

**THE UNCT ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PRSP  
HONDURAS COUNTRY REPORT**

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**JULY 2007**

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<sup>1</sup> The author would like to thank, without implicating, Ms. Rebeca Arias, RC of Honduras, Yuri Leiva and Luisa Plata at UNDP Honduras for the support given to this mission and facilitating the country visit. Karishma Huda provided important research assistance.

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## ***Introduction***

Honduras is one of three Latin American countries who have signed a Poverty Reduction Strategy paper (PRSP), and since 2001 its government has been actively engaged in the adoption, approval, and implementation of the strategy. The process began after 1998 when Hurricane Mitch devastated the country's productive structure leaving a trail of human misery and economic stagnation. During this natural disaster, the United Nations, through the UN Development Fund (UNDP) played a pivotal role for articulating the different demands and capabilities from different sectors of the civil society, the Honduran Government and the donor community. Many of these concerns were brought up to the newly formed Consultative Group for Reconstruction of Central America and the subsequent signing of the Stockholm Declaration on May 28, 1999. Some of the guiding principles included in the declaration were to reduce the social and ecological vulnerability of the region, the consolidation of democracy and good governance, the promotion of human rights, the coordination of donor efforts and the reduction of the external debt burden. As a result of the Stockholm Meetings, Honduras became eligible for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) Initiative in June 2000, and the Flores administration completed the elaboration of a PRSP in August 2001.

A salient feature of the first PRSP was its emphasis for linking PRSP goals to the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This poverty reduction framework was sustained throughout the Maduro Administration (2002-2006), but important revisions were proposed with the advent of the Zelaya Administration (2006-2010). Although the new PRSP is only reported to be a "revised and updated version" of the previous document, some important changes include a greater emphasis on productivity, a shift towards investing in state capabilities (rather than just poverty reduction), and a re-definition of pro-poor spending to enable local governments to engage in more focused poverty alleviation. Some of the most pressing challenges of the current PRS process is to overcome a growing feeling of mistrust on the part of citizens and the donor community that the government has misspent valuable opportunities and funds dedicated to effective poverty alleviation.

Concerning the role of the UN System in poverty alleviation, the PRS not only has become the main document for articulating the government's poverty reduction and social agenda strategy, but it has de facto set the pace for engagement and operation of UN agencies. As a whole, the UNCT has gradually adjusted its role from being a pivotal actor for setting the agenda right after the Hurricane Mitch crisis to providing a solid political and technical presence during policy execution, especially through sector wide approaches, and in the monitoring of poverty reduction and MDG's. In the opinion of the Honduran government and some civil society organizations (CSO), the UNCT is respected for its technical capabilities and its political legitimacy vis-à-vis bilateral donors. This opinion has been echoed by the donor community. However, some government and CSO actors believe –and expect- that the UN could play a greater role in brokering political agreements between different sectors, enforcing policy commitments made by the government and ensuring government transparency in the long run administration and implementation of programs. Few interviewees agreed that the UNCT has been a decisive player

within the international cooperation community for introducing or leading on new initiatives in the PRS agenda.

The following report contains the main findings of a country mission in Tegucigalpa, Honduras between April 23 and 27, 2007. The first part of this country report briefly underlines the framework and the methodology adopted for carrying the country study. The second part describes in more detail the particular aspects of the Honduran context and the main stages of the PRS process. The third part addresses more specifically the UNCT engagement with the PRSP, devoting special attention to content related issues, the main stakeholders in the PRS process, and the outcomes. The fourth part summarizes the main findings, draws country specific lessons and offers some implications for a more effective engagement of the UNCT's in the PRSP.

## **Framework**

The main goal of the country study is to analyze the effective engagement of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in the Honduras Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). More detailed objectives include: a) understanding the dynamics between relevant PRS players and stakeholders, namely the Government, the donor community and Civil Society organizations, b) analyzing coordination and alignment dilemmas within UN agencies, and c) identifying current processes and potential areas where the UN system could play a more effective, more visible, and more coherent involvement in the PRS process.

To address these questions, the framework focuses on contents, processes and outcomes of the PRS. Of relevance to illustrate the first point, are questions regarding the alignment of goals and objectives between UNDAF/CCA and the PRS, and the extent to which UN specific issues (such as MDG) are taken into account in the PRS agenda. The second question refers to the process by which different preferences are integrated or articulated into the PRS, the execution of approved agendas (i.e. through sector strategies), and whether UN agencies act individually or collectively attaining these goals. Finally, the section on outcomes is most concerned with issues of monitoring and performance indicators, and the extent to which the UN system contributes to long term capacity building efforts in the country.

## **Methodology**

The following report is based on interviews with 35 people, carried out during a country mission to Tegucigalpa, Honduras between April 23 and 27. Those interviewed included 6 Government officials and technical officers, 6 representatives from multilateral and bilateral donor agencies, 9 representatives from civil society organizations, and 16 representatives and technical staff from eight UN agencies including the UN Resident Coordinator. The open-ended interviews lasted an average of 50 minutes each, and the questions were based on the questionnaire provided in Appendix 1, which summarizes the goals of the study.

Interviewees were granted anonymity and to this extent, no digital recordings or otherwise were made. All the interviews were carried solely by the main investigator, except in two interviews where the investigator was accompanied by Yuri Leiva, from the UNCT office. The research was corroborated with local documents, many of them of very recent publication, newspaper

clippings and press releases. At the end of the mission, the principal investigator presented a debriefing mission to a dozen members of UN agencies including the Resident Coordinator. To the extent possible, their comments and corrections have informed the making of this report.

### ***The Honduran context, and the PRSP process***

The 2005 presidential elections produced two new phenomena in Honduras politics: the narrow victory to the opposition candidate Manuel Zelaya and the subsequent formation of a coalition government with former political adversaries; and the direct election of Representatives (*diputados*) to the National Congress and the subsequent proliferation of political amateurs, as well as minorities like ethnic groups and women. This combination has translated in a more independent decision making of the legislature on PRS issues regarding the positions of the executive.<sup>2</sup>

The economy of Honduras has widely fluctuated in the past 15 years, with an average annual rate of real growth of GDP was 3.3% and that of GDP per capita of 0.7% during this period. For 2006, the estimates of growth of GDP vary between 4% and 5.5%. Several factors such as the increase of petroleum prices and its derivatives may threaten growth in subsequent years. Honduras reached the Completion Point of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative in April 2005 and the following month, the Paris Club cancelled 1,061 million dollars of public external debt. Debt relief also came from the World Bank, the IMF and the IADB (US\$1,300 million of MDRI funds and US\$1,400 from the latter). Additionally, Honduras received US\$147.51 million of donations and another US\$4.41 million were received in the first quarter of 2006 as non-reimbursable cooperation between January and December 2005.

Although the Maduro Administration has put special emphasis on macroeconomic stabilization, and during the second half of its term managed to sign a PRGF (Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility) agreement with the IMF. The Zelaya administration did not maintain the commitment to fiscal discipline and allowed the public budget to rise to 43,500 million lempiras (approximately US\$2,200 million) in 2006, after he settled a wage dispute with the teachers' unions. In sum, the salaries of the public administration will represent 10% of GDP in 2007.

Greater government spending has improved access of the population to basic services like potable water, health centers and schools in the last decades, although there are still problems of insufficient coverage of electricity and telephone services and sanitary sewage systems. Formal unemployment is approximately 5% of the labor force, but the pervasive presence of informal labor market and poorly paid wage-employment remain an obstacle for income generation and poverty reduction strategies. The percentage of households with a level of income below the poverty line remained practically the same in Honduras between 2001 and 2005.<sup>3</sup> While total poverty slightly increased in urban areas (except the capital city), it slightly diminished in rural areas. A preliminary evaluation of 22 indicators measuring the overall objectives of the ERP show that achievement of 11 indicators is behind schedule as of 2005. The most evident gaps are in the incidence of extreme poverty, the incidence of total poverty, the under-5 mortality rate and number of high-priority protected natural areas with operational plans.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.iss.nl/media/website/files/prsp\\_pdfs/2006\\_honduras\\_executive\\_summary](http://www.iss.nl/media/website/files/prsp_pdfs/2006_honduras_executive_summary)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.iss.nl/media/website/files/prsp\\_pdfs/2006\\_honduras\\_executive\\_summary](http://www.iss.nl/media/website/files/prsp_pdfs/2006_honduras_executive_summary)

## **The UNCT engagement with the PRSP**

Following the guidelines proposed by the desk review, this section explores the degree of engagement of the UNCT with the PRS process along three criteria: the substantive themes of engagement, the engagement of different actors and players with the PRSP, and the influence of the UNCT on outcomes.

### **Content**

A revision of the Honduran PRSP (initially adopted in 2001 and updated in 2007) reveals a fair degree of consistency and agreement with the MDGs and country specific needs as stated by the UNDAF-Honduras (2002-2006 and 2007-2011). A significant exception to this claim is the prevention and treatment of HIV-Aids, which is a critical issue in the UN agenda but it is not sufficiently addressed in either version of the PRSP (more below).

Judging from interviews with UN and government officials during the country mission, the significant alignment between UNDAF/CCA and the PRSP in Honduras appears to be the product of two factors. First is the Government's willingness to continue along the programmatic lines suggested by the MDGs, so they have included those in their PRSP. According to a government official, the GOH would prefer to see a greater role of the UN in promoting the MDGs because this will enable the state to build stronger state capacities and pursue long term development goals. The preliminary survey of donor agencies represented in the G-16 finds contrasting interpretations of this explanation. Some institutions (like the EU) are favourable to the idea of the government focusing on the MDGs as long as they make efficient use of funds. Other donors (such as the IADB and IMF) prefer to focus on PRSP goals as more concrete and short term option in order to demand more accountability from the government and as a way to respond to the concrete demands from their directory boards or the taxpayers at home (in the case of bilaterals).

Another explanation for the alignment of frameworks in Honduras, is the rich exchange of technical staff between the Honduran government and the UNCT. More specifically, several government officials who worked for the technical arm of the PRS, the National Unit of Technical Assistance (UNAT) have also worked for the UNDP and back again. This frequent exchange has ensured an important continuity not only in terms of building agreements along policy priorities, but also creating a cordial and trust based relationship between the GoH and the UN.

Human rights or HIV Aids issues are not prominently featured in the government agenda and this remains an area for continued work. The issue of human rights has not been directly addressed as an issue per se but rather indirectly (for example, "maternal reproduction rights through a human rights lens"), although the UNCT noted minor improvements in the recent PRSP update when it notes that programmes of direct assistance or transfers are referred to as rights-restoring approaches rather than assistential programmes. The issue of HIV Aids is especially important given the fact that Honduras remains the most HIV/AIDS-affected country in Central America. UN agencies such as UNICEF and UNFPA have made significant

progresses in this regard since 2001, and the creation of a UNAIDS trust fund to ensure better coordination and partnership in addressing this issue. Nevertheless, more efforts are needed to introduce this issue in the government's PRSP agenda; as the UNCT recently noted, the PRSP updated version needs to highlight the critical role of preventing and treating HIV - Aids.<sup>4</sup>

## Process

The UNCT engages with the Governments' poverty reduction strategy by directly contacting with government officials and throughout the donor community's G-16. The most relevant contributions from the UN take place at the policy formulation stage, as well as during the execution and monitoring of such policies. As explained earlier, the UN system has traditionally had a considerable influence for setting the reforms agenda by participating in consultative bodies with CSO's, donor agencies, and different government sectors including the legislature, sub national governments and line ministries. While the UN policy influence nowadays has been challenged by its inability to compete with the funding commitments made by bilateral and multilateral agencies, the UN has maintained its traditional role for providing the government with technical assistance for the execution of poverty reduction programs as well as actively participating on sector wide approaches. Although the UN has participated on several sector wide approaches, the two most important worth mentioning are health (*Mesa de Cooperantes en Salud y Reforma-CESAR*) and education (*Mesa Redonda de Cooperantes en Educacion - MERECE*).<sup>5</sup> The UN contribution in these areas reflects the strong technical expertise of agencies like UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP, UNFPA. More recently, some UN agencies like UNFPA have made significant investments to improve the monitoring and evaluation of poverty reduction programs (see next section).

**Table 1: Main Stakeholders in the Poverty Reduction Strategy in Honduras**

	PRS process			M&E
	Formulation	Approval	Execution	
<b>Donor Community - G16</b>	X	X		X
Multilaterals				
Bilaterals				
<b>United Nations</b>	X		X	X
Res. Coordinator				
individual agencies				
<b>Government</b>	X	X	X	
National Govt				
Cabinet				
Legislature				
Sub national Govt				
<b>Civil Society</b>	X			X

<sup>4</sup> Memorandum of the UN System reaction to the proposed 2007 PRSP government update. Honduras, May 2007.

<sup>5</sup> According to one of the interviewees, these spaces seek to mostly promote discussion around health and education, but have not yet become spaces for policy execution.

CCERP				
Others				

To analyze the contribution of the UN to the PRS process in context, the table briefly illustrates the influence of other different actors and stakeholders at different stages of the process. Firstly, the table shows the multiplicity of traditional and new actors within each group of stakeholders; in the case of government actors, it is especially relevant to underline the increasing presence of the legislature and the sub national governments as new actors who represent the specific interests and preferences of their constituents in the PRS. Despite greater participation of multiple actors however, the donor community and the executive branch remain the most relevant actors deciding on poverty reduction strategies.

### Outcomes

The limited agenda setting influence of the UN has been compensated in recent years by a greater role in the monitoring and evaluation of poverty reduction initiatives. One such way has been the development and monitoring of performance indicators, including a watchdog (*observatorio*) of the Millennium Development Goals and PRS goals. The UNFPA is collaborating with the governments' PRS technical body (UNAT) and the National Statistics Institute (INE) to collect relevant data and calculate a poverty index at the municipal level. More recently, the UN has presented an initiative to the G-16 to develop monitoring systems on violence and security issues as well as disaster prevention.

### *Country findings, lessons learned and policy implications*

This section seeks to highlight policy domains or policy processes where UN agencies have made particular contributions or are perceived to be weaker than other international counterparts. The reported findings are based on a reduced sample of stakeholders and although efforts were made to gather a representative sample of stakeholders from the Government, CSO's and donor and cooperation agencies, the findings would inevitably reproduce the sample bias.

The findings are organized around actors' perceptions of the effective UN engagement in the PRS process: the donor community, the government and civil society organizations. A second part discusses the degree to which coordination dilemmas were found within individual agencies of the UN system. Whenever possible, claims are illustrated with specific examples and references.

### G16 perception of UN

Honduras features a unique and semi formalized mechanism of donor coordination called the G-16 or Stockholm Declaration Monitoring Group, formed by government, civil society groups and official donors. The Declaration was signed after Hurricane Mitch in 1999 to promote a series of issues of 'national transformation', including reduction of social and ecological vulnerability, good governance, decentralization and human rights, as well as aid alignment around a PRS (G-16, 2005). The organization operates in two different levels, one is the Group of Representatives and Ambassadors (GER) which carries political and diplomatic relations of donor coordination

and agenda setting with the government, and the Technical and Monitoring Group (GTS) which performs the more technical functions including planning, execution and monitoring of PRS. The UN has formal representation of only one seat at the GER, which is reserved for the Resident Coordinator (UNDP), but UN agencies play a more prominent and influential role at GTS meetings, where delegates from two or more agencies may participate at any one time on more specific aspects of the PRS process.

When asked their perceptions of the UN engagement with the PRS process, almost all interviewees mentioned the unique and “enviable” political legitimacy that the UN system has vis-à-vis government actors and CSOs. This unique status has given UN agencies a direct communication line with government officials that other cooperation agencies “simply don’t have!” A cited example was the meeting convoked at UN House in March 2007 between the UNCT and the *Gabinete Social*, or government ministers in charge of the PRS. Most observers agreed that the UN contributed to the workings of G16 (and PRS efforts) with solid technical expertise in detailed policy areas. This expertise was further maintained thanks to the perceived continuity of the UN country staff and their fluid relationship with government technical experts.

A third welcome contribution of the UN was the introduction and maintenance of the Millennium Development Goals like a relevant paradigm to pursue long term goals beyond the PRSP, especially regarding national development and capacity building. This opinion however was not equally shared by all agencies. Some recognized the relevance of MDGs but given the considerable delays of the Honduras government for meeting these goals in time, it made more short term sense to them and their tax payers at home, to focus on more concrete attainable policy goals such as the PRS.

Regarding the areas where donors perceived the UN system could make some improvements, three issues came to the front: reducing their complex bureaucracy, improving coordination with other donors, and improving internal (UN agencies) articulation and coordination. These claims however, are elusive to generalization to the UN system as some opinions were not shared by all donors and some opinions were based on individual experiences with specific issues. A related issue is the fact that many donors, but also government and CSO representatives, are not aware of the difference between UNDP and the rest of the UN system, leading to repeated references to the UN System or UNDP interchangeably.

On the first point of concern, many interviewees pointed out that the complexity of internal UN rules, especially for the purposes of contracting project-funded personnel, increased the costs of collaboration with the UN. One specific recommendation suggested the relevance of disseminating among the donor community a brief explanation (brochure or presentation) of how the UN system works. A second issue of concern for a few donors was the perception that sometimes the UN engaged in or launched new initiatives independent of, or that were encroaching on the domain of other agencies’ fields of action. A specific reference was made to the –well received- initiative to launch a security and natural disasters monitoring that did not take into account existing similar projects. A final more generalized issue of concern was the donor perception that the UN community lacked internal coordination and articulation which led the agencies to speak with more than one voice. A specific reference was made to the fact that the UN system has only one seat in the GER which is reserved for the Resident Coordinator, but

donors had seen the participation of multiple agencies at GTS meetings. As these meetings are purely technical in nature and oriented towards specific themes, it made sense to this observer that UN agencies would self select their participation according to their area of expertise, without the need for formalizing this arrangement with the G-16 directory. Beyond this point, no specific examples were cited of policy contradictions among different UN agencies.

## **UN perception from the State**

The Honduran government has appointed a direct delegate from the Office of the President to coordinate PRS efforts, and the position is currently occupied by Mr. Fernando Garcia. There is also a supra minister in charge of coordinating the Social Ministries, in this case Pastor Fasquel who is also Minister of Culture. In addition to the political front, there is a technical assistance unit (UNAT), directly linked to the Presidency, in charge of producing the PRS analysis. Their role is to report and measure progress of the PRS, as well as producing economic forecasts.

Civil society is formally represented in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Consultative Council (CCERP), where they have a voice together with representatives from the national government and international cooperation agencies. Civil society organizations in Honduras include a wide array of peasant, private sector, youth, and religious organizations to name a few. An interesting feature, perhaps unique to the Honduran context, is that the Honduran Municipal Association (AMHON) considers itself to be part of civil society rather than an organization of elected officials, and therefore Mayors claim to make collective decisions based on their group interests rather than partisan interests.

State actors who were interviewed shared similar positive views regarding the “moral authority” political legitimacy, technical expertise and principle-driven approaches of UN work. These opinions were voiced by government officials as well as by representatives from civil society organizations. Both sets of actors highlighted the unique political recognition that UN agencies have to champion and support the causes of groups that would otherwise not have access to the policy making process (as in the case of the Womens’ movement), to bring legitimacy and credibility to agreements between the government and civil society organizations, and to ensure the proper execution of such commitments. UN agencies have recently played an important role to facilitate a rapprochement with the government when UN House hosted a discussion with line ministers from the Social Cabinet about recent changes and updates to the PRS.

Actors on both sides of the table, recognized the valuable mediating role of the UN and expressed their preference for seeing more involvement of UN in brokering political agreements, for example by engaging more directly with political parties. Government officials also expressed some frustration for “the lack of cooperation among cooperation agencies” and voiced their hopes that the UN can contribute to harmonize government-donor relations.

Honduran actors reiterated the influential role of the UN system in introducing MDG concerns in the PRS agenda, such as VIH AIDS. More importantly, most interviewees recognized that the UN had a unique capability to go beyond a short term poverty reduction agenda and develop long term state capacities such as infrastructure development, rights based approaches, etc. To this extent, the UN’s technical expertise was acknowledged as a unique contribution within the

donor community. Several success cases of direct technical cooperation between government and the UN, and UN with CSO were cited. Perhaps the most relevant to cite is the continuous flow of technical personnel between the government's Technical Support Unit (UNAT) and UNDP. Since the first drafting of the PRS in 2001, at least half a dozen experts have held positions in both institutions, and this continuity is reflected in a significant degree of coherence between PRS and MD Goals.

Another area where the UN significantly contributed to the debate through sector wide approaches, especially on health and education working groups (CESAR and MERECE respectively). Given the technical and multidisciplinary nature of SWAs, this is a natural area where the combined expertise of UN agencies can make a significant contribution. Although this is a general perception that is shared by UN staff from different agencies, UN experts have a more critical interpretation suggesting that much work needs to be done to improve the UN influence on the PRS. In the first place, it is not clear that the discussion and progress made on sector wide approaches significantly influence or shape the PRS agenda. Secondly, there is still a disconnection between sector approaches and their inclusion into long term development goals beyond PRS goals. Interviews revealed interesting examples of institutional collaboration and strategic alliances between UN agencies such as UNICEF and UNFPA, with donor agencies and local governments to advance development goals, but these efforts are still insufficient to persuade line ministers to make development efforts their own political priorities.

Consistent with perceptions from the donor community, there were two areas where governments and CSO identified room for UNCT improvements. One is the issue of its complex bureaucracy and procedures which sometimes make working with the UN a difficult process to understand and carry out. A second issue is the extent to which the UN has been able to champion and lead on a particular initiative during the PRS process. A problematic and perhaps related issue that was recurrent during interviews was the role that the UNDP played during early stages of the PRS process in 2001 when it accepted the governments request to handle PRS contracting between CSO and other agencies. The perceived lack of transparency in the process of fund allocation and contracting led to believe that there was some mishandling of funds and undermined the trust of state and CSO, and may have led to some internal disputes within the agencies. Many interviewees recognized that it has taken the UNDP several years to recover from that obscure episode and the general consensus in the UN system is a reluctance to engage or adopt an administrative role during the PRS process.

## **UNCT coordination problems**

The issue of UNCT coordination has received significant attention recently with the release of the UN's High Level Panel Report "Delivering as One" (UN 2006). Through interviews with representatives and staff of several UN agencies in Honduras, the mission sought to assess the scope and nature of coordination problems between individual agencies and the agency represented by the Resident Coordinator (UNDP). The potential for conflict lies in the fact that the Resident coordinator represents the entire UN system but he/she is also the representative of one agency, thus opening a possible conflict of interest. The finding is that UN agencies have a different perception of coordination problems with the Resident Coordinator depending on the themes they work or specialize on, the nature of their funding sources, and the strength of pre

existing networks. According to these criteria, I argue that agencies have three different types of responses available.

- A) Exit. These agencies are not affected by the role or the presence of the RC, and often times they appreciate being able to delegate administrative tasks to the RC. These agencies are in a position to do so because they tend to have gained an independent reputation, they work on theme-specific areas of expertise, they have parallel or independent sources of funding and they maintain strong links to government and CSO networks. The best examples are UNICEF and UNFPA.
- B) Voice. These agencies claim to be affected by the dual role played by the UN RC, who is both a speaker of the UN system in the country, but it is also a representative of an individual agency. These agencies feel they have overlapping themes and areas of interest with UNDP domains, they dispute access to funds, and their relations with donors, government and civil society are directly or indirectly mediated by the coordination. In addition, such agencies feel constrained because sometimes they are not recognized as formal UN stakeholder by the government. These agencies have expressed a need for greater agency coordination and have requested greater transparency and participation in the decision making process, through the adoption of a pro-tempore (rotating) coordination for example. Some of these agencies include FAO, WFP, and ONUSIDA.
- C) Loyalty. Finally there are agencies who envision no coordination problems because they have a more dependent relationship with the RC/UNDP. This is usually the case for agencies with narrower mandates, smaller staff, shorter term projects, that depend on UNDP influence and networks for their fundraising. UNIFEM is an example.

The challenge remains to incorporate reforms that would improve the UN Systems coherence and its ability to “deliver as one” without compromising the distinct modus operandi of UN agencies. As one interviewee clearly put it “why should we go back to Gregorian chant when we have invented polyphony?”

## **Summary**

This country report finds that the UN has made an important and permanent contribution to developing the PRS agenda in Honduras. The strengths and contributions of the UN system are widely acknowledged by domestic actors in the government and CSOs, but contributions are less apparent to members of the donor community. This summary ends by highlighting three areas where the UN system is perceived to be already successful, and suggests ways in which a selective and focused strategy in these areas could improve the UN engagement with the PRS process.

### ***Play their strengths: the political side***

A common theme throughout this report is to highlight the important political role played by UN agencies. The UN enjoys significant “moral authority” and legitimacy among domestic actors, partly due to the fact that the UN is not a funding agency and therefore they do not have conflicts of interest. International actors confirmed this “enviable” political role that UN enjoys vis-à-vis domestic actors. Many expressed their interest in seeing a greater UN role for brokering agreements between the donor community, Government officials and representatives from CS organizations, to reconcile different interests and to monitor the implementation of agreements.

### ***Play their strengths: the technical side***

Similarly, most of interviewees recognized the critical expertise brought by UN staff in the discussion and implementation of the PRS agenda. Unlike other cooperation agencies, this technical expertise branches out in multiple areas and there is a sense of continuity over time and fluid interaction between government officials and UN staffers, which contributes to a more productive pattern of cooperation. This technical expertise is best reflected in the active contribution to SWAps, although UN staffers have recognized the need for making strategic alliances to be able to effectively influence on the PRS agenda.

### ***Long term vision***

A common theme voiced by government officials and some cooperation agencies is the important role placed by the UN to put the PRS agenda in the context of broader MDGs. While the former set an important and tangible set of objectives for the short term, the state must go beyond short term necessities and develop a long term approach to developing state capacities. Furthermore, different UN agencies have played a critical role for introducing themes in the governments agenda, that go beyond the PRS. Some of them include alternative approaches to combat and prevent violence, to create awareness and prevention of HIV-AIDS, and to effectively engage with the problem of child trafficking.

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## *Appendix 1. Questions asked during country mission*

### **Agenda setting/content oriented**

1. What was the **main concern** of the UN in the PRS/NDS? Were issues of human rights, social exclusion, vulnerable groups and gender covered? Were the **issues of UN concern** fully integrated into the PRS/NDS? What role did the UN play in bringing such issues to the table?
2. Did the UN play a role in making sure that the PRS/NDS **goes beyond “macro-economics”**? How?
3. Were/are the MDGs integrated into the PRS/NDS? Can the strategy be considered MDG-based? Did the UNCT help the government to carry out **MDG costing and needs assessments**?
4. Did the UNCT or UN agencies provide support to **capacity development/technical assistance** during the PRS/NDS process?
5. Did the UNCT provide support to **data collection or M&E**? [e.g. use of DevInfo?]
6. Have UN agencies included **in their annual work plans** or CPDs **PRS/NDS related projects/programmes**?
7. CSO are perceived to be excluded. Is it still the case? Who civil society is in Honduras? What has been UN's role?

### **Process oriented/coordination**

#### *UN – Government relations*

8. How did the UNCT and UN agencies **individually engage** in the PRS/NDS process? [e.g. teamwork, thematic groups, experts groups, donor round tables, etc]
9. What were the **entry points** for the UNCT participation in the PRS/NDS?
10. What were the **roles of the UN**? [e.g. in advocacy, broadening participation, policy formulation/technical assistance, monitoring and evaluation and resource mobilization]
11. Were the CCA and UNDAF **aligned with** the PRS/NDS? Did/does the UNDAF support the achievement of the national priorities identified in the PRS/NDS, as per UN comparative advantage?
12. Are govt-donor relations good? Are they the sole agenda setters?

#### *UN – donor relations*

13. What was the **division of labor** between the UN and the Breton Woods Institutions? Was there a **formal/informal arrangement on collaboration** between the two?
14. How did the UN (and other partners) perceive the **UN value added** to the PRS/NDS?
15. What were the **strengths and weakness** of the involvement of the UN in the PRS/NDS?

#### *Intra UN dynamics*

16. what is the perception towards the HLP on the four ones?
17. What is the relationship between the CR/UNDP and other agencies? Joint meetings, and coordination? How often?
18. Do agencies have access/discretion over a comparable range and amount of resources?

19. do agencies compare/differ with UNDP in terms of human resources? (staffing, salaries, careers, promotions, national vs international ratio, junior vs. senior ratio.
20. Did the UNCT or UN agencies **individually participate** in the policy formulation/strategy definition of the PRS/NDS? What was the level of participation? [e.g. senior economists or junior professional staff?]

### **Outcomes and M&E**

21. How was the PRS/NDS operationalized? **Linked to budget process? Translation into SWAps / sector strategies?** What was the role of the UN in making sure that the **“paper” is turned into action?**
22. Did the UN **play a role in ResMob** for the implementation of the PRS/NDS, e.g. through Round Tables / Consultative Groups?
23. Did the UNCT advocate for **sector strategies and participation of line ministries?**
24. How far does UNDAF/agency integrate / build on M&E of the PRS/NDS?
25. How has the PRS/NDS changed the UNCT’s or UN agencies’ operations?

*Appendix 2. List of Interviewees, Institutional Affiliation and Dates Interviewed*

Interview No.	Date	Name	Position	Sector
1	23.04.07	Rebeca Arias	Resident Coordinator, UNDP	UNCT
		Glenda Gallardo	UNDP	UNCT
		Dina Salinas	UNDP	UNCT
		Rocío Tabora	UNDP	UNCT
		Yuri Leiva	UNDP	UNCT
2	23.04.07	Rodolfo Pastor Fasquelle	State Secretary of Culture, Arts and Sport	Government
		Yuri Leiva	UNDP	UNCT
3	23.04.07	Fernando Garcia	Presidential Delegate PRS	Government
4	23.04.07	Serguio Guimaraes	Representative, UNICEF	UNCT
		Carlos Carrera	Programme Coordinator, UNICEF	UNCT
5	24.04.07	Jose Dallo Moros	Director, Spanish Cooperation (AECI)	G-16
6	24.04.07	Maria Esther Ruiz	Women's organisation representative	CSO
7	24.04.07	Jaime Vallauré	WFP	UNCT
		José Francisco Salinas	Programme Officer, Senior Programme Advisor, WFP	UNCT
8	24.04.07	Guadalupe Lopez	Peasant organization	CSO
9	24.04.07	Amanda Cruz	Executive Director COHDESSE	CSO
10	24.04.07	Marcio Sierra	Director UNAT	Government
		Francisco Sarabia	Associate Director, UNAT	Government
		Miguel Ramos Lobo	Macroeconomic Analyst, UNAT	Government
11	24.04.07	Juan Zaratiegui	Donor coordinator, European Union	G-16
12	25.04.07	Félix Vasquez	General Secretary of COCOCH	CSO
13	25.04.07	Raf Flores	FOSDEH	
14	25.04.07	Lizeth Coello	Representative of the Youth and Childhood Organisation, COIPRODEN	CSO
15	25.04.07	Sergio Ríos	Social Development Specialist, IADB	G-16
16	26.04.07	Randall Peterson	Deputy Mission Director, USAID Honduras	G-16
	26.04.07	Carlos R. Solís	Finance and Program Analyst, USAID	G-16

17	26.04.07	Paul Compton	Representative, FAO	UNCT
		Carlos Zelaya	Assistant Representative , FAO	UNCT
		Luis Alvarez	FAO	UNCT
18	26.04.07	Sra. Santa Margarita Ochoa	Secretary of Finance	Government
19	26.04.07	Félix Vasquez	Agricultural Representative PRS, general secretary of COCOCH	CSO
20	26.04.07	Lilian Reneau	Representative, OPS/OMS	UNCT
21	26.04.07	Hernando Clavijo	Representative, UNFPA	UNCT
		Jozef Maerien	Deputy representative, UNFPA	UNCT
22		Mario Garza	Resident Representative, FMI	G-16
23	27.04.07	Adrian Fozzard	Representative, World Bank	G-16
24	27.04.07	Maria Tallarico	Regional Coordinator ONUSIDA	UNCT
25	27.04.07	Glenda Gallardo	Principal Economist, PNUD	UNCT
26	23.04.07	Rolando Bu	General Director, FOPRIDEH	CSO
		Juan Blas Zapata	Coordinator, AFH	CSO

## **Appendix 3. PPT presentation mission findings**

Slide 1




**The UN engagement in National Development Strategies/PRSPs**

Honduras Mission Briefing

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Institute of Development Studies  
Sussex-UK  
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**Tegucigalpa, 27 April 2007**


Slide 2



**Motivation - Terms of Reference**

- To improve understanding of the UNCT's role in the PRS process
- To improve understanding of the involvement and dynamics between relevant PRS players: Donors, Government, Civil Society
- To improve understanding of coordination and alignment dilemmas within the UN System
- To identify and suggest mechanisms that could contribute to a more effective, more visible, and more coherent involvement of the UN in the PRS process.


## Slide 3



**Framework**

- Content
  - UN core issues and agenda setting
  - UNDAF/CCA-PRS alignment
- Process
  - Preference aggregation: consultative groups
  - Participation on sector strategies, SWAPs
  - Individual vs. collective participation
- Outcomes
  - Monitoring and performance indicators
  - Capacity building


## Slide 4



**Methodology**

- Desk Review
- Fieldwork/Open ended interviews (4 levels)
  - Government officials and ministries, technical offices
  - Donors, Cooperation agencies
  - Civil Society
  - UNCT
- Comparative chapter: main findings and recommendations


Slide 5




**Actors and Stages of the PRS Process in Honduras**

	PRS process			
	Formulation	Approval	Execution	M&E
<b>G16</b>	X	X		X
Multilaterals				
Bilaterals				
<b>United Nations</b>	X		X	X
Res. Coordinator				
individual agencies				
<b>Government</b>	X	X	X	
National Govt				
Cabinet				
Legislature				
Sub national Govt				
<b>Civil Society</b>	X			X
CCERP				
others				

Slide 6

- 
- Questions Asked (Selected)**
- What has been the role of UN agencies/system in introducing UN concerns (MDGs) in the PRSP?
  - What has been the level of involvement of UN agencies (system or individually) in the PRS process?
  - Did the UN help the government carry out MDG costing and needs assessments?
  - What are the coordination challenges/strengths of the UNCT?
  - What is the comparative advantage (added value) of the UN in the PRS process?
  - Has the PRS changed UNCT's operations?


## Slide 7



**G16 perception of UN (10 is consensus)**

- **Strengths**
  - (Unique) Political legitimacy (10)
  - Solid technical expertise (7)
  - Relevance of MDG (5)
- **Weaknesses**
  - Complex Bureaucracy (5)
  - Influential in setting the agenda (4)
  - Coordination/articulation (4)


## Slide 8



**UN Perception from the State (10 is consensus)**

- **Strengths**
  - (Unique) Political legitimacy (10)
  - Influential in setting the agenda (or should be) (7)
  - Relevance of MDG (7)
  - Solid technical expertise (7)
  - Sectorial support (7)
- **Weaknesses**
  - Complex Bureaucracy (5)
  - Leadership (5)

## Slide 9



### UN Coordination: Exit, Voice and Loyalty

- How do UN agencies solve coordination problems?
  - EXIT: theme-specific agencies, they act in parallel or independent manner from UNCT in fundraising, project management, donor engagement, govt and civil society relations. Not concerned with greater coordination.
  - VOICE: theme-overlapping agencies, they dispute the spaces funds, and relations with donors, government and civil society. Could benefit from greater coordination.
  - LOYALTY: smaller agencies, ad hoc projects, depend on UNDP for fundraising.

## Slide 10



### Next steps (timeline)

- May 07: Elaborate Honduras country report
- May-Jun 07: other country missions and consultations
- July 07: second draft available