

TOWARDS A COMMON UN SYSTEM APPROACH

Achieving the Millennium
Development Goals

Report of the 10th UN Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development

12-14 February 2007
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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Acknowledgements

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Foreword

There are wide-ranging success stories about Communication for Development that describe how this approach has helped in disease prevention, protection of ecosystems, good governance activities, improved agricultural practices and so forth. Those achievements have been gained through the effective use of mass and community-based communication. In recent years, new information and communication technologies are being used to give space to people to tell their stories and be heard.

Development is a process of expanding freedoms that people enjoy. The reasons that restrict freedoms such as the lack of economic opportunities and social exclusion have to be closely examined. There are mutually reinforcing interconnections between different kinds of freedoms. When people have the opportunity to be heard, it reinforces other aspects of their freedom and their ability to be involved in society. The UN system needs to take into account the fact that communicative ecologies are influenced by an increased prevalence of communication media and the democratic engagement of people in shaping the decisions that affect them.

Serious challenges are found in practising Communication for Development (C4D) to its full potential. There are insufficient platforms and mechanisms; lack of priority setting; rare consideration for integrating C4D in development planning; little visibility and experience exchange; limited resources and recognition to enable proper facilitation and delivery of common strategies by governments, donors, as well as UN system organizations.

Some of the challenges above were discussed at the 10th UN Inter-agency Round Table on Communication for Development. The Round Table recommended wide-ranging actions including a UN common approach to Communication for Development in view of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Emphasis was placed on setting priorities at the most senior level to ensure that Communication for Development principles and methodologies are integrated in programme planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation. Greater coherence and coordination needs to be applied through the UN0 Resident Coordinator at country-level and an Inter-agency working group should be established to promote and enhance C4D in the entire UN system.

UNESCO's coordinating role in Communication and Information demands that

the Organization spearheads its priorities among the UN system organizations by matching policy development with field-oriented action. In this respect, the “One UN” approach provides an important opportunity to explore and introduce harmonized and coherent strategies. UNESCO looks forward to attaining those and related objectives in collaboration with the UN system organizations, donors, governments, and international development partners.

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Communication and Information Sector

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Recommendations

10th Inter-agency Round Table on Communication for Development

Participants¹ from the United Nations Secretariat, Specialized Agencies, Programmes and Funds, the World Bank and OECD/DAC, as well as academics, practitioners and other experts in the field of Communication for Development present at the 10th Inter-agency Round Table on Communication for Development held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 12-14 February 2007 on the theme:

Towards a Common UN System Approach for Harnessing Communication for Development to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals

Recognizing that the commitments encompassed in the eight Millennium Development Goals demand communication systems and processes that enable dialogue and allow communities to speak out, express their aspirations and concerns, and participate in the decisions that relate to their development;

Re-affirming that this underpins all definitions of Communication for Development, from United Nations General Assembly Resolution 51/172 of August 1996 to the Rome Consensus on Communication for Development, adopted in October 2006 by more than 700 participants at the World Congress on Communication for Development organized by the World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the Communication Initiative;

Deeply concerned about the lack of appreciation among many development institutions of the need to include Communication for Development principles and methodologies at all stages of the development process and to allocate resources for that purpose;

Noting the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel Report of 9 November 2006, entitled "Delivering as One", which stresses the "responsiveness to needs and delivery of results by the UN system, measured against the Millennium Development Goals";

Taking into consideration the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, of 2 March 2005, where principles of ownership, participation and accountability are central;

Recognizing the substantial work carried out by the UN and other bodies in the field of Communication for Development, and the rapidly growing body of practice that exists elsewhere, as elaborated upon in the UNESCO and UNDP background papers prepared for the 10th Round Table, attached in the annex; **Determined**, in light of these important agreements, to expand existing Inter-agency cooperation on Communication for Development;

Requests the Chief Executives Board of the United Nations System:

- a)** to impress upon senior-level decision-makers of United Nations Specialized Agencies, Programmes and Funds the importance of prioritizing Communication for Development principles and methodologies in all programmatic areas, and the need to allocate human, technical and financial resources for this effort;
- b)** to advise the heads of respective agencies, programmes and funds to integrate Communication for Development principles and methodologies into programme and project planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation; to ensure the incorporation of Communication for Development principles and methodologies, including needs assessments, into CCA/UNDAF guidelines, or equivalent exercises, so as to improve development results;
- c)** to call upon the UN Resident Coordinator System to ensure greater coherence and coordination of Communication for Development at the country level, and
- d)** to establish a formal Inter-agency mechanism promoting and enhancing Communication for Development within the United Nations System.

Participants:

Appreciate UNESCO's initiative to organize the 10th Inter-agency Round Table and request the Director-General of UNESCO to transmit these recommendations to the Chief Executives Board and to the undg for discussions and decisions;

Finally, Participants:

Agree to take forward these recommendations, through internal mechanisms, to respective heads of Organizations and commit themselves to implementing the relevant actions.

**United Nations Conference Centre
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
14 February 2007**

Executive Summary

This report summarizes the proceedings of the 10th UN Inter-agency Communication for Development Round Table, held at the United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 12 to 14 February 2007. The Round Table was convened on the theme 'Harnessing Communication to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals: Towards a Common System Approach'. The meeting's objectives were to increase joint Inter-agency collaboration at Headquarters and UN Country Team levels; strengthen awareness among UN system organizations on ways in which the impact and effectiveness of Communication for Development can be measured; and introduce mechanisms to harmonize Communication for Development programming approaches within the UN system.

The Round Table provided an important forum to take stock of the extensive range and scope of Communication for Development-related initiatives and activities being implemented by the UN system. A consensus emerged around three broad cross-cutting and overlapping approaches practised in the UN system: (a) Communication for Development as governance or participation; (b) Sector specific communication; and (c) Information and communication technologies. There was also recognition that Communication for Development cannot be divorced from the wider context of UN reforms. Participants agreed that a

number of activities proposed during the Round Table needed to be designed and implemented. The two following sets of actions were adopted.

The first action is to integrate C4D empirical research methods, such as media or communication audits or needs assessments, into the Common Country Assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (CCA/UNDAF) guidelines or equivalent strategies. There was agreement for a focus on the needs of marginalized groups and an in-depth understanding of the national communication environment, which should be reflected in the UN system's planning. It was proposed that communication audit/needs assessment be collaboratively piloted in a mix of selected 'One UN' pilot and other countries. The results of those communication audits could be presented at in-country Round Tables or through multi-stakeholder partnerships that are fully representative and invite wider participation including that of civil society. Linked to this, it was proposed that UN Resident Coordinators be mobilized to ensure country-level Communication for Development coordination.

The second action is to formalize the current informal UN Inter-agency Working Group as the designated UN Inter-agency body coordinating Communication for Development. As part of this process, the Round Table's membership should be reviewed to enable it to become fully system-wide, with higher level representation that would raise the impact of decisions taken. To this end, participants requested that the UN Chief Executives Board (CEB) be approached to emphasize the importance of prioritizing Communication for Development to the UN system organizations and urged that the Board undertake a coherent and collective effort to involve senior level UN decision-makers.

Headquarters and country-level execution roles were distinguished. There was agreement that the role of UN system organizations at Headquarters level would be to raise the profile and status of the Round Table as the main UN coordinating mechanism on Communication for Development issues. This would accord a higher priority to Communication for Development and lead to upstream system-wide practices and standards.

Improved and systematic coordination followed by the development of impact indicators as a prerequisite for credible Communication for Development activities would strengthen country-level capacities. To this end, it was proposed that where they did not exist, UN system organizations should establish specific Communication for Development budget mechanisms, set up regional hubs of expertise to support the UN Resident Coordinator system and share good practices.

UN Country Teams together with governments would oversee the integration

of Communication for Development in the CCA/UNDAF and other related development exercises. This type of country-level structuring would then accommodate financing; implementing programmes at scale; building national systems and capacities; and providing joint technical assistance.

The inclusion of country communication audits within the CCA/UNDAF and UN Resident Coordinator system will enable tailored national initiatives that would nevertheless require support from UN system agencies.

The 10th UN Inter-agency Round Table on Communication for Development tackled field work and its action potential. Participants proposed a mapping of existing country-level initiatives as part of a process to gather and present compelling evidence. Such a mapping exercise should also promote joint work among UN agency field offices and make full use of existing UN system networks in the field. It was agreed that Communication for Development should be integrated into log frame planning guidelines or other planning frameworks and project document formats. These proposed initiatives and recommended actions are discussed in detail in the report.

1. Introduction

The UN Inter-agency Communication for Development Round Table was first introduced in 1986 as an informal mechanism for UN system collaboration, with early editions providing forums for debates on diffusion versus participation. In 1994, a Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report recommended that the Round Table be regularized to improve strategies among UN system organizations as well as the regional commissions. The JIU report led to two UN resolutions on Communication for Development in the UN system (1995 and 1996), and encouraged decision makers to include it as an integral component of programmes and projects.

Since then, and prior to the Addis Ababa meeting, four Round Tables were convened on the basis of a theme influenced by current trends and practice. Previous meetings, including the 6th Round Table convened by UNESCO, recommended that Communication for Development be viewed as an integral component of development projects and programmes, and that communities receive the skills and equipment with which to voice their opinions and aspirations. The 7th Round Table, hosted by UNICEF, concluded that greater priority needed to be given to evaluate Communication for Development programmes and urged that more resources be dedicated to develop capacities for behaviour change programmes. The 8th Round Table, hosted by UNFPA, called for the formation of an international coalition on HIV/AIDS Communication for Development to reduce duplication of efforts, harmonize strategies, and identify and improve access to proven tools. The 9th Round Table, hosted by FAO in September 2004, highlighted a number of emerging challenges particularly related to sustainable development and signalled the need for enhanced UN collaboration and coordination on Communication for Development initiatives.

The 10th Round Table met on the theme 'Harnessing Communication to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals: Towards a Common System Approach'. It sought to advance the agenda by focusing on practical and achievable interventions, around which UN system organizations could develop a common approach, strategy and basis for an action plan that would harness Communication for Development. The focus on the Millennium Development Goals reflected the Millennium Declaration's centrality in UN development

efforts and its potential as a strong unifying basis for Inter-agency collaboration. The timing of the 10th Round Table was also fortuitous, occurring as it did in the wake of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel report 'Delivering as One' and the start of a new era of UN leadership.

The meeting had three main objectives:

- To increase joint Inter-agency collaboration at international (Headquarters) level and national (UN Country Team) levels;
- To strengthen awareness within and among UN system organizations on measuring the impact and effectiveness of Communication for Development;
- To harmonize Communication for Development programming approaches within the UN system.

The expected outcomes were highlighted as follows:

- agree on a tentative action plan;
- seek to ensure **impact** of the Round Table at higher UN level;
- make Inter-agency collaboration on C4D a **priority issue** in the UN system;
- set up an Inter-agency technical group on C4D;
- introduce C4D as a **required element** of UN and other project formats;
- pilot the mainstreaming of C4D in the 8 'One UN' countries or the 14 UNDAF countries; and
- create a **field network strategy** for increased cooperation among each agency's respective field offices, particularly in the 'One UN' countries.

Fifteen UN system agencies were represented at the meeting. Of the 50 participants, 12 represented academia and practitioners from outside the UN system.

This report aims to capture the overall essence of the discussions. The first section summarizes the Communication for Development activities reported by participants in their stocktaking presentations on the first and second days of the meeting. The second section identifies major challenges to a common system approach. The third section lays out proposed elements of a strategy to make a case for Communication for Development at high levels of the UN system. The fourth section identifies key actions for the integration of Communication for Development in the UN system's operations and activities at country level. The fifth section proposes next steps.

The Round Table was conducted in plenary and small group sessions. The details of the Agenda are found in the appendices.

2. Stocktaking C 4 D activities in the UN system

The Round Table took stock of relevant initiatives and activities being implemented by the UN system. Some participants expressed that system-wide conceptual and methodological clarity is required to foster enhanced UN collaboration. Others argued that while definitions were important, a constructive approach would be to focus on tools and methodologies that can examine Communication for Development action in relation to development outcomes. The absence of system-wide methodologies for communication audits/needs assessments was discussed with reference to the broader development environment, beyond communication.

A consensus emerged for the UN system to unite around definitions similar to those articulated in the UNDP background paper prepared for the Round Table. The paper identified three broad approaches that encapsulate most of the activities reported by Round Table participants, namely:

- (a) Communication as Governance or Participation
- (b) Sector Specific Communication
- (c) Information and Communication Technologies

Public information was also discussed as an important function of the United Nations Department of Public Information.

COMMUNICATION AS GOVERNANCE OR PARTICIPATION

This approach encompasses the role of communication in enabling citizens to amplify their voice; participate in public debate on issues that affect their lives, and hold governments to account. Media is considered an important Communication for Development constituency, as a conduit for information, an amplifier of voice, a facilitator of public debate, as well as a check and balance on governments. Numerous examples falling under this category were shared during the course of the Round Table.

FAO harnesses old and new technologies such as rural radio to exchange information, promote participation and ownership, and support the bottom-up articulation of community needs.

UNAIDS, stressing that Communication for Development needs to have a clear purpose and be linked and supported by action, focuses on building capacity and supporting learning to ensure action at grassroots levels.

UN-HABITAT has developed the World Urban Forum as one of a number of strategies to enable communities to speak out on issues relating to urbanization realities. Outcomes of the Forum are channelled into high-level decision-making processes.

UNICEF harnesses advocacy, behaviour change communication and social mobilization to engage young people as change agents and promote children's participation in issues affecting them.

UNCDF's local development programmes build the capacity of local governments and sub-national authorities by ensuring accountability and broad participation of stakeholders who monitor, provide feedback, and influence local decision-making processes. UNCDF uses three dimensions of accountability in local governance:

- (a) downward accountability, of local government to citizens
- (b) horizontal accountability within local administrations; and
- (c) upward accountability, of local to central government.

UNCDF recognizes that two-way communication makes accountability work particularly when citizens are empowered to participate in public debate.

UNDP's approach to Communication for Development is rooted in its poverty reduction mandate, which reflects a specific commitment to meeting the MDGs and the broader objectives of the Millennium Declaration. The fulfilment of citizens' information needs and making it possible for the poor to voice their concerns is conditional to participation in the development process. An important UNDP intervention in this regard is a two-year project to develop media strategies in support of vulnerable groups. This is led by the Oslo Governance Centre in cooperation with the Communication for Social Change Consortium, involving the piloting of national information and communication baseline audits in 6 least developed countries (LDCs) in Africa and Asia. The pilot audits will form the basis of national strategies to address information and communication deficits of poor and marginalized people. This is part of the broader Access to Information activity of the Democratic Governance Group in UNDP. Other related core UNDP activities include communicating the different themes of the global Human Development Report, as well as the regional and national Human Development Reports being published.

The World Bank's view is inclusive treating Communication for Development as part of a broader canvas of tools and strategies to ensure stronger governance and participation. As such, it advocates for the use of communication-based assessments to create empowered communications environments in which citizens can access the information needed to participate in markets and to hold governments to account. To this end, a recent Governance paper by the World Bank includes a section on communication and its relevance to the governance agenda. The World Bank approach to Communication for Development in governance also focuses on freedom of information with an emphasis on modes of governmental communication, the role and organization of civil society, and the identification of problematic legislation, such as official secrets acts, which prevent citizens from accessing public information. Public opinion polling, a key World Bank communication modality, is encouraged as a tool for effective programme design. The World Bank's view is that a sustainable business environment is essential to the survival of media outlets in developing countries. In some countries, for example, draconian tax laws and the lack of an effective newspaper distribution system makes it difficult for a pluralistic and independent media to flourish.

UNESCO's overarching objective on the approach to Communication for Development is focused on building open and inclusive knowledge societies. Concepts, such as plurality, inclusion and participation are explored and developed for this purpose based on the principles of freedom of expression; universal access to information and knowledge; promotion of cultural diversity, and equal access to quality education. The four key areas of activity are: promoting freedom of expression and freedom of information; development of free and pluralistic media; promoting people's participation in development through media, and widening access to diverse content. Much of the work relevant to these areas is wide ranging from special events such as the World Press Freedom Day to the establishment of legal regulatory frameworks, standard setting in public service broadcasting, assistance to media in conflict and post-conflict situations thus contributing to governance at different levels from the amplification of people's voice at the community level to the promotion of citizens media.

UNECA is among other agencies that consider media development to be an important Communication for Development strategy in achieving the MDGs, with its 'Strengthening Africa's Media' consultation process an example of UN initiatives to upscale media development.

SECTOR-SPECIFIC COMMUNICATION

Communication approaches in responding to health, environment, agriculture and livelihoods, gender, education, habitat and other sectoral development issues are focused within UN system organizations and can be strengthened with a system-wide approach.

FAO, recognized as a pioneer in harnessing Communication for Development, is a market leader in communication for emergencies. Its emergency programmes to address threats to food security routinely incorporate community-led and participatory-based communication approaches – as seen in information campaigns on Avian Flu (implemented in collaboration with UNICEF and WHO); and its information and communication activities around desert locust outbreaks, preventive control methods and safe use of pesticides.

UNESCO's approach to sector-specific communication is met largely through the overarching objective of building open and non-exclusive knowledge societies. Activities related to Communication for Development focus on wide-ranging areas, namely,

- fostering community media as catalysing brokers for community “voice” and people centred development
- promoting freedom of expression and freedom of information (awareness raising, regulatory frameworks, public service broadcasting, media capacities in conflict/post-conflict zones, research)
- development of free and pluralistic media (mainly through the media enhancement projects supported by the International Programme on Communication Development (IPDC))
- setting standards and building capacities for journalism education
- fostering networks of media professionals specialized in reporting on specific development issues (HIV and AIDS, sustainable development, science communication, etc)
- widening access to diverse content (capacity building of electronic media, facilitating creation of content)

Inter-agency collaboration is marked through the implementation of the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Action Plan and the Tunis Agenda; supporting the development of community radio policy. Collaboration with UNDP is particularly noteworthy and includes scale up of community multimedia centres, promotion of freedom of information legislation, training of journalists, parliamentary broadcasting, multi-country research on the impact of ICTs on poverty. UNESCO also enjoys wide-ranging collaboration with UN system organizations in the implementation of media assistance in post-conflict countries.

UNESCO foresees strategic and systematic future collaboration with UN system organizations as the way forward and called attention to the 8 One UN pilot countries through which field network strategies could be tested. To achieve this UNESCO proposed to:

- develop a joint action plan on communication for development
- ensure impact of the Round Table at higher UN levels
- making Inter-agency collaboration in the field of C4D a priority in the UN system
- set up an Inter-agency technical group on C4D
- introduce C4D as a requirement of UN and other project planning formats
- fostering networks of media professionals specialized in reporting on specific development issues (HIV and AIDS, sustainable development, science communication, etc)
- widening access to diverse content (capacity building of electronic media, facilitating creation of content)

UNEP's focus on the environment enables it to harness sector-specific communication innovatively to address a complex set of issues involving a multitude of actors within and outside the UN system, as well as a multiplicity of frameworks. UNEP's approach is to catalyse action by and through others. This partnership-led approach views Communication for Development less as an add-on function of communication expertise, and more as an integral part of day-to-day programme delivery. A strong emphasis is placed on Inter-agency frameworks such as UN-Water, held up as a best practice in Inter-agency Communication for Development because it brings together multiple UN system organizations in a collaborative, non-competitive way around a shared resource that is not 'owned' by any single agency. A key to UNEP's approach is the sharing of visibility as well as accolades. The branding for UN-Water replaces 12 agency logos with a single logo, ensuring that the pivotal issues around water represent the brand, as opposed to the mandates and agendas of individual agencies.

UNECA emphasizes the primacy of partnership. Marking the first time the UN's Africa Regional Commission has participated in a Round Table, UNECA highlights the importance of pan-continental partnership, by building stronger links to the African Union, NEPAD and African Development Bank as a key plank of its communication strategy. Convening and consultation, with an emphasis on interaction and dialogue, are considered key to communicating policy. Knowledge management is also considered an important strategy to strengthen interaction between the UN system in Africa and different networks or communities.

UNFPA has made communication a compulsory element of all its programming using Behavioural Change Communication (BCC) as the methodology of choice. Population is perhaps the sector with the longest association with BCC.

UN-HABITAT has pioneered sectoral communication to help improve the lives of slum-dwellers and halve the number of those without access to water and sanitation. It does this by generating information for decision-making, so as to strengthen the link between urban planning and policy-making.

UNICEF, another leading proponent of sectoral communication, has four distinct approaches, spanning the full range of communication types: policy advocacy to garner political support; community mobilization to organize civil society networks; BCC and social change communication; and new media outreach.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICTS)

The emphasis is on the creation of enabling policy environments, innovative financing of community use of ICTs, harnessing ICTs to facilitate market access by marginalized groups, enabling developing countries to participate in the global knowledge economy, promoting e-governance, developing community telecenters, and overcoming the digital divide. The outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) – spelled out in the 2003 Geneva Declaration and reaffirmed in Tunis in 2005 – speak on the importance of harnessing ICTs as a means to enhance people’s participation in development.

UNESCO has been at the forefront of advocating the potential of communication in promoting and helping meet the MDGs. The key objectives of UNESCO’s communication and information programme is to build knowledge societies, hinged on key concepts of plurality, inclusion, participation, as well as key principles of freedom of expression, universal access to information and knowledge, promotion of cultural diversity, and equal access to quality education. UNESCO, along with ITU and UNDP, served as a key facilitator in the implementation of the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Action Plan and Tunis Agenda.

UNESCO’s International Initiative for Community Multimedia Centres (CMCs) has been widely acknowledged and taken up by UN system agencies. More than 130 CMCs, including pilots, have been created and supported in 20 countries with varying degrees of involvement from other UN system organizations. The initiative is currently being scaled up in three countries in Africa – Mali, Mozambique and Senegal. In Mozambique, UNESCO works closely with UNDP. In India, UNESCO works with UNDP and UNICEF to support the development of

community radio policy. UNESCO also conducts multi-country research, with other agencies, on the impact of ICTs on poverty reduction.

FAO develops innovative approaches to knowledge exchange using ICTs. An example of FAO's approach is the VERCON/RADCON project, aimed at strengthening information and communication between agricultural services and farmers to improve food production and nutrition. As part of this emphasis, an information management resource kit (IMARK) has also been developed.

UNDP's Democratic Governance practice area includes an E-Governance and Access to Information service line, part of the Programme's growing emphasis on ICTs that also includes its work with UNESCO on ICT community centres, its emphasis on decentralization, and the nurturing and facilitation of virtual practice networks. This is similar to UNECA's focus on knowledge networking and communities of practice.

UN-HABITAT is a leading exponent of geo-information to support policymaking, providing free GIS software, training and technical support for partners, e-learning on city management for local leaders, and a best practices database that includes free e-learning for developing countries. As part of its strategy to empower slum dwellers, UN-HABITAT also harnesses Internet cafes and supports ICTs-enabled one-stop youth centers.

RIGHTS-BASED COMMUNICATION

Approaches focused on advancing rights are becoming increasingly central to development efforts. The UN has adopted the rights-based approach as one of its core values, and is increasingly making use of methodologies to mainstream rights in its programmes. Such approaches view human rights as being of intrinsic value, and as a critical means to the end of development. In addition to the better-known civil and political rights, which have long been advocated for, there is a growing emphasis on economic and social rights, which intersect directly with the Millennium Declaration and MDGs. Advocacy, an approach that is championed in some Communication for Development circles and questioned in others, is increasingly becoming a tool of choice for some agencies pursuing the rights-based approach.

A related intersection is between the rights-based approach and participatory communication, since making citizens aware of their rights implies the creation of a communication environment that facilitates access to information and allows the poor and marginalized to be heard and to influence policy. Although there is no clarity or coherence among development institutions as to how to harness communication to advance rights-based approaches, many agencies

consciously develop communication strategies to advance rights. This leads agencies to enter the sensitive domain of politics as part of a system that is owned by member states and therefore not supposed to challenge governments, however inimical their policies may be to the rights of citizens.

FAO believes strongly that the rights-based approach can strengthen multi-sectoral policy coordination, initiate the support of decision-makers, ensure an ongoing dialogue between stakeholders, and promote reflection, participation and action at community level. The UN agency sees Communication for Development as vital to empowering right-holders by providing informal and non-hierarchical mechanisms for stakeholder participation in their own development. In 2004, its member states unanimously adopted Voluntary Guidelines to support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the context of National Food Security Guidelines that FAO's Right to Food Unit was set up in 2005 to operationalize. Communication is harnessed innovatively to convince governments to implement the Guidelines. In Brazil, for example, FAO efforts to mobilize and provide technical guidance to civil society led the government to recognize adequate food as a human right, resulting in the adoption of a Food and Nutritional Security Law in 2006.

Another example from FAO is DIMITRA, an information and communication project aimed at highlighting the contribution of rural women to the development of their communities. The project gathers and shares information and knowledge on issues such as access to land, the fight against sexual violence, and the impact of HIV and AIDS on rural women.

UN-HABITAT organizes events to commemorate World Habitat Day in urban slums and other relevant locations, as a way of advocating issues.

UNICEF considers policy advocacy as a key pillar of its Communication for Development framework. Strategies in this vein include its 'Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS' campaign, which seeks policy change by partnering across the board and promoting a child-focused framework around the 'Four Ps' – preventing MTCT, providing paediatric treatment, preventing infection among young people, and protecting children with AIDS. The ground-breaking Meena and Sara communication initiatives combine advocacy for child rights with an educative and empowerment approach aimed at girls in Asia and Africa.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AS COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT?

The World Congress on Communication for Development (WCCD) Rome Consensus recently precluded “public information or corporate communication” from its definition of Communication for Development. Nevertheless, public information emerged as a common element in the communication strategies described by the lion’s share of participating agencies in the 10th Round Table. There was a tendency towards disinvesting in Communication for Development in favour of corporate communication strategies – a trend driven by the need for agencies to be more and more visible in a highly competitive environment where a lack of visibility impacted negatively on funding.

The role of corporate communication and areas of potential tension as well as cross-fertilization with Communication for Development were evoked by a presentation on the UN Department for Public Information (UNDPI).

UNDPI made a case to be seen as a unifying platform for information and communication-related efforts. Its role as chair of the UN Communication Group involved convening members of all agencies, funds and programmes, as well as representatives from the UN Secretary-General’s Executive Office, in weekly technical level meetings, annual principal-level meetings, and ongoing issues-based task forces. In some cases, the 64 members of the worldwide network of UN Information Centres have served as the UNCT’s communication arm. UNDPPI also services the Committee on Information, an important policy body that reports to the UN General Assembly.

3. Challenges to a common system approach

Successive waves of UN reform have sought to strengthen coherence both at Headquarters and country levels. As a result, the MDGs are unanimously accepted as the *raison d'être* of the system's efforts, and human rights, gender equality, sustainable development and other concerns are firmly established as core UN values.

COHERENCE, COORDINATION, PARTNERSHIP

There was a clear recognition that communication cannot be divorced from the wider context of UN reforms. Opportunities presented by the One UN Reform may allow the integration of Communication for Development as a systematic approach in development planning. In this context existing actions need to introduce strategies that are able to fully accommodate coherence, coordination and partnership. Practical challenges such as the tension between Headquarters-driven visions and country-level actions; the UN system's uneven impact, and a proliferation of actors in developing countries would have better chances of being resolved within a strategic framework. This could then lead to the system-wide adoption of C4D.

C4D IN NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORKS

UN implementation and planning frameworks – notably CCA/UNDAF – and project and programme formats such as the log frame should take into account Communication for Development. UNDAF is effectively the only system the UN possesses at country level to influence and help support national development plans. For CCA/UNDAF to be re-engineered to include communication as a core component, participants agreed that a compelling case would have to be made to UN Resident Coordinators.

HIGH-LEVEL UNDERSTANDING OF C4D

A third challenge acknowledged by participants was the poor understanding of Communication for Development at the highest levels of decision making

in the UN system as well as beyond it. At best, communication was viewed as a downstream dissemination function, unconnected with the design and implementation of projects, and designed only to promote the mandates, methods and agendas of specific agencies. High level decision-makers tended to buy into communication as a tool for generating and disseminating content, as opposed to a relevant change process. There are few, if any, high-level champions of Communication for Development.

As a result, Communication for Development professionals have been excessively self-referential with many assuming their field was important in its own right and needed no elaboration or explanation. As one participant put it, communication practitioners in the UN have suffered from “a collective chip on the shoulder, which is why we have not been able to get beyond Round Table discussions to influence policy”. With this tendency in mind, strategic thinking about how to position the field has been constrained.

FUNDING

Participants were disturbed by the trend of UN system organizations disinvesting in Communication for Development and reallocating resources to other areas. The likely closure of FAO’s Communication for Development unit was cited as a case in point. At UNICEF, a previous decision to downgrade development-oriented communication (known in UNICEF as programme communication) is likely to be reversed under new leadership. In other cases, communication budgets had been reallocated due to concerns by managers that the long-term nature of behaviour and social change communication meant that they were unlikely to see short-term results.

DATA GENERATION

Data to support the relevance and impact of communication tools and strategies at national level is rare, and where such data exists, it is sketchy and difficult to access. The introduction of UN-system strategies for data gathering, analysis and dissemination will increase chances of relevant and effective national communication policies that respond to priorities in poverty reduction. Systematic mechanisms may ascertain the perspectives of citizens or identify opportunities for expanded participation in national decision-making. Research and lessons learned will then be factored into next-generation policy development and good practices with the potential of being replicated at scale. Given the rapid evolution in communication theory and practice, systematic data gathering and processing will enhance the UN-system’s relevance and credibility.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Appropriate Communication for Development indicators and methodologies will contribute to the credibility of Communication for Development. Although it was recognized that this verifiability deficit was in part due to the long-term nature of development impact, necessitating strategies for managing expectations among policy makers, the consensus was that even in such an environment it should be possible to develop innovative indicators to strike an effective balance between short-term impacts and the widely-shared goal of sustainable and effective development.

REPLICATION AT SCALE

By its very nature, Communication for Development did not necessarily lend itself to at-scale programme or project implementation, with many good practices successful precisely because they were micro-level interventions targeted at specific communities with their unique contexts. This being the case, Communication for Development proponents needed to be cautious and advocate for pilot-level programmes and projects to be implemented at scale in different contexts only when appropriate.

EMPOWERMENT VS. COUNTRY OWNERSHIP

Another challenge raised by some participants was the tension between aspects of Communication for Development practice—predicated on a belief system of two-way communication and empowerment of marginalized groups – and the growing belief in country ownership. Some participants argued that under no circumstances should the UN seek to impose its ideas on governments, who were after all the owners of their national development strategies. The role of the UN, according to this point of view, was to advise and assist in implementing plans drawn up by developing country governments. The flip side of this argument was that bowing to country ownership ran the risk of undermining the rights-based approach that is a core UN system value.

With both perspectives in mind, and recognizing the difficulty such a tension posed for the UN's impact in this area, communication advocates had no choice but to strike a balance, where possible, between pursuing pro-active empowerment approaches and providing reactive technical assistance requested by governments. One participant, noting that the UN system has brought about many changes among its member states since its inception, urged that the Round Table be less internally-focused and address issues of relevance to the system's key stakeholders.

SPECIALIST CAPACITY

A shortfall in specialist Communication for Development capacity was highlighted as affecting all agencies represented at the Round Table. At one end of the spectrum, market leaders such as UNICEF allocate significant budgetary resources to ensure Communication for Development expertise in regional offices. At the other end, and as is more the norm than the exception, the absence of specialized Communication for Development personnel is palpable at middle as well as high levels, partly accounting for the UN's failure to systematically harness communication tools and methodologies in service of more effective development. Furthermore, and despite two UN General Assembly resolutions and a host of strong proposals emanating from previous Round Tables, mechanisms, accountability lines and division of labour in the Communication for Development domain are missing. Even when communication experts are in evidence, these overwhelmingly tend to be of the public information or external relations variety. In-service and specialized training programmes for UN staff in the Communication for Development field are also few and far between.

4. Making a high-level case for C 4 D

The following two sections of this report synthesize the key proposals for the way forward discussed in the Round Table plenary sessions, as well as the working groups. In particular, this section highlights action points emerging from the first working group, whose task was to develop proposals for high-level advocacy at global UN level that would help make the case for mainstreaming Communication for Development across programmes and projects.

ADVOCACY STRATEGIES & FORMAL MECHANISMS

It was proposed that the Round Table recommendation be conveyed by the UNESCO Director-General to the UN Secretary-General. Steps should also be taken to explore how to establish a formal link with the CEB, and the possibility of using the Committee on Information as a conduit for regular reporting to the UN General Assembly. The need for high-level advocacy strategies and formal mechanisms to position Communication for Development in the UN system at global level was unanimously agreed. Participants had expressed their concerns that the Round Table, while laudable, was not sufficient to legitimize the field. In particular, there was an overarching concern that the Round Table would develop recommendations in a vacuum, omitting to take into account the various UN high-level bodies and their importance in building a constituency in the absence of a high-level mechanism.

RAISE AWARENESS WITHIN THE UN SYSTEM

Additionally, participants were asked to widely disseminate the recommendations internally – although the absence of ranking staff members from agencies represented at the Round Table was raised as a possible stumbling block. Third party endorsements – whereby senior champions from outside the UN system could be canvassed to convince their UN peers – were also proposed as a means of getting high-level support for communication.

FORMALIZE THE ROUND TABLE

Participants proposed that the Round Table be designated the principal international coordinating mechanism for Communication for Development efforts in the UN system. The Round Table's current informal status had rendered follow-up difficult in an environment where coordination and coherence was

already problematic. The fact that key UN system organizations, such as WHO and ITU, were not represented in Addis Ababa reflected this reality. Formalizing the Round Table and expanding its remit would strengthen the mechanism's influence.

FORMALIZE THE INTER-AGENCY WORKING GROUP

At the same time, an Inter-agency Working Group on Communication for Development should be formalized and designated to report to the CEB. The Working Group would take a lead in following up Round Table recommendations, and developing system-wide Communication for Development norms and standards. Participants in favour of this approach suggested that steps should be taken to secure a third UN General Assembly resolution. An opposing view warned against excessive formalization and the creation of new structures, suggesting that high-level advocacy was best accomplished on an issue-by-issue basis, harnessing existing products and structures.

INCLUDE C4D IN STANDARDIZED APPROACHES

Another key proposal emerging from the working group was to include Communication for Development as a component of UN and international standardized programme-based approaches and formats for project development, often associated with log frames. While it was essential for this mainstreaming to happen at global level, the critical importance of convincing UN Resident Coordinators was also emphasized. Similarly, it was also agreed that for Communication for Development needs assessments to be included as part of the CCA/UNDAF process, UN Resident Coordinators needed to be brought on board.

C4D A CORE UN COMPETENCY

There was unanimous agreement that system-wide capacity building should be instituted as part of the effort to embed Communication for Development as a core UN competency. However, participants did not elaborate in any detail how this might be achieved, identifying it as something that could be put in place once communication had been recognized at high UN levels. Participants also agreed, without going into detail, that efforts should be made to optimize the use of existing resources while advocating for dedicated Communication for Development budgets.

5. Integrating C4D in programme planning & delivery

This section highlights action points emerging from the second working group, whose task was to develop proposals on how Communication for Development can be integrated in programme planning and delivery at country-level.

DIVERSIFY PILOT AUDITS

It was agreed that pilot country communication audits, participatory communication research processes or needs assessments should take place possibly in the 8 'One UN' pilot countries, and scaled up accordingly along the lines of the 'One UN' proposal. However, there was uncertainty as to the extent to which the proposals contained in the 'Delivering as One' report, commissioned by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan, would be acted upon by his successor. For this reason, it was argued that pilots should not be restricted to 'One UN' pilot countries, but should instead be selected on the basis of context-specificity, since it was unlikely that an enabling environment for communication audits existed in each of the 'One UN' pilot countries.

An alternative proposal was to pilot the assessments in countries that held the best possible chance of success, while ensuring overlap, where possible, with a sub-set of 'One UN' countries.

The motivation and dynamism of the UN Resident Coordinator was suggested as criteria for selection of pilot countries. Ultimately, the pilots would have to respect and fit in with country development plans.

CONVINCE AND MOBILIZE UN RESIDENT COORDINATORS

It was agreed that the mobilization of UN Resident Coordinators should be among the most urgent of priorities. Doing so would necessitate a detailed set of activities in each country, including Communication for Development Round Tables at regional, national, and sub-national levels. Given that coordination

mechanisms for the UN's work in developing countries were already in place, it was strongly felt that UN Resident Coordinators should be left to coordinate, and Communication for Development advocates should instead focus on convening at country level – creating spaces for different actors to come together and agree on joint actions and initiatives.

DEVELOP SYSTEM-WIDE POLICY TO BUILD COUNTRY CAPACITY

It was suggested that a policy on in-country communication capacity and collaboration needed to be laid down at Headquarters level. The UN Communication Group, convened by UNDPI, was identified as the appropriate body to do this. Capacity shortfalls at country-level reflect the system-wide lack of Communication for Development expertise. Where posts for communication officers existed at country-level the staff concerned tended to be focused on external or public relations and lacked clout in CCA/UNDAF processes. The absence of UN country communication teams made it all the more difficult to foster sustained in-country collaboration.

COMPILE COMPELLING EVIDENCE FOR HIGH-LEVEL ADVOCACY

Participants agreed on the importance of compiling evidence for high-level advocacy purposes. Such evidence could be used by UN Resident Coordinators to convince their peers, among senior UN decision makers, to focus on content as opposed to process, and in light of the universal importance of the MDGs. Efforts should be undertaken to provide MDGs-specific evidence as well as communication content to better show the linkages between, for example, participatory communication and meeting specific MDGs.

PURSUE TWIN-TRACK APPROACHES TO SELL C4D

Participants also discussed the eventuality that in certain contexts, it may not be possible to sell Communication for Development to the UN system at country level. This may well happen because of the heterodox nature of the field, and the different names given to the body of methodologies and theories usually ascribed to Communication for Development. A viable alternative is to pursue a twin track approach, combining advocacy of the field as a coherent whole with sector-specific initiatives that are less abstract and can therefore market the field more concretely.

HARNESS PERSUASIVE POWER OF IN-COUNTRY DONORS

A number of issues and constraints were raised in the context of embedding Communication for Development at country level. Given the political nature of communication, it was suggested that advocates leverage the clout and persuasive powers of in-country donors as a means of getting round difficulties with government line ministries. On indicators and evaluation, and in light of the long-term nature of impact, it was important to develop indicators that measure process, sustainability and outcome, as opposed to simply short-term outputs. Furthermore, in attributing changes to communication, impact assessment should take into account other factors, not related to communication, which may have reflected positively on the environment. To be optimally effective, indicators should be linked to specific outcomes in UNDAF as in other strategic approaches.

6. Tentative actions and initiatives

An expected outcome of the 10th UN Inter-agency Round Table was agreement on an action plan for UN system collaboration on Communication for Development. To this end, and prior to the start of the Round Table, a draft plan of action was circulated as an annex to the UNESCO and UNDP background papers. The following narrative constitutes a revised UN Inter-agency strategy based on the Round Table discussions and proposals. Its focus is two-fold: first, it proposes ways of integrating Communication for Development in the UN system; second, it proposes strategies for in-country UN collaboration.

6.1 BACKGROUND, PURPOSE AND VISION

6.1.1 The United Nations General Assembly passed resolution 50/130 in 1995 and subsequently resolution 51/172 to encourage the UN to use informal mechanisms, such as Round Tables, to advance Communication for Development noting that there was “no regular forum whereby discussions are held and views exchanged” on this issue. The resolutions also requested the UN-Secretary General in consultation with the Director-General of UNESCO to report to the General Assembly on their implementation. It allowed the informal Round Table to evolve into a regularized, biennial process. The UN system organizations agreed that the Round Table would be chaired and hosted on a rotational basis, while coordination is taken up by UNESCO.

6.1.2 Eliminating poverty in all its forms must involve a multi-dimensional approach that is predicated not only on achieving an adequate standard of living, but also on other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. Communication for Development, which puts people at the centre of decision-making processes, enables dialogue, facilitates information and knowledge sharing, builds understanding around development issues and amplifies the voice and influence of people in public debates.

6.1.3 Incorporating Communication for Development analytical and cross-cutting features becomes invaluable when integrated at the initial stages of

planning. Such features enhance project design and improve their effectiveness and sustainability.

6.1.4 Communication for Development works most effectively when the requisite enabling environment is in place. Elements of such a setting include:

- an open society in which all groups are able to participate fully in development decisions, democratic debates and decision making processes
- a free, independent and pluralistic media system, where media are accountable to their audiences and open to dialogue and debate; and
- an open, transparent and accountable government that encourages public discourse, broad public access to a variety of communication media and channels, as well as a regulatory environment that promotes non-discriminatory licensing for local radio and low-cost universal access to the Internet and telephone services

6.1.5 Communication for Development can play a key role in reducing poverty and fostering development. A myriad of interventions over time have sought to strengthen media systems and capacity in developing countries. However, in some cases, the sheer proliferation of actors working in an un-coordinated manner at different levels has imposed a high transaction cost on development partners and potential beneficiaries of development.

6.1.6 A more holistic approach by the UN system, reflecting greater coherence and enhanced collaboration, can foster more effective partnerships with and among the wider development community. Putting in place the enabling environment constitutes a critical agenda around which the UN system can rally.

6.1.7 This was emphasized in a recommendation issued at the end of the 10th Round Table, which highlighted the importance of participatory communication systems and processes in meeting the MDGs. The recommendation noted the results orientation enshrined in the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel Report 'Delivering as One'; the principles of ownership, participation and accountability codified in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (OECD-Development Assistance Committee, 2 March 2005), and included a number of requests directed at the CEB. The participants of the Round Table agreed to take forward these recommendations, through internal mechanisms, to respective Heads of Organizations and committed to the implementation of the relevant actions.

PURPOSE

A common UN strategy would be a first step towards strengthening the role of Communication for Development as a key component of UN system programming. It draws on recommendations adopted at the 10th UN Inter-agency Round Table on Communication for Development, held at the UN Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 14 February 2007, as well as from previous Round Table discussions.

VISION

Communication for Development principles and methodologies prioritized by senior-level decision makers of United Nations Specialized Agencies, Programmes and Funds in all programmatic areas, and human, technical and financial resources allocated towards this effort.

The existing Inter-agency mechanism formalized to promote and enhance Communication for Development within the United Nations System.

Communication for Development integrated as a strategic component of policy development to meet the MDGs and other international development goals.

UN Country Teams work together to strengthen communication and information capacities so that development will occur.

6.2 MISSION, OBJECTIVE AND PURPOSE

UN system agencies jointly execute communication programmes in pilot countries, if possible, over a period of three years.

The agencies strengthen available mechanisms for the coordination of operational activities, reinforce Headquarters level collaboration and senior management involvement, and develop standards, guidelines, and/or indicators to ensure enhanced impact.

Recognition of the existing Inter-agency Round Table and its role in promoting and enhancing Communication for Development within the United Nations system.

OBJECTIVES

To strengthen UN Inter-agency collaboration around Communication for Development. In particular, improve existing country-level diagnostics and programming collaboration (CCA/UNDAF, PRS, C4D audits/needs assessments, monitoring and evaluation).

Involve senior-level decision-makers in (a) prioritizing Communication for Development in the elaboration and execution of their programmes (b) allocating the human, technical and financial resources required for this effort.

PRINCIPLES

- A strategic approach
- An official common UN platform
- Partnership within and beyond UN system
- Country focus
- Comparative advantages of UN system organizations
- Advocacy of Communication for Development
- Local capacity building
- Monitoring and evaluation

FOCUS

The action to be devised will articulate joint UN Inter-agency collaboration to meet the MDGs and other internationally agreed upon goals by focusing on the following areas:

(a) Raise the profile of the Round Table, develop a common understanding on Communication for Development, and enhance Inter-agency collaboration

(b) Integrate Communication for Development in programme planning and delivery; involve the UN Resident Coordinator to foster C4D collaboration; include communication audits in CCA/UNDAF and other development exercises; build capacity of the UN Country Team; and develop system-wide indicators to measure the impact of C4D in helping meet the MDGs and other internationally agreed upon goals.

The action will be implemented at two levels: at global, Headquarters level and within selected developing countries.

6.3 INTERNATIONAL-LEVEL ACTIONS AND PROPOSED INITIATIVES

Globally, UN system organizations, funds and programmes will:

- Seek to raise the profile and status of the UN Inter-agency Round Table
- Reinforce the Round Table as the main international UN coordinating mechanism on Communication for Development issues
- Agree that a higher priority shall be accorded to C4D by UN system organizations
- Undertake advocacy to mainstream Communication for Development
- Establish system-wide practices and standards

To ensure the above, participants proposed the following initiatives:

- Integrate C4D audits/needs assessments into CCA/UNDAF guidelines or equivalent methodologies
- Ensure that a country level C4D coordination system is integrated into the UN Resident Coordinator system (national and international)
- Formalize the Inter-agency Working Group as the UN Inter-agency mechanism coordinating C4D
- Review the Round Table's membership to enable it to become fully system-wide, with higher level representation that would raise the impact of decisions taken
- Request the CEB to emphasize the importance of prioritizing C4D to senior-level UN decision-makers. Undertake a coherent and collective effort to involve senior-level UN decision-makers
- Develop system-wide indicators to measure the impact of C4D and possibly publishing readily available evidence
- Adopt measures to heighten the capacity of countries and ensure sustainability of capacity building actions
- Establish new specific C4D budget mechanisms
- Establish regional hubs of C4D expertise for support to regional coordinators/ country offices
- Share good practices
- Collaborate in the preparation of a document providing a common platform on Communication for Development that will also include the various approaches and methodologies used by the various UN system organizations.

6.4 COUNTRY-LEVEL ACTIONS AND PROPOSED INITIATIVES

UN Country Teams could be responsible for:

- integrating C4D in the CCA/UNDAF, PRS and other development processes
- financing and implementing programmes at scale
- building national systems and capacities, and
- providing joint technical assistance

To ensure the above, participants proposed the following initiatives:

- Include communication audit plans in the CCA/UNDAF
- Collaboratively pilot communication audit processes in a mix of selected 'One UN' pilot countries and other countries
- Facilitate organization of country-level Round Tables informed by communication audit processes and involving wider participation including members of civil society
- Ensure coordination of C4D at country level under the auspices of the UN Resident Coordinator
- Conduct mapping of existing initiatives regarding the development of communication within countries
- Examine ways of ensuring joint work among existing field offices of UN system organizations and making full use of other agencies' existing field networks
- Integrate C4D into log frame planning guidelines and other project document formats

6.5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Two levels of monitoring and evaluation should be built into all activities from inception: (a) Actions to be developed jointly as a follow-up to the Round Table meeting (b) A broader evaluation of Communication for Development's contribution to create an enabling environment for meeting the MDGs.

The UN Inter-agency Round Table will closely follow overall progress. An Inter-agency working Group will meet periodically to further elaborate strategic elements that may lead to the following results:

- Advancement of communication structures and systems in Member States
- Help meeting the MDGs and other international development goals
- Strengthening the institutional weight and capacities of UN based C4D Units

6.6 COMMITMENT INDICATORS

- Evidence of forward movement in pilot communication audits
- Evidence of resource allocation
- Commissioning of papers
- Development of operational plans
- Inclusion of C4D in log frames and other project formats
- Initiatives to strengthen mechanisms
- Dedicated C4D funding secured or pledged

6.7 IMPACT INDICATORS

- Number of UNCTs implementing joint Communication for Development programming
- Number of UNCTs using communication audits/ needs assessments
- Number of UN system organizations increasing priority of C4D
- Number of research reports published
- Number of sets of indicators produced in countries

6.8 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

- The UN Inter-agency Round Table on Communication for Development
- The Technical Working Group on Communication for Development
- Communication for Development structures or mechanisms within UN Country Teams

APPENDICES

Inaugural Address,

**Mr. Abdul Waheed Khan, Assistant Director-
General for Communication and Information,
UNESCO**

Agenda

List of Participants

Inaugural Session Address

By Abdul Waheed Khan
Assistant Director-General for
Communication and Information
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Mr. Minister,
Secretary-General of ECA,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Colleagues from UN system organizations and multilateral institutions,

On behalf of the Director-General of UNESCO and of all our colleagues from the other UN and multilateral institutions present here, I warmly welcome you to this inaugural session of the 10th UN Inter-agency Round Table on Communication for Development.

During the next three days, we will work together to develop a “UN system-wide common approach to Communication for Development in view of achieving the Millennium Development Goals” as the Round Table theme indicates.

We will work together to establish synergies in order to contribute to building societies, “where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life”, as the Heads of States gathered for the World Summit on the Information Society declared in Geneva in 2003.

The Geneva Declaration reflects the conviction that Communication for Development is fundamentally the manner, in which we share knowledge aimed at reaching consensus for action. Its particular feature is that it takes into account the interests, needs and capacities of all concerned, particularly of

those who are expected to benefit from development initiatives. The approach invites participation at all levels in the process of development planning, implementation and evaluation.

Seven years ago, at the dawn of the new millennium, the world's governments united to make an unprecedented promise to the victims of global poverty. Gathered at the United Nations, they signed the Millennium Declaration — a solemn pledge “to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty”.

The Declaration provides a bold vision rooted in a shared commitment to universal human rights and social justice. Moreover, it is backed by clear time-bound targets to realize that vision. You all know that these targets — the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) — include halving extreme poverty, reducing infant mortality, providing all children all over the world with an education, rolling back infectious diseases and forging a new global partnership to deliver results.

The date for delivery - 2015 - looked ambitious, but was at that time considered feasible. In fact since 1990, life expectancy in developing countries has increased by 2 years. There are 3 million fewer child deaths annually and 30 million fewer children are out of school. More than 130 million people have escaped extreme poverty. These human development gains cannot be underestimated but the time it took does not correspond to the expected rate of the MDG timeframe.

Therefore, we can no longer proceed with business as usual. Unless we redefine the way we work, we will be unable to reach the goals by 2015, given the fact that results achieved in the first half of the MDG timeframe are seriously insufficient. Still today, 10.7 million children every year do not live to see their fifth birthday. More than 1 billion people survive in abject poverty on less than \$1 a day, while a total of 3 billion live on less than \$ 2 per day. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has inflicted the single greatest reversal in human development, particularly in Africa.

The magnitude of the challenge facing the world to reach the MDGs by 2015 is enormous. It demands us to reexamine the ways in which we grapple with the related issues. Therefore it is important that we reflect upon key implementation issues that we have to resolve and make the necessary adjustments before it is too late.

**Mr. Minister,
Colleagues,**

We know that international cooperation cannot substitute governments' work to prioritize human development, to respect human rights, to tackle inequality, or to root out corruption. But we also know that without a renewed commitment to cooperation by all stakeholders, including those of us working in the UN system, backed by practical action, the MDGs will be missed, and the Millennium Declaration will be judged by history as just another failed promise.

Not only governments but the entire UN system and all other development partners need to change their ways to work together. Operational activities of the UN represent 31 % of global official development assistance. We have an obligation to jointly reflect on how best we can realign our tasks so as to make our contribution towards achieving the MDGs more efficient and result-oriented. And we have to jointly act since the "true measure of success for the United Nations is not how much we promise, but how much we deliver for those who need us most" as UN Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon reminded us in his inaugural speech in December before the UN General Assembly in New York.

**Mr. Minister,
Colleagues,**

Development is led and owned by the countries themselves. The road map drawn in the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness recognized this as an important right. However, while the leadership for development policies and strategies rests with each country, countries do need partners to mobilize resources and implement those policies. Therefore, it is important that countries coordinate their development actions based on a broad consultative process with their partners.

The development partners, for their part, are expected to provide assistance in line with identified national development strategies, institutions and procedures. Together with the recipient countries, the development partners are mutually accountable for development results. It is in that spirit the UN High-Level Panel – comprising, among others, the Prime Ministers of Mozambique, Norway and Pakistan – in its recent report on UN system-wide coherence, made a strong plea for the UN system to "deliver as one", in true partnership.

From now on, the relevance and impact of the UN system organizations will thus increasingly be judged by their results orientation and capacity to "deliver as one".

We have gathered here in Addis Ababa to deliberate on how best we can achieve this through improving our working methods and adopting a common strategy in the area of Communication for Development.

Development is a process of expanding freedoms that people enjoy. Development as freedom requires that we address the reasons that restrict freedoms such as the lack of economic opportunities and social exclusion. There are mutually reinforcing interconnections between different kinds of freedoms. If people have the opportunity to be heard, it reinforces other aspects of their freedom and their ability to be involved in society.

We need to establish a common strategy to assist Member States to integrate Communication for Development as a key component of development planning. Previous round tables have consistently observed that there is an inadequate focus on Communication for Development in development planning. If there was any, it was usually limited to mere publicity for the plans and failed to recognize the importance of sharing knowledge with the purpose of reaching consensus on development planning, implementation and evaluation.

The era during which communication development concepts were more or less determined by communication debates that were vertical versus horizontal, or top-down versus bottom-up, is now history. In today's world the multiplicity of channels providing both top-down and bottom-up communication can very well complement with each other to facilitate an optimal sharing of knowledge, enabling in turn people to make informed decisions. The outcome documents of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) rightly highlight the potential of information and communication to promote the Development Goals of the Millennium Declaration.

It is for this purpose that we need to forge a common understanding of Communication for Development and its role in delivering the Millennium Development Goals. We need to take into account the fact that communicative ecologies are influenced by an increased prevalence of communication media and the possibility for the democratic engagement of people in shaping the ways in which the decisions that affect them are made.

Therefore, we have to look at how we can improve the communication capacities of people so they can increase their participation in communication processes; in other words improve communication capacities: yes, but in a way that is participatory and inclusive. Both technical and political developments now allow us to introduce significant improvements in this area.

**Mr. Minister,
Colleagues,**

Before closing, I wish to thank the authorities of Ethiopia for their kind hospitality proving once more the commitment of the government to the ideals and the operations of the UN system.

My thanks go also to Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa, and his staff for their very efficient and generous help they have provide so that we can be together here in Addis Ababa for the next three days.

Thank you, colleagues from the UN system organizations and friends from all the other organizations for accepting our invitation. I look forward to fruitful and constructive debates and suggestions that can enable us to jointly deliver.

Now, on behalf of the Director-General of UNESCO, it is my great pleasure to officially open the 10th Inter-agency Round Table on Communication for Development.

Thank you.

Agenda

Monday 12 February 2007

8.00 – 8.45 am Transfer from Hilton Hotel to UNCC

8:30 – 9:00 am Registration of participants

9:00 – 10:00 am Inaugural Session

Opening Remarks:

9:00 – 9:15 am **Mr Abdul Waheed Khan**, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, UNESCO

9:15 – 9:30 am **Mr Abdoulie Janneh**, Executive Secretary, ECA

9:30 – 9:45 am **Mr Fidele Sarassoro**, UN Resident Coordinator

Inaugural Address:

9:45 – 10:00 am **Representative of H.E. Mr Meles Zenawi**, Prime Minister, Ethiopia

10:00 – 10:30 am Coffee

10:30 – 11:30 am **Session 1**

Introduction to the Round Table

Facilitator: **Mr Abdul Waheed Khan**, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, UNESCO

Follow-up to the 9th Round Table (12 min)

Mr Riccardo Del Castello, Communication for Development Officer, Extension,

Education and Communication Service (SDRE), FAO

Follow-up to the World Congress on Communication for Development

(12 min)

Mr Paul Mitchell, Manager, Development Communications Division, World Bank

Programme, organization and expected outcomes of the 10th Round Table (12

min)

Mr W. Jayaweera, Director, Communication Development Division, UNESCO

Discussions follow

11:30 – 12:30 am **Session 2**

Stock taking: Current orientations in each UN agency on Communication for Development to achieve the Millennium Development Goals

Facilitator: **Mr Salil Shetty**, Director of the Millennium Campaign, UN

- What is each agency doing to achieve the Millennium Development Goals through their Communication for Development programmes?
- What are the regional- and country-based strategies, challenges, opportunities, funding/grants?
- What are the potential areas for Inter-agency collaboration?
- Showcasing best practices of UN agency collaboration

Presentations (10 min. each) by:

- FAO
- UNAIDS
- UNCDF
- UNDP

12:30 – 2:00 pm **Lunch**

2:00 – 3:45 pm **Session 3**

Stock taking continued: Current orientations in each UN agency on Communication for Development to achieve the Millennium Development Goals

Facilitator: **Mr Salil Shetty**, Director of the Millennium Campaign, UN

Presentations (10 min. each) by:

- UNEP
- UNECA
- UNESCO
- UNFPA
- UN-HABITAT
- UNICEF
- World Bank
- UNDPI

3:45- 4:00 pm **Coffee break**

4:00 – 4:15 pm **Key points to be summarized from the presentations**
(Mr Salil Shetty)

4:15 – 4:45 pm **Discussions**

4:45 – 6:00 pm **Session 4**

Towards a UN-wide approach to Communication for Development
(based on the background papers prepared by UNDP and UNESCO)

Facilitator: Mr Bjoern Foerde, Director, UNDP Oslo Governance Centre

- The role of communication in achieving the MDGs
- What areas of collaboration would make a change?
- What are the challenges we face?
- What mechanisms need to be reinforced or established?
- To what extent can Communication for Development be integrated in CCAs and UNDAF?
- What strategic approaches, such as the human rights-based approach, can be used in this context?

(a) UN system common approach highlighting the role of communication in achieving the Millennium Development Goals

Presented by Mr Peter Da Costa, UNESCO Consultant

- Who does what and at what level;
- Existing challenges and opportunities for strengthening UN collaboration in the implementation and follow-up of Communication for Development projects;
- Intended thematic areas and target groups;
- Using the Round Table as a platform for long-term collaborative planning and harmonization;
- Ongoing efforts to raise the awareness of policy makers and development planners.

Questions and answers

6.00 – 6.30 pm Transfer from UNCC to Hilton Hotel

7.00 pm Transfer from Hilton Hotel to Lucy Gallery

7:30 – 9:30 pm **Welcome cocktail at Lucy Gallery**

Tuesday 13 February 2007

8.00 – 8.45 am Transfer from Hilton Hotel to UNCC

09:00 – 10:15 am **Towards a UN-wide approach to Communication for Development continued**

Facilitator: **Mr Bjoern Foerde**, Director, UNDP Oslo Governance Centre

(b) Integrating Communication for Development in UNDAF / common country assessment / PRS.

Presented by Mr James Deane, Communication for Social Change Consortium, UNDP Consultant

- Brief introduction to CCA/UNDAF and PRS
- Overview of ongoing and outstanding challenges
- Existing efforts and success factors to integrate a communication focus
- Exploring other mechanisms similar to UNDAF

Questions and answers

10:15 – 10:45 am **Coffee break**

10:45 – 1:00 pm **Session 5**

Round Table debates and discussions

Facilitators: **Mr Adam Rogers**, Head, Communications and Public Information, UNCDF
Mr Paul Mitchell, Manager, Development Communication Division, World Bank

Brainstorming session – combination of UN system representatives, practitioners and academics

1. What is your perception of UN system organizations' contribution towards Communication for Development?
2. What role do you foresee for the UN system in the field of communication for development in the coming years?
3. Based on past experiences and results, what kind of strategies do you propose for the UN system in the field of Communication for Development to fast track the development process in developing countries?

Introductory remarks: **Mr Abdul Waheed Khan**, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, UNESCO

Discussants:

➤ Academics / practitioners:

Mr James Deane, Managing Director, Communication for Social Change Consortium

Mr Torben Krogh, Chairman, UNESCO International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) and Chairman, International Media Support (IMS)

Mr Stephen King, Director, BBC World Service Trust

Mr Alfred Opubor, Coordinator of the Working Group on Communication for Education and Development (GTCOMED)

Ms Josie Pagani, Communications Manager, OECD/DAC

Ms Rinalia Abdul Rahim, Director, Global Knowledge Partnership

Mr Jules Savaria, Ambassador-in-Residence, Orbicom

Mr Jan Servaes, Head of the School of Journalism and Communication at the University of Queensland, Australia, and President of the European Consortium for Communications Research (ECCR)

Mr Gerolf Weigel, Head of Division, ICT4D, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

➤ Representatives of UN system organizations:

FAO, UNAIDS, UNCDF, UNDP, UNECA, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-HABITAT, UNICEF, World Bank, UN Millennium Campaign, UNDPI

1:00 – 2:30 pm **Lunch**

2:30 – 4:00 pm **Session 6**

Introduction to break out sessions, facilitators, rapporteurs (two groups to discuss and outline proposals and follow-up actions and create cluster groups on specific issues/subject areas. A draft action plan with matrix will be provided to each group and will serve as a basis for the discussions)

Overall facilitator: Mr Salil Shetty, Director of the Millennium Campaign, UN

Working Group 1: Design of a UN system common approach highlighting the role of Communication for Development in achieving the Millennium Development Goals

Expected Outcomes:

1. Outline areas for a UN system-wide action plan, to be further elaborated at a future meeting.
2. Consider the pronouncement of a political declaration.
3. Identify strategies to harmonize Communication for Development programming approaches internationally and link them to the realization of the MDGs and WSIS Action lines.
4. Propose ways to ensure impact of the Round Table at higher UN level / in the UN system

Moderator: **Mr Neil Ford**, Regional Adviser, Programme Communication, UNICEF
 Rapporteur: Chief of the Section for Media Capacity-Building, Communication and Information Sector, UNESCO

Working Group 2: Develop a UN system proposal on how best to integrate Communication for Development in the UNDAF common country assessment

Expected Outcomes:

1. Formalize Inter-agency technical groups, within UN Country Teams, working for Communication for Development. Identify elements to integrate it in UNDAF system
2. Propose a plan of action that could be implemented by UN system organizations and a field network strategy, at country level
3. Design a follow-up strategy for UN system organizations to act upon.
4. Identify key target audiences or thrusts of Communication for Development.

Moderator: Mr Andreas von Brandt, Communications Officer, FAO
 Rapporteur: Mr Jean Fabre, Deputy Director in charge of Communications, UNDP

4 :00 - 4 :30 pm **Coffee break**

4:30 – 6:30 pm **Session 6 continues**

6:30 – 6:45 pm **Transfer from UNCC to Hilton Hotel**

Wednesday 14 February 2007

- 9:30 – 10:15 am Transfer from Hilton Hotel to UNCC
 10:30 – 12:30 am Reporting back on action plans

Draft Recommendation (to be prepared by a drafting committee) and Message to UNSG

Follow-up agenda and delegation of responsibilities

Concluding remarks

Mr Abdul Waheed Khan, ADG for Communication and Information, UNESCO

- 1:00 -2:30 pm Lunch reception

2:30 – 4:30 pm

UNESCO - BBC World Service Trust Special Panel'Voice and Accountability – Media and Opening of the Political Space'

Moderator: Mr Stephen King, Director, BBC World Service Trust

Speakers:

Mr Peter Knowles, Editor, BBC Parliamentary Service
 Mr Mahfuz Anam, Editor, Daily Star, Bangladesh
 Mr Kwaku Sakyi-Addo, JOY FM, Ghana
 Mr Torben Krogh, Chairman, UNESCO Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) and Chairman, International Media Support (IMS)

4:30 – 5:00 pm **Coffee break**

5:00 – 6:15 pm **Press Conference**

Chaired by Mr Abdul Waheed Khan, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, UNESCO

6:15 – 6:30 pm Transfer from UNCC to Hilton Hotel

List of participants UN system organizations:

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
C4D	Communication for Development
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CEB	UN system Chief Executives Board for Coordination
CMC	Community Multimedia Center
ECCR	European Consortium for Communications Research
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GTCCOMED	Working Group on Communication for Education and Development
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ICT4D	ICT for Development
IMS	International Media Support
IPDC	International Programme for the Development of Communication
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
IMARK	Information Management Resource Kit
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit (of the United Nations)
LDC	Least developed country
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MTCT	Mother to child transfer (HIV)
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Co-operation Directorate Orbicom Network of UNESCO Chairs in Communications
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
UN	United Nations
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Programme for Human Settlements
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNCC	United Nations Conference Centre
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistant Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDPI	United Nations Department of Public Information
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General
WCCD	World Congress on Communication for Development
WSIS	World Summit on the Information Society