

**National Workshop on Successful Models in Capacity Development for  
Local Self Governance towards Urban Renewal and Rural**

**Reconstruction – 18 Aug 2008**

**Statement by Mr. Alvaro Rodriguez – UNDP Country Director**

Dear colleagues and partners, it is a pleasure to be with you here today to discuss the important topics to be addressed during this workshop. I would like to highlight the UN's and UNDP's evolving focus on capacity development, the challenges in relation to UN reform, and potential responses at country level by the UN.

**Capacity Development: An evolving focus area for the UNDP and UN**

Since its founding, the UN has focused on developing national and local capacities for sustainable human development. The role of capacity development is repeatedly being highlighted in the corporate policies, efforts and strategies of the various UN agencies.

Indeed, over the last several years several global agreements and corporate guidelines have been issued with direct relevance to capacity development that further encourage all of us to pay even greater attention to capacity development. These include the Millennium Declaration of 2000; the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of 2005; the CCA/UNDAF Guidelines of 2007; and, for UNDP specifically, its Strategic Plan 2008-2011.

This Strategic Plan of UNDP, for example, emphasizes that capacity development is UNDP's overarching contribution to global human development efforts, and that UNDP's efforts to support programme countries to develop national and local capacities for human development and achievement of the MDGs will be guided by three principles: 1) national ownership; 2) effective aid management; and, 3) South-South cooperation. The Plan further states that UNDP will seek to strengthen national capacities in four areas of comparative advantage, aligned with the Millennium Declaration: poverty reduction and MDGs, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery, and environment and sustainable development.

These recent agreements and guidelines signify a paradigm shift in the development approach of the UN. Indeed, I would suggest that the MDG framework has contributed significantly to shift from a supply to a demand driven technical assistance approach to achieve the MDGs. And within this paradigm capacity development at three levels is deemed essential; namely capacities at the national, organizational and individual levels.

### **The Challenge of Capacity Development and the UN response**

Not surprisingly, UN Member States have called for the UN system to enhance its efforts to support national capacity development. They expect a major gearing up in the support and success of those efforts in order to meet the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. Indeed, Member States view capacity development as a comparative advantage of the UN development system.

For the UN, at country level, to deliver on these expectations, a major shift is required in the way the UN does business. UN Country Teams in programme countries across the world will have to make capacity development a core area of their work, and develop new ways of assessing and achieving capacity development results as a team.

The responsibility of rising to this challenge does, however, not rest solely at country level. The UN at global and regional levels will have to adjust too, creating an organizational environment that facilitates and encourages a shift in the work of UN Country Teams at national level. For the UN system this also implies a much greater focus on complementarity and coherence between UN agencies, funds and programmes in supporting countries on their capacity development agendas.

For UN Country Teams at national level, this is a major challenge. And Pakistan in particular has taken an important step in becoming one of eight Pilots of UN Reform, or Delivering as One, as the reform process is called. Since March 2007, the UN Country Team in Pakistan has been working closely with national partners to develop a One Programme that will bring together in one programmatic framework the bulk of UN operations in the country. Paralleling this effort, operational policies will be reviewed to promote not only programmatic coherence but also operational coherence. Already financial management

policies are being reviewed and an effort is under way to look at programme management, human resources and procurement policies. In all cases, the goals are to reduce transaction costs, build national capacities and promote coherence among UN agencies.

**Responding to the challenge at country level:**

As noted already, the overall goal for the UN system at country level is to support national counterparts develop their capacities to lead, manage, achieve and account for their national development priorities. This is especially so for those related to the MDGs and internationally agreed development goals, as well as human rights obligations in ratified UN conventions and treaties.

This capacity development agenda reinforces the UN's role and responsibilities as multilateral organizations accountable to its Member States.

The UN Country Team at national level can play a number of key roles in order to enhance national capacity, within a variety of areas. These roles, as evidenced by past and current practice, draw on the UN system's strengths and mandates. The roles include to:

- Facilitate capacity assessments, with needs, equity and distributional analysis.
- Support the capacity to review and analyze pro-poor policy options.
- Facilitate consensus-building processes and broker relations between key development stakeholders, to promote capacities for democratic governance, inclusion and empowerment in decision making.
- Strengthen national capacities to implement and monitor international norms/standards.
- Facilitate participation of societal and government actors in, and enhance capacities for, national coordination of development & humanitarian assistance.
- Support capacity to develop and use information, data and robust results-based management systems for greater accountability.
- Provide catalytic support for knowledge acquisition and innovation capacities.

- Provide international good practice and comparative experiences in all the above and promote knowledge networking capacities around them.

In Pakistan, an effort has also been made to define in a more concrete way how the UN aims to provide its support, including on capacity development, and the four following roles have been outlined. As the One Programme begins implementation later this year you will see these roles more clearly. Namely, they are:

1. Advisory role
2. Advocate role
3. Convener role
4. Service provider role

The UN recognizes that its own capacity needs to be enhanced if Country Teams are indeed to be able to fulfill the roles expected of them. The Country Teams must be equipped with initial tools and knowledge to begin to shift their thinking in the area of capacity development. Training and learning opportunities have been introduced, policy guidelines and capacity assessment methodologies have been drafted, capacity development strategies in the areas of UN agency work have been articulated; and the monitoring and reporting on progress and results on CD has been strengthened.

As can be seen, capacity development is an on-going effort that in one way or another we must all engage in. For this reason, this workshop and your participation will benefit greatly the cause of sustainable development in Pakistan.

Thank you.

## NOTES

### Integrating a Capacity Development Framework in UNDAF and Country Programme:

#### **Step 1: Engagement with Partners and Building Consensus**

**Objective:** To explore how best the UN system can facilitate and contribute to partnerships and networks that support and reinforce nationally and locally driven CD efforts.

#### **Step 2: Assessing Capacity Assets and Needs**

**Objective:** Ensure the systematic application of, and follow up to, country led capacity assessments within national development strategies and sector planning exercises.

#### **Step 3: Designing Capacity Development Strategies**

**Objective:** Priorities long term capacity development investments and impact, even if some may require short term capacity enhancing or ‘quick impact’ results as well, and identify potential risks, and risk management strategies to stay the course.

#### **Step 4: Implementation of CD Strategies**

**Objective:** Support the use of national systems for implementation, management and monitoring based on internationally recognized standards and good practice.

#### **Step 5: Monitoring and Evaluation of CD Efforts**

**Objective:** Embed the tracking and impact analysis of CD progress and results as part of national evaluative mechanisms that measure impact of NDS, PRS and sector strategies and enable stakeholders to draw lessons and learning.

The OECD DAC (Development Assistance Committee) has defined “capacity” as the ability of people, organizations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully, and “capacity development” is understood as the process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time. While there is general consensus on this definition, within any given country context there are different levels of capacity – national, sub-national, local – and different stages of development in different sectors that finally determine the capacity development response.