



**Report on the UN Development Assistance Framework Prioritization  
Retreat  
25 to 27 August 2003  
Gajereh, Islamic Republic of Iran**

**Introduction**

The UN Development Assistance Framework Prioritization Retreat was held at the Iran-Gajereh Hotel from 25-27 August 2003. More than 50 participants from the Government, national NGOs, and resident and non-resident UN organizations attended the meeting. (A list of participants is attached as Annex 1).

The Retreat was held over the period of three days. The first day was reserved for internal UN Country Team discussions, the second was dedicated to consultations with the Government and national NGO representatives, and the third was used to draw conclusions. (A copy of the schedule is attached as Annex 2).



**Day 1, Monday 25 August 2003**

The Resident Coordinator, opened the meeting by remembering the victims of the bomb attack at the UN headquarters in Baghdad (19 August) and asked for a minute of silence.

The facilitators (Aung Thun Thet of the UN System Staff College in Turin, Shamim Hamid from the Resident Coordinator Support Unit in Bangladesh; and Parviz Fartash from UNDP-New York) then began the morning session by introducing the objectives of the Retreat:

- To identify common strategic priorities for UN support to Iran's pursuit of key Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through the UNDAF
- To agree on a work plan for the completion of the UNDAF exercise
- To build partnerships and enable UN agencies and the government to work more effectively together.

- To develop a better understanding among the participants of linkages between the Millennium Declaration, the MDGs and their implications for the country, the UN system and the UNDAF

The methodology of the prioritization exercise was outlined as follows: participants would identify a set of key priority areas for the UNDAF from the national priorities, the MDGs and the areas of cooperation suggested by the Common Country Assessment (CCA). Participants would then identify possible outcomes of UN System support to these priority areas. These suggested outcomes would then be discussed, reformulated and 'validated' by the UN Country Team. It was emphasized that in order to maximize the impact of the UN's support, both the Country Team and the Government would need to be very strategic in choosing priority areas. Prioritization based on agency mandates would inevitably lead to a very broad UNDAF, which would consequently be of little use in directing attention and resources and facilitating coordination. A strategic UNDAF, on the other hand, would result in:

- Greater synergy among UN agencies
- Improved long term impact of UN system development cooperation in terms of domestic capacity development and sustainability of results
- More efficient use of resources and mobilization of additional resources
- Integration of crisis prevention and disaster management into development activities
- Integration of gender and human rights
- A framework/ mechanisms to monitor and evaluate effectiveness of UN system support

The presentations that followed focused on UN reform, simplification and harmonization, and teambuilding. Participants discussed their worries and expectations regarding the CCA/ UNDAF process. Chief concerns included lack of ownership by the government and UN agencies, poor planning, and the fear that national priorities and agency mandates would not be well integrated. Participants also discussed lessons learnt during the CCA process. It was suggested that the UNDAF exercise would benefit from increased engagement with Government. Involving the government in the day-to-day management of the UNDAF process would help to increase ownership and reduce the types of problems experienced during the CCA process.

The day ended with a presentation on the challenges identified in the CCA and their linkages to the MDGs and national priorities. It was followed by lengthy discussion on possible priority areas. Although no consensus was reached, employment, HIV/AIDS, vulnerability reduction and child protection were identified as key challenges.

## **Day 2, Tuesday 26 August 2003**

The session was opened by the Resident Coordinator, who welcomed the Government participants and provided an overview of the Retreat. He was followed by Dr. Mojtaba Khalesi, Director-General of the International Cooperation Bureau of the Management and Planning Organization, who emphasized the need for greater coordination between the UN and the Government to avoid duplication and to ensure optimal use of funds. Dr. Khalessi briefly discussed the Iran's Third Five Year Development Plan. He mentioned unemployment, brain drain, the country's semi-arid climate and the imbalance between urban and rural populations as key challenges faced by the country. According to Dr. Khalessi, the priority areas of Iran's forthcoming Five-Year Development Plan would include:

- Sustainable development and disaster management
- Employment and productivity
- Strengthening capacities to realize the MDGs
- Economic competitiveness

- Science and new technology

Following the remarks by Dr. Khalessi, the Resident Coordinator went through the 12 main development challenges identified in the CCA:

- Strengthening national statistical capacity
- Reaping the demographic bonus
- Improving economic performance
- Generating employment
- Reducing inequality and poverty
- Improving the education system
- Improving health and nutrition
- Putting gender at the center
- Strengthening institutional transparency and accountability
- Enhancing political pluralism
- Ensuring environmental stability

### **UNDAF Priority Setting Exercise:**

Four working groups were formed to identify possible priority areas. It was repeatedly stressed that the prioritization exercise should involve a pragmatic appraisal of where and how UN support is likely to make the most difference. It was also emphasized that individual agencies would continue to work on areas not identified in the UNDAF.



Following intensive group work and a lively discussion that carried on well into the evening, the meeting agreed to five areas of cooperation, as follows:

- Strengthening capacities and capabilities for achieving the MDGs
- Enhancing good governance
- Sustainable development, disaster management and energy efficiency
- Improving economic performance and management, and increasing employment
- Facilitating transfer of science and new technology in all areas of cooperation

### **Day 3, Wednesday 27 August 2003**

The day began with a presentation on UNDAF outcomes and the results matrix. Five working groups were formed to further develop the five priority areas and translate them into achievable

UNDAF outcomes. It was emphasized that the exercise was an attempt to further strengthen consensus on the priority areas and not an outcome-oriented strategy planning session.



### 1. Strengthening Capacities and Capabilities for MDG implementation:

<b>National Target:</b>	<b>UNDAF outcome:</b>
By 2015 reduce poverty (national poverty line) to 10 %.	<i>Not identified</i>
Prevalence of HIV/AIDS in general Population less than 1% by 2007	100% of all detected HIV/AIDS cases have access to all preventive and curative services
By 2015, 60% of pre-school-age children have access to pre-school programmes	By 2009 a nation-wide policy of IMCI
By the end of 2015 national MMR reduced to 18 per 100,000	By 2009 national MMR will be reduced to 25 per 100,000
By 2015 increasing women's role in decision-making system to 20%	<i>Not identified</i>
By 2015 universal primary education	By 2009 implement GEI
By 2015 reduce prevalence of malnutrition in children to 80% of current rate	<i>Not identified</i>

### 2. Enhancing Good Governance

<b>National Target:</b>	<b>UNDAF outcome:</b>
Development of National Capacity of good Governance	National capacity for promoting rule of law, human rights, transparency and accountability

### 3. Sustainable Development, Energy Efficiency and Disaster Management

<b>National Target:</b>	<b>UNDAF outcome:</b>
Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of natural resources through mitigation and preparedness for disasters	<i>Not identified</i>
By 2015 reduce poverty and vulnerability by half in the rural and marginal areas including disaster preparedness and mitigation	

#### 4. Improving Economic Performance and Management and Increasing Employment

<b>National Target:</b>	<b>UNDAF outcome:</b>
Increasing economic competitiveness and productivity	Achieve the extra sustainable economic growth rate enhanced by the Fourth Five-Year Development Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritization</li> <li>• SME</li> <li>• Innovation</li> <li>• Investment promotion</li> <li>• Skill development</li> <li>• Corporate social responsibility</li> <li>• Economic planning and management</li> </ul>	

#### 5. Facilitating transfer of New Science and Technology in all areas of Cooperation

<b>National Target:</b>	<b>UNDAF outcome:</b>
By 2009 significantly reinforce Iran's scientific and technological capabilities with emphasis on the private sector and international linkages	By 2008 increase the competitiveness ratio of National Innovation System (NIS) of Iran by 20%
	By 2008 complete the establishment of knowledge-based network on science and technology and its linkages with Iran's priority science and technology partners.

As the discussions were largely spontaneous and not informed by reference to available data, it was agreed that the proposed UNDAF outcomes listed above would be reviewed and refined in the theme group sessions

#### **Wrap-up**

In his closing remarks Mr. Lyons noted that although the discussions over the three days had been complex, and at times excited, the Retreat had on the whole contributed to a better understanding between the UN System and its national partners.

As the Retreat had above all been an exercise in consultation, it was agreed that the priority areas and suggested outcomes would be further discussed, refined and filtered by the UNDAF theme groups. The UNDAF core/managing group will be co-chaired by Mr. Yuxue Xue, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative and a senior technical/ programme officer from the Management and Planning Organisation.

#### **Next steps:**

In order to allow for the finalization of the UNDAF by mid-December it was agreed to follow the timeline outlined below:

<b>Step</b>	<b>Suggested Activities</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Internal stock-taking and consensus-building in preparation for the UNDAF	Hold a three-day UNDAF prioritization workshop;	25-27 Aug. 2003	RC support unit

	Prepare a work plan for the preparation of the UNDAF	25-27 Aug. 2003	RC support unit & UNCT
	Designate Co-Chairs of the UNDAF Management Group	27 August	UNCT & Government
Preparing the first draft of the UNDAF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish Mechanism to develop the UNDAF Result Matrices, i.e. Theme Groups/Taskforces;</li> <li>- Theme Groups produce the first draft of the Result Matrices and circulate them among partners (and the Regional Support Group) for comments;</li> </ul>	8 September 2003	UNCT & Government
		15 November 2003	Theme Groups & Taskforces; and UNDAF Management Group
Finalization and dissemination of the UNDAF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Produce a final report that reflects comments received from partners;</li> <li>- Produce the UNDAF document and circulate it among national and international partners</li> </ul>	15 December	UNDAF Management Group
		Beginning January 2004	UNDAF Management Group
Formulation of Country Programmes	- Hold a Joint Strategy Meeting to review and discuss consistency between the UNDAF's expected outcomes and substantive content of respective country programmes.	February 2004	UNCT

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