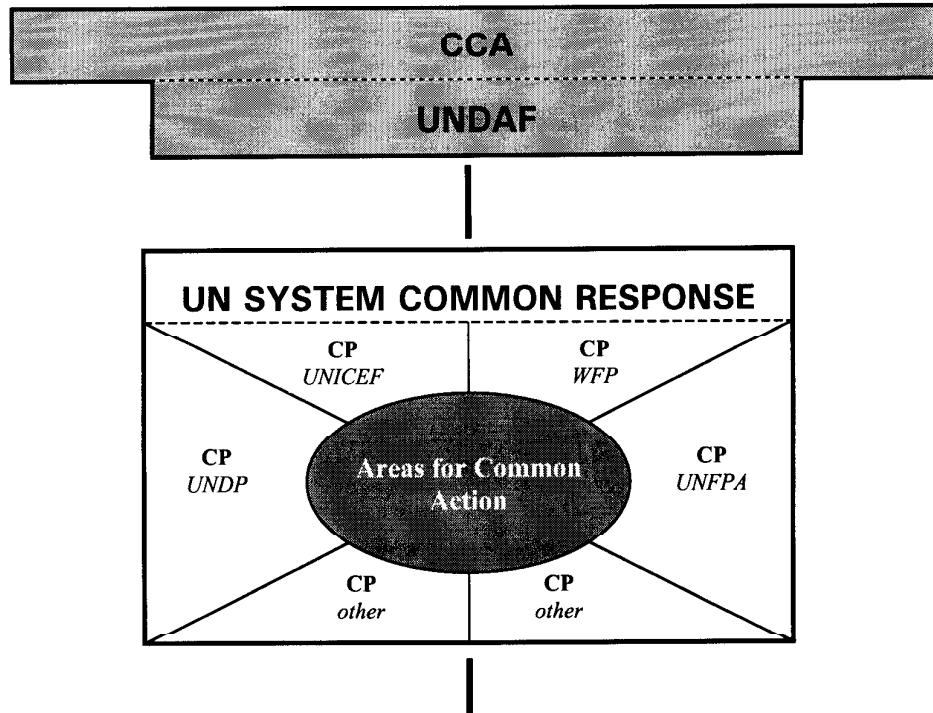
- a) setting up a common fund which would be channeled to the implementing entities<sup>2</sup>;
- b) participating organisations would channel funds to the implementing authority within the agreed budget of the joint programme;
- c) other mechanisms that responds to the accountability needs of the participating organisations.

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<sup>1</sup> This section addresses the programme/project level of operational activities of the UN system at the country level, and does not apply to the Country Programmes of concerned organisations. The products are the programmes/projects that are implemented by those organisations, described in one or several documents (ProDoc, Programme Support document, Memorandum of Understanding,...).

<sup>2</sup> This option needs to be cleared within individual organisations given the varying accountability requirements established by their respective governing bodies.

The following matrix gives the main characteristics of each of these options:



		COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMMING OPTIONS	AGENCY-SPECIFIC	PARALLEL	JOINT
<b>Components</b>	<b>Problem assessment</b>		Agency-specific / common	common	common
	<b>Objective</b>		Agency-specific	common	common
	<b>Timeframe</b>		Agency-specific	common	common
	<b>Programme design</b>		Agency-specific	common	common
	<b>Activities</b>		Agency-specific	Agency-specific	common
	<b>Reporting</b>		Agency-specific	Agency-specific / common	common
	<b>M&amp;E</b>		Agency-specific	Agency-specific / common	common
	<b>Programme document</b>		Agency-specific	Agency-specific	common
	<b>Budget</b>		Agency-specific	Agency-specific	Agency-specific / common
					<b>Products</b>

CP: country programmes