

New York, 21 July 2006

Dear Resident Coordinators,

Subject: Enhancing the UN's contribution to national capacity development

Member States, through General Assembly Resolution 59/250 on the TCFR and more recently at the World Summit, have called for the UN to enhance its efforts to support national capacity development. In light of this, I am pleased to circulate an initial Position Statement which has been recently approved by the UNDG Programme Group.

If the UN at country level is to deliver on the expectations of Member States, a major shift is required in the way the UN does business, whether it is in countries that are adjusting to new aid modalities, countries that are facing or recovering from conflict, or countries that face particular challenges (such as HIV/AIDS) in meeting their development priorities. UNCTs will have to make capacity development the core of their work, and develop new ways of assessing and achieving capacity development as a team, in different contexts, clearly making more of a sustained difference than has been the case in the past.

The Position Statement sets out a new overall framework for the UN's work at country level to enhance its contribution to national capacity development. It presents in summary form the key legislative background and current development thinking that guides the UN's work at country level in this regard. The statement presents the positioning framework and key roles for UNCTs to consider, and it provides access to an initial set of tools and resources including a matrix of optional roles for the UNCTs to consider undertaking during the national planning cycle. I hope that as such you will find the material useful, particularly in the context of CCA and UNDAF, as well as your on-going work in support of national efforts.

We also recognize that the capacity of UNCTs themselves needs to be strengthened if success is to be assured. The UNDG plans to provide additional material to support UNCTs. Based on feedback and consultations with UNCTs, it is expected that this Position Statement will be complemented with practical guidance on capacity assessment tools. Furthermore, lessons learned and suggested strategies on capacity development will be provided with a view to identifying ways for the UN to better to support national capacity to own, lead, manage, achieve and account for their national development priorities.

I would therefore like to request you to discuss the Position Statement within the UNCT and preferably with national partners, and to consider ways in which it could be applied in your particular country. I would also appreciate your feedback to HQ on the utility of the statement and/or any particular policy support that may be required.

TO: All Resident Coordinators

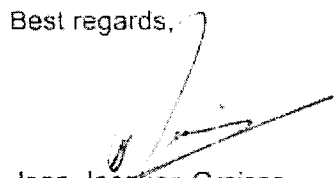
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In particular, we would welcome any comments from you on capacity assessment tools and methodologies that would be most useful as a UNCT. Your comments could apply to tools with general application to the possible components, which are identified on pages 3-4 of the Position Statement and elaborated in the left-hand column of the matrix in Annex I. More specifically, you may wish to suggest one or more of these 8 components for which the UNCT would see the development of assessment tools as a high priority.

This feedback will be gathered and assessed to help ensure that future support is geared to priority needs at country level, and does not duplicate existing or agency-specific efforts currently available.

Please provide your comments and feedback to Ian McFarlane, Chair of the Task Team on Capacity Development ([mcfarlane@unfpa.org](mailto:mcfarlane@unfpa.org)), copied to Arthur Erken, Associate Director, UNDGO ([arthur.erken@undp.org](mailto:arthur.erken@undp.org)) by the end of August 2006. For further clarifications please contact these staff, or the agency members of the Task Team listed below.

Best regards,



Jean-Jacques Gaisse  
Senior Deputy Executive Director  
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and  
Chair, undg Programme Group

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