

United Nations



Nations Unies

OFFICE OF THE RESIDENT COORDINATOR
OF THE UN SYSTEM'S OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT
IN THE REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

15 February 2009

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

Subject: Yemen-2008 Resident Coordinator Annual Report (RCAR)

On behalf of the UN Country Team (UNCT) in Yemen, I am pleased to convey the 2008 Resident Coordinator Annual Report (RCAR). The Report highlights activities of UN system agencies in support of national development strategies and priorities as reflected in the MDG-based national 5 year Development Plan for Poverty Reduction (DPPR). The Report also documents initiatives and results of the UN system in Yemen towards achieving greater coordination, harmonization and alignment.

ONE: Brief description of major development or political events that have had an effect on the work of the UNCT. It should not be longer than half a page;

In 2008 there has been a steady decline in oil revenues, which has had impacts on government budget allocations to various sectors. Population growth rates continued to be high and there has been rising unemployment particularly amongst youth. Socio-economic disparities have been further exacerbated by rising food prices in 2008 and 1.3 million people have been forced into poverty as a result of food crises, including the urban poor.

In the northern governorate of Sa'ada the internal conflict between the Government of Yemen and the Al-Houthi tribe has resulted in increased numbers of IDPs and humanitarian needs and there has been a steady influx of refugees into the country. In 2008 there were 133,805 documented refugees (an increase of 51,085 from 2007) and approximately 100,000 IDPs (an increase of 23,000 from 2007).

On October 24th, the Governorates of Hadramout and Al-Mahra were hit by floods and the resultant damage has had sever impacts on future agricultural productivity, the loss of livelihoods and damages to infrastructure and residences.

Mr. Ban Ki-Moon
Secretary-General
United Nations
New York

Coupled with this scenario of growing poverty, hunger and socio economic pressures and increased numbers of refugees and floods, and conflict in Sa'ada, over the course of 2008, the security context has required adaptive responses due to a number of incidents involving the kidnapping of foreigners, targeted attacks against embassies and residential compounds and threats against hotels. This has resulted in two shifts in the security phase from Phase 1 to Phase 2 on April 9th and from Phase 2 to Phase 3 on October 12th.

UN assistance is extremely crucial to respond to the development and humanitarian needs resulting from this context, but the security restrictions on the UN have posed challenges in our ability to operate effectively and efficiently due to the relocation of non-essential staff, increased time and efforts focusing on security related matters, temporary relocation of office sites, the implementation of a light foot print policy and increased frequency's of R&R. The Security Management Team (SMT) increased the frequency of its meetings from once a month to every two weeks and since October to weekly. The RC Office capacity in the 4th quarter was reduced to one person.

Under these conditions, the UNCT undertook some critical activities to support the humanitarian and development needs of the country using various coordination mechanisms including the UN Emergency Preparedness Response Team, the Security Management Team, the UN Core Group, the Operations Management Team and several ad hoc inter-agency taskforces to prepare and respond to emerging issues.

At the same time, the UNCT took advantage of every opportunity presented under this context to effectively respond including advocating responses to the food crises, responding to humanitarian needs in Sa'ada and Hadramout, and in securing external support from OCHA to prepare contingency plans and to provide coordinated humanitarian responses.

TWO: Highlights on progress in UN reform. Summarize the two or three most significant achievements in UN reform, in particular from the following areas:

(i) efforts to align with the national development processes;

In developing its UNDAF (2007-2011) the UN system is already fully aligned with national development priorities, as reflected in the government's Development Plan for Poverty Reduction 2006-2010 (DPPR). To facilitate this task there are Outcome Groups for each of the four key UNDAF goals (namely governance, gender, population and basic social services, and pro-poor economic growth). These Outcome Groups work under the overall guidance of a UN Core Group, in which UNCT agencies with country representation actively participate, to ensure a link between Heads of Agency and UNCT programme activities.

Due to the rising prices of food in Yemen, the UNCT provided a situational analysis and in a joint assessment with the donor community prepared a report which was submitted to the Government on the impacts of increased food prices based on joint assessment by the UN and donor community which was discussed in a high level forum. At the same time, the UN

submitted a joint proposal to CERF and secured \$ 2.5 million USD to provide assistance to the most vulnerable segments of the population that were impacted by the food crises.

The UN also facilitated government preparation of the CEDAW national progress report and supported the participation of the report to the CEDAW Committee in New York. The national report and recommendations were released through a multi-stakeholder workshop supported by UNDP and UNFPA to develop inputs on a national action plan.

(ii) support to the national government in the preparation and/or implementation of comprehensive MDG-based national development strategies;

In 2005, the Government developed an MDG based national development plan with support from the UN which conducted an MDG needs assessment and costing to ensure alignment between the MDGs and the DPPR. In 2008 the Government initiated a Mid Term Review (MTR) process of the DPPR. As the MDGs are a part of the national priorities, the UN provided technical assistance (ongoing through 2008) to help the Government in the prioritization of development plans and as a part of the post Consultative Group process. UNDP provided a consultant to support the process, and UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO and FAO provided technical analyses with various line ministries in support of reviews in multiple sectors. Progress and findings during this process were shared in the UNCT and in high level meetings with the Government and the donor community.

In preparation for the Regional Arab MDG 4 (Reduce Child Mortality) & MDG 5 (Improve Maternal Health) Countdown Conference in October, UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO technical teams provided data and analysis to enable the Ministry of Population and Public Health (MOPHP) to report its status and needs. While the conference was cancelled due to security restrictions, the MOPHP was empowered in taking ownership of monitoring and reporting on these MDGs.

There was also strengthened national AIDS response and leadership for prevention, care, and treatment through UN support to the preparation and launching of the National Strategic Framework on HIV/AIDS prevention and control in Yemen (which was launched in January 2009)

(iii) progress UNCTs are making collectively in support of the national partners' endeavours towards capacity development and aid effectiveness; and

The process of coordination and harmonization is being strengthened and the Donor Forum, co-chaired by the RC and the World Bank, continues with participation of the INGO Forum Representative, while the RC was invited to participate on behalf of the Donor Forum in the INGO coordination meetings, in this way strengthening mutual understanding, priority setting and the identification of partnership opportunities. Through this forum in 2008, there has been enhanced aid coordination on anti-corruption initiatives, reviews of the post Consultative Group processes and government reform, joint advocacy and advisory notes to the

government on the food crisis, as well as technical assistance and expertise to support the MTR.

In addition the UN has coordinated ad hoc donor-government meetings for the harmonization of information, action plans and resource mobilization for Sa'ada and for the flood affected areas.

(iv) experiences of common programming, including Joint Programmes and HACT, as well as other highlights in coordination;

2008 provided many opportunities for the UN System in Yemen to coordinate joint initiatives and to capitalize on agency comparative advantages to deliver as one.

Humanitarian Assistance

Through the UN Emergency Preparedness and Response Team and with support from OCHA, training was provided to 14 staff in 8 agencies on UN Contingency Planning. The UNEPRT also coordinated the preparation of an updated Inter-Agency Contingency Plan (IACP).

In response to the impacts of the internal conflict in Sa'ada, at the request of the government, the UN conducted two UN/INGO joint rapid needs assessments, the findings of which were presented to the government and donor community for resource mobilisation to deliver humanitarian assistance to the affected population. At the same time, the UN prepared a joint CERF proposal on Sa'ada which was approved in February 2008 for UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP for a total of USD 3.7 million

Immediately following the floods in the governorates of Hadramout and Al-Mahra, the UN conducted a joint Rapid Needs Assessment of Flood Affected Areas, established a UN coordination and flood response hub in the city of Seiyun and had a joint CERF proposal on Flood Response approved in December 2008 for IOM, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO for a total of USD 1.9 million. At the same time, a flood response plan (flash appeal) was prepared and released.

On behalf of the UNCT, I would like to express our sincere appreciation for the timely response received from CERF, and from OCHA which made it possible for the UN to position itself as a provider of emergency relief to the affected populations in Yemen.

Joint Initiatives for Harmonization

In support of harmonized development planning and response the UNCT continued the identification and implementation of joint initiatives to address development needs in the country.

Building on the practices of 2007, the UN continued implementation of the Basic Development Needs (BDN) approach to achieve MDGs through collaborative programme agreements with ILO, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO.

The Gender UNDAF Outcome Group took the lead in laying the ground work for a future joint programme on Violence Against Women. A baseline assessment was completed as the preliminary step to prepare for an assessment workshop to formulate joint initiatives in 2009.

UNICEF and WFP continued their work on promoting girls education together, and UNICEF and WHO conducted a joint measles campaign. The implementation of Global Fund activities through UNDP as principal recipient continued with strong collaborations from WHO, UNFPA and UNICEF which lead to ensuring future grants for Yemen.

Through the work of the HIV AIDS thematic group and the Joint UN Team on AIDs, the UN continued its advocacy with the Government to scale up Anti Retroviral Treatment Sites (3 new sites launched in 3 governorates), as well as the launching of 14 Voluntary Counselling & Testing sites and leadership training of 70 Persons Living with Aids (PLWA)

Operational Harmonization

The UN through the work of the Operations Management Team completed an in depth review of agency practices and developed a set of common rates and tariffs for transportation, DSA for domestic travel of Government Officials, and Terminal Allowances in September 2008.

The Ex-Com agencies through the HACT taskforce have completed the Macro Assessment and jointly provided 6 training sessions on HACT for 150 implementing partners from 21 government entities resulting in increased awareness and capacity to implement HACT measures and to facilitate the micro-assessment process for 2009.

THREE: Highlights on progress towards UNDAF outcomes (drawing from your UNDAF Annual Review) in support to the national development priorities. This section should also demonstrate how UN reform has impacted UN common programming.

2008 is the second year of UNDAF implementation. At the beginning of 2008, the UN and the government conducted a joint review of UNDAF achievements in 2007. This process increased awareness of the UNDAF as a planning tool and re-affirmed UNDAF commitments are in line with the national development plan highlighting priority issues for 2008 including population issues, water resources, gender and poverty reduction.

This effort highlighted the need for urgent and wide-ranging strengthening of capacities and systems for monitoring and evaluation, without which tracking of progress and UN contributions to such efforts would be at risk of subjectivity. Over 2008, the 4 UNDAF Outcome Groups under the oversight of the UN Core Group carried out an in-depth analysis and overhaul of UNDAF indicators and re-alignment of 2 outputs as a part of a revision

process to the UNDAF, with a view to make them easier to measure and attribute during future reviews.

It was expected to present revisions to the UNDAF for Government review and approval in line with their planned mid-term review of their 5 year development plan and to make and to use that opportunity to ensure that the UNDAF remains aligned with national priorities. The UNCT has undertaken a comprehensive review of its programme results to date and the 2008 UNDAF annual review is scheduled to take place by the end of February 2009 to coincide with the government's planned mid term review.

FOUR: The key aspects of the proposed 2009 workplan and linkages to ongoing issues of concern within the country; and

The context for 2009 was discussed in detail at a UNCT retreat in January, and it is expected that the Government will experience increased revenue losses. The government will need to make budget cuts in various sectors and may implement a public sector freeze in hiring. Furthermore, there are upcoming elections in April 2009 and the current security context will require continued mitigating measures on the part of the UN for at least the first quarter of 2009. It is likely that the impact of the global economic crises will compromise the ability of the Government to maintain progress towards MDGs.

As such the UNCT is aiming to position the UN to ensure sustainable delivery of services and increased collaboration and UN delivery through harmonization of work through sector wide approaches and the leveraging of individual agency comparative advantages for increased coordination in various sectors. At the same time, increased advocacy with the Government to ensure that the budget cuts do not compromise on the social sector services and population needs will be pursued.

Following the completion of the 2008 UNDAF Annual Review in conjunction with the government's MRT, a further refinement of some programmes and possibly a realignment of priorities (not least with greater emphasis on poverty, population and water scarcity) may be undertaken

In addition, considering the security context and expected socio-economic disparities in 2009, the UN in Yemen will need to examine and balance the parallel mandates of development and humanitarian aid and ensure business continuity. Further key elements of the work of the UNCT in 2009 such as donor coordination, HACT roll-out and, joint programming and advocacy are also planned for.

The Government has indicated that it plans to prepare a 2009 national MDG report. The last one was completed in 2003. The UN will advocate for this report to be prepared and will provide all necessary support to carry it out.