

Chapter 3

Increasing Efforts on HIV/AIDS, Gender Equality, and Human Rights

The integration of HIV/AIDS, gender, and human rights into the broad range of UN activities is at the heart of the ongoing efforts of UN reform. Coherence within the UNCTs plays an important role in ensuring that agencies and development partners exploit their comparative advantages to jointly focus support on national capacity development in these three core and cross-cutting areas.

At the 61st Session of the General Assembly the Secretary-General affirmed the progress made towards universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care, and support, including the 2006 adoption of the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS, which brought greater coherence to the accelerated international response to the pandemic. In terms of gender, the global consensus that the UN facilitated on the centrality of gender equality to development forms a powerful basis for coherent UNCT support for gender equality and women's empowerment in line with national priorities. Furthermore, in response to the call of the Secretary-General, an increased number of UNCTs in 2006 undertook joint activities in the field of human rights, many as part of the Action 2 programme. Finally, the deeper commitment of the entire UN system to mainstream the human rights-based approach (HRBA) throughout programming increasingly ensures that capacity is developed so that rights holders can claim their intrinsic human rights and duty bearers will meet their corresponding obligations.





Reversing the HIV/AIDS Pandemic

AIDS remains one of the leading causes of death worldwide, and by the end of 2006 an estimated 39.5 million people were living with HIV infection. The scale of the epidemic threatens achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) — in particular the goal to “have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.” But HIV/AIDS similarly endangers the goals on poverty, education, gender equality, child mortality, and maternal health.

In the face of this exceptional challenge, the international community has strengthened its commitment to scaling up capacity to reverse the spread of HIV and the annual AIDS death toll. At the High-Level Meeting on AIDS held at the UN General Assembly on 2 June 2006, a new global objective was declared: moving towards the goal of universal access to comprehensive prevention programmes, treatment, care, and support by 2010.

The universal access commitment set a major milestone on the road towards the achievement of the MDGs. The Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS played a leading role in its formulation through a country-led process supported by more than 120 UNCTs. Harmonization and alignment are guiding UN efforts to build capacity to make universal access a reality. The Rome and Paris agendas for harmonization and aid effectiveness, as well as the principles guiding UN reform, have been adapted to the AIDS response through the “Three Ones” principles and the recommendations of the *Global Task Team on Improving AIDS Coordination Among Multilateral Institutions and International Donors*.

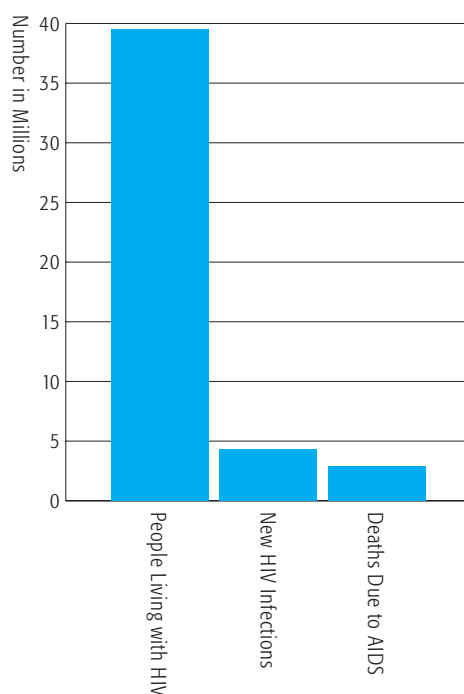
Harmonization and alignment of AIDS responses

In 2004 the adoption of the “Three Ones” principles brought greater coherence to the dramatic acceleration of the international response to AIDS. The global community embraced a comprehensive and country-owned national response guided by one national AIDS action framework, one national coordinating authority, and one monitoring and evaluation system. Subsequently, in 2005 a high-level multi-stakeholder Global Task Team, chaired by UNAIDS and the Government of Sweden, recommended specific actions by multilateral institutions and international partners. The aim was to empower inclusive national leadership and ownership, increase alignment to national priorities, better harmonize multilateral support, and improve accountability and oversight.

A major contribution to the implementation of the Global Task Team recommendations was the establishment of joint UN programmes and teams on AIDS within the UNCTs, following a December 2005 directive by the UN Secretary-General.

- By the end of 2006 at least 65 UNCTs had established a Joint UN Team on AIDS, consisting of operational-level UN staff working on AIDS.
- The joint teams provide more effective UN support under the authority of the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) and with the facilitation of the UNAIDS Country Coordinator.
- Joint teams are developing detailed joint programmes of support, which generally include a technical support plan, an advocacy and communications strategy, a resource mobilization strategy, and other tools required to operationalize a coherent UN response to AIDS at country level.
- All elements are aligned with the UNDAF or national programming frameworks and then translated into an annual work plan.

Global HIV Estimates for Adults and Children



Working through this improved structure, UNCTs reported UN achievements on harmonization and alignment, including:

• **Monitoring and evaluation (M&E):**

The establishment and maintenance of a comprehensive M&E system in each country is essential to obtain all the necessary information for evidence-informed policy development, sound programme management, and continued programme improvement. Dominican Republic, Honduras, India, Morocco, Philippines, Rwanda, Serbia, Swaziland, Thailand, Togo, Turkey, and Zambia were among the UNCTs that highlighted M&E work in their annual reports. In Myanmar, UNAIDS facilitated the production of strategic information on HIV and assisted the National AIDS Programme with data collection from all partners against a harmonized indicator set. Used for advocacy and resource mobilization, the data offered the basic building blocks for the National Response Progress Report.

• **AIDS response reviews:** Support to inclusive reviews or external evaluations of the national AIDS programme were reported by UNCTs in Burundi, Colombia, Dominican Republic, DR Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Iran, Morocco, Romania, and Sri Lanka. Such AIDS reviews are becoming routine in an increasing number of countries. However, additional efforts are needed to make them inclusive, widely collaborative, and fully aligned with other ongoing efforts. In 2006, UNAIDS developed the Country Harmonization and Alignment Tool (CHAT) to assist country efforts in gauging national and international partner involvement and adherence to good practices in harmonization, alignment, transparency, and accountability. CHAT also serves to help catalyze a national dialogue and support the participation and self-determination of those affected by HIV (see box, right).

The Zambia Joint UN Programme of Support on AIDS, 2007–2010

In Zambia a full Programme of Support was completed and endorsed by the UN Theme Group on HIV/AIDS in early October 2006. To develop the programme within the context of the 2007-2010 UNDAF, the Joint UN Team on AIDS aligned the comparative advantages of the 13 in-country UN organizations with Zambia's AIDS Strategic Framework 2006-2010.

The Joint Programme consists of the following components

- A four-year results matrix with four outcomes and 16 corresponding outputs
- A work plan with key results and activities for 2007
- A technical support plan for 2007
- Management and funding arrangements
- A monitoring and evaluation matrix

Within the Annual Work Plan, each key result is linked to individual and joint organization activities with a specific source and amount of funding. The work plan reflects programme areas where a single organization is responsible for a set of activities as well as areas supported jointly by two or more UN agencies.

CHAT Pilot in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Recommendation 4.1 from the *Global Task Team on Improving AIDS Coordination among Multilateral Institutions and International Donors* called on UNAIDS to develop a "scorecard-style accountability tool." The resulting Country Harmonization and Alignment Tool (CHAT) functions as a "barometer" of the current status of harmonization and alignment at country level. CHAT also helps identify where real or perceived blockages lie, and it serves as an advocacy tool for strengthening accountability, focusing dialogue, and driving progress.

CHAT was piloted in 2006 in Botswana, Brazil, DR Congo, Indonesia, Nigeria, Somalia, and Zambia. In DR Congo the piloting process provided evidence that not all relevant ministries were involved at the same level, and that CHAT represents an opportunity to stimulate greater involvement and identify the gaps. The stakeholders in DR Congo see CHAT as a policy development and advocacy tool, and not only as a monitoring tool. The Ministry of Health and the Chair of the UN Theme Group on HIV/AIDS co-chaired the CHAT Reference Group. To ensure that the CHAT outcomes trigger national discussion on harmonization and alignment, the stakeholders realized that those who work on policy and institutional development should be overseeing the use of the tool.

Increased Support and Rights for Those Living with HIV/AIDS in China

Supported by the UNCT, the National Five Year Plan for the control of AIDS in China (2006-2010) was developed and launched. The plan has ambitious targets in AIDS prevention, treatment, care, and support. These fit well with the global roadmap for universal access. In addition, in January 2007 the National AIDS Regulations were issued, specifying the responsibilities of government departments and citizens in the response to AIDS, enunciating the rights of people living with HIV and their relatives, and prohibiting stigma and discrimination. During the year a joint programme on AIDS was finalized to bring together the efforts of all UN agencies in one framework, in line with the National Five Year Plan and AIDS Regulations. Other notable UN achievements in China in 2006 included: mobilization of additional Global Fund resources to fight AIDS, TB, and malaria; strengthened involvement of China's civil society in the response to AIDS; and support to the development of the National Stop TB Plan 2006-2010. The latter will, inter alia, address multi-drug resistance, given that China has an estimated 30 percent of global cases.

Universal access

The High-Level Meeting on AIDS included an agreement to translate the universal access commitment into a set of ambitious national targets. Since then, UNCTs have assisted governments to set targets and overcome the critical obstacles to scaling up that were identified during inclusive country consultations.¹

- By the end of March 2007, 92 countries had set targets for universal access.
- 36 countries had incorporated these targets into their national strategic plans and costed their new, accelerated efforts.
- This process has offered partners a much more goal-oriented approach to scaling up prevention, treatment, care, and support by 2010.

As well as supporting national target-setting, UNCTs reported UN support to national efforts to scale up through:

- **Mainstreaming:** UNDP, the World Bank, and the UNAIDS Secretariat are jointly strengthening national capacity to mainstream AIDS priorities into national planning efforts — particularly through Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). Seven countries were selected for the first phase of the programme (Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, and Zambia), and seven additional countries were supported in 2006 (Burkina Faso, Burundi, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, and Uganda).
- **Resource mobilization:** Technical and financial support was provided for the development of 56 proposals for Round 6 of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. Twenty-eight of these proposals were approved for

funding (80 percent of all successful proposals), corresponding to a two-year grant value of \$467 million and a lifetime grant value of \$1.15 billion.

- **Building capacity and increasing involvement:** In China, for instance, the UNCT is focused on building the capacity of persons living with HIV, particularly women and poor and rural families affected by AIDS. By promoting the socio-economic empowerment of women living with HIV, and increasing access to micro-finance services for poor families affected by AIDS, the UNCT and Government of China were able to produce replicable models of empowerment to lift people living with HIV out of poverty.

- **Dispelling stigma and discrimination:** There is growing awareness of the importance of strengthening efforts to address the social drivers of this epidemic. These include the low status of women, homophobia, HIV-related stigma, and inequality. For example, stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV discourages many people from taking an HIV test and determining their status. In an effort to promote understanding and acceptance of HIV testing, in 2006 heads of UN agencies in Papua New Guinea publicly underwent voluntary counseling and HIV testing. Several national leaders, including the Minister of Health, civil society representatives, athletes, youth leaders, students, and others took part in the event organized as part of activities commemorating United Nations Day in Port Moresby.

¹ See *Towards universal access: assessment by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS on scaling up HIV prevention, treatment, care and support*, UN General Assembly document A/60/737, 24 March 2006.

Conclusion

- In 2006, UNCTs strengthened national capacity to mainstream AIDS priorities into national planning.
- About half of the UNCTs have established a Joint UN Team on AIDS, providing more effective and better aligned support. Many of these teams have developed a detailed joint programme, including a technical support plan, communications and resource mobilization strategies, and other tools.
- Because the majority of countries have set targets for universal access, development partners are provided with a goal-oriented approach to scaling up prevention, treatment, care, and support.
- Comprehensive M&E systems remain essential to evidence-informed policy development.
- Additional efforts are needed to make AIDS reviews inclusive, collaborative, and fully aligned with other ongoing efforts.
- The Country Harmonization and Alignment Tool was developed to catalyze a national dialogue and to gauge good practices in harmonization, alignment, transparency, and accountability.
- While UNCTs further seek to strengthen capacity for women and rural families affected by AIDS, they are also drawing attention to the underlying social drivers. These include the low status of women, homophobia, HIV-related stigma, and inequality.

Community Capacity Enhancement Against AIDS in Tanzania

The Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS in collaboration with TACAIDS and the Prime Minister's Office for Regional Administration and Local Government decided to help scale up HIV/AIDS responses at the community level by placing a national United Nations Volunteer (UNV) in 22 local councils. The UNVs will help build the capacity of the Council Multi-Sectoral AIDS Committees at district, ward, and village levels. They will also help communities plan and implement local interventions, rally youth and women's groups, and encourage people living with HIV to play a more active role in fighting stigma and discrimination in their communities.

Mobilizing Resources for Universal Access in Burkina Faso

At the sixth annual session of Burkina Faso's National AIDS Commission, President Blaise Compaoré called for a scaling up of the AIDS response towards universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care, and support. Universal access targets were set through a process that includes national, international, and civil society partners, and the targets have since been incorporated into the strategic plan for the national AIDS response. This plan was costed by the secretariat of the national AIDS programme using tools developed by the World Bank, UNAIDS, and WHO. A resource mobilization meeting was held on July 3, 2006, leading to a general commitment from financial partners to cover 75 percent of the \$239.7 million budget for the period 2006-2010. A Global Fund Round 6 proposal was later approved, covering the other 25 percent of the budget.

Universal Access Targets in Cambodia

In Cambodia comprehensive, robust, and ambitious universal access targets were agreed upon through a process involving a wide range of national and international stakeholders. These stakeholders included government institutions, the private sector, trade unions, faith-based organizations, civil society organizations, national NGOs, national networks, international NGOs, bilateral donors, and the Joint UN Team on AIDS. The effort has stimulated inclusive national ownership (government and civil society) of the national response; increased attention to most-at-risk populations and underserved areas; and reanimated the discussion on HIV prevention. The national targets will also figure in the Joint UN Programme of Support, clarifying the United Nations' contribution to making universal access a reality.

A national communication campaign led by the national AIDS authority is planned to ensure that every Cambodian knows the universal access targets, why they are important, and what can be expected in terms of accountability. In 2007 the national strategic plan will be revised with joint UN support; and the development of a proposal for Round 7 of the Global Fund is already being guided by the targets.

The Call to Pursue Gender Equality in the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review

The Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR - A/Res/59/250) called upon all organizations of the UN system to pursue gender equality in their country programmes and to articulate country-level goals and targets on gender equality in accordance with the national development strategies. It urged the RC system to make gender specialists available in key sectors; work with national counterparts to generate sex disaggregated data; ensure clear mandates and needed resources for gender theme groups and specialists; and avail itself of UNIFEM's technical expertise. The TCPR also called on the RCs to ensure that information on gender equality was included in their annual reports and encouraged progress on achieving gender balance in appointments.

Promoting Gender Equality

The Millennium Declaration commits States to promote gender equality and women's empowerment as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger, and disease. It also commits to stimulate sustainable development; combat all forms of violence against women; and implement the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Taken together, the global consensus that the UN has facilitated on the centrality of gender equality to development — as enshrined in the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW, Security Council Resolution 1325, and the Millennium Development Goals — form a powerful basis for strong and coherent UN support to countries to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in line with their national priorities.

Yet as the mid-point for achieving the MDGs approaches, the rate of progress on gender equality and women's empowerment is cause for concern. Globally and regionally, more adult women (15 years or older) than ever before are now living with

HIV. The 17.7 million women living with HIV in 2006 represent an increase of over one million compared with 2004. Women's political participation is increasing at a snail's pace — reaching only 17 percent of representatives in national parliaments by 2006. While maternal mortality has been high on the international agenda for two decades, ratios of maternal mortality seem to have changed little in regions where most deaths occur (sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia). Unreliable data and wide margins of uncertainty make trends difficult to measure. In addition, the world missed its first MDG target in 2005: parity in school enrolment between girls and boys.

Urgent action is needed, and there are positive indications that the UN system is strengthening its mechanisms of support for gender equality:

- The past three RC Annual Reports (2004–2006) demonstrated incremental improvements in the substance of reporting and inclusion of gender equality in UNDAFs and work plans.
- The UNDG is strengthening capacity development and accountability for gender equality by endorsing a set of indicators to assess UNCT performance and strengthening the gender equality dimension of all UNDG-sponsored RC system training.
- Based on data from July 2004 to June 2006, within the RC system the number of female RCs increased 21 percent, to 32.5 percent.²

² OHRM data from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2006.

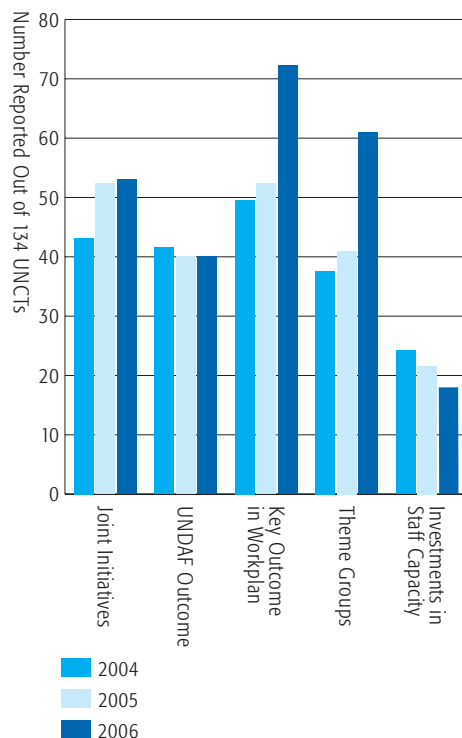
Support for gender equality

The UNDG Task Team on Gender Equality³ review of RC Annual Reports for 2004, 2005, and 2006 shows an overall positive trend towards strengthened support by UNCTs for gender equality.⁴ Among key areas of progress based on 134 annual reports submitted by resident coordinators:

- Forty-five RC reports in 2006 highlighted UNCT efforts to mainstream gender equality in national development processes, compared to 20 in 2005 and 17 in 2004.
- Seventy-two UNCTs highlighted gender equality or women's empowerment in the outcomes for their work plans, as compared to 52 in 2005 and 49 in 2004.
- There was a small increase in reporting on joint initiatives on gender equality, rising to 53 in 2006, from 52 in 2005, and 43 in 2004.
- There are indications that the number of Gender Theme Groups (GTGs) increased to 61 in 2006, compared to 41 in 2005 and 37 in 2004.⁵

The number of UNDAF frameworks that contained gender equality and women's empowerment in at least one outcome statement remained the same at approximately 40 across the three years. And there was a slight decrease in the number of UNCTs reporting on capacity development of staff in gender equality issues: 18 in 2006, from 21 in 2005 and 24 in 2004.

Tracking Changes in UNCT Reporting on Gender Equality Initiatives



Nicaragua: Building Internal and External Capacity for Action on Gender Equality

The Inter-agency Gender Committee (IGC), composed of UN organizations and members of the donor community, has proven to be a strong driver in the UNCT. The IGC is currently conducting a mapping of present and future interventions, and is funding commitments of the UN system and donor community in support of the National Program for Gender Equity (NPGE). The map will serve as a framework for a future sector-wide approach (SWAp) to support implementation of the NPGE. The IGC also supports capacity building to strengthen the technical and political structures of the National Council of Women and the planning capacities of the Nicaraguan Institute of Women (INIM). The IGC has coordinated trainings with UN system regional experts for the use of gender-sensitive analysis in the CCA. Furthermore, it prepared guidelines and a gender and human rights analysis matrix. The matrix included key gender-specific indicators available in the Gender-focused Indicator System of the National Institute of Statistics and Census, according to each MDG, economic, and governance areas covered by the CCA.

³The task team is chaired by UNIFEM and consists of 17 member organizations: IFAD, ILO, FAO, DAW, UNDP, ECOSOC, UN-HABITAT, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNODC, OSAGI, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, WFP, and WHO.

⁴Please note that the information reported here is not an indication of the performance of UNCTs. It is, rather, a reflection of what Resident Coordinators are reporting. Reporting was also enhanced in 2006 by changes in guidelines that called for more substantive reporting in specific areas.

⁵The UNDG does not systematically track the number of theme groups. The number for 2006 may have increased because the reporting guidelines in that year included a reporting line on GTG activities.

Kazakhstan: Progressing toward Gender Equality in its UNDAF

The UNCT in Kazakhstan made good progress towards the cross-cutting outcome on gender equality in its UNDAF: *“Legislative base and policy for promotion of gender equality and the advancement of women strengthened.”* UN agencies supported the National Commission on Family Affairs and Gender to support a National Gender Equality Action Plan (NAP), which was approved by the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan in June 2006. The NAP sets specific tasks and allocates responsibilities to state bodies in executing these tasks, which signifies an important achievement in providing the National Commission with real authority to implement the Gender Equality Strategy adopted in 2005.

Supported by UN agencies both technically and financially, participatory discussion of the draft NAP put a number of gender priorities on the government’s agenda.

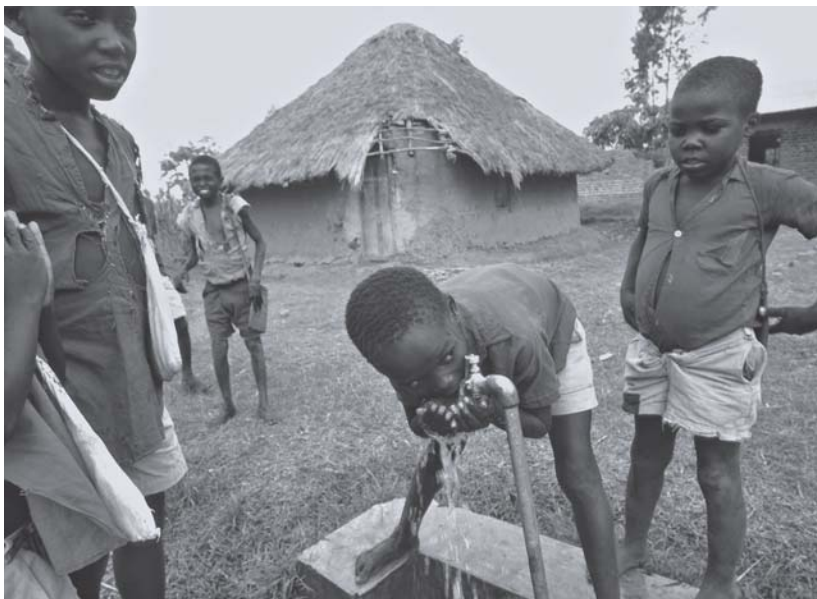
One is a commitment to finalize preparation and submit to Parliament two important pieces of legislation: (1) on equal rights and equal opportunities of men and women, and (2) on domestic violence. Another is the incorporation of a gender-disaggregated statistical approach in state programming and monitoring. And yet another is a commitment to study, adapt, and ultimately apply gender responsive budgeting. The UN Theme Group on Gender coordinated the flow of information to ensure that there would be no duplication of UN activities in assisting the National Commission in implementing the NAP. In accordance with the NAP, UNIFEM spearheaded a joint project to support the drafting of a Law on Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities. The draft was discussed at national roundtables with active participation of civil society, state officials, and parliamentarians. After incorporating wide ranging suggestions, the draft law was submitted to Parliament, with anticipated adoption in 2007.

Areas of support

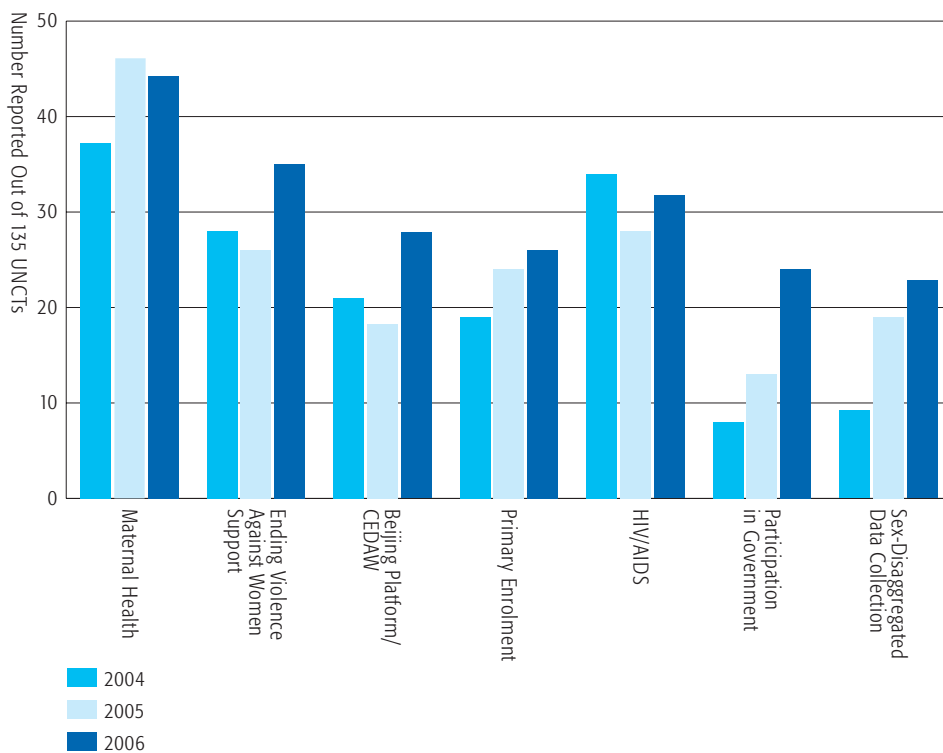
The areas of gender equality programming that were most frequently reported were:

- Strengthening reproductive health and reducing maternal mortality (44 examples in 2006, 46 in 2005, and 37 in 2004).
- Ending violence against women (35 examples in 2006, 26 in 2005, and 28 in 2004).
- Supporting women’s empowerment in HIV/AIDS programmes (32 examples in 2006, 28 in 2005, and 34 in 2004).
- Assistance in implementing and/or reporting on the Beijing Platform for Action and CEDAW (28 examples in 2006, 18 in 2005, and 21 in 2004).
- Supporting girls’ enrolment in primary school (26 examples in 2006, 24 in 2005, and 19 in 2004).
- Enhancing women’s participation in government (24 examples in 2006, 13 in 2005, and 8 in 2004).
- Strengthening collection of sex disaggregated data (23 examples in 2006, 19 in 2005, and 9 in 2004).
- Capacity development support for National Women’s Machineries (NWMs), i.e., agencies mandated to address women’s rights and gender equality within government, such as Ministries of Women’s Affairs or gender desks (21 examples in 2006, 16 in 2005, and 11 in 2004).

Most notable are the areas in which there were exponential increases. For instance, there was an approximate doubling between 2004 and 2006 in the number of RCs that reported on mainstreaming gender equality into national development processes, supporting NWMs, and strengthening collection of sex disaggre-



UNCT Initiatives on Gender Equality by Area of Support



gated data. And there was a tripling between 2004 and 2006 in the number of RCs that reported on support for women's political participation. The fact that these activities align with MDG priorities may be a contributing factor.

Challenges and recommendations

While overall reporting indicates increased activity by UNCTs, the review also highlighted a number of challenges:

- Despite a significant emphasis on the critical role the UN can play in addressing sexual violence in crisis and conflict countries, little information on UN action is provided in this regard.
- There is still too little information in the RC annual reports on the extent to which UNCT action has contributed to achieving concrete results.
- There is scant reporting on UNCT joint programming and UNCT-wide actions in

support of gender equality and on the processes that enable all UN organizations — including non-resident agencies — to work together, from their areas of comparative advantage, to provide coordinated support. The example from the UNCT in Egypt remains the exception rather than the rule.

A number of actions being taken by the UN system in 2007 could contribute to better analysis in the coming years:

- A set of performance indicators on UNCT gender equality programming will be field-tested and rolled out in 2007, as will an action learning initiative to support UNCTs in devising holistic approaches to support the achievement of gender equality.
- The Chief Executive Board (CEB) has approved a system-wide policy and action plan on gender equality that is also scheduled to be rolled out in the coming months.

Kenya: Supporting the Development of a National Gender Policy

Capacity building efforts of the Ministry of Gender and the National Gender Consultative Forum & NGO Thematic Forum contributed to the passage of the Sessional Paper on Gender Equality and Development into law by Parliament in October 2006. The Sessional Paper commits the government to a wide range of initiatives to combat violence against women. These include: (1) the implementation of the National Action Plan to combat violence against women; (2) the enactment of a Family Protection bill; and (3) amendments to the Penal Code to ensure that domestic violence (including domestic assault and marital rape) are criminal offences. In addition, the government plans to make it mandatory for police officers to record statements and follow-up on cases of domestic violence.

Egypt: Sharing Responsibilities through Joint Initiatives

The UNCT in Egypt reported on a number of joint initiatives on gender equality, demonstrating how responsibilities can be shared across the system with UN organizations leading in their areas of comparative advantage. The UN joint Girls' Education Initiative, led by UNICEF, helped to ensure the adoption of national teacher performance standards and improve the quality of teaching methodology standards. As a result, in 2006 the number of girl-friendly schools in Egypt rose to more than 500. The UN system also worked together to address HIV under the UN Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS and through the Joint Team on AIDS established in January 2006. Several joint projects continued and new ones were established in 2006, such as the first outreach project targeting female sex workers.

With joint support to the National Council for Women and coordination from UNIFEM, the National Five Year Development Plan gathered information from various governorates. Gender budgeting, gender auditing, and performance-based budgeting were piloted in selected ministries. Ten UN agencies came together to address the rights of children, youth, and mothers through the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM). The NCCM sought to develop an integrated national five-year plan of action to facilitate long-term and integrated interventions. In the area of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), community dialogue and joint activities continued among NCCM, relevant ministries, and UN agencies. Two agencies joined forces in major evaluations of FGM/C programmes in order to produce joint final recommendations feeding into one national strategy and a joint work plan. Progress was also made in efforts to utilize the media to advocate against FGM/C.

- The UN Evaluation Group has committed to assessing performance on gender equality in the One UN pilots.
- At least ten UN organizations have joined together in the UN Action on Sexual Violence, which will focus on enhancing UN joint responses on the ground.
- WHO, UNFPA, and UNICEF, in partnership with multiple stakeholders, are rolling out the Road Map for Maternal and Newborn Health (MNH) in the African region to accelerate attainment of the MDGs.

Conclusion

- The steady increase and improvement in reporting on gender equality is probably due to factors such as changes in reporting guidelines that encourage more specific information on UNCT support to national gender priorities.
- The improvements may also be demand-driven, reflecting more intensive action by countries in creating laws, policies, and action plans on gender equality and women's empowerment.
- A more rigorous and systematic process of evaluation of UNCT performance on gender equality and women's empowerment on the ground is still required. This would provide a greater in-depth analysis and understanding of how UNCTs most effectively support countries.
- Actions being taken in 2007 should contribute to more systematic monitoring of performance. They include performance indicators on UNCT gender equality programming, the action learning initiative, the system-wide policy and action plan, and the evaluation of UN pilots.
- These actions, as well as the results of inter-governmental debates on a strengthened UN architecture for gender equality, hold great potential for enhancing UN system support for gender equality and women's empowerment.

Advancing Human Rights

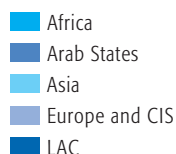
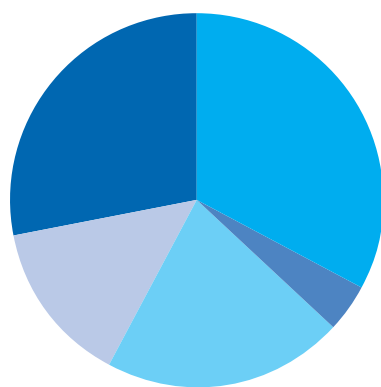
International human rights standards have little bearing if they are not enforced at the country level. Therefore, all programmes of development co-operation, policies, and technical assistance should further the realization of human rights as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments. In drawing on the assets of its entire system, the UN has a fundamental and crucial role to play in collectively assisting host governments promote and protect international human rights standards at the national, regional, and local level.

In 2006, to make certain that rights holders claim their intrinsic human rights and duty bearers meet their corresponding obligations, the UN widened its commitment to mainstreaming the human rights-based approach (HRBA) throughout programming. UNCTs further strengthened their support to the development of joint human rights activities with national partners. Specific support included support from the Action 2 Global Programme, which continued to tailor human rights strategies to national needs and build UNCT human rights capacity (see box, right).

New CCA/UNDAF guidelines and the human rights based approach

In stating that UNCTs must support actions that help member states fulfill their international legal obligations on human rights, the new CCA/UNDAF guidelines now place a much stronger emphasis on human rights (see UNDAF and capacity building sections of this report). The guidelines further identify the HRBA as one of the five inter-related principles that must be applied to the national planning process. All UNCTs must implement the HRBA to support country analysis, advocate for priorities in the national development framework, and prepare an UNDAF demonstrating strategic use of UNCT resources and expertise.

Distribution of Areas of Staff Training



Joint human rights activities

Unlike with gender and HIV/AIDS, reporting on joint UNCT activities on human rights is not yet a requirement under reporting guidelines. While reporting might not reflect the full scope of human rights activities, an increased number of UNCTs still reported joint activities in the field of human rights in 2006. Some of these occurred as part of the Action 2

Common UN Understanding of Rights-Based Approaches to Development Cooperation

1. All programmes of development cooperation, policies, and technical assistance should further the realization of human rights as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments.
2. Human rights standards contained in, and principles derived from, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments guide all development cooperation and programming in all sectors and in all phases of the programming process.
3. Development cooperation contributes to the development of the capacities of “duty-bearers” to meet their obligations and/or of “rights-holders” to claim their rights.

Action 2 Global Programme

As a response to the second action point of former Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s *2002 Strengthening the United Nations: An Agenda for Future Change*, Action 2 calls for joint UN action to strengthen human rights at the country level. The Action 2 Global Programme has been endorsed by 21 Heads of Agencies and is managed as a joint programme through an Inter-Agency Task Force, composed of OHCHR, UNDGO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNIFEM, and OCHA.

The overarching goal of Action 2 is to tailor human rights strategies to national needs and build UNCT capacity through strengthened and sustainable human rights support systems. To reach this goal, Action 2 provides support to UNCTs, including seed funding for human rights activities, guidance tools, learning resources, human rights advice, networking, and knowledge-sharing.

Action 2 has so far approved 40 projects for implementation worldwide (a quarter stemming from post-conflict countries) and ten requests for human rights advisors for deployment in 2007. Action 2 also supports a special initiative for the Great Lakes Region in Africa.

In 2006 a comprehensive learning package on the HRBA was developed, featuring a reference manual, a workshop and trainers’ guide, and a collection of learning tools and materials. The learning package is being rolled out globally in 2007 and it is expected that the system-wide implementation of the learning package will significantly contribute to a coherent system-wide understanding and application of HRBA.

programme, while numerous others were developed outside the programme.

According to RC reports worldwide, 12 Joint Programs were developed or implemented under a narrowly defined Human Rights theme in 2006; nine others dealt with human rights issues but were attributed to Governance, bringing the total number to 21. By comparison, in 2005 only eight joint programmes were reported under a consolidated Human Rights & Governance theme. The increased human rights focus in 2006 was reported primarily in Africa and Europe & CIS. The joint human rights activities spanned over a wide range of innovative approaches, including advocacy activities such as establishing information centers within national ministries, drafting national citizens' human rights charters, initiating human rights theme groups, and supporting the establishment of national human rights commissions. UN country teams also made active use of Theme Groups on Human Rights to organize their joint activities. A quick survey conducted in May 2007 showed that 42 country teams had a functioning inter-agency theme group on human rights (out of 95 UNCTs responding).

A survey of 2006 RC annual reports reveals five key areas of joint human rights activities: (1) joint programming; (2) capacity building for national partners; (3) promotion of international human rights standards; (4) cooperation and linkage with human rights mechanisms; and (5) UNCT staff training. The following represents examples of these human rights initiatives at country level in 2006.

1. Joint programming

The Macedonian Under-represented Minority Internship Programme

A new UN Under-represented Minorities Internship Programme was initiated in

2006 to provide graduate-level students from ethnic minorities in Macedonia with the opportunity to obtain valuable work experience as interns within a UN agency. The programme has so far recruited four interns for two projects in UNDP and is currently in the process of recruiting interns for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNIFEM. UNHCR, WHO, and UNFPA have also expressed an interest to recruit interns under this programme later in 2007. The programme will in a second phase be rolled-out to other organisations (universities and NGOs) to widen the recruitment base and broaden the opportunities for inclusion in this programme.

2. Capacity building for national partners

Strengthened Support for the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

The Human Rights Commission (HRC) in Sri Lanka developed a number of major programmes in the area of protection of human rights. In particular, a special unit in the HRC was established to monitor relief issues in the wake of the tsunami, which successfully combined the capacity-building strengths of UNDP, the child protection agenda of UNICEF, and the internally displaced persons focus of UNHCR. This has in turn translated into strengthened support for the regional offices of the HRC in tsunami and conflict affected areas. The project also undertook a series of People's Consultations in more than 1,000 affected communities, which led to the creation of a new Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights.

Moving forward, the collaborative agencies now should be further integrated into one comprehensive package. This is particularly important at the local level, where regional offices have had additional staff and resources come on line through different project streams. This was flagged as a priority challenge in the new UNDAF, and will be the basis of joint programming in the future.

3. Promotion of international human rights standards

Linking UNDAF to International Human Rights Standards in Kenya

Orientation sessions were held for inter-agency staff to improve the understanding of human rights principles and the link to and among the UN Charter, Declaration of Human Rights, MDGs, and the UNDAF review process. The training highlighted the Action 2 programme and objectives, the human rights-based approach, and UNCT mechanisms that promote human rights locally. The approach used was very participatory and involved learning experiences from civil society, government, UN agencies, and development partners, including practical and participatory presentations and plenary discussions. The trainings were extremely well attended by partners outside the UN system, such as donors, national ministries, the National Commission on Human Rights, NGOs, indigenous and minority groups, religious groups, and other development partners.

Mongolia Incorporates Human Rights Standards in the National Development Strategy

A special session for parliamentarians resulted in a 2005 bill and resolution on Mongolia-specific MDGs targets. The resolution included an additional MDG 9: "Strengthening human rights and fostering democratic governance." MDG 9 targets include respecting and abiding by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, ensuring freedom of mass media and access to information, mainstreaming democratic principles and practice into daily life, and creating an environment of zero-tolerance for corruption. In March 2006 the President of Mongolia issued a decree to develop a National Development Strategy (NDS) based on MDG targets and established a working group chaired by the Prime Minister. The working group is comprised of ministers, the president's advisors, political party

leaders, academics, researchers, and civil society and private sector representatives. The MDG-based NDS includes human rights indicators and will guide medium-term programmes, sectoral strategies, and donor cooperation programmes.

Philippines Human Rights Task Force Advocating for Visit of the Special Rapporteur

The governance portfolio of the UNDAF includes capacity development and strengthening of institutions working on issues of rights of children and human rights. Building on this platform, a small task force was formed within the UNCT in direct response to the increase in reported unexplained killings. The task force sought to interact with the government and key partners such as the EU and the Commission on Human Rights. The goal was to advocate for the earliest invitation to be issued to the Special Rapporteur on Extra-judicial Summary or Arbitrary Execution to the Philippines, and identify immediate, short-term, and long-term solutions to address the issues of human rights violations.

4. Cooperation and linkage with human rights mechanisms

New Theme Group in Iran Receiving HR Complaints and Forwarding to HR Mechanisms

Established in 2006, a new theme group on Human Rights and Good Governance has initiated dialogue about a more formal link with the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). In this context progress was made on juvenile justice reforms, although it remains to be seen whether this progress will lead to an effective halt of executions of minors or the abolishment of the death penalty against adolescents in Iran. A list of 23 adolescents on death row was handed over to the High Commissioner for Human Rights as well as to the Chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva in June

2006. Several UN agencies are directly involved with a number of human rights cases, receiving reports and complaint letters from various individuals, which are regularly shared with OHCHR.

5. UNCT staff training

Angola – Improving the Use of the HRBA in the UNDAF

In order for the UN system to be able to perform its supporting role, as a first step the knowledge within UNCTs on human rights standards and principles and of the human rights-based approach must be strengthened. A workshop on HRBA was organized by OHCHR Angola Office for the UNCT in April 2006, which introduced HRBA programming to the UN agencies in the country. The workshop also included a one-day session focusing on poverty reduction strategy to which government officials and NGOs were invited. These events led to significantly increased awareness and interest within the country team, and to various joint programmes on human rights being prepared or improved. The workshop was followed up with specific trainings for each agency. More importantly, the workshop also led to the UNCT deciding to hold a retreat with focus on the same issues as a preparation for the Midterm Review of UNDAF. This retreat concluded with a decision to go more thoroughly into the UNDAF than a normal midterm review, and recommended that the UNDAF outcomes should better reflect human rights standards and that the processes should adhere to human rights principles. The UNCT even considered a redrafting of the CCA. This process will now also feed into the preparation of the next CCA/UNDAF process for the period from 2009 onward, which is planned to get well underway later this year.

Conclusion

Because reporting on joint UNCT human rights activities is still not a requirement under the reporting guidelines, a clear assessment of human rights support is difficult to address.

- Nevertheless, 21 joint programs were reported under Human Rights and/or Governance in 2006, in comparison to eight joint programmes in 2005.
- At least 42 UN country teams currently have a functioning Theme Group on Human Rights.
- Mongolia took the innovative step of establishing an additional MDG 9: “Strengthening human rights and fostering democratic governance.” MDG 9 targets include abiding by the Declaration of Human Rights, ensuring freedom of the press, and mainstreaming democratic principles into daily life.
- Theme groups on human rights streamlined associations with the likes of the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, and thus facilitated progress towards issues such as justice reform.
- HRBA trainings and workshops helped further improve UNCT human rights awareness, joint programmes, and UNDAF outcomes.

