



**MDG-F Regional Workshop for Africa, Arab States,
Asia and Eastern Europe**

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FINAL REPORT



Winning photo from the economic governance joint programme in the Philippines

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1. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

As the MDG-F pursues its fifth year of work, the Fund continues its efforts to maximize the achievement and sustainability of development results, as well as its commitment to systematically monitor and evaluate the experience and knowledge generated by participating countries, joint programmes, and the overall Fund as a mechanism. Through the implementation of joint programmes, important partnerships have been created to address multi-dimensional issues; these have generated a wealth of experiences and lessons learned to inform an assessment of the progress, opportunities, strengths and challenges for the UN system in relation to the reform process and joint programming, and in comparison with other mechanisms. Reflecting on these experiences will also help strengthen our contribution to debates on aid effectiveness (Busan 2011), One UN (Montevideo 2011), and progress on MDGs.

In this context the MDG-F Secretariat hosted the “Regional Workshop for Africa, Arab States, Asia and Eastern Europe”, bringing together over 200 participants from the UN system and national partners. This followed another Regional Workshop held in Cartagena, Colombia from 7 to 9 June 2011, for the Latin American and Caribbean Countries.

The overall objectives of the workshop were the following:

- To facilitate knowledge exchange and networking between participants of the MDG-F; forge on-going collaboration and teamwork across global, regional and country levels; share knowledge stemming from the implementation of joint programmes (JPs); document practical experiences; and showcasing successful practices in achieving development results.
- To consolidate experiences with communication and advocacy (C&A), and monitoring and evaluation (M&E); as well as to further support /enhance knowledge and skills of participants on concepts, tools and successful methodologies for M&E and C&A. This will also be instrumental to strengthen the capacity of participating countries in the areas relating to monitoring and communicating progress in the achievement of results.
- In consultation with different Fund stakeholders, provide inputs for a discussion paper on concrete issues related to national ownership, UN Reform and contribution to the achievement of the MDGs/ development agenda.

2. WORKSHOP ORGANIZATION

The workshop’s participants included UN Resident Coordinators, joint programme national counterparts, joint programme Coordinators, Coordination Officers and selected specialists supporting the joint programmes in M&E and C&A.

The event was composed of plenary sessions and working groups, where participants had a chance to exchange ideas and experiences around a number of issues that fall within the general frameworks of the MDG Agenda, the UN Reform and the principles of the Paris Declaration.

In addition, there were two specialized working sessions on monitoring and evaluation and on communication and advocacy.

3. SYNTHESIS OF WORKING SESSIONS

This section of the report presents a synthesis of the six working sessions around which the workshop was structured. This text presents only the participants' conclusions and does not offer any analysis at this time. The MDG-F Secretariat is currently working on this analysis.

The UN Resident Coordinators debated four key topics: UN reform, national ownership, results achievement and country classification.



Culture and development programme in Mozambique

The sessions of the UN Coordination Officers, JP Coordinators and Government Representatives provided an opportunity for participants to discuss three main topics, namely: i) results achievement; ii) national ownership, and iii) UN reform. Under each of these headings participants were asked to address a number of specific questions that are detailed in annex I.

Finally, the sessions on M&E and C&A mainly focused on identifying good practices and shared criteria, so as to provide technical orientation to the JP.

The key points addressed and the main conclusions of each working session are presented below.

A) WORKING SESSION OF UN RESIDENT COORDINATORS

i) Ownership

In this section of the debate, participants discussed the issue of ownership from the perspective of national ownership of the MDG-F Joint Programmes and of UN System ownership of the MDG-F as a modality for development cooperation and made the following points.

Regarding national ownership, participants acknowledged that the MDG-F governance mechanisms provide a forum for governments to play a leadership role in JP oversight and management and, therefore, for greater national ownership. On the other hand, the management arrangement proposed by the MDG-F superposed other existing governing bodies, such as those of the UNDAF and of the Country Programmes of individual UN organizations. In some cases this has created a duplication that affected the participation of Government counterparts. It can be challenging to bring in senior level government people to participate in each and every governing body. Participants suggested that a possible solution could be to merge these three levels into one comprehensive National Steering Committee (NSC). Having the formal presence of a Minister at the NSC is important, but this is just one aspect and in and of itself does not define the quality of ownership. The main issue is to have the JP integrated into national policies, and this might be more challenging in certain countries for programmes that respond to the UN mandate on sensitive issues, such as human rights.

Understanding and promoting ownership at different levels including national and local governments as well as civil society is important. This wider ownership also relies on JP activities being implemented with an inclusive, horizontal approach, and respectful of social, political and institutional dynamics, so as to ensure the legitimacy of the initiatives among the different stakeholders. UN Agencies should avoid being too protagonist and substituting themselves to national or local counterparts in the name of efficiency and the achievement of implementation targets. Another issue raised was that of how to measure ownership. The group felt that a valid indicator is co-financing from national or local partners. In general, there was agreement that the ownership has been greater when the MDG-F came to reinforce a policy already in place. In this connection it was also noted that another good indicator of national ownership is the replication or up streaming of JP initiatives under the leadership of national counterparts.

UN Country Team (UNCT) ownership of the MDG-F as a modality for development cooperation and a platform for interagency coordination is mixed. According to the participants, the MDG-F is owned by the RC and its office, but not equally by the individual Agencies, Funds and Programmes. There is a perception that the MDG-F might be yet another bureaucratic requirement from headquarters or another bilateral donor coming in through the UN system. Consequently the MDG-F would have benefited from being more organically integrated into the collective UN identity as opposed to presenting itself as a separate branding.

ii) UN Reform

The UN Resident Coordinators debated the following points on UN reform.

There was consensus among the participants that the MDG-F was the first significant financial incentive for interagency work on MDGs at the country level, thereby providing an empirical basis to advance the UN Reform. The MDG-F on its own does not drive UN reform, but it does provide a good mechanism to show what is possible. Moreover, the MDG-F provided support to the RC office, contributing to its empowerment and reinforcing its oversight and representational roles. This was particularly the case in MDG-F Focus Countries where the RC office received extra funds for monitoring, evaluation, and communication and advocacy activities.

However, as mentioned in the section on ownership, MDG-F management modalities, including M&E and C&A, could have been better integrated into existing UN tools and procedures so as to enhance its institutionalization within the UN system at large and its continuity once the MDG-F closed its operations.

The importance of the leadership of governments in promoting UN reform is a critical factor for success. It is the national government that can best empower the RC to lead coordination and harmonization within the UNCT. In this respect, the JPs are a good entry point, but without clear political support from government there will not be real achievements on UN reform. Along the same line, the importance of being supported by the donor community was highlighted. However, some ministries are more comfortable and make a greater investment in building up a partnership with the UN agency having a similar sectoral mandate, which is less conducive to internal UN coordination and harmonization.

While calling for the need for greater empowerment and a greater role for the Resident Coordinator, the latter should privilege its political representation role and not be directly involved in programme

management, a function that must be left to the Country Directors and UN Agency Representatives. The leadership role of the RC is hindered by the different mandates and lines of reporting of each organization, which *de facto* only allows for a moral authority of the RC. In this connection, it was noted that the Coherence Funds passing through the RC office provide a better platform to empower its coordination role thanks to the delegated authority to allocate the funds¹.

This led to the discussion on accountability, whereby the role of the RC should be to hold the Lead UN Agency accountable, rather than being directly accountable for the JP activities. However, it was recognized that different JPs adopted different management modalities, putting greater emphasis on the role of the Lead UN Agency or on the role of the RC, and that it would be worthwhile to assess the pros and cons of these different options to see what has worked and why. Regarding the effectiveness of the management model based on the Lead UN Agency, the latter should limit its role to provide technical orientation and supervision without overlapping with the managerial functions of the JP Coordinator, so as to avoid confusion of roles and responsibilities which is not conducive to an effective coordination on the ground.

At the beginning, UN Agencies were mainly attracted by the funding opportunity and when the identification and design of the JP did not coincide with the UNDAF, JPs were largely based on the Agencies' need to fund the continuation of their own activities, while ideally it should be the other way around. This dynamic was thought to be one of the factors that can explain, in some cases, the unwillingness of UN organizations to privilege their collective identity over their brand and individual visibility.

The collective reflection on how to actually work together within a coherent programmatic framework became a reality (and challenge) during the implementation phase. In some cases this created a tension between the expectations raised and the real operational capacity of participating organizations. Some of them stepped into JPs to get money without having enough in country capacity for efficient implementation and monitoring of progress towards expected results or for active participation in the governing bodies and coordination mechanisms. One of the challenges faced in implementation was the different interpretation of Results Based Management and the different capacity to operationalize it throughout the programme cycle.

iii) Results Achievement

The participants then moved on to discuss results achievements. It was acknowledged that the JPs have worked as catalysts to inject new ideas and to develop technical skills. For example, in spite of its relatively little financial weight, UN work done through the MDG-F JP has demonstrated an added value in transferring methodologies to the country level that enable national partners to better dialogue with other actors such as the EU and WB which are their main financial partners. This is particularly true in the case of middle income countries (MIC) and European Union accession countries. MDG-F JPs have had an important demonstrative effect of better institutional coordination within the UN system and the national governments. Similarly, the MDG-F has been successfully used as an advocacy tool and has contributed to widen the MDG Agenda, introducing a human development perspective and rights based

¹ *Note by the MDG-F Secretariat: While the decision-making process for UN coherence funds may go through the UNRC, the funds transit via the same process as the MDG-F i.e. through the MDTF Office and then to the UN Agency headquarters.*

approach. These are indirect effects of the JP that should be adequately captured and reported, together with the direct or indirect impact on the MDG indicators.

Greater geographical convergence, rather than territorial dispersion within a given country, could have been more conducive to maximizing impact of the MDG-F JPs. At the same time, participants lamented that the short duration of the JPs does not allow consolidating processes and achieving significant outcomes within the given time frame. In some cases the design of JPs was unrealistically ambitious and did not consider carefully enough the actual time and resource constraints.

Finally, there are still significant challenges in designing and applying results oriented planning, monitoring and evaluation system and in demonstrating credible linkages between the JP activities and outputs and the trends in national statistics. This might be more feasible at the local level where the impact of JP is more visible, but it still constitutes a challenge.

iv) Country Classification

The objective of this discussion was to discuss the role of the MDG-F in various countries such as LDCs, middle income and crisis countries. In this connection, participants questioned the mainstream country classification according to macroeconomic indicators that is often used in the allocation of ODA in the global system. In their view, this type of classification loses sight of the multidimensional character of human development and of internal inequalities across different regions or groups of population. Although the MDG agenda is not always perceived as a national priority in what are defined as “middle income countries”, the relevance of MDG related work in these countries is confirmed by the persisting internal inequalities.

While the MDG-F can be equally relevant in countries with different income levels, the relative weight of the MDG-F Joint Programmes in relation to the overall ODA and to the PIB makes a significant difference in the possibility for the Fund to impact as a mechanism for development cooperation at the country level. Some UNRCs felt that the relatively short timeframe of the MDG-F JPs was a challenge to working effectively in crisis and post crisis countries.

Towards the end of day, the UN Resident Coordinators had a discussion on support to the UN Coordination Office. The support provided by the MDG-F was greatly appreciated but it could not be counted on in the long term. The RCs felt that the Coordination Offices need a minimum capacity and that this was being eroded by a decrease in funding from UNDOCO.



Private sector joint programme in Egypt

B) WORKING SESSION OF UN COORDINATION OFFICERS

i) National Ownership

According to participants, the understanding of the concept of national ownership and its effective application has varied greatly from country to country and from programme to programme. Some national authorities have shown effective leadership and ability to lead programmes, while in other cases ownership has been more limited, with governments mostly participating and accompanying programme implementation while the leadership of the JP remains with UN agencies. In order to enhance national ownership, governments should be involved in all phases of the JP, from the early conceptualization to its implementation, including a more prominent role in the management of funds. This would require UN ability to maintain a constant dialogue with national counterparts, as well as the adequate institutional capacity on behalf of national partners.

The group highlighted the notion that national ownership should go beyond government ownership, to include civil society and local governments as well as community organizations. Civil society involvement in different phases of the JP has been rather limited, particularly in the identification phase and in JP governing bodies such as the Programme Management Committee (PMC). However, participants also highlighted some cases of remarkable experiences with local communities and civil society participation. In particular, when the PMCs have been decentralized at provincial and local levels they have proven to be effective in enhancing the participation of local actors in decision-making.

The question of national ownership can be particularly challenging in crisis contexts, where the legitimacy of national Government might be questioned by political opponents and reaching an agreement among stakeholders can be very difficult. Beyond these specific circumstances, it was noted that sometimes UN agencies tend to control programme implementation rather than giving more space to national partners in programme management, including monitoring and reporting. This is particularly the case when the JPs are executed directly by a UN organization.

ii) UN Reform



YEM volunteers tutoring youth to stay in school instead of migrating for work in China

Coordination Officers agreed that the MDG-F has strengthened the role of the RC and RCO, providing the tools and the means to promote greater coherence at the country level. They argued that the management arrangements proposed by the MDG-F have also helped to increase awareness of the importance of joint work within the UN system as they provided a platform for experimentation. The effort to coordinate within the UN system has resulted in national counterparts enhancing their internal communication and cross sectoral work in the framework of the JPs.

However, there still are challenges to be faced. Although the Fund formally empowers the RC and its office, the actual authority of the RC over other Agencies

and its power to effectively coordinate the UN system is still hindered by the internal diversity of UN administrative procedures and reporting lines. The lack of harmonized UN administrative procedures directly affects efficiency in implementation. Additionally, the UN different mandates and individual UN Agency identities and agendas, can create a sense of confusion and frustration among government counterparts. Sometimes heavy management structures can exhaust government officials.

Concern has also been expressed regarding the sustainability of the governing mechanisms set forth by the MDG-F, particularly as regards the leadership role of the national counterparts and the participation of local actors in the strategic direction and management of programmes. There is no guarantee that such mechanisms will still be adopted as a standard *modus operandi* once the MDG-F JPs are closed.

iii) Results Achievement

Regarding the contribution to the MDG Agenda, the participants of this session perceive that the MDG-F JPs are relevant and are contributing in different ways. They also argued that it is difficult to establish a direct line of attribution between the JP activities and progress in national MDG indicators. This is due to the great number of variables that can influence changes in national statistics, and is particularly the case in middle income countries, where the financial input of the UN is minimal in relation to the national economy. Therefore, it is less likely that MDG-F JPs come a deciding factor for change in the short run.

In spite of the difficulties in assessing the direct impact at the national level, there are a number of areas in which MDG-F contribution can be measured by proxy indicators. These include the following:

- Raising awareness on the MDGs and providing a platform for national and local debate ;
- Influencing policy-making and mainstreaming the MDG agenda into the national development agenda;
- Piloting of innovative initiatives which can be replicated or up-scaled;
- Contributing to national statistical and monitoring capacities through the preparation of the MDG Progress Reports, which allowed identifying gaps and needs; and
- Addressing inequalities within countries by raising the voice and concerns of the most vulnerable groups including women and ethnic minorities, and promoting equitable access to basic social services.

While acknowledging these important contributions, participants also identified a number of internal factors as well as variables given the contexts in which JPs operate that have limited greater impact. The operationalization of results based management has been identified as one of the key challenges. The ability of UN organizations to analyze and report JP progress beyond reporting on compliance with work plans and delivery targets is still limited. This has negatively affected the strategic management and effective implementation of JPs in a way that should optimize opportunities and minimize risks. The challenges in interagency coordination that were referred to in the section on UN reform have also affected greater synergy and effectiveness on the ground. There is still too much reliance on personal commitments rather than on institutional incentives and arrangements, and this also influences institutional memory with negative consequences for continuity and coherence over time. The short three-year JP time frame does not allow consolidating processes, especially considering the complexity of the institutional architecture of the JP which in many cases requires more than one year to be fully

operational. Additionally, frequent political changes in the country context add high turnover in government counterparts.

The need to have clearly defined exit strategies was identified as a critical challenge at this point in time. The majority of JPs are in their second year or last phase of implementation and it is important to ensure a smooth transition of responsibilities to national and local counterparts, so as to avoid an abrupt interruption of the initiatives supported by the JP. In this respect, national ownership, at the national government level, as well as among local governments and community organization is a key factor for continuity and sustainability. The most effective programmes in terms of sustainability are those which managed to include certain themes on the national development agenda and policy debate, with a view to scaling up the pilot initiatives experimented during the programmes.



Culture and Development JP in Namibia

C) WORKING SESSION OF JP COORDINATORS

i) Results Achievement

Participants acknowledged that while the JPs are still being implemented, it is difficult to assess their direct impact on MDGs at national level. Moreover, it should be recognized that the inputs provided by the JPs constitute just one variable within a large number of factors that can influence change hence the difficulty in drawing a line of direct attribution between JP activities and changes in national statistical indicators for MDGs. In spite of these challenges, it was argued that there are a number of indirect outcomes in which JP contribution is more visible and tangible.

The key areas in which JPs have contributed so far include:

- Increasing awareness on the MDG related issues at national and local levels;
- Positioning the MDG agenda in the national political debate and incorporating it into national and local development plans;
- Influencing policy making by up-scaling successful pilots initiatives from the local level to national policies and programmes;
- Contributing to better horizontal coordination within government institutions thanks to the inter sectoral nature of many JPs and to the governance mechanisms proposed by the MDG-F that provide a platform for dialogue between institutions; and
- Increasing access to public services at the local level.

Alignment to national priorities and the participation of all stakeholders from the identification and design phases through JP implementation have been identified as critical factors that can enhance the effectiveness of JPs and the sustainability of results over time.

Another important issue addressed by participants was that of exit strategies to ensure a smooth

transition at the end of the JP cycle. One of the key elements to prepare the exit of the JP and to ensure the continuity of the initiative is to embed the programme into government systems and use/ improve government tools. Programmes should be organically inserted into national and local institutions and not just aligned with national and local political discourse. Working towards the development of national and local institutional capacities, with a view that goes beyond the accomplishment of programme activities was highlighted as a critical element in an approach to sustainable results. By the same token, participants stressed the importance of systematizing programme experience so as to leave a set of accessible information, methodologies and good practices, as references for future actions once the JPs are closed.

To ensure continuity it is important to include the initiatives supported by the JP into the new UNDAF and to actively pursue other funding sources that can complement the MDG-F.

Finally, participants agreed that all the JPs, in one way or another, address issues of inequality by targeting areas and groups where the MDGs have not yet been met. This implies addressing the most vulnerable or excluded groups and regions within each country, including ethnic minorities, youth, migrants, rural population, and marginalized urban areas.

ii) National ownership

Participants shared their perception on the ownership of the JP in their country, and this revealed different understandings and different scenarios. Some felt that ownership is at the Ministry level, while others argued that it is crucial to adopt a more inclusive concept, including ownership at the local level and with CSOs. While the national government might take the ownership of the JP, in some cases this was less evident at the local level where the programme was perceived as a UN initiative. The extent to which the JP is actually owned by all stakeholders may vary, but it was argued that the Programme Management Committees (PMCs) work as solid platforms for governments to take the lead in planning and implementation. There was consensus in highlighting the direct link between the alignment of national priorities and national ownership, and it was argued that a good indicator of national ownership is the percentage of co-financing from national counterparts, whether in cash or in kind. Another good indicator is the fact the government takes the initiative to replicate or scale up pilot initiatives.

The discussion revealed that the experience on widening the ownership of JPs beyond national governments is mixed. In some cases there has been participation of local actors and civil society from the identification and design phases to implementation, but in several cases there was little involvement of local actors and CSO in decision-making. There was consensus among participants that, as far as civil society is concerned, the concept of ownership in practice corresponds to participation in the implementation phase, where the decision making is limited to operational issues, while the political direction of the JP is normally at the national government level.

Participants have identified the leadership in fund management as one of the key factors that may hinder or foster greater national ownership. Some argued that when the Government does not have responsibilities on fund management, ownership is actually limited. Another factor that may limit national ownership is language. In countries where the national language is not a UN official language and the JP working language is English the ownership of national actors might be affected. Finally, the operational capacity of national institutions can affect ownership, particularly when they are not sufficiently staffed or resourced to actually take the lead of JP management and implementation.

Most participants argued that there are clear synergies between the UN mandate, the MDG-F agenda and national priorities. In some cases there might be a different perception of priorities, for instance, in EU accessing countries macroeconomic stabilization is sometimes considered a greater priority than MDG achievement, but this never led to real political tension between the UN and national Governments. Occasionally, given the nature of the JP and the context in which it operates, ownership can be affected by the difficulty to identify the most appropriate national counterpart, and this is more contentious when JPs are not fully aligned with national policies and programmes, leading to a lack of interest on the Government side.

iii) UN Reform



Culture and Development JP in Morocco

Participants agreed in perceiving that the MDG-F has paved the way for greater coherence at the country level and has succeeded as an institutional incentive for greater coordination and synergy within the UNCT and across different sectors of intervention. However, they also agreed that there still is a long way to go to transform the One UN discourse into a consolidated practice. The lack of administrative harmonization was identified as a critical factor. Moreover, issues of institutional cultures, individual agendas and visibility still hinder in some cases greater coherence of the UN system.

While there might be agreement at the policy level, implementation of activities and delivery of outputs sometimes responds more to individual UN mandates than to a joint strategy for action.

Participants also agreed that the JPs are effective in demonstrating the benefits of working together and contributed in facilitating better communication and coordination within government entities, both horizontally and vertically. On the other hand, they also acknowledged that the fact that coordination and communication is “programme based” rather than a consolidated *modus operandi*, there is a challenge to ensure that the benefits of JP working modalities will continue once the JP are closed.

There was consensus among participants that the system of co-chairing between the Government and the UN in the JP governing bodies (NSC and PMC) somehow ensures mutual accountability, but in most cases the UN has to take initiative in facilitating the functioning of such bodies.

Mutual accountability is hindered by the fact that UN organizations report directly to their head quarters and the MDG-F and sometimes accessing financial information is not made easy for national partners or even for JP coordinators. This might be particularly the case for non-resident Agencies.

In order to foster mutual accountability, the rules of sharing financial information with the government partners should be included specifically in the JP document at the very beginning.

D) WORKING SESSION OF GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

i) National Ownership

This segment of the debate highlighted the existence of different interpretations among participants on what national ownership is about. However, one common denominator was the endorsement of the definition of ownership under the Paris Declaration, particularly with respect to the importance of using government structures and procedures. In this connection, the participants made a number of recommendations that are listed below:

- More emphasis should be put on increasing monitoring and evaluation capacities of the governments.
- Coordination within the government is as important as UN internal coordination and a dedicated structure for project coordination and implementation should be identified within government counterparts.
- Civil society should be involved in the early project design, and serve as third party monitoring.
- Government representatives should chair Steering Committees and other structures, such as Programme Management Committees, and UN agencies should have only been observers and have an advisory role.
- Local authorities should be active partners in planning and implementation insuring sustainability, ownership and capacity building, as well replication of good practices.

ii) UN Reform

Participants agreed that the MDG-F provided the groundwork to enhance joint work among UN organizations, but its impact on the coherence of the UN system at country level is yet to be consolidated. There is still room for improvement, particularly in terms of simplification and harmonization of UN internal procedures for approval, implementation and reporting processes. Similarly, the division of labor among UN organizations could be better rationalized so as to enhance coordination.

The UN should carefully assess the readiness of countries to implement programmes and, when appropriate, consider transferring JP funds directly to the Government budget. Finally, it was noted that full transparency in budget programming and reporting and mutual trust between and across the government and the UN agencies contributes to maximizing the benefits of programme activities.

iii) Results Achievement

Participants of this session agreed that the MDG-F JPs are contributing to poverty alleviation through income generating activities, particularly women led interventions. These include initiatives to preserve and add value to cultural heritage, contributing indirectly to economic improvement through the



Culture and Development JP in Cambodia

promotion of cultural tourism. JPs are also contributing to rearticulating the social fabric through socio-economic interventions and to the development of national institutional capacities for greater internal coordination and cooperation.

Parallel to these positive contributions, participants noted that the design of the JPs could be improved, including a clearer definition of indicators to guide the implementation and enable JPs to better capture progress towards expected results. Alignment to country priorities in some cases could be enhanced and the issue of gender equality could be better mainstreamed throughout the different components of JP.

E) WORKING SESSION ON C&A

The Advocacy and Communications working session brought together representatives from twelve countries to share and consolidate experiences in advocacy, communication and citizen participation with the objective of using them to inform further action in this area of work. Based on this interaction the session was expected to produce the following outputs:

1. Agreed policy lines that generate action in the areas of:
 - a) Citizen organization and participation in MDG programmes and policy; and
 - b) Production of communication and advocacy pieces that reflect our work and help to advance the MDG agenda at the national and global level
2. Increased commitment to using strategic communication, advocacy and promote citizen participation in the coming 18 months to 2013.



Youth Employment and Migration JP in Serbia

The methodology used was one of presentations, group work and open discussion with the aim that the workshop outputs be created in a participatory manner based on experiences and perspectives of practitioners who are implementing this work at the national level. The inputs and outputs that stemmed from the Morocco workshop will be combined with those that recently emerged from the Latin America workshop held in Cartagena, Colombia (which brought together 18 countries), so that the final outputs are reflective of the MDG Fund's global effort.

The workshop was a good opportunity to revisit the rationale and main components of the MDG-F Advocacy and Communication (A&C) strategy and reflect on the advances and challenges that have characterized the past two years of implementation. It was noted that there is now greater willingness to engage with a broader definition of communication and advocacy and integrate action in this area to programme implementation. Also

there has been a significant increase in JPs with A&C strategies as well as examples of countries, which on their own initiative are looking at how MDGF JPs can join efforts to build one voice on MDG issues in a country. On the communications front it was noted that there has been an increase in the

documentation of stories whether in electronic or print form. The challenge remains however to keep advocacy and communication work strategic using effective tools that allow for the achievement of strong advocacy interventions that point to policy change and strengthened citizenship. While the number of JPs with strategies has increased many tend to resemble lists of activities rather than strategies. There is also a recurring issue of human resource allocation to this area since without the right people in the right place it is difficult to advance on the advocacy agenda.

The main discussions and presentations of the workshop revolved around the following sessions:

- What type of communication are we talking about?
- Citizen Participation and Policy Advocacy: Key elements and experiences (*Cases: Philippines- Advancing the Equity Agenda and Ethiopia- Citizen involvement in National Development Plans*)
- National appropriation of MDG agenda (*Case: Timor-Leste- National MDG Steering Committee*)
- Getting the Word Out- Developing good stories and spreading the word
- Guidelines for production of communication pieces: MDGF Secretariat viewpoint and revision of guidelines
- Joint communication and advocacy on MDGs (*Case: Great Ethiopian Run and One UN Communication on MDGs*)

On what type of communication it was noted that the MDGF Secretariat supports the integrated use of communication **about** development (which consists of capturing stories about positive change that is taking place through targeted interventions) as well as communication **for** development, which is a more participatory and transformational process, that links citizen voice to policy change processes. Communication happens for various reasons, for example to inform, disseminate, change behaviors, for visibility, social mobilization etc. and none are good or bad *per se*, but they can be more or less effective depending on what we are trying to achieve: knowing **why** we want to communicate, as basic as it may sound, is fundamental.

On citizen participation, policy advocacy and national appropriation there were several points raised such as the need to work directly with local civil society/citizen groups that have legitimacy among people, the use media and citizen mobilization to create pressure on governments to meet MDGs, the need to work with local governments to open dialogue spaces between citizens and governments and the importance of having a well thought out strategy to influence change that is based on what works in a given context amongst others. It was agreed that JPs should be used as platforms upon which processes of greater citizen involvement in policy areas can be fostered. There have been different practices and findings in this area and a document that captures these will be distributed at a later date (see Future Action below).

Regarding spreading the word and guidelines for communication products, these were validated during the workshop and are outlined in a separate document that is being circulated to all participating countries.

At the end of the workshop all participants were asked to reflect and document what concrete actions they envisage taking in the coming six months to advance the MDG communication and advocacy agenda in their respective countries/programmes. These will be followed up on by the Secretariat.

VIDEO AND PHOTO COMPETITION

As part of the Secretariats effort to encourage the production and dissemination of good communication pieces that reflect the work of joint programmes at the local and national level, a video and photo competition was held as part of the Regional Workshop.

The response from joint programmes was impressive with approximately 200 photographs and 20 videos submitted. These were reviewed by an internal panel according to a criterion of technical quality, good story telling, demonstration of JP impact and the inclusion of advocacy and call to action components. There were four prizes handed out for both the video and photo category with financial rewards that are to be destined towards increased communication and advocacy within respective joint programmes. The awards were given to the following countries:

Photo Category

- 1st prize: Philippines Democratic Economic Governance
- 2nd prize: Mozambique, Culture and Development
- 3rd prize: Egypt, Private Sector and Development
- 4th prize: Namibia, Culture and Development

Video Category

- 1st prize: Turkey, Climate Change
- 2nd prize: Serbia, Youth Employment and Migration
- 3rd prize: Cambodia, Culture and Development
- 4th prize: Bangladesh, Gender Empowerment

WORKSHOP FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

- Based on the outcomes of the Advocacy & Communications sessions in Colombia and Morocco where together thirty countries participated, the MDG-F Secretariat will compile agreed upon policy lines on advocacy, communication and citizen participation with the objective of using these to strengthen our work and inform further action.
- The Secretariat will create a network with workshop participants so that practices and insights can be shared and exchanged among countries and possibly regions giving practitioners an additional resource upon which to rely.
- Participants were also alerted that the Secretariat is at the disposal of countries to help document and disseminate good stories of the work that is taking place to advance the development agenda. These stories will be put on the MDG F global website and shared with senior levels of management within Spain and the UN.
- Rewards for video and photo competition will be transferred to country offices for the use of joint programmes.

The objective of this session was to identify success stories, best practices, useful M&E tools to share with the programmes and to provide guidance on JP final evaluations as well as focus country case study evaluations. For this purpose, the workshop brought together M&E focal points from 15 MDG-F countries covering all four regions, including M&E Specialists, JP Coordinators, RCO Coordination Officers, and M&E Consultants

The M&E session covered four distinct topics: a) M&E as a tool for measurement of development results, b) design of M&E systems in the institutional context, c) measuring the JP contribution to the MDGs, and d) designing indicators, data collection and analysis. The methodology entailed presentations by selected countries on the M&E strategies and tools they developed, followed by group discussion. Several group activities were also carried out to allow more in-depth examination of the topics.



Environment and Climate Change JP in Turkey

The main conclusions and follow up agreements are reported below.

Five principle findings emerged from the workshop discussions

1. Design of M&E systems:

- a. Participants noted the importance of 'getting it right' from the start, but several countries also illustrated examples in which programmes were successful in adapting a weak M&E system after a programme was already underway and thereby improving the implementation of the programme.
- b. Simplicity is an asset in the design of an M&E system, while an overambitious design can lead to difficulties in implementation. It is important to set targets that are achievable and recognize limitations in data sources available, etc
- c. A good design is necessary for achieving quality results

2. Institutions:

- a. The needs and priorities of different actors (UN, national counterparts, civil society, etc) should be recognized in the design and implementation of an M&E system.
- b. It is important to assign the roles and responsibilities to each actor to improve coordination and implementation.
- c. Programme teams should involve all actors in the entire M&E cycle (design, implementation, and outreach) through a participatory process, not only to incorporate their input but also to validate conclusions.

3. Instruments:

- a. The key to developing useful M&E tools is balancing the need for standardized approaches with context-specific requirements.
 - b. To adapt M&E tools to a specific programme context, the programme teams should always take into account thematic, political, geographic, and socio-economic factors.
 - c. The most useful tools have resulted from creative and innovative approaches.
4. Measuring the MDGs and other Intangibles:
- a. Some of the most significant results of JPS are indirect and programmes need to adopt a more flexible approach to capturing these.
 - b. Qualitative indicators are especially important, including measuring behavior change, etc.
5. Re-defining the purpose and utility of M&E:
- a. M&E is not merely a reporting obligation, nor simply a measurement or assessment mechanism.
 - b. Rather, M&E is tool that should be used to improve the quality of programmes and provide knowledge and lessons for joint programmes beyond the life of the MDG-F.
 - c. It is critical to also incorporate communication and advocacy into M&E systems in order to be able to communicate the results and findings of a programme to the stakeholders, beneficiaries, and the wider public.

Follow-up to the Workshop:

- Based on the outcomes of the M&E sessions in Colombia and Morocco, the MDG-F Secretariat will produce best practices for M&E in MDG-F joint programmes.
- The Secretariat plans to synthesize common challenges and propose solutions. In this process, the most important element will be to identify standardized and non-standardized instruments, identifying which tools can be applied, in which contexts.
- The Secretariat hopes to maintain the network that was established through the M&E sessions through visits, emails, Teamworks, etc. and to extend this network between the regions.

Presentations:

Below is a summary of the cases presented by participants:

- Occupied Palestinian Territory: developed a holistic M&E system for research, policy, capacity development, and advocacy. This system was developed and is being implemented through a participatory process involving UN partners, national institutions, and civil society
- Philippines: Social Watch Philippines, which is partnering with the MDG-F joint programmes in the country, presented its work on MDG shadow reports and on the development of a budget monitoring tool. This tool has allowed citizens to ensure that budgets are disbursed and to identify lags in the provision of social and economic services. This initiative has given a voice to the voiceless – it has empowered traditionally marginalized groups to hold government accountable

- Lebanon: following reformulation of the Conflict Prevention JP, the programme team revised its M&E framework to align it with the planned results. The framework was simplified by removing irrelevant indicators and establishing more realistic, achievable targets. In addition, the use of simple tools such as data collection templates, combined with clear allocation of roles and responsibilities for data collection and measurement has helped improve coordination and implementation of the M&E strategy.
- Mauritania: the Environment JP established clear links between the objectives of the programme and specific MDGs and sub-targets, allowing them to align their activities more directly with the MDGs. On this basis, the team was able to develop indicators for each result area that match indicators of the MDG sub-targets and thereby more easily measure the programme’s contribution to the MDGs.

f) UPDATE GIVEN TO PARTICIPANTS ON THE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

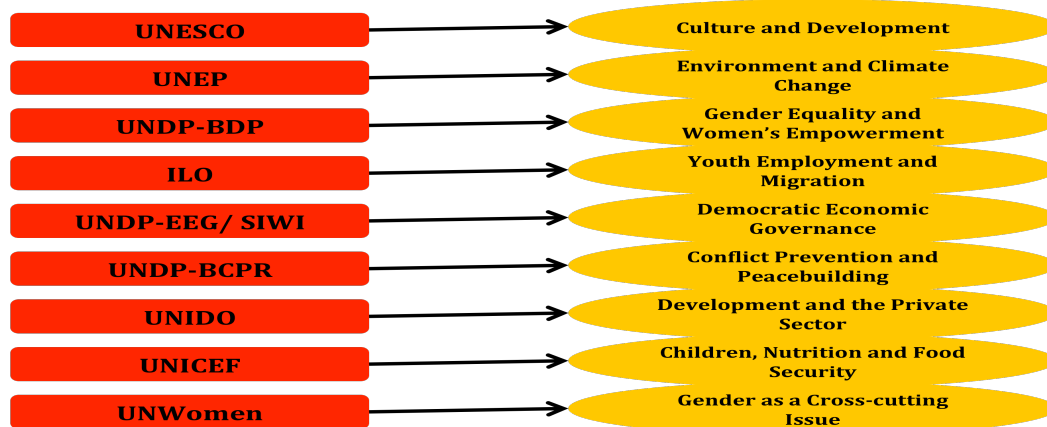
The Links between M&E and Knowledge Management

- Compilation and Systematization of M&E information (monitoring reports, evaluations, etc)
- Identification of common objectives and challenges among the JPs
- Development of best practices and promotion of effective implementation tools
- Incorporation of best practices into evaluation recommendations and improvement plans

3 Pillars of the MDG-F Knowledge Management Strategy

- Electronic “Teamworks” Platform
- 9 thematic window knowledge management plans led by UN convener agencies, including a plan for “Gender as a Cross-Cutting Issue”.
- Partnerships with development organizations for capacity building among development professionals and civil society, as well as for further research in the Fund’s areas of work.

Convener Agencies of the 9 Thematic Window KM Plans



Key Activities

- **Creation of a virtual community through “Teamworks”**
- Identification of JP knowledge management needs
- Global and regional KM workshops (18 carried out by end of June 2011)
- Collection of best practices and lessons learned
- Case studies
- Virtual discussion forums

Teamworks “Spaces”

- 9 thematic spaces
- 9 focus country spaces
- 128 joint programme spaces

Workshop Products

Intangibles

- Marketplace’ presentations of joint programmes in each thematic window
- Definition of the thematic window and its relation to development and the MDGs
- Identification of case study topics
- Visits to programme sites
- Establishment of a network of development professionals and a virtual community of practice

Tangibles

- Templates for systematization of best practices and lessons learned
- Mapping of JP by focal area within each thematic window
- Support for improvement of thematic indicators and results frameworks
- Support in measurement of JP contribution to the MDGs
- Introduction of Teamworks as an electronic communication and knowledge-sharing platform

Common Themes Across Thematic Windows

- The need to address inequalities in achievement of MDGs
- Identification of vulnerable target groups for JPs
- Promotion of a multi-sectoral approach in KM
- Assessment of the level of gender mainstreaming in the JPs
- The need to ensure sustainability of the JP results and impacts
- Assessment of the potential for replication of JP interventions

Challenges Remaining

- Follow-up on workshop conclusions through concrete actions and incorporation of conclusions into planned KM activities
- Strengthening of virtual communication and exchange, especially across regions
- Development and distribution of knowledge products (best practices, lessons learned, success stories)
- Linking KM activities and products with a communication and advocacy strategy

ANNEX I

Discussion Matrix for UN Coordination Officers, JP Coordinators and Government Representatives

Table Number:
Table Leader:
Segment 1: Results achievement/ MDGs
Given the short timeframe of these joint programmes, what have been some of the catalytic elements; direct and indirect contributions of the MDG-F to the national and/or local MDG agenda?
Has your joint programme developed an exit strategy to ensure continuity/ sustainability of the interventions? Which do you consider to be the key elements of such a strategy?
Does the JP address issues of inequality? How? Which?
Segment 2: National Ownership
How is 'national ownership' understood by the joint programme partners?
What is your experience within the Fund initiatives to embrace a concept of ownership that goes beyond government ownership (i.e. civil society, local authorities, etc)?
What are the main obstacles to full national ownership of programmes? In your opinion, are there existing tensions between national priorities, UN mandates, and international development agendas in deciding on joint programme priorities?
Segment 3: UN Reform
Do you think that the MDG-F has contributed to coherence of the UN discourse at country level? How? In your opinion, is this an appropriate mechanism to address multidimensional development challenges?
Do you think it has improved coordination within government entities? How and at what levels?
How are the principles of joint and mutual accountability (of the UN system and the national Government vis a vis each other and the citizens of recipients as well as donor countries) have been, or could be practically applied within the MDG-F joint programmes?

