

Summary on progress towards UNDAF outcomes

Lesotho's UNDAF cycle is ending, and the new UNDAF will be in place in 2008. No text on this section

Summary on progress in UN Reform

Delivering as One

The Country Team initiated the Common Country Programming Process (CCPP), engaging the UN Heads of Agencies, Representatives of the Non-Resident Agencies (NRAs), key Development Partners in Lesotho and the Government in strategic discussions to plan and prioritise the UN Lesotho's support to the national development aspirations within the next UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Lesotho for the 2008-2012 programme cycle. The preparation of the draft UNDAF coincided with the country strategy planning periods for Lesotho's other major Development Partners. Like the UN System, the country cooperation programming cycles for DfID, European Commission, GTZ, Irish Aid and the World Bank also commence in 2008. Their participation at the November 2006 Strategic Planning Retreat provided a unique opportunity for exploring prospects for joint and/or collaborative programming, within the context of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the November 2006 Report of the High Level Panel on System-wide Coherence, entitled "Delivering as One".

Throughout the year, the Country Team made efforts to instill the notion of "One UN" in the programme and operational activities of the UN system. Several joint programmes and projects have been developed between and among the various Agencies. These include:

A Joint FAO-UNICEF-WFP Programme on Orphans and other Vulnerable Children; A Joint UNDP-ILO Programme on Youth Employment; A Joint FAO-WFP Programme to Implement the Food Security Policy and Action Plan; and, A Joint UN Programme on Greater Involvement and Empowerment of People Living with HIV/AIDS (GIEPA); A Joint UNDP-GEF-World Bank-Government of Lesotho Renewable Energy Programme.

The UN System has, over the years, implemented the Common Service/Common Premise function under the leadership of the interagency Operations Management Team (OMT). At present, the UN House accommodates seven out of eight resident UN agencies, namely: UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, FAO, UNFPA, UNAIDS and the World Bank. WFP is housed in a precinct adjoining the UN House. However, discussions are underway to accommodate WFP in the UN House.

All the Agencies except FAO and WFP contribute to the Common Service/Common Premise Budget, including the UN Dispensary and the V-Sat Connectivity Budgets. Other shared services include cleaning, electricity, security, electrical and plumbing services, lifts and the back-up generator.

The Common Service/Common Premise function has contributed immensely to reducing the cost of 'doing business'. There is potential, still, to further streamline the function and make it more effective if all the Agencies could merge certain aspects of their operational activities, and pool their resources for services such as transport, procurement and financial management systems. It is in this connection that the Common Service/Common Premise function was brought under expert review in November 2006. A UNDG Common Service Adviser undertook a review mission and prepared a Report. The recommendations will be reviewed by the UNCT and implemented as part of the joint Common Service Work Plan in 2007.

These steps have put the Lesotho team in a favourable position for the implementation of the now-imminent Joint Office Initiative, which the Country Team recommended should be introduced in Lesotho as part of the roll-out programme.

Support to National Development Plans and Strategies

The UN System has played a significant role in enhancing the policy, legislative and strategic planning environment to level the ground for greater progress in implementing the MDGs. During the year under review, the UN System supported formulation and implementation of key policies, plans and laws. These include: the National AIDS Policy, the National AIDS Strategic Plan and Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) Framework; the Know Your Status Action Plan; the Food Security Action Plan; the Legal Capacity of Married Persons Act; the Child Protection and Welfare Bill; the Orphaned and Vulnerable Children Policy; the National Action Plan on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS; the Roadmap to Reduce Maternal and Neo-Natal Morbidity and Mortality; the HIV Testing and Counselling Policy Guidelines; and, the Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) Guidelines. The National AIDS Policy, Strategic Plan and M & E Framework were launched by His Majesty the King, as part of the commemoration of the World AIDS Day 2006.

Improved Country Level Coordination

Consistent with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the 2004 Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR 2004), the Office of the Resident Coordinator spearheaded the Country Team's efforts to engage with Lesotho's other Development Partners in strategic dialogue to strengthen the Government's institutional capacity for aid coordination, resource mobilisation and harmonisation of development assistance. The RC acted as the Chairperson for the Development Partners' Consultative Forum (DPCF) since its establishment in 2005, and coordinated the Forum's participation and/or support to a number of processes and events. These include:

Support to the processes leading to the Population and Household Census 2006; Support to the processes leading to the Ninth Donor Round Table Conference; Support to the preliminary processes leading to the general elections 2007; and Resource mobilisation for the First Lady's Community-Based Workers Symposium and its related activities; The DPCF even commissioned UNDP to play a leading role to support capacity development for the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, and to provide support towards the preparations for the Round Table Conference, which was held from 20th to 24th November this year. The UN supported a special project to enhance effective civil society participation in local governance through advocacy and civic education programmes. This Project will be fundamental in supporting the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) in the preparatory activities leading to the general elections in February 2007, as well as in the prior and post-election conflict resolution and transformation activities. The Irish Aid provided counterpart financial support to the Project.

Increased Efforts against HIV/AIDS

Throughout the year, the UN System participated in the national efforts to turn the tide against the pandemic through resource mobilisation, technical assistance and specific individual and joint projects. One of our most important milestones has been accelerated implementation of the UNAIDS' "Three Ones". The UN provided technical and financial support towards the establishment of the National AIDS Commission (NAC) and the National AIDS Secretariat (NAS), a joint review of the national response to HIV/AIDS, the development of the National AIDS Policy and Strategic Plan (2006-2010), and the establishment of a unified HIV/AIDS Monitoring and Evaluation System.

The Government has demonstrated determination to make HIV testing and counselling a national campaign, and to increase access to the testing centres throughout the country. The desire, which has sprung from a series of major social mobilisation events that continued throughout 2006, has energised the momentum for change. The Operational Plan of the "Know Your Status" Campaign, launched by His Majesty the King in 2005, was a culmination of this commitment to bring about a profound and significant transformation against HIV/AIDS. The UN rallied behind this call, and supported the launch of the Campaign and its Implementation Plan in 2006. With UN's advocacy and financial and technical support, the country has been able to place approximately 10,000 people on Anti Retroviral Treatment (ART). There is greater national and district ownership, following the launch of HIV treatment centres in 6 districts during 2006. At present, there are 55 ART health centres in the country, and up to 15,000 people have benefited from the Ministry of Health counselling services. A formative search has shown that more than 92% of the population are aware of HIV/AIDS and are willing to be tested for HIV.

Partnerships on HIV/AIDS

The UN led the development partners' collective support to scale-up the response to HIV/AIDS. The Resident Coordinator, in consultation with the Country Team and other development partners, expanded the co-chairmanship of the UN Theme Group on HIV/AIDS to the European Commission and the Embassy of the United States of America. The Theme Group comprises UN Heads of Agencies, the Government (through the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare), Development Partners, the National AIDS Secretariat, NGOs and Faith-Based Organisations. On the Government side, the UN's "voice" was added to the key decisions of the national "Know Your Status" Campaign's Steering Committee and the Global Fund's Country Coordination Mechanism.

These steps epitomise the Government's desire to execute an urgent and effective response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic. There is no doubt, nevertheless, that even more concerted effort is required if Lesotho is to turn the tide against HIV/AIDS, and for this to happen, all role players should join the national efforts to dramatically accelerate the response and promptly scale-up their individual and collective actions.

HIV and AIDS in the Workplace

As part of the efforts to lead by example, the Country Team continued to support the implementation of the UN HIV/AIDS Learning Strategy through selected HIV/AIDS activities in the UN workplace. The interagency HIV/AIDS Learning Team was reconstituted under the leadership of UNAIDS. Information, education and communication materials were prepared and shared with staff. HIV/AIDS sessions held for all staff culminated in an HIV/AIDS family session in November 2006. A total of 181 participants drawn from staff members, their spouses and children participated in this important activity.

Support to the Strengthening of the National Systems

The UN System continued its search for ways to alleviate the suffering of the poor and the vulnerable, as well as those affected by HIV/AIDS. As you well know, in Lesotho, like anywhere else in the developing world, HIV/AIDS places the heaviest toll on women and children, especially Orphans and other Vulnerable Children (OVCs). During the year under review, the UN System supported the establishment of a multi-sector committee for OVCs under the leadership of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. The committee is composed of Government sectors, NGOs, CSOs, the National AIDS Commission and the Development Partners. To date, the committee has established linkages at district level through a similarly constituted multi-sector District Child Protection Team in all the 10 districts of Lesotho. The committee will be responsible for ensuring a more effective implementation of the national OVC Policy and Action Plan. To this end, the UN has supported the strengthening of the capacity of district and community institutions, and volunteer groups to support the OVCs and their care-givers in the areas of food security, social welfare, health, education and income generation.

In a bid to accelerate the country's efforts at attaining the MDGs, the UN System provided support for the development of a comprehensive basic education policy. Funding was provided for the installation of water and sanitation facilities in 16

schools in two districts. At the higher level, the UN supported the Education Sector Review as part of the Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp) process, as well as the National Education Dialogue held during November 2006. UNICEF represents the UN in co-chairing the Education Partners Forum, and has helped the Government mobilise \$7.2 million from the Fast Track Initiative.

As part of the strategy to ensure that children and OVCs remain in school, the UN System has supported implementation of the school feeding programme under WFP's leadership and in close collaboration with the Government. Take-home rations were provided for the OVCs in a bid to keep their enrolment in school at a reasonably high level. Other areas supported during 2006 include: the development of the life skills framework and sensitization sessions for principals on the latest policies and legislative frameworks on child protection and OVCs.

Furthermore, the Government of Lesotho completed its first national "Roadmap to Reduce Maternal and Neo-natal Morbidity and Mortality", with technical and financial support from UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO. The road map was launched by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in November 2006. Lesotho data were used for the Roadmap Plan. Training is currently being provided on safe delivery and child health.

Strengthening of the Coordination Capacity of the UNCT

In keeping with the Reform agenda, and to ensure coordination and collaboration in system-wide planning and programming, the Office of the Resident Coordinator played a key oversight role to facilitate synergy and cooperation among agency programmes.

Some strategic interagency teams were established in order to support the implementation of the Country Team Work Plan 2006, as well as other priority activities. These include; the Joint UN Team on AIDS (JUNTA), the expanded DevInfo Team, the Avian and Human Influenza Task Force, the Operations Management Team, the Communications Group and the Common Country Programme Strategy Team. Through the expanded Theme Groups on HIV/AIDS, and on Gender and Reproductive Health, the UN continued to engage with the Government and civil society partners to scale-up the national response to HIV and AIDS, and to advocate for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women respectively. A number of other teams were also set up to support Government Thematic Working Groups and Task Forces in the areas of: HIV and AIDS, Health, Agriculture and Food Security, and Environmental Management.

Owing to the increasing need to further strengthen the human resource aspect of the Office of the Resident Coordinator, the Resident Coordinator has solicited the deployment of a Human Rights Advisor from the Action 2 Global Programme. Once deployed, the Adviser will be responsible for the UN Country Team's support to governance, elections in particular, and human rights. The Adviser will be a long-awaited addition to my Office which has, to date, been stretched very thin with only one national professional officer. With the possibility of the "Joint Office Initiative" coming our way soon, I anticipate a complete expansion of the Office in order to facilitate better support to the new RC System needs.

Headquarter and Regional Support to the Country Team

The Country Team received a high level of cooperation and technical support from colleagues at the UNDG, the UN Staff College, the RDT and the Non-Resident Agencies throughout the year. The Country Team acknowledges OCHA's support towards the preparation of the "UN Lesotho Contingency Plan on Avian Flu" and the "Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan". On this, Lesotho was cited as an example of "good practice". The UNDG, the Staff College and the RDT, on the other hand, helped the Country Team to facilitate the Common Country Programming Process, as well as the activities leading to the formulation of the draft UNDAF 2008-2012.

Throughout 2006, the Country Team liaised with the Non-Resident Agencies, namely: ILO, UNESCO, UNODC and UNOHCHR, to identify strategic areas for joint programming and project support, and to explore opportunities for resource mobilisation. Such strategic partnerships were established with the relevant resident Agencies, and joint projects in the areas of HIV/AIDS, Youth and Employment, Education, Gender and Human Rights were formulated and implemented. Through this support, the Country Team has been able to raise the UN's profile in areas that had otherwise not received sufficient attention previously.

UN Lesotho's Preparedness and Response to Emergencies and Disasters

At the beginning of 2006, the UN Country Team established an interagency team responsible for emergencies and disasters. Through the team, and with support from OCHA, the UN Lesotho Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan was prepared and disseminated. The Teams were supervised by the WHO and the FAO Representatives under the overall coordination of the Resident Coordinator.

A separate UN Lesotho Avian Flu Task Force prepared two Avian Flu Contingency Plans, one covering Phase III to Phase VI, and the other focusing on the worst-case scenario. The latter plan will be simulated in January 2007, with support from OCHA and the WHO Regional Office. Sensitisation sessions on Avian Flu were held for staff and stakeholders. In addition, the UN, under the leadership of WHO, provided technical assistance to the preparation of the National Avian Flu Plan 2006.

Furthermore FAO trained the Veterinary Officers of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security in sero-diagnosis of the H5N1 virus. The Department of Livestock Services of the same Ministry was provided with essential field and laboratory equipment, supplies and materials for the surveillance, diagnosis and handling of infected birds.

Security of Staff and Property

While the security situation has been relatively calm for the most part of the year, the Country Team has been profoundly bothered by the number of security incidents affecting the UN and other international staff. The criminal activities that were reported to the Department of Safety and Security (DSS), as part of the System's security reporting requirements, included murder, armed robberies, rape, livestock theft, smuggling of drugs and firearms, vehicle theft, and burglaries to homes and businesses. Some staff members have been victims of street robberies, while an international staff member of one international Organisation working in Lesotho has been killed in several rounds of gunfire recently.

As the country prepares for the next general elections on 17th February 2007, there is a much more heightened political activity, marked by political party campaigns in several parts of the country. While we do not anticipate any obvious security problems related to the election process, the RC has advised the entire UN System to exercise caution and vigilance at all times. The nationally-recruited staff members have, accordingly, been urged to exercise their democratic right to vote, but to stay clear of any potential trouble spots. The RC has considered the security of staff paramount above all else in her responsibilities as the Designated Official for Security, and as part of the UN Lesotho's Security Plan 2006, a number of important security reinforcements were made. The overall security management system has also been strengthened. The Security Management Team (SMT) met regularly to plan and oversee the implementation of the Security Plan; a 24-hour closed circuit surveillance system has been installed, and window shatterproof film and a mail-scanning x-ray machine have been ordered.

Staff training was conducted, including the following: Certificated Basic and Advanced "Security in the Field" training for all staff; Fire-preparedness training; Training for Wardens; and Training on Defensive Driving for UN drivers. The Country Team further established a system of weekly security incident reporting, with a view to ensuring that the UN was up to speed on all security issues and security-related developments in the country. These activities will go a long way to ensuring that Lesotho is MOSS compliant.

Key aspects of the proposed 2007 workplan

Result Area 1: Coordination for Results

1.1 Contribution to national development plans and strategies 1.1.1 Poverty Reduction Strategy reviewed, costed, MDG-ised and rolled over into the next phase; PRS will be revised; 1.1.2 Country MDG Progress Report will be updated. 1.1.3 Country human rights obligations met in accordance with the ratified human rights conventions. 1.1.4 National statistical system strengthened and used to evaluate progress towards achieving the MDGs. 1.1.5 Capacity of key ministries and partners on the use of DevInfo developed 1.1.6 Post census analysis, reports and dissemination

1.2. Aid Coordination and Management /Paris Declaration 1.2.1 Capacity of the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning strengthened for enhanced aid coordination and management

1.3 Enhanced aid coordination systems within the Ministry 1.3.1 UNDAF/Common Country Programming Common Country Programming Process completed through a consultative process and submitted to the Executive Boards. 1.3.2 Country Programme Documents and Annual Work Plans prepared

1.4. Coordination Support to UNCT in Implementing and Monitoring the 2002-2007 UNDAF 1.4.1 Working Groups (MDG, Food Security and Nutrition, OVC) are operational 1.5 Joint programmes 1.5.1 Joint Programmes developed, implemented and evaluated

1.6 Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT). 1.6.1 Advocacy, training and roll-out of HACT for UN, government and other implementing partners

1.7 Gender Equality 1.7.1 Mechanisms for women's empowerment and protection of the rights of women and girls established. 1.7.2 Advocacy activities to popularise the law on the equality of married persons implemented. 1.7.3 National Action Plan on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS implemented

1.8 Road Map to Accelerate Reduction of Maternal & Newborn Mortality 1.8.1 Maternal & Newborn morbidity & Mortality reduced at all levels.

1.9 HIV and AIDS. 1.9.1 Joint UN Programme on AIDS prepared and implemented 1.9.2 Technical and financial support provided to the implementation of the National AIDS Policy and Plan 1.9.3 Scaled-up response to HIV and AIDS accelerated through implementation of the "Know Your Status Campaign".

1.10 Coordination of Humanitarian and Natural Disaster Operations 1.10.1 Capacity developed for disaster management and response 1.10.2 Joint UNCT Plans on (1) Emergency Preparedness and (2) Avian and Human Influenza implemented 1.10.3 Alternatives for implementing the Joint Office Initiative for Lesotho explored, and recommendations made

1.11 Human Rights and Good Governance 1.11.1 Mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights established and/or strengthened 1.11.2 Partnerships for the deepening of democracy, elections, civic education and conflict resolution, involving Government, IEC, political parties and development partners strengthened

1.12 Food security and Nutrition 1.12.1 National Nutrition Policy prepared 1.12.2 National Food Security Action Plan implemented

1.13 Common Services/Premises 1.13.1 Joint UNCT Plan to simplify, harmonise and streamline operational processes, standards and disbursement of funds to government and partners prepared

Result Area 2: UN Advocacy and Resource Mobilisation

2.1 Joint UNCT Advocacy and Communications 2.1.1 Joint UNCT Communications and Advocacy Strategy prepared and implemented in line with the 2002 Reform Proposals

2.2 Joint UNCT Resource Mobilisation Strategy 2.2.1 Joint UNCT Resource Mobilisation Strategy developed and implemented

Result Area 3: Non-Resident UN Agencies

3.1 Special measures to integrate non-resident UN agencies in UNCT processes 3.1.1 Greater involvement of the Non-Resident Agencies in the national strategic planning processes and Common Country Programming Process

Result Area 4: Coordination Capacity of the UNCT

4.1 Strengthening UNCT Coordination Capacity 4.1.1 Human, technical and material resources provided

4.2 Training 4.2.1 HIV/AIDS Learning Strategy implemented 4.2.2 Security in the field training conducted

Recommendations

No recommendations from the Country Team