Final 10 January, 2011

**UNDG Interim Guidance Note**

**Common Country Programme Document**

1. **Purpose**

The purpose of this Interim Guidance Note is to provide guidance to members of the UN Country Teams (UNCTs) that have opted to participate in the development of a common country programme document (common CPD), which is to be presented to the UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP Executive Boards in the annual session of 2011. It is expected that this Interim Guidance Note will be further developed based on the experience and lessons learned from the process of developing and reviewing common CPDs. It should be noted that participation in a common country programme document is not a condition to access resources from the One Fund at country level.

1. **Background**

The General Assembly, inresolution 64/289 of 9 July 2010 ([A/RES/64/280](http://www.un-ngls.org/IMG/pdf_Report_July_2010_N0947917.pdf)) on system-wide coherence (link) invited:

 “those countries presenting a common country programme document on a voluntary basis to prepare it consistent with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, where it exists, and to present in the common country programme the critical actions that will be taken to achieve the agreed results with available or indicative resources, as well as actions to ensure coherence of the assistance provided by the United Nations system at the country level, attaching, as an annex, a brief description of the agreed results and indicative resources for each of the relevant United Nations agencies”.

The General Assembly also invited (paragraph 17): “the governing body of each fund, programme and specialized agency, where relevant, and in accordance with its mandate, to consider and approve its role and the resources it will require for the implementation of the common country programme on the basis of the organisation-specific annex”.

The resolution also noted (paragraph 18) “that the approval of the contribution of each fund, programme and specialized organisation, where relevant, will be based on an assessment of whether the elements in the organisation-specificreflect the priorities of its strategic plan and overall mandate, as well as their alignment with national priorities and strategies”.

The Report of the Secretary General of 22 December 2009, ‘Follow-up to General Assembly resolution 63/311 on system-wide coherence related to operational activities for development’ ([A/64/589](http://www.undg.org/docs/10918/N1020213_English.pdf)) summarizes the country programme approval mechanisms of funds, programmes, specialized agencies and other entities and can serve as a useful reference for UNCTs (see paragraphs 15-19).

1. **What is a common Country Programme Document?**

The development of a common CPD is undertaken on a voluntary basis in accordance with General Assembly resolutions, for submission to the respective organizations’ Executive Boards for approval.A common CPD outlines the results, partner contributions and indicative resources of relevant United Nations organizations and is consistent with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) or equivalent strategy document. The timing of the UNDAF and common CPD should follow the planning cycle of the government to the extent possible.

UNCTs that opt to develop acommon CPDare recommended to prepare a short and strategic UNDAF document. This will facilitate the development of the common CPD, which must adhere to the standard format and word limit summarized below.When the draft UNDAF document is approved by the government, the narrative of the common CPD and also the annexes can be submitted for review and approval through the same process as with CPDs (further described below).

1. **Format**

In accordance with UN rules and regulations for official documentation, the common CPD should not exceed a maximum of 8,500 words[[1]](#footnote-2), inclusive of the organisation-specific annexes, (suggested format would be 4,500 words for the narrative and 1,000 words (approximately 2 pages) for each of the four annexed results and resources frameworks). Changes to the length and format of the document require the approval of respective Executive Boards (in in some cases the General Assembly) and are therefore not possible at this time. It is possible to seek a waiver should the word countexceed 8,500 words, although this practice is strongly discouraged.

The common country programme document includesa cover page and then the followingfour headingsfor the common narrative:

1. Situation analysis
2. Past cooperation and lessons learned
3. Proposed programme
4. Programme management, monitoring and evaluation

Annexes: Results and resources framework (for each organisation)

It is important that the all sections of the document underscore the coherent and coordinated approach that is adopted in the country. Specifically, Section III should include the critical actions that will be taken to achieve the agreed results and section IV should include a description of actions to be taken to ensure coherence of assistance of the UN system at the country level. Organization-specific references should be reflected in the relevant annexes.

Theorganisation-specific annex (usually one each for UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP if they are each providing assistance to the country) is an integral part of the common CPD, and should follow the current organisation-specific standards. Organisations are being encouraged to harmonize the formats to the extent possible.

Each organisation may provide additional complementary information as may be required by the respective Executive Board (such as by posting additional documents on relevant Executive Board website).For example, organizations may post the UNDAF results matrix on the website of each organisation to enable Board Members to review the coherence between the UNDAF and the organisation-specific results matrices that are included as annexes to the common CPD.

1. **Quality assurance review**

The quality assurance process for the common CPD (narrative and annexes)will continue to follow the same process as with CPDs, with the involvement of the regional and headquarters as per standard practice. Organisations are encouraged to ensure that consistent feedback (between organisations and also between the various levels of the same organisation) is provided on the common narrative. Each agency is solely responsible for the development and review of their respective annex.

1. **Clearance and deadlines**

Following the development of the UNDAF, the common CPD is drafted in time to meet the deadline of the relevant session of the Executive Boards. Participating members should therefore check with their relevant organizational headquarters for specific deadlines, and submit the approved document by the earliest deadline (i.e. the organization with the earliest date).

1. **Editing and translation**

To ensure consistency, the secretariats of the Executive Boards will agree on a coordinated editing and translation of the common country programme document.

1. **Approval of the common CPD**

The Executive Board approval process for common CPDs follows current practice of the respective Executive Boards. Although the Executive Boards will be specifically approving the respective annex, the full common CPD is submitted.

1. Please note that during the editing process, documents often become longer (with the elaboration of terms etc.) so country teams should consider submitting the final draft which is approximately 8,000 words. Please also note that no agency-specific logos will be included in the document. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)