



**Interoffice Memorandum**

To: Bruno Moro  
UN Resident Coordinator  
Colombia

Date: 7 February 2008

From: [Redacted]  
Assistant Administrator and Director, Partnerships Bureau  
UNDP New York

Extension: 6005

Subject: MDGF-1746: "Integrated strategy for the prevention, care and elimination of all forms of gender based violence in Colombia"

File: MDGF 1746

**I. Approval Status**

On behalf of the MDG-F Steering Committee I am pleased to inform you that your Joint Programme "Integrated strategy for the prevention, care and elimination of all forms of gender based violence in Colombia" is approved with an allocation of **US \$ 7.2 million** over three years. This figure includes 7% for indirect costs incurred by UN Participating Organizations. Please note the 1% AA fee will be reimbursed directly to the MDTF Office and need not be included in your allocation.

**II. JP design comments**

We have identified a number of changes in Section III below ('JP re-design requirements and/or recommendations') which we require to the design of your Joint Programme. Once these adjustments have been reflected, you may proceed directly with signature of the Joint Programme document. In addition to the Government, the UN Resident Coordinator and all Participating UN Organizations should each sign the Joint Programme document. We would encourage you to ensure some visibility for this event and for the launch of activities.

We consider the Joint Programme a faithful extension of the approved Concept Note. An acceptable effort has been made to address the recommendations of the Technical Sub-Committee and the Steering Committee. Please note the approved budget reflects a \$690,000 reduction in the original indicative budget, in order to accommodate resource constraints in this window.

We very much concur with the Country Team's analysis of the importance of addressing Gender Based Violence as an integral part of achieving MDG 3 and applaud the Colombian Governments decision to explicitly adopt eliminating gender-based violence as an MDG target. We welcome the comprehensive definition of gender based violence adopted by the programme and its intention to target women and girls and in particular those in a situation of greater vulnerability such as the indigenous and afro-descendant, displaced or victims of trafficking.

The overall strategy proposed is comprehensive and in our view illustrates the potential added-value of joint programming particularly well, with UNIFEM leading on social mobilization, prevention and monitoring, IOM on improving services to victims and UNFPA on helping incorporate this issue in public policies, plans and budgets.

The comments of our technical reviewer on the Joint Programme document are attached for your reference. As you will note, the review is a positive assessment but also identifies a number of issues where



some important details are missing which we would like to see addressed before finalizing the document. For example, while various forms of violence are identified among diverse groups in diverse settings (displaced, armed groups, adolescent girls, etc.), the design document does not identify how the specificities required in each case will be addressed. Similarly, the narrative in the document would be greatly strengthened by explaining which geographic locations will be targeted for the down-stream interventions (and why), how coordination between the different participating organizations at the local level will be assured, which local partners will be prioritized and so forth. In general, greater detail on the 'how' and some more hard numbers on results are expected in these design documents. To this end, we would like to identify a suitable expert to participate in the Inception Workshop and to work with your team in finalizing the strategy in the period leading up to the launch of activities.

With regard to the institutional arrangements, we feel the Joint Programme would be improved by explaining the comparative advantages of the different UN agencies and why they have been assigned their respective roles. We do feel there is clear institutional responsibility and accountability for each of the outcomes though how each (outcome and agency) relates to each other, and will become part of a larger, inter-related and mutually reinforcing whole, could be better captured. It would also be valuable to explain the coordination mechanisms at the implementation level that will avoid the risk of repeating identical or similar actions at different times but with the same counterparts (for instance, the activities associated with strengthening institutional capacities in 1.2, 2.1 and 3.1). With regard to the implementation team (*Equipo de ejecucion*, p.13), rather than one integrated secretariat (as would be implied by the paragraph describing UNIFEM's overall supervisory role), the text seems to suggest each lead technical expert will be under the supervision of each individual agency (next paragraph). We wonder whether a more integrated approach to the management arrangements could be found to support the holistic approach of the underlying strategy. A harmonized approach to reporting, monitoring and evaluation will also be key elements of success.

The Programme is ambitious in its scope and could clearly be narrowed somewhat to increase impact and help identify more concrete targets. Furthermore, in light of the \$690,000 reduction required, we would recommend the revision of the budget be linked to establishing greater geographic focus, and to reducing some of the costs of technical assistance.

Finally, please note that the Fund Secretariat may revert to you with comments on your Monitoring Framework in the first part of 2008. The proposed Monitoring framework does not include indicators relating to UN reform or the Paris Declaration. This has been a common feature across many submissions, and the Secretariat has been tasked with investigating what is feasible within a three-year programme and developing Fund-wide M&E standards.

### **III. JP re-design requirements and/or recommendations**

The following changes are required to the Joint Programme document before finalization:

- The budget should be reduced to \$7,200,000. The Secretariat recommends this reduction be linked to introducing greater geographic focus. The costs of technical assistance are also high and could be reduced.



- The narrative in Section 4 and 5 should be expanded to address some of the key strategy questions identified above and in the enclosed reviewer comments. Identifying the geographic areas of intervention, priority groups within those and the criteria for their selection should be included here. Particular effort should be made to elaborate further the components and strategy for Outcome 2 (IOM), for example detailing the definition of the anticipated services and beneficiaries and their location. Please also provide greater detail on the proposed technical assistance that will be given to legislative processes and some more description of these processes, under Outcome 3.

#### **IV. Management arrangements and delegation of authority**

On receipt of a copy of the signed document, the Fund Secretariat will transfer the full three-year allocation to the custody of the Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) Office pending further instructions from you.

Please note the MDTF Office will pass-through funds to Participating Organizations on instruction from you as Resident Coordinator and Co-Chair of the National MDG-F Steering Committee.

As reflected in the Fund's Framework Document (Section 9 'Formulation Process & Release of Funds) and the global MoU with Participating Organizations (Article I, 2-c) the MDTF Office will release resources on an annual, advance basis. For the first advance, these funds will be transferred on the basis of receipt of the first year Annual Workplan and the signed Joint Programme document. Subsequent annual advances will be released on instructions from you and on the basis of a) receipt of the next annual work-plan approved by the National Steering Committee; b) evidence that a formal review of the programme's progress has been undertaken not more than three months earlier, either in the form of an annual progress report (if the timing coincides) or through the minutes of a National Steering Committee where this has been discussed; and c) only when combined commitments against the existing advance have exceeded 70%. Please review the initial year budget requests carefully with participating organizations in order to ensure realistic delivery targets in this regard. The annual agency apportionment projected in the final budget attached to the signed Joint Programme document should also be reviewed and can be revised up to the time of your first funds-advance request. This is important for the reasons outlined below.

In order to allow the implementation team some flexibility to adapt the strategy to unexpected challenges and opportunities, and to empower Resident Coordinators in their oversight responsibilities, this memorandum also provides you with the authority over the three year duration of the programme and with the agreement of your National Steering Committee to (a) transfer up to \$1,000,000 or 20% of the total value of the project budget – whichever is lowest – *between Participating Organizations* identified in the original Joint Programme budget and (b) re-phase up to \$1,000,000 or 20% of the total value of the project budget – whichever is lowest - *between years*. The base-line against which these ceilings will be measured is the annual budget projection (by year and by participating organization) confirmed at the time of your first funds-advance request. The MDTF Office must be informed of any revisions of this kind, decided locally and is responsible for tracking these delegation ceilings for each programme. Any changes that fall outside these parameters will have to be referred back to the (Global) MDG-F Steering Committee for approval.

The success of the MDG-F activities will depend on your ongoing leadership and engagement. We count on you to exercise this leadership and to ensure this Joint Programme remains an ongoing, integrated



effort by the UN system in support of national priorities. Please also use the National Steering Committee mechanism to help ensure national ownership by the Government in particular and involve it in important financial and programmatic oversight decisions.

The Executive Coordinator of the MDTF Office, Bisrat Aklilu, will be in contact with any specific documentation requirements to ensure the programme meets compliance requirements for UNDG pass-through arrangements.

With best wishes.

cc.

Mr. Bisrat Aklilu, Executive Coordinator, Multi-Donor Trust Fund Office

Ms. Rebeca Grynspan, Assistant Administrator and Director Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, UNDP New York

H.E. Mr. D. Juan Antonio Yáñez-Barnuevo, Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations

H.E. Ms. Claudia Blum, Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations

Ms. Milagros Hernando, Director-General for Planning & Evaluation, MFA Madrid

Ms. Sally Fegan-Wyles, Director, Development Group Office

MDG-F Secretariat

**MDG Spain Achievement Fund – Joint Programme Review - COLOMBIA**  
**October 30, 2007**

OPAS 1746: Colombia – *Integrated Strategy for the Prevention, Care and Elimination of All Forms of Gender-Based Violence*

*Submitted by:*

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**Overall Comments**

The JP clearly aims to strengthen the coherence and synergies of existing efforts to address gender-based violence by a multitude of governmental and non-governmental actors, by emphasizing coordination and harmonization of approaches. This bodes well for overall improvement in the potential for impact by the JP's end. Its guiding principles appropriately adopt a human rights-based, gender equality and culturally-sensitive approach.

While overall true to the approved Concept Note, direct deliverables to intended beneficiaries remain unclear in terms of coverage and scope (the attention given to qualitative improvements is noted). The strategies, at least at this stage of the JP write-up, warrant greater clarity in terms of which forms of gender-based violence will be tackled, among what specific population groups, where and how. Currently, various forms of violence (trafficking, domestic, sexual) are identified among diverse groups in diverse settings (displaced, armed groups, adolescent girls, etc.), but without information or articulation of how the specificities required in each case will be addressed. This also raises questions about which results will be prioritized, secured, for whom, and whether they are all feasible to attain. In sum, the greater details of an integrated, strategic direction at this stage is lacking, and makes it difficult to ascertain if and how, what and for whom, results will be achieved. Logframes/matrices should not be considered a substitute for well-defined narrative that establishes the basis on which to validate that a quality, coherent, inter-agency holistic programming framework is in place to guide implementation.

**Elaboration of the Concept Note**

The JP is faithful to the goals and activities of the approved concept note, but the greater weight to be given to priority population groups (as opposed to policy processes only) seems to have dissipated rather than become more refined and prominent. Though the comments earlier provided by the MDG-F Secretariat have been largely taken into account, an expanded description/explanation of how the advocacy capacities of indigenous and Afro-Colombian women's organizations will be developed, for example, and in what competency areas more specifically, would be relevant to address. Another example that warrants greater development/explanation: the 'development of 2 ethnic strategies on GBV/indigenous and afro- is embedded in the logframe, 1.1.1., without further description of this innovative and important component.

As regards the Convenor's comment on **scale up**, a more explicit strategy and plan to promote uptake of the pilots (and in budgets) could be appropriate to consider (i.e. more emphasis on the monitoring, evaluation, documentation and 'packaging', dissemination, advocacy vis-à-vis public authorities/specific by sector, etc.), to more explicitly bring attention to this key aspect of the JP.

## **Relevance and External Coherence**

**Global Agenda:** The JP's deliverables are intermediate/process-based, meaning that they can be interpreted to strengthen the capacities that would ultimately contribute to the achievement of higher-level indicators (i.e. reduced prevalence of forms of GBV). The JP is not focused on direct services to beneficiaries, other than through pilots; though GBV is not an MDG indicator per se, it is clearly central to achieving MDG 3 and the Colombian Government has explicitly adopted eliminating gender-based violence as an MDG target.

As already reflected in the approved Concept Note, the outcomes and outputs aim to improve the living conditions of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups identified in the JP, though not necessarily/sufficiently clearly, through **direct supports to the intended beneficiaries**, for example, in terms of significantly expanded coverage of services.

As regards the **Paris Declaration**, it should be noted that the UN System coordinating entity on gender equality issues in the country has been expanded to include the leading international donors, a mechanism which is involved in this JP.

**National Policy and Institutional Context/Partnerships:** The programme is clearly aligned with principles of national ownership, and national priorities and plans, including the National Development Plan 2007-2012; and one of its expected results is focused exclusively on the need to strengthen and mainstream GBV in existing policies, laws and institutions charged with addressing the issue. In addition, and noteworthy, is the JP's explicit reference to its role in following up on the **CEDAW** recommendations and the report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, among other key reports that reflect the **human rights-based approach** espoused. The multi-stakeholder participation and involvement of an impressive array of public and civil society institutions across the JP's intended operations are aimed at strengthening coherence and coordination overall to maximize the potential impact of ongoing efforts to address GBV. Local authorities and stakeholders are also identified (i.e. municipalities, local women's organizations and other NGOs).

**UN reform:** As reported in the JP, it builds on the experience and comparative advantages of the lead participating UN agencies in the country, as well as on the UN agencies' participation in the UN gender theme group mechanism (Mesa Interagencial de genero del SNU). Clear responsibility and accountability for delivering on each outcome is assigned (one per agency), though how they are interrelated and become part of a larger, inter-related and mutually reinforcing whole is not quite clear. This also relates to whether the outcomes will be implemented in the same locales, etc.

The documentation on rationale when analyzing comparative advantages of different UN agencies could be strengthened and expanded with greater detail. By way of one example, on Outcome 2 on quality of services with IOM as lead agency: It is interpreted this outcome relates to GBV services overall, and not specifically/exclusively to those for trafficking victims, though the text mentions IOM's main area of comparative advantage has been trafficking. This is not too say that they could have the broader GBV expertise nor that GBV services for trafficking victims are not relevant, but by way of limited information on which to assess.

## **Internal Coherence**

**Programme Design and Delivery:** The activities-output-outcome links are logically related overall. The JP alludes to the utilization of **good practices** and lessons learned in general terms (though without identifying any in particular); and it might be useful to specify more explicitly

what the value-added of the pilots are (for example, will this be the ‘first’ integrated model in the country? Have there not been prior efforts to establish a common registry? Etc./other); or in the case of the Law on Violence against women, page 5 states the draft law has already been presented to Congress, so it becomes a little unclear, under Outcome 3, how indicator 3.2 (on same) is not restating something that has already happened, or what the “increase in no. of laws” might more specifically refer to (3.1a, for example).

From a programme design perspective, and as stated in the Overall Comments, the main gap is completing in greater detail the **tailored strategies for each group and form of violence** the JP aims to have an impact on, related to a common and universal lesson learned on the need to invest thoroughly in the design stage. This has implications for the types of message, media and educational/outreach outlets, formats, training approaches, service delivery and outreach, challenges, etc., at each step of programme planning, implementation and monitoring. Taking the **health sector** as an example, issues of whether PEP, emergency contraception are/will become available is not mentioned; or, in the case of the **police**, what are the key gaps and existing models being used on GBV and capacity development efforts, etc., so the ‘added value’ capacity development (and institutionalization/sustainability) strategy is made more clear. Similarly, section 3 (p. 10) on strengthening the **judiciary** and monitoring of public policies, it is stated that ‘capacities will be strengthened’ (of the Public Ministry, and the women’s machinery), but without indicating how or for what, what form of VAW, etc.

Also relevant will be the specific **identification of the local areas of intervention**, and the **priority groups** within those, and the criteria to be applied in their selection, which should include explicit reference to poorest quintiles and/or poverty pockets in the country (MDG focus, and as referenced in top of page 13). Page 10 of the proposal, however, lists **criteria** that *could* be applied which *appear* to be out of synch with the emphasis elsewhere in the proposal on especially disadvantaged areas (and seems to *potentially* contradict the criteria listed on page 13).

**Synergies with existing programmes** and initiatives (i.e. the SRH programmes supported by UNFPA, for example) would also be useful to state more specifically in the areas of intervention.

Setting these aspects out more clearly at the outset will guide the rest of the programme and help elucidate specific expected results (and strategies) by group, locale, sector, etc. This should also give consideration to **analysis by key variables** (e.g. age, ethnicity, educational level, marital status, and so forth) as they relate to the specific form of GBV.

**Risks** are identified, but strategies to overcome them are not stated in the logframe.

### **SUSTAINABILITY, MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

As per the JP document, **beneficiaries have been involved in the consultations** leading its design, with a welcome annex listing the range of consultation meetings held, that includes government authorities as well as Afro-descendant and indigenous women’s groups. This is a very positive indication, also related to sustainability prospects.

On the issue of sustainability, it would be useful to have a clear depiction of in-kind and/or financial resources to be assigned to the JP, beyond the programme’s expectation of increasing public allocations to GBV (which features as an indicator). As mentioned, a more explicit statement on what strategies will be pursued to upscale the pilots would also be useful.

Importantly, the JP emphasizes capacity development of the governmental and non-governmental entities that have important roles to play in addressing GBV. However, more information to

establish a **capacity development baseline or gap analysis** would be useful. For example, do educational curriculae not address GBV at all, or does it vary by institution and schools? Is the plan to incorporate GBV in the national educational curriculae, or in that of some schools? What are the key gaps in the health sector's role and how will this JP address them? Answers to these are sometimes implicit or dispersed, but a stronger articulation would be highly advised for the benefit of the programme and its planners themselves given the ambitions and complexities of the programme.

As for the **monitoring and evaluation** plan, meaningful indicators are provided (which it is assumed will undergo refinement to meet indicator criteria and become time-bound, specific, including geographically, by sector, etc.) once planning advances further and baseline data is added). Some also aim to measure capacity development. Reporting, monitoring and evaluation stages are covered, and a generic listing of the types of means of verification to be utilized. Noteworthy is attention to iterative planning and monitoring, for ongoing learning and improvements. It may be worth clarifying how the annual reports and annual evaluation reports are different or whether both are necessary (p. 16).

Note that the evaluations are intended to be delivered by each agency individually, rather than as evaluations of the whole of the JP, which is probably more practical but would seem to depart from the integrated programme approach and 'one UN' seemingly more in line with the spirit and intent of the MDG-F.

The logframe and MOV should ensure (or confirm) inclusion of an important element of assessment originally found in the Concept Note: user **surveys of client satisfaction** with the service pilots, since women will be the primary and most important informants of quality of care (p. 9 of Concept Note). This indicator could perhaps be inserted in logframe (cuadro 1, Resumen de Marco Logico, Linea de Base 2.1/calidad de servicios).

## **OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS**

In addition to the recommendations incorporated in the above comments, here are a few other observations:

- The MDG-F Secretariat may wish to confirm that **gender-responsive budgeting** seems to have dropped out in the JP, though reflected in the Concept Note, and important to incorporate in the capacity development plans to link up to the outputs related to upscaling pilots and institutionalizing GBV in public budgets of various entities.
- As regards **coordination mechanisms**, there seem to be 4 levels of committees, which might be excessive and slow down efficiency or time-use devoted to implementation. In particular, it would seem the functions of the Comité Sectorial and the Grupo Técnico Asesor could be merged into one, as they both deal with operational coordination issues (TBC).
- As for the implementation team (Equipo de ejecución, p.13), rather than one **integrated secretariat** (as would be implied by top paragraph under UNIFEM overall supervision), it appears each lead technical expert would be under the supervision of each individual agency (next paragraph). If there are concerns among the three agencies that this could lead to **fragmentation** of the programme rather than greater integration of the three outcomes into a more holistic initiative, this could be revisited at this stage ('one team, one overall supervisor', without preventing day-to-day close collaboration with each lead agency).