**UN Working Group on Transitions retreat**

**6-7 February 2017**

**Meeting Summary**

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| **Participants** | |
| **Co-Chairs** | |
| Co-Chair | Oscar Fernandez-Taranco |
| Co-Chair | Izumi Nakamitsu |
| **Presenters** | |
| Senior Adviser, EOSG | Kyung-wha Kang |
| Director, Sustainable Development Unit, EOSG | Michelle Gyles-McDonnough |
| WFP/ UNDG Vice Chair | Amir Abdulla |
| Director, DOCO | Kanni Wignaraja |
| **Agency** | Representatives |
| CEB Secretariat | Xenia von Lilien |
| CEB Secretariat | Cheryl Stafford |
| DESA | Diana Alarcon |
| DESA | Sibel Selcuk |
| DPA | Stephen Jackson |
| DPA | Nikki Siahpoush |
| DPKO/DFS | Norihito Yamabe |
| DPKO/DFS | Megan Carroll |
| FAO | Neil Marsland |
| FAO | Steve Perry |
| ILO | Donato Kiniger-Passigli |
| ILO | Dino Corell |
| IOM | Misato Yuasa |
| MPTF | Henriette Keijzers |
| MPTF | Jennifer Topping |
| OCHA | Rodolpho Valente |
| OCHA | Romano Lasker |
| PBSO | Henk-Jan Brinkman |
| PBSO | Chelsea Payne |
| Senior UN Coordinator 'Fit for Purpose' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development | John Hendra |
| UN Habitat | Filiep Decorte |
| UN Habitat | Francesca De Ferrari |
| UNDOCO | Helene Remling |
| UNDOCO | Bradley Foerster |
| UNDOCO | Mari Huseby |
| UNDOCO | Kana Kudo |
| UNDP | Vanda Santos |
| UNDP | Stan Nkwain |
| UNDP | Sara Sekkenes |
| UNDP | Taija Kontinen-Sharp |
| UNDP | Anja Bille Bahncke |
| UNEP | Maaike Jansen |
| UNESCO | Michael Croft |
| UNESCO | Ricardo de Guimarães Pinto |
| UNFPA | Bouwe-Jan Smeding |
| UNFPA | Esteban Olhagaray |
| UNICEF | Segolene Adam |
| UNICEF | Manuel Fontaine |
| UNOPS | Andrew Reese |
| UNV | Jan Snoeks |
| UNV | Dominic Allen |
| UNWOMEN | Tatyana Titenova |
| UNWOMEN | Paivi Kannisto |
| WFP | Gina Pattugalan |
| WFP | Paul Howe |
| WFP | Brian Bogart |
| WHO | Kwame Pok |
| World Bank | Juan Espinosa |
| Facilitator | Michele Ferenz |

**Opening by Co-Chairs**

The Co-Chairs, Izumi Nakamitsu and Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, opened the retreat, highlighting the Secretary-General’s identification of prevention as his priority, and his vision: connecting efforts across the United Nations system. Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, the QCPR, and the Resolutions on Sustaining Peace all recognize that greater interconnection and complementarity among development, humanitarian action and sustaining peace are fundamental.

Numerous processes are ongoing to realize this mandate and vision, including reviews to the peace and security architecture, the development system, and the management of the United Nations. It is important that all our efforts are coordinated, including regarding the sustaining peace agenda and the New Way of Working. An integrated approach is reflected in the new UNDAF guidance, was strongly emphasized at the World Humanitarian Summit and it now appears in the QCPR. The joint work of the UNWGT and the IASC Task Team is a positive step in supporting coherence. As discussed at the previous week’s UNDG ASG Advisory Group Retreat there will be revisions to the architecture of UNDG working groups, which will also impact the UNWGT.

A key Working Group bringing actors together across the pillars, the UNWGT has conducted important work and should continue to do so in the new environment. Communication with the field is a critical component. The sustaining peace agenda also clearly identifies the key role of planning and analysis, leadership and accountability, partnerships and financing, and how we work with women and youth. The UNWGT will need to remain nimble and flexible in the new context. The importance of translating the New Way of Working to meaningful support for the field, and developing a “country-focused” work plan was highlighted. Both Co-Chairs looked forward to a productive planning session.

**The Secretary-General’s Priorities: Policy and Institutional Reform in 2017 and Beyond**

Ms. Kyung-wha Kang, formerly Chief of the Transition Team of the Secretary-General and newly appointed Senior Advisor on Policy, EOSG, reflected on the Secretary-General’s vision to shift the organization’s focus from reaction to prevention. The Secretary-General is bringing about this shift through his strong leadership, including a change in his Executive Office structure, revision of the peace and security architecture (noting changes already made in DPKO/DPA/DFS), the development system as requested by the QCPR and management reform.

The EOSG will have a strategic planning and coordination function to provide leadership to the system. Four substantive units will be closely interconnected and focused internally. The role of Senior Advisor on Policy will include an outward looking component. The newly established Executive Committee also supports nimble decision-making to bring the United Nations system together. While many parts of the United Nations system engage in prevention, that capacity is scattered. A key task will be to map available prevention tools. An important contribution to this can be made by the UNWGT.

The SDGs were underscored as the universal paradigm along with the contribution of the Resolutions on Sustaining Peace, and the Secretary-General’s broader view of prevention, including disasters. The SDGs offer the global platform for discussions with Member States going forward.

**The HDP Nexus: United Nations Strategic Priorities and QCPR implementation**

Amir Abdulla (WFP/UNDG Vice Chair) and Kanni Wignaraja (DOCO) provided feedback from the UNDG ASG Advisory Group Retreat, identifying three priorities: (1) Advancing the SD agenda with linkages operationalized between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding; (2) Giving voice to values and norms; and (3) leveraging United Nations development system (UNDS) resources in leadership, data, strategic financing and business innovations.

The QCPR overall message is Member States’ support for a strong UNDS, which delivers coherent and with increasingly integrated support for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.  There is now recognition of normative support as a core function of the United Nations to be delivered through UNCTs. It is clear that Member States are serious about integration, including through greater use of joint programmes, evidence-based policy support and pooled funding mechanisms.  This requires a UNDS that is organised differently, as it is not just about the vertical sum of its parts, including separate capacities. How we come together to deliver behind shared results, is the challenge to the system as a whole.

The QCPR calls on the Secretary-General to propose options for a number of key reform areas:

* Streamlining and reducing overlaps and gaps with regard to entities’ functions and capacities to support the 2030 Agenda.
* Strengthening governance of the UNDS, including by enhancing accountability, coordination and UNDS responsiveness to Member States.
* Improving the functioning of the RC System.

The ASG AG retreat welcomed ways to bring more coherence to the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus, and to find effective ways to make this happen.  The new UNDAF Guidance reflects this approach, the call for a One UN planning framework in complex countries with common risk and data analysis, and joint programmes in those very ‘nexus’ areas that address both the shorter-term needs and also the longer term sustainability factors, were considered high priority.

On strategic finance, the purpose will be to help understand, analyse, shape and guide financial flows (both domestic and international) towards the SDGs.  This will require leveraging the UN’s funds, access, data and capacities and a shift from the more inward looking “funding” perspective to how to leverage the resources we have to influence the flow is “financing”.

It was also noted that the UNDG strategic priorities and working mechanisms were under review at this time.

In discussion, the importance of realizing an integrated approach in practice was underlined, including through translation of collective objectives into the strategic plans of individual UN entities, if to break the silo’d approaches. It was emphasized that there is a need to go the extra mile, on substance and on business processes, and to ask if we are missing tools or missing leadership commitment to such a transformation in how the UN does business.  There was a call to ensure that all external partners are on board, including donors, and humanitarian actors, in accordance with the outcome of related resolutions and the World Humanitarian Summit.

**Retooling and reorienting work across the United Nations: processes, tools and mechanisms for advancing the HDP Nexus and promoting coherence across initiatives**

*Joint presentation on HDP Nexus, Henk-Jan Brinkman and Rodolpho Valente*

The presentation outlined the common vision of integrated responses across intergovernmental agreements including Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1), Resolutions on Sustaining Peace (A/RES/70/202 and S/RES/2282), QCPR (A/RES/71/243); Humanitarian Omnibus Resolution (A/RES/71/127); Disasters’ related Resolutions (A/RES/71/128), among others. The support of Member States, combined with the vision of the Secretary-General, have common elements including “leave no one behind”, “ending needs”, a focus on prevention, breaking down the siloes and the call for an integrated approach. Underpinned by Agenda 2030, the presentation identified the various ongoing processes across the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus, and the guidance products that follow [see attached PowerPoint slide].

**Work planning**

Introducing the work planning part of the retreat, Bradley Foerster (DOCO) gave an overview of UNWGT achievements and challenges in 2016. Key challenges included: informing the work of other UNDG Working Groups, engaging IASC in discussions on humanitarian-development nexus (e.g. Humanitarian-Development Advisory Group), linkages with CEB discussions on cross Charter integration, engagement with EOSG on integration issues, and ensuring linkages with the Human Rights WG.

Key inputs to the work planning session were the UNWGT 2016 work plan, and IASC Task Team on the humanitarian development nexus in protracted crises (IASC TT)/UNWGT draft Plan of Action for Operationalizing the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus, which was an outcome of the first IASC TT/UNWGT joint workshop in October 2016.

In plenary discussion and through a “keep, start, stop, change” exercise the team identified key achievements and challenges in 2016, lessons learned, and what to carry forward from the UNWGT 2016 work plan and the IASC TT/UNWGT Plan of Action. After the plenary discussion concluded, a series of breakout table discussions were held on the following results areas: (1) Field support; (2) Policy coherence and guidance; (3) Financing; (4) Partnership; and (5) Communication and advocacy. The break out groups focused specifically on defining key results, activities and time frames; and on identifying division of responsibilities. On the second day of the retreat break out groups reported their draft results back to the plenary for validation, and participants were able to provide feedback and additions to the work of other breakout groups.

Key messages that emerged throughout the two day planning discussions included:

* There is a vision for an overarching shift from the United Nations as a reactive institution to one that focuses on prevention. For these changes to take root (including the New Way of Working and the sustaining peace agenda), there is a need for commitment to an integrated approach both in words and in practice. This includes a need to address incentives across the system (including management and financial incentives).
* There is an opportunity for the UNWGT to provide inputs into the work of the EOSG and the reform agenda that is happening. This opportunity should be seized in a timely manner.
* While the details of UNDG working group reform are still to be finalized, the areas of work that the UNWGT focuses on will continue to be important- even if in a different structure/set up.
* There is a plethora of activities and initiatives on-going; it is important to take stock of tools and initiatives, and facilitate access to these for country teams.
* Guidance to country offices should be light, flexible and adaptable at country level.
* The UNWGT could explore the integration of Human Rights into the Humanitarian-Development-Peacebuilding framework.

A draft work plan was developed, and is included in the annex of this summary. It is noted that the UNDG working mechanisms are being reviewed, which may impact the proposed indicative work plan.

**Closing remarks**

UNWGT co-chair Oscar Fernandez-Taranco congratulated the group on a productive and substantive work planning retreat. He reflected on the ambitious draft work plan and emphasized the importance of prioritization of tasks, given limited resources. The importance of communication and simplified messaging to country teams was reiterated, as was the importance of realizing commitments to an integrated approach to the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus both in words and in practice.

