



UN-HABITAT EVALUATION BRIEF

Review of UN-Habitat's Participation in the Delivering as One UN Initiative

Evaluation Report 5/2011

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

A year after the United Nations World Summit in 2005 on progress in the implementation of the Millennium Goals (MDGs), the United Nations High-Level Panel on System-wide Coherence, recommended to the Secretary-General a 'Delivering as One' approach to strengthen delivery of key United Nations mandates of development, humanitarian assistance and environment. It aims at making United Nations bodies working around the world deliver as one United Nations. The approach also built on the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, which had called for greater harmonization and simplification of development aid and increased effectiveness in its delivery.

The Delivering as One (DaO) initiative is based on five pillars: One Leader, One Programme, One Budgetary Framework, One Communication Strategy, and, where appropriate, One Office. In 2007, eight countries, Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uruguay and Vietnam, volunteered to have the DaO approach piloted in their countries, and UN-Habitat participated in six of the eight pilot countries, in which it had country presence (excluding Albania and Uruguay) during the pilot phase.

2. REVIEW PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

Since 2007, the DaO pilot programme has gone through a number of evaluations and assessments. UN-Habitat conducted the review to assess its participation, covering current opportunities and challenges, and to identify recommendations on how future participation can be made more rational, coherent and effective.

The evaluation was carried out from March to June 2011 by two independent

consultants, Mr. Mathias Hundsalz and Mr. Antonio Yachan. During the preparatory phase of the review, a desk review was undertaken of primary and secondary documents related to DaO and its implementation, including UN-Habitat country programmes' annual reports. This was followed by data collection and analysis, which included field visits to Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania and Vietnam, and consultations with UN-Habitat staff and other stakeholders for the other pilot countries. Meetings were also held with key staff at UN-Habitat Headquarters on their experience with DaO. A draft report was produced by the consultants based on their initial findings, which was reviewed by field staff and staff at UN-Habitat Headquarters and their comments were incorporated in the final report. The Regional and Technical Cooperation Division (RTCD) of UN-Habitat managed the administrative and logistical components, while UN-Habitat's Evaluation Unit ensured that the evaluation process conformed to UN-Habitat evaluation requirements.

3. KEY FINDINGS

UN-Habitat's work with the Governments and other United Nations agencies has been facilitated through the DaO. The agency's contributions at all levels have gained better recognition in terms of its mandate and expanded its portfolio. Specifically,

- UN-Habitat Programme Managers in the six pilot countries have made commendable efforts and have taken the lead in the time-consuming and complex tasks of DaO planning and implementation. They have demonstrated the competency and comparative advantage of UN-Habitat in a highly competitive environment with resident and non-resident agencies, leading to raising the profile of UN-Habitat's urban mandate, and

improved recognition by governments and other United Nations partners.

- UN-Habitat Programme Managers, in general, were able to expand activities using DaO funds. The largest UN-Habitat country under DaO was in Mozambique, with a budget of USD 7.3 million, USD 4.1 million coming from the DaO funds, the remainder from bilateral and UN-Habitat core funds. The smallest programme was in Vietnam, with USD 950 000 from One Plan Fund funds. UN-Habitat's share of the 'One Plan' country programme budget in the pilot countries ranged from less than 1 per cent to about 6 per cent of the total allocations to agencies from the One Plan Fund.
- The One United Nations Fund has proved to be an incentive for United Nations agencies to work together. Joint preparation of the "One Plan" as part of the country team led to significant cooperation by UN-Habitat with other specialized United Nations agencies, particularly in Tanzania and Vietnam.
- The status of UN-Habitat as a non-resident agency did not appear to constrain the ability of the UN-Habitat Programme Managers in the countries to make programmatic and coordinated contributions to the DaO process in the case of Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda and Vietnam.
- The DaO planning, programming and implementation process was very complex and time-consuming. Staff attended numerous inter-agency meetings and meetings with national partners. They also had to plan and conduct numerous workshops and seminars as part of the DaO process. This stretched limited human and financial resources. Some UN-Habitat Programme Managers had inadequate capacity to respond to requests without the support from Headquarters.

- Administrative support to the UN-Habitat country offices was provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) country offices, but the administrative and financial regulations and procedures differed from those of UN-Habitat Headquarters, causing unnecessary delays and duplication of efforts.
- There was a common pattern in the DaO countries that Governments would relegate United Nations agencies from the purely implementation of projects, requesting for more policy, strategic and capacity building involvement, and looking for areas where the United Nations could add value and make a difference. Specifically in Tanzania, the seed money provided to the DaO initiative through the One Plan Fund were expected to decline in future as donors would continue to shift their funding either to global programmes or back to earmarked agency funding. This raises the prospect that DaO would have to be sustained financially in future by the participating agencies and recipient host Governments. So far, UN-Habitat's contribution to DaO from its own core resources has been limited.

4. LESSONS LEARNED

- The administrative and financial procedures at UN-Habitat Headquarters have not been adjusted to support the DaO initiative in the six pilot countries.
- Successful participation in DaO would require greater decentralization, delegation of authority to regional and country offices, and simplified procedures, monitoring and reporting,

as well as increasing human resource capacity in the field.

- Additional human and financial resources from Headquarters would be necessary to promote participation by UN-Habitat in the DaO reform processes.
- In order to minimize the cut off on UN-Habitat allocations for DaO components, it would be important to prioritize available core funding to Headquarters and provide seed funds for UN-Habitat activities in DaO countries.
- Without proper support from UN-Habitat Headquarters, UN-Habitat's participation will remain fragmented and inadequately recognized in the DaO reform processes.

5. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The review identified a number of key recommendations to help address the challenges ahead in maintaining and improving UN-Habitat's participation in the DaO:

- The present status of UN-Habitat as a non-resident or resident agency should be kept depending on the view of the United Nations Resident Coordinator. An 'upgrade' should be undertaken in countries where UN-Habitat would have large-scale development and humanitarian programmes.
- In DaO countries, such as Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda and Vietnam, where the tasks, responsibilities and the size of the UN-Habitat programme have substantially increased, at least two additional non-project staff should be assigned to UN-Habitat country offices

with relevant specializations and in-line with respective national priorities.

- UN-Habitat should establish National Habitat Committees or National Habitat Forums to mobilize civil society and other partners so as to increase the level of awareness and advocacy in regard to sustainable human settlements development issues.
- Policy papers on the focus areas of UN-Habitat's Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan (MTSIP) should be adjusted to take into account the DaO initiative so they can be used as point of reference by UN-Habitat country teams in the DaO joint programming.
- Current fragmented management practices in UN-Habitat operational activities at the country level should be reviewed to enable the agency to 'Deliver as One'. This would require a unified management and programme support structure at UN-Habitat Headquarters.
- UN-Habitat Headquarters, through its Programme Support Division and the joint administrative support services provided by United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON), should clarify administrative procedures with the UNDP on how to improve recruitment and procurement for projects implemented for UN-Habitat at country level eliminating the duplication of steps being followed.
- Within the One United Nations country planning documents, United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and Delivering as One, UN-Habitat should ensure that its component consolidates all in-country activities in a coherent, structured and coordinated fashion so as to present a complete profile of the agency's competencies and comparative advantage.