



From meeting together...

...to really working better together



UN Staff Town Hall Meeting
Summary Report

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The milestones for the One UN Initiative in the coming months are:

- Finalization of One Plan 2, One Budget 2, OPMP, One Leader's MOU and HPPMG
- Joint Donor/ Government Assessment on One Plan 2 and One Budget 2
- Revised Agreed Principles, Objectives and Instruments to achieve the One UN in Viet Nam in close consultation with the Government
- Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for OP2
- Staff survey
- Capacity assessment
- Toward a Green One UN House: procurement, financial analysis, real-estate valuation, security assessment, and resource mobilization
- Inter-agency missions on Financial Accountability & Audit, IT, and HR

The UN Country Team should move from meeting together to really working together for a more coherent, effective and efficient One UN in close cooperation with the Government of Viet Nam. The whole UNCT is expected to work as one in this learning process where the inputs from the staff are very important.

- Initial achievements have been obtained in harmonizing operational rules/guidelines e.g. HPPMG, HACT
- Good lessons learnt on how the UN organizations can better work together can be gained from the experience of the UN Communications Team and HIV joint team. Team discussion and high-level management support would provide momentum toward solutions.
- The preliminary design of a Green One UN House will be presented by Chulalongkorn University to OMT, SAs, and HOAs soon. To-date UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA agreed to contribute USD 1 million, and the UK government pledged to fund USD 1 million.
- Areas to move ahead:
 - UN Learning Team
 - Joint Training Plan
 - Joint UN Orientation Programme
- Issues for further consideration/ follow-up:
 - Human Resource policies;
 - Programme Coordination Group (PCG);
 - National staff taxation.

SA representatives will continuously collect staff questions/ concerns and concrete proposals/recommendations on the One UN Initiative so that the UNCT could discuss how to practically implement it.

1. Introduction

In the context of the One UN Initiative in Viet Nam, the common view is that reform will only work in a sustainable way if all UN staff is ready to make it work. Staff needs to be informed, engaged and empowered to participate in deliberations on UN reform.

The first Town Hall Meeting (THM 1) was organised as a forum for dialogue on UN reform between UN staff and senior management. It took place on 13 June 2007 with the participation of several hundred staff across Agencies. The THM 1 succeeded in generating a greater interest in different aspects of UN reform. A number of recommendations requiring follow-up by the senior management of the UN Country Team were also identified.

Since then, efforts to systematize adequate information sharing and the empowerment of UN staff have been strengthened. The UN Country Team (UNCT) has taken a number of important steps in this regard. Since September 2007 a representative of the UN Staff Associations (SA) was invited to attend all UNCT meetings on UN reform and to actively join the drafting team of the One Plan Management Plan (OPMP). The OPMP recommends, among other things, the creation of a change management strategy to define milestones and timelines for greater involvement of UN staff, not only in terms of staff welfare, but also in terms of empowering them as architects of change.

After six months of progress and hard work by the entire UN family, senior management joined the SA to organize the second Town Hall Meeting on 22 January 2008. This would be the right time for UN staff to be updated on the latest on the One UN Initiative and outstanding as well as evolving issues after the first Town Hall Meeting. An important feature of this THM 2 was that the meeting was co-chaired by a UN Staff Association representative and the UN Resident Coordinator – one of the recommendations from the last Town Hall.

2. How the Town Hall Meeting 2 was organized

The SA worked closely with the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO). Two preparatory meetings were set up to discuss the questionnaire, structure of the meeting, agenda, logistics, and responsibilities.

It was agreed that the THM 2 should be designed in a way to allow for more time being spent on discussion. The agenda included one short presentation to brief staff on the progress of the One UN Initiative and four other sessions to discuss the 5 Ones and other related issues in detail.

Content of the discussions derived from three sources: 1) Outstanding issues from the first THM; 2) New issues identified through a questionnaire sent to all staff before THM2; and questions from the floor raised by staff at THM2 itself.

In order to facilitate active and participatory dialogue, as well as to help ensure clear answers were given for staff questions, each of the sessions was moderated by one SA and one senior management member. PowerPoint presentations were encouraged to ensure there was a visual demonstration to highlight the points being raised. The floor was open for staff to raise questions/comments and for senior management to have the space to provide their responses during the meeting itself.

More than 200 UN staff and all senior management representatives of the UN Organizations attended the THM 2.

3. Key messages of the Town Hall Meeting 2

The THM 2 came up with the following key messages, which resulted from the updates given by senior management on the One UN Initiative over the past six months and the exchange between UN staff and senior management on key issues and suggestions as raised in the course of the discussion. *(For full outlines of the discussion see Annex 5 Minutes of Town Hall Meeting 2)*

GENERAL REMARKS

- With regard to the One UN Initiative in Viet Nam, many achievements have been made in the last 6 months in all "Five Ones." But still, challenges remain. *(See Annex 2 UN Reform in Vietnam: Six month update)*. The milestone plans of the 5 Ones for the next few months will include
 - i) finalizing One Plan 2, One Budget 2, OPMP, One Leader's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and Harmonized Programme and Project Management Guideline (HPPMG);
 - ii) recruiting project manager and mobilizing resources for the One UN House,
 - iii) Joint Donor Assessment on One Plan 2 and One Budget 2. In 2008, the UN Country Team should move from meeting together to really working together.
- Different developing countries may have different views on the One UN Initiative. More information on the debates can be seen in the UN website - triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the UN system. In the case of Viet Nam, the Government's expectation on UN reform is very high and there is real pressure on the UNCT to deliver better and to change toward a more coherent, effective and efficient UN.
- The UNCT is working on revising the Agreed Principles, Objectives and Instruments to achieve One United Nations in Viet Nam. The vision expressed in this revised Agreed Principles document was built in partnership with the Government of Viet Nam and will reflect viewpoints of key stakeholders especially that of the Government of Viet Nam.
- As the first joint working team, the UN Communications Team is a good example of how all UN agencies can work together. Many issues related to human resources (HR), IT services, task management and support were discussed during the team retreat recently. Considerable progress has been made. The team has hired an independent HR consultant to push the HR issue forward. It was highlighted that team proposals and subsequent high-level management support would provide momentum toward solutions.
- SA representatives will continuously collect staff questions/concerns and concrete proposals/recommendations on the One UN Initiative so that the UNCT can incorporate these staff considerations in how they practically move forward.

ONE PLAN MANAGEMENT PLAN (OPMP)

- The OPMP is being finalized and is expected to be ready in March. It will not cover human resource policies or operational policies but rather will set up a process through which the UNCT will agree on how to have such policies established.
- With regard to UN Organizations' operational rules/guidelines changing to better reflect the One UN initiative, it was noted that the UNCT in Viet Nam should be strategic with a clear understanding of the ability that each agency has to move. Some areas showed

positive signals such as HPPMG, Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT) while some pending issues i.e. auditing, planning, M&E may require further discussions and considerations.

- A staff survey is a very powerful and useful tool to collect staff opinions and suggestions. A staff survey of the UN in Viet Nam will be implemented by an independent, professional company and the results will be kept confidential.
- Regarding human resource (HR) policies (e.g. equity in contracts and benefits), there is no specific plan yet for harmonization of Agency HR policies, procedures and practices under the framework of the One UN Initiative in Viet Nam. Specific research on HR policies has not been conducted. However, the issues are still being considered in pilot countries and at headquarter level and there will be an inter-agency HR mission to Viet Nam. It is expected that the mission will review HR policies of each organization and make specific recommendations. In addition, the planned capacity assessment will help the UNCT evaluate existing capacity compared to the identified needs of the One UN Initiative, and will result in suggestions of what can be done at the country level.
- The UNCT in Viet Nam can move forward on some initiatives such as the formation of a UN learning team, a joint training plan, a joint UN orientation programme etc. SA representatives will collect opinions and suggestions from staff for the discussions among the UNCT on how to operationalize these at the country level.
- A tentative list of 11 Programme Coordination Groups (PCG) has been shared, although no final decision has been taken by the UNCT. The whole UNCT is expected to work as one in this learning process, and input from the staff is very important.
- The UNCT agreed in principle that drivers would receive 100% of DSA when traveling. However, this may not be possible given the financial constraints of each agency.
- There will be better opportunities for career development under the framework of the One UN Initiative as it will be easier for staff to move from one organization to another. The OPMP will not cover staff recruitment criteria. Recruitment principles, if any, will have to be discussed and agreed among the UNCT.
- With regard to the concern about written regulations and reporting mechanisms covering abuse in the workplace, importance was attached not only to the reporting mechanism and reports but also to actions taken in response. It was agreed that questions on sexual discrimination would be included in the staff survey.

ONE PLAN AND ONE BUDGET

- Concerning the roadmap for development and implementation of the One Plan 2 and One Plan Fund, there are four steps to be taken: 1) sharing the draft One Plan with the Government, donors and UN Agency headquarters; 2) finalizing legal documents (Memoranda of Understanding and Letters of Agreements); 3) getting agreement on fund allocation criteria; and 4) allocating funds to agencies. The roadmap process for the One UN is making progress and the One Plan is expected to be completed soon.
- In terms of human resources, the management team reaffirmed the importance of the 14 UN organizations working together effectively. The One UN process may change staffing structures somewhat, but will not reduce staff numbers. The relevance of the work of the UN in Viet Nam was emphasized and the UNCT needs to work as one team to respond to national changes and priorities.

- Financial management of the One Plan Fund is also a concern of UN staff. It is mentioned in the MOU signed by participating agencies that UNDP, as the Admin Agent, will charge a 1% fee that applies to the whole fund, and each agency also will charge a 7% general management service fee to their portion.

ONE LEADER

- The UNCT had a long discussion and came to an agreement that the UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC) would be given additional responsibility and accountability with regard to resource mobilization, speaking for the UN ("one voice"), etc. An MOU for the One Leader is being discussing among the team and is expected to be available next month. The importance of creating an environment in which the One Leader can work and exercise his role was highlighted.
- With regard to the role of Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) in the context of One UN Reform, it was stressed that the major task of the RCO was to facilitate and support the process - not to set up an additional bureaucratic layer. Reform can only happen if it comes from the whole UNCT (staff, management, etc.).

ONE HOUSE

- Updates on progress with the Green One UN House were provided, including information on: i) the mission of the Operation Management Team (OMT), Service Department for the Diplomatic Corps (DISERCO), and RCO to Bangkok to examine eco-friendly designs; and ii) a preliminary design of the Green One UN House completed by Chulalongkorn University in Thailand, with funding from Norway through the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office in Bangkok. The first design would be presented to the OMT, SAs, and Heads of Agencies next week. With regard to resource mobilization, the ExCom Agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, and UNFPA) agreed to contribute USD 1 million. The UK Government pledged to contribute USD 1 million. The Government of Viet Nam is talking about providing funding. However, it was clear that additional resources from donors and the Government would be essential.
- It was agreed that the questions on daycare/preschool facilities and other staff support facilities would be discussed among the OMT and UNCT, taking into consideration the available financial capacity for the One UN House. UN staff were encouraged to send their opinions/comments/suggestions on the Green One UN House to the OMT or/and SAs.

OTHER ISSUES

- Taxation for national and international staff is an issue from the first THM that is still being discussed. The OMT met with the Hanoi Tax Department to discuss the issue and provide relevant documentation. A follow-up letter was sent to the Hanoi Tax Department on 21 December, 2007 with copies sent to headquarters and relevant government bodies. The Hanoi tax authorities said that they would comply with agreements that have been signed between UN organizations and tax authorities. It was proposed that further discussions between the UN and higher-level government bodies should take place to settle the issue.

Annex 1

Agenda of Town Hall Meeting 2 22nd January 2008

InterContinental Hanoi Westlake – K5 Nghi Tam, Xuan Dieu, Tay Ho
Co chair: Mr. John Hendra (UNRC) and Mr. Dang Huu Cu (SAs)

Time	Activity	Chair/Moderator
13:30-14.00	Introduction of Agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome Objectives of the meeting Opening Remarks and overall update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening Remarks Brief update about One UN in Viet Nam 	Huu Cu, SA reps and John Hendra, UNRC
	Updates and Discussions by thematic groups	
14.00-14.45	Session 1: One Plan Management Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of the issues from THM1 + questions newly received from THM2 questionnaires Updates and response from corresponding Senior Management Q&A Follow-up Summary of Co-Chairs 	Y Duyen Jesper Morch
14.45-15.15	Session 2: One Plan + One Budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of the issues from THM1 + questions newly received from THM2 questionnaires Updates and response from corresponding SM Q&A Follow-up Summary of Co-Chairs 	Duong Van Dat Setsuko Yamazaki
15.15-15.30	Session 3: One Leader + One House <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of the issues from THM1 + questions newly received from THM2 questionnaires Updates and response from corresponding SM Q&A Follow-up Summary of Co-Chairs 	Katja Pellini John Hendra and Neil Reece Evans
15.30-15.40	Session 4: Other issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of the issues from THM1 + questions newly received from THM2 questionnaires Updates and response from corresponding SM Q&A Follow-up Summary of Co-Chairs 	Kevin Deveaux Neil Reece Evans
15.40 -16.00	Wrap-up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of the meeting Follow up Closing Remarks 	John Hendra, UNRC Huu Cu, SA reps
16.00	Happy Hour	

Annex 2

Summary of pending issues at THM 1 and collected questionnaires from THM2

Disclaimer: *All the collected questions in this document are from individual staff of different agencies, and these do not necessarily reflect the collective view of Staff Associations or of the presenters/moderators.*

SESSION 1: Issues relating to OPMP

Pending issues at THM 1

1. Would it be possible to joint the WB office in Viet Nam and ensure that a number of UN staff in Viet Nam received training through the WB Respectful Workplace Advisors programme?
2. Is One UN process looking at possibilities to promote "Two Work!" initiative of UN Dual Career and Staff Mobility project in Viet Nam?

Collected questions from THM2

3. In the first Town Hall meeting it was stated that research on human resource policies across agencies is an important task. Has reaseach on human resource policies across the agencies been conducted if yes what are the results or if not when such a reseach will take place?
4. Currently most of the national staff in our agency (UNESCO) is working under SSA agreement that does not include benefits such as health insurance or paid maternity leave. Is UN going to have uniform contractual modalities, and same pay for the same kind of work and will all staff working in the similar position gain same benefits in the future?
5. Can 100% standard DSA rate be applied to drivers from all UN agencies?
6. When arriving to organization there was not very clear orientation period and would have been helpful to learn more especially about the administrative procedure. Will UN have joint staff orientation programme for new staff when one set of management practises is in place?
7. What are the opportunities and threats for career development of National Professional Staff, especially for staff who has served UN for a long time?
8. Basis and criteria for staff selection when staffing structure changes? Will staff from other UN agencies can be considered more advantaged than a non-UN candidate for a new post of one UN agency?
9. Is there a UN Learning Team who is in charge of development a training plan to equip staff with new competencies/skills that might be required by One UN?
10. Currently, each agency has their own way to run the business strictly following the HQ requirements (for instance, planning, budgeting, M&E, auditing, etc). To implement One Plan effectively, are there any requirement to UN agencies to modify or to change their operational rules/guidelines towards one-UN spirit or they will continue to run their business as usual?

11. Why UNICEF HQ does not allow the Viet Nam office to move away from UNICEF global operational guidelines so that it can harmonize with procedures & processes of the One UN in Viet Nam?
12. How will WHO affect the management of all health related programmes as it will be considered as 'the cluster' leading agency?
13. Please share key lessons learned from UN joint initiatives (e.g. UN Communications Team, M & E Working Group, HACT Working Group, HPPMG Working Group, etc...) and the measures to improve such joint initiatives.

II. SESSION 2: Issues relating to One Plan & One Budget

Pending issues at THM 1

14. Clear and practical rules for action plan including budget development and implementation must be developed and a great decentralization should be given to projects/programs managers.
15. What are implications of one budget? What are benefits which One UN will bring to UN staff?
16. What is the expected timeframe for having one plan in place? And how one plan is implemented? Will there be more joint programmes or is each agency implementing one part of the plan? How coordination is organised/does each agency have coordinating role in some parts of the plan?

Collected questions from THM2

17. Could you please update the roadmap for development and implementation of One Plan 2 and One Plan Fund? What is the mechanism to allocate One Plan Fund amongst UN agencies? Whether One Plan Fund will pay salary for technical staff/personnel who are not stationed in Viet Nam (i.e they are at regional or HQ offices)
18. How would different organizations be structured under the one UN reform? In particular, are there any programme areas to be merged amongst UN agencies? Please update on the structure of joint clusters and joint teams under the One Plan. Will joint clusters/join teams move to work in a same working station (like UN Communication team) or not. If yes, when we plan to move? What is possibility of downsizing or cut-off staff as a consequence of merging or joining similar technical areas?
19. Over the past 6 months the reform process has appeared incredibly brutal on participants, especially at the leadership level within UNCT - particularly the 'negotiation' between the 13 agencies on the future of 'One Plan', and more recently on budget allocations between the 6 agencies within the first round of the 'One Plan'. We seem to have lost sight completely of any concept of actually building a better system, or doing better work. Rather, all the energy seems to be sucked into political positioning by agencies...and at best to completing the '5 Ones' regardless of whether this actually delivers on the original intentions / overall point of UN reform... So, is the current UN reform pilot really worth the pain? When can we make the statement to interested external parties that the One UN reform process is working? What kind of data could we present to prove this point? If not yet available when will it be available?

20. One Plan 1 or 2 is for the period 2007-2010. Will we continue One Plan after 2010? What will be the future of one UN in Viet Nam or elsewhere for the next ten or more years? What are the orientations/perspectives of UN HQs, donors and Viet Nam's Government?

III. SESSION 3: Issues relating to One Leader & One House

Collected questions from THM2

21. When are we expecting to move to the new common UN building? Is there the roadmap for moving?
22. In the development of the One House plan, has any consideration been given to the **inclusion of on-site daycare/preschool facilities?**

This need not be a free of charge, many UN staff members already pay for these services; however, the convenience and security afforded working mothers and fathers in this way would be a model of corporate social responsibility worthy of replication throughout Viet Nam.

IV. SESSION 4: Issues relating to General Themes

Pending issues at THM 1

23. What is the current development/updates of the issue of high-income tax applied to the national staff?

Collected questions from THM2

24. What is global experience in undertaking one UN reform? Any lessons learnt for Viet Nam?
25. Will UN have same staff benefits such as health insurance, paid maternity leave, number of leave days for all staff after there is one set of management practises? When will this happen?
26. What are the opportunities and threats for career development of National Professional Staff, especially for staff who has served UN for a long time?

Annex 3

UN Reform in Viet Nam: A six month update

UN Reform in Viet Nam: Towards More Coherent and Effective UN Support to Viet Nam
6 months Update



2nd Town Hall Meeting – January 22, 2008

John Hendra
UN Resident Coordinator

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“One UN Initiative” – The Oneness



- One Plan/One Budget/One Plan Fund
- One Leader
- One Set of Management Practices
- One UN House
- One Plan Management Plan

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One Plan 1 and One Budget 1

- One Plan 1 signed on 23 August 2007 by MPI Minister, the UNRC and six Heads of UN Agencies
- One Plan 1 implementation on going
- One Budget 1 gap (July 07 – Dec 08): US\$ 33 million
- First allocation from OPF to six Agencies taken place
- OPF donors so far: Norway, Netherlands, UK, New Zealand, Ireland, France, Luxembourg, CIDA, SDC, Spain (MDG-Fund)

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One Plan Fund (OPF)

- (Internal UN) One Plan Fund Mobilization and Allocation Committee (OPFMAC) established.
- Paper trails and allocation criteria for funds received from OPF developed and tested.
- MPI granted a waiver for the first allocation of OPF before the formal establishment of One Plan Steering Committee.
- OPF received US\$ 31 million as of 31 December 2007

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One Plan 2 and One Budget 2

- One Plan 2 – a common action plan of all 14 Agencies under development. UNHCR and IOM for different reasons not joining.
- OP2 = OP1 + Action Plans of incoming Agencies with an attempt to increase synergies and reduce overlapping
- One Plan 2 and One Budget 2 initially to be ready end December 2007. Now to be submitted to the Gov't by end February.
- One Plan 2 and One Budget 2 to be shared with donors shortly after being shared with Gov't.

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Five Outcomes of the One Plan 2

- Outcome 1:** Equitable and inclusive social and economic policies, plans and laws
- Outcome 2:** Universally available, high quality social and protection services
- Outcome 3:** Environmental protection and rational *management* of natural resources *and cultural heritage*
- Outcome 4:** Accountable, transparent and participatory governance
- Outcome 5:** Reduced vulnerability to natural disasters, *communicable diseases, and other emergencies*

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One Leader



- UNCT Code of Conduct approved in December 2007.
- UNCT agreed at September retreat to develop a Memorandum of Understanding on One Leader
- First draft of MOU to be shared with UNCT for comments by mid February

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One Set of Management Practices – HPPMG



- Harmonized Project Programme Management Guidelines (HPPMG) for 3 ExCom Agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA). Other Agencies invited to join as observers and join elements of the HPPMG overtime.
- Vietnamese version of the 2nd draft Harmonised Programme Project Management Guidelines (HPPMG) for ExCom Agencies finalised. English translation on going.
- 2nd draft HPPMG to be shared with ExCom HQs and line Ministries for comments by mid February.

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One Set of Management Practices – Common Services



- 2007 Action Plan of Common Services for UN Country Team overall being implemented.
- Annual retreat being prepared by OMT to work on Action Plan 2008.
- EU/UN Cost Norms coming into effect as of 1 Jan 08. Govt informed EU/UN providing comments by March 08.

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One UN House and “Greening” the UN



- Joint UNFP and UNDG Common Premises mission (June 2007) conclusion: the House is technically feasible but financial feasibility is a challenge.
- Preliminary design and the eco-aspects of the One UN House finalized by Chulalongkorn University (Thailand) with financial support from Norway and to be presented to OMT, HOA, Gov't this week. Staff Associations being invited to join.
- Construction time estimated 12 months

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One UN House and “Greening” the UN



- One House Project Manager TORs finalized. Recruitment on going.
- Contract for real-estate valuation and financial study on going
- An Environmental Audit of all Agencies offices including CO2 emission inventory undertaken. Final report available soon

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One Plan Management Plan



- OPMP draft gone through several revision rounds
- Discussion on Programme Coordination Groups being informed by One Plan II programmatic clustering on going
- Capacity Assessment mission being scheduled in context of OPMP and in line with consultation with DGO/Inter-Agency WG
- Draft OPMP to be shared with Gov't and donors in parallel with draft OP 2 and draft One Leader MOU

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Monitoring and Evaluation



- M&E Framework for One Plan I finalized
- Process indicators for One UN Initiative endorsed by UNCT
- Joint Inspection Unit mission undertaken
- UN Evaluation Group mission undertaken. UNEG evaluability assessment report has been shared with all stakeholders.
- Review of Joint Programme in the context of UN Reform pilots undertaken. Report to be shared shortly.
- A Stakeholder Survey soon to start by TNS

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Incoming missions scheduled (as of January 2008)



- Capacity Assessment
- Inter-Agency Mission on Financial Accountability and Audit
- Inter-Agency IT mission

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Staff engagement in the UN Reform



- Two Town Halls organized. This one co-chaired by Staff Associations rep and UNRC.
- Staff Associations being invited to join the monthly Heads of Agency Meeting and meetings/retreats related to One UN
- Staff Associations being invited to join the WG to develop the One Plan Management Plan
- Staff Associations being invited to join the One House WG
- Weekly newsletter "The One to Know" informing staff on areas related to UN Agency work and One UN
- External independent staff survey being planned [Staff Associations to be consulted]

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Transaction costs – have we not seen each other enough?



- 2007 – Year of retreats (4 two-day retreats of UNCT after the 1st Town Hall (Feb/Sept/Dec/Jan) and 2 Away Day (Jan/May))
- Monthly and many ad-hoc UNCT meetings (at Heads level)
- Countless meetings of OP2 WG, 5 Outcomes groups, OP narrative WG, OPMP WG, OPFMAC, M&E WG
- 9 two-day retreats of HPPMG WG (joint Gov't/UN) and two weeks to edit the HPPMG draft
- 2 meetings of the Tripartite National Task Force (UN/Gov't/donors) (Nov 07, Jan 08)
- Many meetings with MPI/GACA/MOFA on UN reform related issues

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Time line



- One Plan 2 / One Budget 2 finalized end Q1/2008
- Joint Donor Assessment on OP 2/OB 2 available end Q1/2008
- HPPMG finalized in April
- Draft OPMP shared with Gov't and Donors end February
- One Leader MOU finalized

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Lessons learnt to date



- Building a coherent UN achieving higher development impact is a tough process and takes time
- Strong ownership and leadership by the Government is key for success
- A cohesive donor group supporting the UN reform is an important factor for our initial achievements
- Viet Nam reform process started after the programming framework finalized has consequences on the scope of possible programmatic changes.

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Lessons learnt to date



- Important to have Clarity of Intent and “Efficiency Gains” better addressed (UNEP report)
- Managing external and internal expectations of the performance of Viet Nam pilot is crucial to reduce unnecessary pressure on the UNCT
- Viet Nam under the microscope. We need more space and flexibility to “pilot” (moratorium on incoming missions, etc)

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... but challenges still remain



- To build a coherent UN achieving higher development impact in more efficient manner
- To overcome obstacles that prevent the effective implementation of the One Plan
- How to really maximize potential synergies
- UN exerting more leadership in international development community

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2008 – the Year of the Rat



From complicated design ...

... to implementation

From meeting together ...

...to really working better together



2

Annex 4

Minutes of Town Hall Meeting 2 22nd January 2008

InterContinental Hanoi Westlake – K5 Nghi Tam, Xuan Dieu, Tay Ho
Co chair: Mr. John Hendra (UNRC) and Mr. Dang Huu Cu (SAs)

OPENING REMARKS AND UPDATES ON ONE UN INITIATIVE

Welcoming remarks by Mr. Dang Huu Cu, SA Co-Chair

The SA Co-Chair underlined that Town Hall Meeting (THM) was an opportunity to keep staff updated about One UN Initiative in Viet Nam. The meeting was also an open dialogue between the UN management and the staff to address staff concerns and questions on the One UN Initiative. The THM agenda was introduced. (*See Annex 1 Town Hall Meeting Agenda*)

6 months updates on One UN Initiative by Mr. John Hendra, UNRC

The UNRC concurred with his co-chair's opinion that the THM was a very good time to joint together. He stressed that it was a chance to look for innovations and different ways of doing business not only from Head of Agencies but also from staff. He expressed his hope that the UN staff would bring specific recommendations and innovative solutions for the One UN Initiative.

Regarding the One UN Initiative in Viet Nam, Mr. Hendra stressed that many achievements have been obtained for the last 6 months in 5 Ones: One Plan; One Budget and One Plan Fund; One Plan Management Plan; One UN House; One Leader. (*See Annex 3 UN Reform in Vietnam -A 6-month update*). Some significant aspects such as M&E, staff engagement in the UN reform, transactions cost and lessons learned were also covered in the presentation. He also highlighted that many challenges still remained i.e. how to build a more coherent and efficient UN, how to overcome obstacles that prevent the effective implementation of the One Plan, how to really maximize potential synergies and to exert more UN leadership in international development community. The milestone plans of the 5 Ones for the next few months would include i) finalizing OP2, OB2, OPMP, One Leader's MOU, HPPMG; ii) recruiting project manager and mobilizing resources for the One UN House, iii) Joint Donor Assessment on OP2/OB2.

The UNRC came up with the conclusions that the UNCT would need to work together to move from a complicated design to a real implementation and from meeting to really working together in the year 2008

Questions and Answers on the 6 months updates

It was commented by a staff that the staff survey would be a very powerful and useful tool to collect opinions from staff taking into consideration that not all questions/concerns were raised at the THM. The UNRC fully agreed with the comment and noted that the survey would be done by an independent professional company and kept confidentially. It would be in both web-based and hand-writing format for the convenience of the staff.

In response to the staff question about supporting arguments for the on-going reform in Viet Nam, taking into account that different countries may have different ideas about the One UN Initiative, the UNRC referred to the tri-annum conference of policy review, in which

the government would make their reviews on the UN operation system on development (particularly on the reform in the current context). There was a debate among developing countries. However, he stressed that the important thing was the ownership/participation of the government/country in the process. In Viet Nam, Rwanda, and Mozambique, the government was very proactive with high expectation. Therefore, we were under a real pressure from the Government to change toward a more coherent, effective and efficient One UN.

SESSION 1: ONE PLAN MANAGEMENT PLAN (OPMP)

Ms. Nguyen T. Y Duyen (UNICEF) on behalf of UN Staff Association reviewed the last THM OPMP-related questions/issues that were not fully addressed and asked for feedbacks at this THM. She also raised some additional questions collected from the 2nd THM questionnaires.

Mr. Jesper Morch (UNICEF Representative, Chair of OPMP working group) addressed the two THM 1 issues, namely training opportunity through WB Respectful Workplace Advisors and “Two work” initiative by commenting that such issues relate to UN Agencies’ daily work. He suggested that the SAs should collect such questions and concrete proposals/recommendations from staff. The UNCT would then discuss on how to best practically implement it.

Mr. Morch, then, provided concrete feedbacks to questions collected from the THM2 questionnaires as follows:

- Has research on human resources (HR) policies been conducted? What are the results?

No research has been conducted yet. Research and questions may refer to capacity assessment where we look at existing capacity against the identified capacity need of the One Plan and some suggestions how we will do. We can learn from the piloting countries that had implemented this exercise. It should be noted that the OPMP will not cover this HR or/and operational policy but will only describe a process through which UNCT will agree on how to have such policy established.

- Is UN going to uniform contractual modalities and staff benefits?

Human Resource (HR) is one of the most complex areas of the UN. There is no specific plan for harmonization of HR policies, procedures and practices in One UN Initiative in Viet Nam yet. There is a gap between the expectation at country level and the real flexibility agencies can move in due to HQ regulations/decisions.

However, the issue is being considered in New York. Dialogues on what desirable policies would be eventually established at country level are underway among 8 piloting countries. However, it takes time in a laboratory process.

- Can 100% of DSA apply to drivers from all UN agencies. Why UNFPA drivers only received 70% of DSA when traveling?

In principle, UNCT in Viet Nam agreed on 100% standard DSA rate to drivers for all agencies. However, the real implementation might be prevented from financial constraints of each agency.

- Will UN have a joint staff orientation programme for new staff?
It is a very good idea with a joint One UN briefing and orientation package for new staff and we don't need to wait until after we have an OPMP. We suggest that the SA representatives should be focal points consolidate such specific suggestions for further discussions or/and some agencies can go ahead in joining discussions with their staff on such issues.
- What are opportunities and threats for career development of National Professional Staff?
In principles, there will be no threats but rather, better opportunities for career development as it should become easier for a staff to move from one agency to another.
- What are basis and staff recruitment criteria when staffing structure changes?
The principles will be determined. The OPMP will not cover every details relating to the One UN Reform. However, a possible principle can be a candidate from one agency within the One UN shall be chosen over an external candidate whenever the external candidate is not clearly better qualified than the internal candidate.
- Is there an UN Learning Team who is in charge of developing training plan to equip staff with new competencies/skills that might be required by One UN?
Once the competency mapping and the capacity assessment have been undertaken, follow-up activities would be the establishment of a UN Learning Team and development of training plans on newly required competencies and skills.
- What are requirement to UN Agencies to change their operational rules/guidelines toward one UN spirit?
We are all very enthusiastic and want to see the UN in Viet Nam succeed. It is not a single agency alone but all 14 agencies together. We know of the framework within which we can move. The agencies themselves will determine their decisions/rules. It might be difficult with some issues like auditing, planning, M&E but significant improvements can obtained in many area. Such as HPPMG, HACT, etc.
- Why UNICEF HQ does not allow the Viet Nam office to move away from UNICEF global operational guidelines so that it can harmonize with procedures and processes of the One UN in Vietnam
This problem faces all agencies have and we suggest tackling it by the way mentioned earlier.
- How will WHO affect the management of all health related programmes as it will be considered as 'the cluster' leading agency?
A tentative list of 11 Programme Coordination Groups have been shared. However, it was highlighted that one or two agencies may be assigned as PCG conveners or co-conveners, not cluster lead agencies and no agency/person will be automatically selected for each group.

The answer was then supplemented by **Mr. Jean Mark Oliver, WHO Representative** that the UNCT has not decided on how coordinating group will function. However, he stressed that it would not be the case when one specific agency to do a leading job but the whole UNCT is expected to work as one in this learning process where the inputs from the staff are very important. All effort of the One UN Initiative in Viet Nam was to make the UN deliver more efficiently and effectively to meet with the context of Vietnam's changes to a middle-income country. He imagined of how differently WHO would function in the next 4 years compared with now and supposed that would happen with all other agencies.

- What are key lessons learned from UN joint Initiative

The UN Communication Team is suggested to share their great experience in the next session. It was also stressed that good lessons learned can be shared from HIV/AIDS and M&E teams.

In addition to the issues collected from the THM2 questionnaire, the staff and senior management discussed on issues/ questions as follows:

- Regarding work abuse, are there any written regulations/reporting mechanism in case one UN staff is abused by someone else at working place?

The issue is very important and we need to take it very seriously. One thing is to have mechanisms e.g. hotline, reporting mechanisms established and the other, more importantly is how to implement it. Abuse-related, sexual discriminations questions should also be included in the staff survey.

- Taking into account that two strategic visions of "One UN" as "Being One" and "Delivering as One" can be a challenge to the One UN Initiative, has the UNCT clarified a common vision beyond 2010 as the UNEG report's suggestion?

The initial vision was to integrate as 'One UN'. But it was too far from the current situation. The report's recommendation was raised at the TNTF taskforce and the UNCT spent a lot of time discussing on this issue at the Retreat in December. The UNCT is now working to revise the Agreed Principles and it is important that we will work toward a coherent vision in the partnership with the government. We need to make sure that the vision we have will well reflect related stakeholders' views especially ones of the Government of Viet Nam

The strategic revision will be clearer when the revised Agreed Principles is shared with donors and government by the UNCT.

- Regarding Kon Tum Joint Programme, it is necessary to have a balance between harmonized rules/regulations and agencies' rules at micro and macro levels and a special solution for joint programme. For example, while UNFPA take few days to transfer money to local agencies, the other agencies need longer time. In addition, communication among agencies involving in the programme takes time as all things had to gone through one focal point before assigning it to the others.

We should not look at one agency against the other as each agency has its own constraints. The system, as the whole, has the weaknesses. We have many

lessons learnt from Kon Tum and HIV/AIDS joint programmes. We are working together on advocacy and communication also. We will need to follow-up after this meeting to see how we can address issues.

The session was concluded with the co-moderators' remarks as follows:

- The OPMP is being finalized and is expected to be ready after Tet. After this meeting, staff can send further concerns/questions with regard to the OPMP working group through SAs or to Senior Management
- It is able to address the equity issues at two levels: common services and common applications. In order to do it, it is important to have a common policy developed and applicable for the whole UNCT.
- Concerning the operational procedure across agencies, an inter-agency mission on HR will come to look at HR policies across UN agencies in the next few months. The mission is expected to look at how each agency work and come to concrete suggestions. However, the UNCT should go ahead to discuss the issues that can be addressed at country level.
- It is able to move towards in some areas such as the UN learning team, orientation, etc. Discussions should be taken place to see how it can be operationalized in the UNCT.

SESSION 2: ONE PLAN + ONE BUDGET

Mr. Duong Van Dat (UNFPA), on behalf of the UN Staff Association moderated the session and raised up the following questions:

- Could you update the roadmap for development and implementation of One Plan 2 and One Plan Fund?
- Whether and how would different organizations be structured under the UN reform?
- In particular, are there any programme areas to be merged amongst UN agencies?
- Please update on the structure of joint clusters and joint-teams under the One Plan
- Over the past 6 months, within UNCT, there are a lot of debates around budget shares of One UN Fund and political positioning by agencies. It is likely that we lost sight of building a better system, or doing better work. So when can we make the statement to interested external parties that the One UN reform process is working?
- What kind of data could we present to prove this point? If not yet available now, when will it be available?
- What are the orientations/perspectives of UN HQs, donors and Viet Nam's Government for current and future UN reform in Vietnam?
- One Plan 1 or 2 is for the period 2007-2010. Will we start a new One Plan after 2010?
- What will be the future of one UN in Viet Nam or elsewhere for the next ten or more years?

Ms. Setsuko Yamazaki (UNDP Country Director) answered the question on roadmap for development and implementation of One Plan 2 and One Plan Fund as follows:

One Plan II consists of three parts: 1) narrative and 2) result and recourse framework and 3) budget. There have been discussions to reduce the budget because the budget jumps up from about 200ml dollars to 400million dollars in view of practical issues to raise the fund. Then the result and resource framework and the narrative will modified accordingly. All of agencies are welcome to have comments on narrative and budget. The One Plan Fund is expected to complete soon.

There are 4 steps to be taken:

Step 1: The draft of One Plan will be shared with the Government, donors and UN headquarters and get and sign agreement. Then it is necessary to identify the total money of UN agencies bring to Vietnam and how much each agencies need to deliver the plan. The regular budget and non-regular budget need to be clear.

Step 2: Legal documents need to be finalized. There are two legal document: 1) MoU signed among participating UN agencies identifies the administrative agent which is now UNDP. 2) LoA signed with donors with details on donors' contribution to the fund for One UN.

Step 3: Committees are set up to agree on fund allocation criteria based on contribution received from donors

Step 4: Agencies contact UNDP for fund allocation.

The cost of regional experts was agreed to be included in the budget.

Other senior management representatives emphasized the importance of how 14 agencies working together effectively in joint programme/ clusters and the relevance of the UN roles/work in Viet Nam. In addition, it was highlighted that UN process might change some staff structure but not reduce staffing and staff would work together on common objectives to eliminate the duplication.

The UN Communication Team shared its experience as the first co-located team among the UN Organization. A lot of value has been obtained by sitting together. The team could serve clients better and staff could learn a lot from each other. However, the team was facing with many issues that were currently discussed such as harmonized HR policy, no other co-located team, etc. Significant progress was obtained in the area of IT services, task management and report. A HR consultant was hired to push the HR issue forward. It was stressed that discussion among the team member and UN Management support would provide a momentum toward solutions.

In response to a staff concern about the **financial management of the One Plan Fund** and the standard recovery cost charged by the AA and each participating agency to the fund received, it was highlighted that UNDP, as the Admin Agent, will charge a 1% fee that applies to the whole fund, and each agency also will charge a 7% general management service fee to their portion.

SESSION 3: ONE LEADER AND ONE HOUSE

Ms. Katja Elina Pellini (UNESCO), on behalf of the UN Staff Association moderated the session with the remarks that there was no question on One Leader collected from the questionnaires.

Concerning One House, many questions were already replied in the 6-month update presentation by Mr. Hendra. She provided a summary of the first THM questions relating to the eco-friendly feature of a One UN House, funding issues, working place and facilities, etc.

She also presented the two questions collected at the THM 2:

- Is there any roadmap for the One UN House?
- Would it be possible to have services like on-site daycare/preschool facilities in the future One UN House?

Mr. Neil Reece Evans (Chair of OMT, DCD of UNDP) responded to the One UN House questions by sharing progress obtained by now. A mission by OMT, RCO, DISERCO (MOFA) to Chulalongkorn University to observe eco-friendly designs was organized. With the funding from Norwegian government through UNEP regional office in Bangkok, preliminary design of a Green One UN House has been completed by Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. The first design will be presented with OMT, SAs, HOA next week. With regard to resource mobilization, Ex-com Agencies agreed to contribute USD 1 mil. The UK government pledged to contribute USD 1 million. Government of Viet Nam was talking about funding. However, he stressed that many things need to be done to make the Green One UN House happen.

With regard to the daycare/ preschool facilities question, Mr. Evans highlighted that the facilities such as canteen, medical facility, etc. were attached to the importance when completing the preliminary design. It was necessary to discuss about the daycare/preschool facilities taking into consideration the financial capacity. OMT and SAs would like to collect all opinions/comments from UN staff with regard to the Green One UN House.

The staff also raised additional questions on One Leader and Resident Coordinator's Office at the THM as follows:

- In the context of the One UN Initiative, is the role of UNRC in piloting countries different from other RCs? Whether the RCs in piloting countries do receive more authority or being more empowered to make decision especially where the consensus can not be reached among the team?

The UNRC answered the One Leader's question by recalling initial vision in Vietnam to move to One UN with integrated management. It was the view of having RC almost like CEO. However, it was not happening. The UNCT has a long discussion and come to an agreement of giving RC more roles but more accountability regarding resource mobilize, one voice, etc. A One Leader' MOU is being discussed among the team. The UNCT was committed to work as one to efficiently response to the dynamic change in the country.

The importance of the MOU of One Leader and the necessity of creating an environment that the One Leader can work and exercise his role in reality were also highlighted.

- How will Resident Coordinator's Office be structured under the framework of the One UN Reform?

The head of RCO provided feedbacks to the questions by highlighting that RCO's tasks were to facilitate and support the reform process but not set up a bureaucratic

layer. What RCO tried to do move and shake the system. Reform could only happen if it came from UNCT (staff, management, etc.)

OTHER ISSUES

Mr. Kevin Deveaux (UNDP), on behalf of UN Staff Association, mentioned about a pending issue from the 1st THM on taxation for national and international staff.

Mr. Neil Reece-Evans, on behalf of the UN Operations Management Team, informed on meetings with Hanoi Taxation, Ministry of Finance and Government Office to share with them on one UN process and relating documentations. A follow-up letter was sent to Hanoi Taxation on 21 December 2007 with copies sent to the government (MPI, MOFA) and UN Headquarters. A further meeting is expected to be held soon to finalize an agreement. According to him the meeting was very positive and Hanoi Taxation expressed that they would comply with agreement which have been signed between UN Agencies and Tax Authority.

It was proposed by a staff that the UN Operations Management Team should work with MoFA or higher-level government bodies on taxation. His proposal was taken by UN Management Team.

FINAL REMARKS OF UN TOWNHALL MEETING

Final remarks of the UN THM by Mr. John Hendra

UN Town Hall meeting proved to be very productive and enriching, as a useful framework for sharing UN reform steps with all staff. As in an innovative process, exchange of information and dialogue is crucial.

UN communication joint team is a good experience from which we can get some lessons learned and that could inspire other type of initiatives in the future.

This year will bring new initiatives and challenges. In 2008 the UNCT should move from meeting together to really working together.